

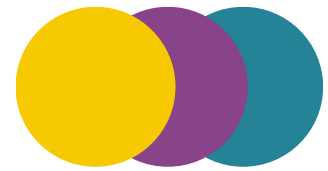


**HAPPINESS HOUSE**

# Annual Report 2026

For the year ended 30 June 2026

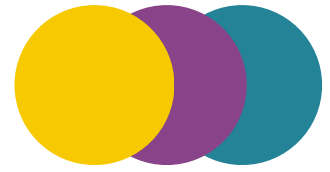
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# 2026 at a glance



10,546 op  
shop visits



898

visits to  
the drop  
in space



12,859  
people  
engaged  
with us

864 volunteer shifts  
46% increase



131 christmas  
gifts  
provided

59% increase in  
visits to donate  
goods

# From our Chair

Kia ora koutou,

This has been a year of change for Happiness House, and one that has encouraged us to think carefully about our future.

Our biggest priority is finding a new home. With our lease ending in October 2028 and no opportunity to renew, the search for suitable long-term premises is firmly at the top of the Board's agenda. We want to find more than a replacement building. Our hope is to secure a sustainable, welcoming and accessible space where Happiness House can continue serving the Whakatipu community for many years to come.

We also experienced a significant leadership change this year. In May 2026, we farewelled our long-serving Manager, Léna Boss, and I would like to thank her for her years of dedication and service to Happiness House. In July 2026, we welcomed Francisca Retamales (Fran) as our new Manager. Fran brings fresh energy, ideas and enthusiasm, and we're looking forward to working alongside her as we strengthen our programmes, partnerships and the way we support our community.



This year, a volunteer-led social impact project helped us better understand what Happiness House means to the people who come through our doors. It reinforced something we see every day: the value of a welcoming place where people feel connected, supported and accepted, regardless of their circumstances.

We remain in a sound financial position, supported by the generosity of our funders, donors and wider community. I would also like to thank our dedicated staff, volunteers and fellow Trustees, whose contributions make everything we do possible.

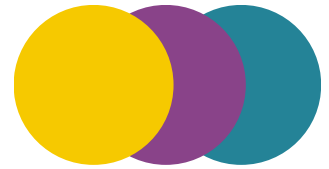
Looking ahead, we have some big decisions to make, but also an opportunity to shape the next chapter of Happiness House. As we approach 35 years of supporting our community, our commitment to community supporting community remains as strong as ever.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jen Geale".

Jen Geale  
Chair, Happiness House



# From our Manager



Kia ora,

HOLA! to our Happiness House whānau, I joined Happiness House as Manager in July 2026, so I am still very new here.

This year's report was shaped by the staff, volunteers and trustees who were here long before me, and I want to thank everyone for the warm welcome I have received.

In my first few months, I have seen every day how much connection, creativity and care matter to the people who come through our door. Our programmes, events, services and one to one appointments give people a place to come together, share a meal or a story, and feel supported.

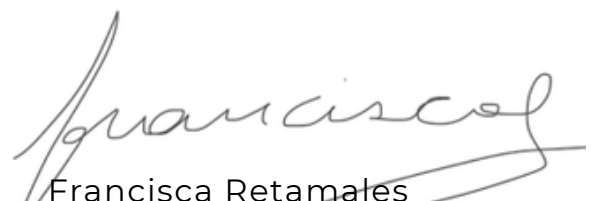
I am still learning the House, and I am glad to be learning it alongside such generous people.

The heart of Happiness House is our people. Thank you to our staff, volunteers, trustees and supporters, to our funders and private donors, and to the organisations we work alongside, for your patience, kindness and time. You make this a warm, inclusive and safe place for everyone.

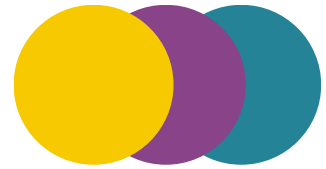
Looking ahead to 2026 to 2027, we will keep nurturing connection, support wellbeing and offer meaningful opportunities for everyone in our community.

I am deeply privileged to be part of this extraordinary community with you.



  
Francisca Retamales  
Happiness House Manager

# New in 2026



This year, Happiness House introduced new programmes and worked with community partners to create opportunities for learning, participation and connection.

## **Understanding Local Democracy**

*Helping newcomers have a voice*

Happiness House partnered with Catalyst Trust, Citizens Advice Bureau Queenstown and QLDC Libraries, with support from the Electoral Commission, to deliver **Let's Talk About Local Government.**



The free event helped newcomers and long-established migrants understand local democracy, voting eligibility and how council decisions affect their lives. Participants also had the opportunity to hear directly from an elected representative and ask questions. The initiative was subsequently featured in QLDC's Welcoming Communities Impact Story: Year in Review as an example of civic engagement and participation.

## **Community Kitchen**

*Building confidence through cooking*

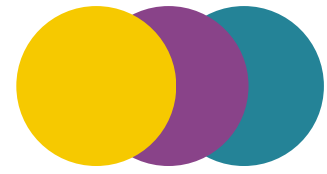
Launched in October 2025, our new Community Kitchen programme brought participants together with professional chef Álvaro Morales. Hands-on sessions helped people develop practical cooking skills, confidence and connections through preparing food together.

## **Sustainable Menstrual Products**

*Sharing knowledge and practical alternatives*

In partnership with Sustainable Cycles, Happiness House hosted a free educational workshop exploring reusable menstrual products. Participants learned about sustainable, affordable alternatives and gained practical information to help them make informed choices.

# Understanding our Impact



## Happiness House Impact Project | September 2025

During the year, a qualified volunteer led a social impact project to better understand the difference Happiness House makes. Through interviews, focus groups and conversations with service users, volunteers and staff, the project explored how involvement with Happiness House affects people's lives.

The findings highlighted two equally important roles: supporting people through difficult circumstances and providing opportunities for volunteers to experience connection, purpose and belonging.

### Key Learnings

#### **Volunteers benefit too**

Volunteering provides connection, purpose, routine and improved wellbeing. Our volunteers are not only supporting others; they are also benefiting from being part of Happiness House.

#### **Belonging makes a difference**

For people experiencing isolation, particularly migrants and those without family nearby, Happiness House provides a sense of community, acceptance and belonging.

#### **Practical help creates stability**

Affordable food, clothing, financial assistance and referrals help relieve immediate pressures, while building confidence and supporting longer-term wellbeing.

#### **Small interactions have a big impact**

A conversation over a cup of tea, a familiar face or simply having somewhere to go can be just as valuable as a formal programme or service.

#### **The benefits reach further**

Volunteers described becoming more connected to their community and inspiring others to contribute. Some service users expressed aspirations to volunteer themselves.

### Shaping our future

The project recommended protecting informal spaces for connection, continuing cultural and creative activities, and strengthening opportunities for community involvement. These insights will help guide our programmes and inform our search for new premises, ensuring we preserve the qualities that make Happiness House valuable to our community.

# How we work



## **Connection instead of isolation**

People who are new to the district, on their own, or going through a hard time have somewhere to go, someone to talk to, and a sense of belonging. This includes experiencing connection as a volunteer.

## **Resource provision with dignity**

Resources are received and distributed so that no-one in our community goes without food, warm clothing, bedding or essential household items because of cost. Support is offered in a way that upholds the mana and dignity of each person.

## **Support and skill development**

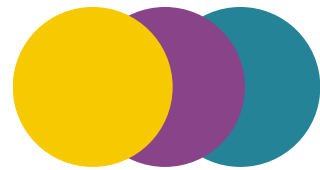
Support is given to those facing crisis, financial pressure or complex systems. They get timely support, advocacy and the right referral, and feel more able to ask for help again. Through activities and volunteering, people build practical skills, routine and purpose - and for some, a pathway into employment or wider community life.

# Connection

Throughout the year, Happiness House continued to provide opportunities for people to meet, build friendships and feel part of their community.

Our activities included Cook Around the World, gardening, knitting and a new volunteer-led frisbee golf group. We also welcomed the return of Toi Ora, our community art programme, which ran six sessions with ten participants.

Cook Around the World remained a valued part of our programme, bringing people from different cultures together to share food, stories and traditions. Happiness House took responsibility for continuing the programme following changes at Lakes Multicultural Collective.



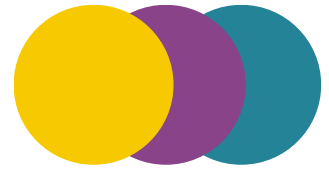
**“ESPECIALLY FOR ME PERSONALLY, AS A MIGRANT, IT GIVES ME A SENSE OF BEING ONE IN THE COMMUNITY”**

Beyond organised activities, our drop-in space continued to provide somewhere people could simply turn up, have a conversation and feel welcome.

**“[VOLUNTEERING] CREATES A SENSE OF BELONGING... I FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO MY COMMUNITY”**

Volunteering remains central to Happiness House. As well as making much of our work possible, it provides opportunities for people to build friendships, contribute their skills and feel connected to the Whakatipu community.

# Ru's Story



Every person's journey is different, but the heart of Happiness House remains the same: creating a space where people feel supported, welcomed and accepted for who they are. For Ru, what began as an obligation became something much more meaningful.

Having moved from Ireland to New Zealand, Ru first came to Happiness House to complete his community service hours following a legal issue.

He soon began coming in every day, helping around the house with a variety of tasks and putting his existing skills to use in the garden. As he spent more time at Happiness House, he began connecting with the other volunteers, and we started to notice a change in his attitude. He became more cheerful and increasingly involved in the life of the house.

Over time, Ru became an important part of our team. He brought positive energy to the house and was always willing to lend a hand wherever it was needed. As he grew more comfortable, he began sharing more about his life and feelings.

**For Ru, Happiness House had become more than a place where he came to complete his hours. He shared that he did not feel judged here, but instead felt welcomed and accepted for who he was. He had found a place where he could finally be himself.**



On his last day, before returning to Ireland, Ru gathered everyone together to say goodbye. He had written us a heartfelt letter, and as he shared his words, his voice broke and tears filled his eyes. He spoke about how grateful he was for his time at Happiness House and how much the experience had meant to him.

It was a touching moment for everyone and a reminder of how meaningful it can be to find a place where you feel accepted and truly belong.

# Support



Support at Happiness House takes many forms, from an informal conversation over a cup of tea to more structured individual assistance.

Throughout the year, our team continued to help people navigate difficult circumstances, access services and find practical solutions. This included one-to-one appointments, referrals and working alongside other community organisations.

We introduced our Community Kitchen programme, bringing participants together with a professional chef to develop cooking skills and confidence. The programme offered practical learning in a welcoming, supportive environment.

## **“IT FEELS LIKE A SAFE PLACE TO, LIKE, NOT BE OKAY”**

Our wider community work included collaborating with Citizens Advice Bureau, libraries and Catalyst Trust on a local-government information event, participating in discussions about migrant-worker experiences, and strengthening relationships with local mental-health and food-support organisations.

We also hosted meetings between local food providers to encourage collaboration and coordination of services, and welcomed students undertaking placements and community-service activities.

These relationships help us connect people with appropriate services and ensure the experiences of those who come through our doors are heard beyond Happiness House.

**“HAVING THESE PEOPLE HERE THAT ARE JUST  
REALLY WILLING TO HELP AND THAT SEE YOU AS  
WORTHY OF HELP, HELPS ME TO SEE MYSELF AS  
WORTHY OF HELP”**

# Kym's Story

Kym first connected with Happiness House a few years ago through Nancy, the financial advisor who offered her services at our space. Together, they worked on creating structure and setting priorities for his finances. This practical support made a real difference, and Kym continues to apply the advice he received.

Since then, Kym has also accessed other free support services, including Friday Produce Day, which provides families with access to fresh food. He later joined our Community Kitchen programme, where professional chef Álvaro Morales helped him learn to prepare a variety of recipes from scratch, building skills he can use in everyday life.

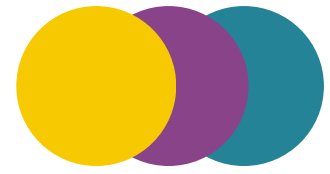
**Through the budgeting advice and cooking skills he has gained, Kym has learned to manage his money and make better use of the food available to him. Over time, this has helped him achieve greater stability and gradually rely less on Friday Produce Day. The Community Kitchen has also given him opportunities to share experiences, exchange stories and build connections with others.**

Beyond practical assistance, Happiness House offers Kym something equally important: people who take the time to sit down with him, ask how he is feeling, listen to what is happening in his life and find out whether he needs help in other ways.

As Kym explained: "If I had anything I needed help with, any issues that needed to be solved, there was always somebody here who could help me sort things out or answer my questions, which was a great benefit."



# Resources



Making essential goods accessible and affordable remained a core part of our work throughout the year.

Our Friday Produce programme continued to distribute donated and rescued food, helping individuals and whānau experiencing financial pressure.

The Happiness House op shop remained an important community resource, providing low-cost clothing, household goods and everyday essentials. We also continued to make baby and children's clothing and equipment available free of charge.

## **“I’VE GOT NOWHERE TO LIVE... I HAD NO MONEY FOR FOOD, SO IT WAS ESSENTIAL”**

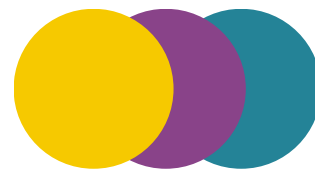
At Christmas, our referral-based gifting programme supported 131 people through 45 referrals. Rather than receiving a preselected parcel, recipients were able to choose gifts themselves. Feedback highlighted how much this approach meant to families, particularly the opportunity to make their own choices during a financially difficult time.

We also secured swimming-pool vouchers through QLDC's Get Active grant, helping make recreational opportunities more accessible.

These initiatives reflect our commitment to providing practical assistance in ways that preserve dignity and choice.



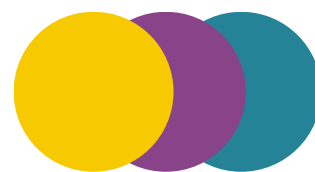
# Our Team



Permanent Staff as at 30 June 2026

|                                |                                             |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Manager</b>                 | Léna Boss (to 29 May 2026)                  |
| <b>Manager</b>                 | Francisca Retamales (appointed 3 June 2026) |
| <b>Coordinator</b>             | Steph Burbidge                              |
| <b>Community Interface</b>     | Lucas Rodriguez                             |
| <b>Op-Shop Lead</b>            | Daniela Diaz                                |
| <b>Food and Community Lead</b> | Marie-Louise Spikerbosch                    |
| <b>Admin Support</b>           | Nina Clark                                  |

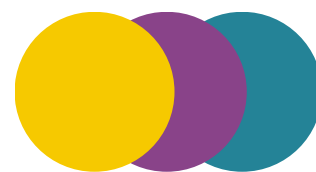
# Our Trust



As at 30 June 2026

| <b>Role</b>       | <b>Name</b>       | <b>Date appointed</b> |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Chair</b>      | Jen Geale         | 11/02/2025            |
| <b>Vice-Chair</b> | Chris Fitzpatrick | 23/11/2020            |
| <b>Trustee</b>    | Megan Wallace     | 10/05/2022            |
| <b>Trustee</b>    | Phil Jones        | 01/06/2024            |
| <b>Trustee</b>    | Mark Sommerville  | 19/04/2024            |
| <b>Trustee</b>    | Kerry Harper      | 10/06/2025            |
| <b>Treasurer</b>  | Simon Whitfield   | 14/10/2025            |

# Financial Snapshot



Full Performance Report available on the Charities Register (CC11023)

| Year Ended 30th June   | 2026             | 2025             | % Increase |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------|
| Number of Visitors     | 12,859           | 12,648           | 2%         |
| Total Income           | <b>\$384,982</b> | <b>\$451,802</b> | (14.8%)    |
| Expenses               | (356,764)        | (\$310,189)      | 15.00%     |
| Net Surplus            | <b>\$28,218</b>  | <b>\$141,613</b> | (80.1%)    |
| Cash and Term Deposits | <b>\$557,732</b> | <b>\$518,162</b> | 7.60%      |

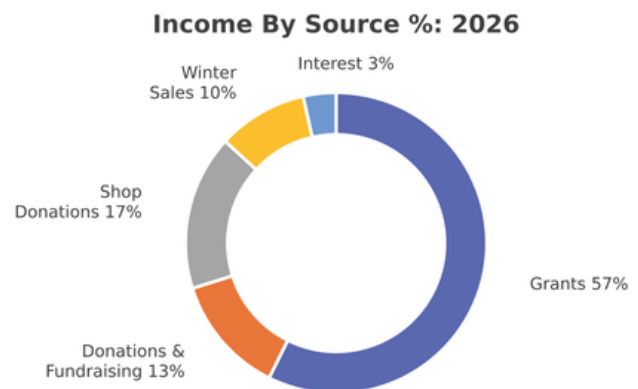
# Financial Snapshot

## Income

Total income \$384,982 was down 15% year on year (2025: \$451,802). Grants were down 9%, donations and fundraising 43% and interest 39%, while shop donations and winter sale held steady (up 1%).

## Grants

\$220,760 (2025: \$243,089)  
Funding from Central Lakes Trust, Lottery, QLDC and Community Trust South continued into FY2026. The prior year included \$18,885 of grant funding carried forward from 2024, a higher proportion of Department of Internal Affairs funding and one-off grants that were not repeated.



## Donations and Fundraising

\$49,268 (2025: \$85,951) – Donations are down significantly year on year. Last year included several large one-off private donations and a strong website appeal.

## Shop Donations and Winter Sale

\$101,402 (2025: \$100,647) – sales from donated goods were slightly up year on year with monthly sales from our shop operation growing steadily. Our winter sale generated lower sales than the prior year.

## Interest

\$13,552 (2025: \$22,114) – term deposits were reinvested at lower rates and some reserves were held in the current account from October 2025 to March 2026.

## **Expenses**

Expenses of \$356,764 were up 15% on the prior year (\$310,189) and are primarily made up of employment related expenses \$263,175 and costs related to providing services \$93,589.

Employment related expenses make up the majority (74%) of costs running Happiness House and increased \$34,664 (15%). The number of paid employees as at 30th June 2025 was 3.8 FTE, and this was figure held through May 2026 (June 2026 decreased due to the Manager finishing prior to a replacement starting and the figures are distorted). The increase in overall employment related costs was primarily due to individual wage increases.

Costs related to providing services increased \$12,123 (15%), with increased spend on community projects \$6,644 such as cooking programmes, garden and art projects and support for families; professional fees \$12,585 (2025: \$8,016). Premises costs including rent, insurance and utilities were steady at \$64,951.

The Trust recorded a net surplus of \$28,218 (2025: \$141,613), ahead of a budgeted surplus of \$7,573. The trustees have not required the financial statements to be audited for FY2026 which is expected to reduce professional fees in FY2027.

## **Cash and Term Deposits**

Cash inflow from operating activities was \$7,998 compared with \$126,327 in the prior year, reflecting the lower surplus.

Net cash applied to investing activities was \$47,912 with deposits placed with Westpac ending the year at \$466,103 in line with the Trust's strategy to invest funds not immediately required for operating expenses to be invested in interest bearing term deposits. (2025 Investments \$386,620).

## **Audit requirement**

Through the year, the Trust identified that an audit is not required by law for Happiness House. The Trust Deed has historically required an audit, however in order to reduce the costs and compliance burden on the small team, the Trust agreed to amend the Deed to allow for, but not require, an annual audit. The Financial Statements for 2026 are unaudited. Audit costs are still included in the 2026 financials as they represent the Audit for 2025 - going forward, professional fees will be reduced as a result.

