The Institution of Engineering and Technology

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Impact Report 2026

IET Futures Fund



Welcome

As we reflect on another year of impact, we are reminded that every opportunity created, every barrier removed and every young person supported on their engineering journey begins with the generosity of people who believe in a better future.

The engineering and technology profession has a vital role to play in solving some of society's greatest challenges. Meeting those challenges, requires a diverse, skilled and resilient pipeline of future engineers and technicians. Through the IET Futures Fund, donors are helping make that possible by opening doors for talented young people who may otherwise have been unable to access the support and opportunities they need to thrive. This commitment sits at the heart of the IET's mission to engineer a better world.

During the 2025/2026 academic year, your support has enabled more young people to explore engineering through programmes such as *FIRST*® LEGO® League, IET Faraday® DIY Challenge Days and the IET Future Talent Awards. Behind every statistic in this report is a young person building a robot, presenting an idea, experimenting, building skills or discovering a new career path. Their confidence has grown, and new possibilities have opened up to them.

It has been a privilege to see the difference our donors make. As we now move into the next chapter, with the establishment of the Philanthropy Operational Committee, we are excited to build on these foundations, deepen relationships with our supporters and develop philanthropy as a key driver of impact across the IET.

To everyone who has donated, fundraised, advocated for our work or offered their support in other ways, thank you. Your generosity is helping ensure that potential and passion, not circumstance, determine who can become the engineers and technologists of tomorrow.

Together, we are creating opportunities today that will shape the future for generations to come.



Dawn Ohlson MEng CEng FIET
IET Immediate Past President 2026-2027; Former Chair, IET Futures Fund Working Group

Mark Goudie MEng CEng FIET FIES
Chair, IET Awards and Scholarships Committee; IET Trustee

Creating opportunities beyond the classroom

Throughout the year, IET Futures Fund supporters helped create opportunities for children, young people and aspiring engineers to develop new skills, build confidence and take meaningful steps towards brighter futures in engineering and technology.

From regional robotics competitions and national STEM showcases to scholar development events and programme pilots, these experiences provided more than a moment of inspiration. They gave participants the opportunity to connect with peers, meet role models, develop practical skills and see where a future in engineering and technology could take them.

FIRST® LEGO® League regional tournaments and UK Finals

For many teams supported through the IET Futures Fund, participation in *FIRST*® LEGO® League was only possible because funding removed the financial barriers to taking part. This support enabled schools and community groups with limited resources to compete in regional tournaments and progress through the competition season.



The events themselves provided young people with opportunities to showcase their creativity, resilience and problem-solving skills in a supportive and celebratory environment. Participants worked collaboratively to solve real-world engineering challenges, present their ideas and learn from teams from across the UK. The experience helped many young people develop confidence in their abilities while strengthening teamwork, communication and technical skills.

For some participants, attending a regional tournament or UK Final was their first experience of a national STEM event, offering valuable exposure to the wider engineering community and helping them see new possibilities and imagine themselves pursuing careers in engineering and technology.

Future Talent Awards scholar community event

Future Talent Award recipients often tell us that the value of the scholarship extends far beyond financial support.

Earlier this year, scholars were invited to IET London: Savoy Place, enabling them to connect with fellow engineering students, industry professionals and the donors whose generosity makes these awards possible. These experiences helped scholars build professional networks, gain career insights and develop a stronger sense of belonging within the engineering community.

For students who may be the first in their family to attend university or who have overcome significant personal or financial challenges, these opportunities can be transformative. They reinforce confidence, provide valuable role models and help scholars recognise the important contribution they can make to the future of engineering.

Shaping the future of the IET Faraday® Challenge Day

While the IET Faraday® Challenge Day programme underwent redevelopment during the year, young people's experiences remained at the heart of the work.

Feedback gathered through pilot activity, educator engagement and continued use of IET Faraday® DIY resources helped the team redesign the programme to become more accessible, flexible and scalable. Insights from participants and teachers informed plans for a future model that can reach more young people, support a wider range of learning settings and create additional opportunities for recognition and achievement.

By listening to the experiences of those who use the programme, we have been able to build a stronger foundation for future impact, ensuring that even more young people can benefit from high-quality engineering experiences in the years ahead.

A lasting legacy through giving in memory

This year, the IET Futures Fund was further strengthened by gifts made in memory of loved ones whose lives were touched by engineering, education or the IET community.

One such example was the support given in memory of Lauren Davidson BSc nee Rosenior. Through the generosity of family, friends and supporters, donations made in Lauren's memory are helping to create opportunities for aspiring women engineers through scholarships in her name.

These gifts represent a powerful and lasting legacy, turning personal remembrance into meaningful action, helping young people access opportunities, develop confidence and pursue ambitions that may otherwise have been beyond reach.

The collective impact of generosity

Whether supporting a school's *FIRST*® LEGO® League journey, funding a Future Talent Award, helping shape the future of the IET Faraday® Challenge Day programme, or creating a lasting legacy through gifts in memory, every contribution to the IET Futures Fund helps open doors.

Together, these opportunities are helping young people build skills, confidence and aspirations, ensuring that talent can thrive regardless of circumstance and helping to create the next generation of engineers and technologists.

Reimagining IET Faraday® Challenge Days

Building a stronger future for engineering education

This year marked an important transition for the IET Faraday® Challenge Day programme.

Following more than a decade of inspiring young people through hands-on engineering experiences, we took the decision to pause delivery of the traditional programme and undertake a comprehensive review of its future development.

We know that many children and young people still lack access to inspiring engineering experiences, particularly those in schools and communities with fewer resources. At the same time, educators told us they needed greater flexibility in how programmes were delivered.

Rather than continuing with a model that could only reach a finite number of participants each year, we took the decision to redesign the programme from the ground up. Our goal is: to create an engineering experience that can engage more young people, in more places, while continuing to build the confidence, creativity and problem-solving skills that future engineers need.

Guided by feedback from educators, volunteers, partners and participants, we set out to redesign the IET Faraday® Challenge Day to reach more young people, remove barriers to participation and create a more sustainable model for long-term growth tied into sectors of engineering that are becoming increasingly important and crosscutting themes that are at the heart of the challenges our world faces.

At the same time, we continued to support schools and community groups through our IET Faraday® DIY resources, ensuring that young people could still benefit from practical engineering challenges designed to develop creativity, teamwork and problem-solving skills.



Keeping engineering accessible

Throughout the year, educators around the world continued to access IET Faraday® DIY challenge resources, enabling students to tackle real-world engineering problems in their own classrooms and communities.

The continuing demand for these resources demonstrates the importance of accessible, flexible engineering experiences that can be delivered in a variety of settings.

14,689

UK students were able to access an **IET Faraday® DIY Challenge**

♀ 44%

were **female**

These activities helped young people build confidence, apply STEM learning in practical ways and gain a greater understanding of engineering and technology careers.

Designing the next chapter

The programme review gave us the opportunity to ask a fundamental question:

How can we inspire even more young people to see themselves as future engineers?

Working closely with teachers and stakeholders, we developed a new vision for the IET Faraday® Challenge Day that will:

- Enable delivery by teachers, volunteers and community leaders.
- Reach learners aged 10-15 years.
- Increase access for schools regardless of location.
- Create opportunities for international participation.
- Strengthen links between engineering skills and future careers.
- Recognise achievement through Industrial Cadets accreditation.

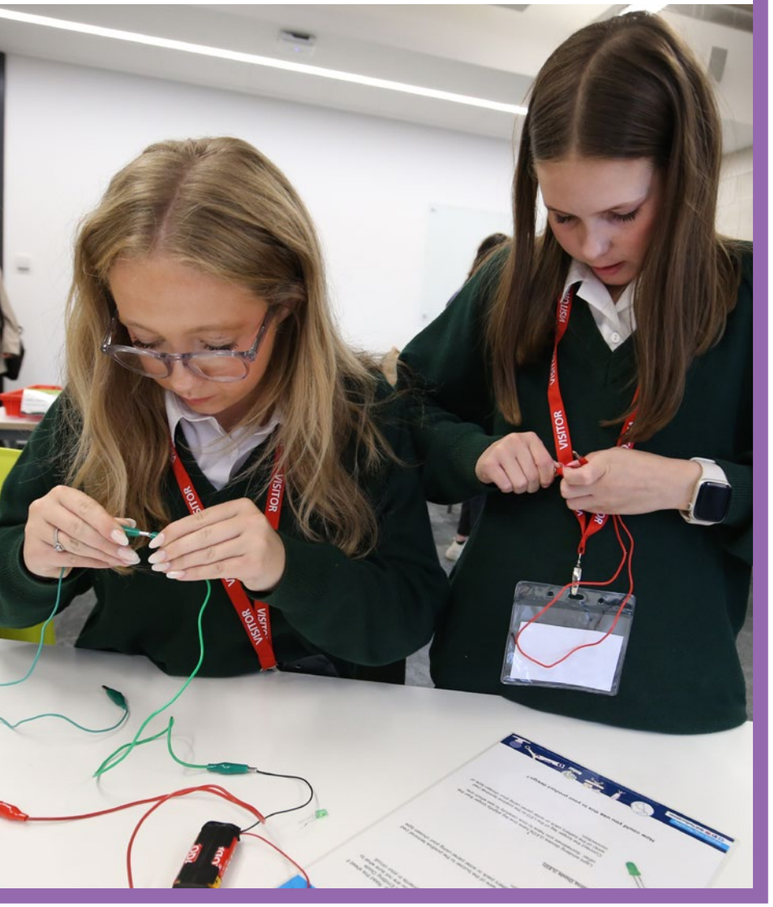
The redesigned model retains the creativity, teamwork and problem-solving that have always defined the programme, while making it more accessible and scalable for future generations.

Looking ahead

The redevelopment work completed this year lays the foundations for a new phase of growth.

Over the coming years, we aim to expand participation, engage thousands more young people and create new opportunities for recognition, mentoring and celebration. By combining flexible delivery with real-world engineering challenges, we will continue to help young people build the confidence, skills and aspirations needed to thrive in an increasingly technological world.

Testing the future of IET Faraday® Challenge



Young engineers help shape the next generation of the IET Faraday® Challenge

As part of the redesign of the IET Faraday® Challenge Day programme, a group of primary-aged pupils were invited to take part in one of the first pilot events, helping us test and refine the new format.

The challenge asked students to work in teams to solve a real-world engineering problem, following the same design process used by professional engineers. Working against the clock, they generated ideas, developed prototypes, managed resources and presented their solutions.

Despite being among the youngest participants the new programme is designed to reach, the students embraced the challenge with confidence and enthusiasm.

Each team approached the challenge differently, producing a wide range of creative solutions and demonstrating that there is rarely a single "right answer" in engineering.

Building confidence through challenge

For many students, the experience pushed them outside their comfort zone.

Some initially felt nervous about sharing ideas or worried that other teams might perform better than them. Others found collaboration challenging when working with people they did not already know.

However, by the end of the day, students reported that these challenges became some of the most valuable aspects of the experience.

They highlighted:

- Developing creativity and problem-solving skills.
- Learning how to work effectively as a team.
- Hearing different viewpoints and ideas.
- Experiencing what engineers do in the real world.
- Building confidence in their own abilities.

One student reflected that mixing teams helped them meet new people and discover new ways of thinking, while others spoke about enjoying the opportunity to solve problems together.



A sign of success

At the end of the pilot, students were invited to share feedback on their experience.

The response was overwhelmingly positive.

Participants described the challenge as fun, rewarding and engaging, frequently mentioning the satisfaction of creating something of their own and seeing their ideas come to life.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the programme's impact came when students were asked what they would change.

The most common suggestion for improvement was "more IET Faraday® Challenges."

Several students even asked for shorter break and lunch times so they could spend longer working on their designs.

Informing the future

The pilot provided valuable insight into how young people engage with engineering challenges and confirmed that the redesigned programme is accessible to younger learners.

Feedback gathered from students, teachers and delivery partners is already helping to shape future delivery, ensuring that the next generation of IET Faraday® Challenge remains engaging, inclusive and inspiring.

FIRST® LEGO® League UNEARTHED™ season in the UK

Opening doors to STEM opportunities

Every young person deserves the opportunity to discover their potential, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Through support from the IET Futures Fund, schools and community groups facing disadvantage or who are typically underrepresented, were able to take part in the 2025-2026 *FIRST*® LEGO® League UNEARTHED™ season. By helping to cover participation costs, IET Futures Fund ensured that more young people were able to access hands-on STEM experiences that build confidence, develop practical skills and inspire future ambitions.

The UNEARTHED™ season invited participants to explore how discoveries from the past can help shape the future. Teams investigated hidden stories, ancient artefacts, underground systems and archaeological discoveries before applying their own creativity, research and engineering skills to develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges.

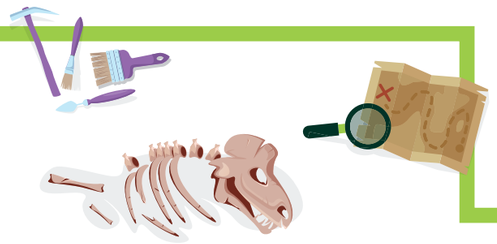
Thanks to donor support, schools and communities in need received financial assistance to participate, ensuring that opportunity is not dependent on means.

Building skills that last beyond the competition

Throughout the season, participants worked together to research practical challenges, design solutions and programme LEGO® robots to complete a series of themed missions.

Along the way, they developed valuable skills that extend far beyond the competition itself. Through hands-on learning, they strengthened their problem-solving, communication, teamwork and resilience, while learning how to investigate evidence, think critically and present ideas with confidence. They also gained a deeper understanding of how engineering and technology can be applied to address complex challenges in the world around them.

For many young people, *FIRST*® LEGO® League provided an opportunity to engage with STEM in a way that felt practical, creative and accessible. It encouraged curiosity, inspired innovation and helped participants recognise their own potential.



Most importantly, it demonstrated that talent and ambition can be found everywhere, and that opportunities to succeed in engineering and technology should never be limited by geography, background or circumstance.

The difference donors make

The IET Futures Fund exists to ensure that financial circumstances are not a barrier to participation.

By supporting schools and community groups with limited resources, donors help create opportunities for young people who may have had fewer chances to engage with engineering, technology and STEM enrichment activities.

This support reaches communities that are often less likely to access programmes like *FIRST*® LEGO® League, helping to ensure that talent and potential are recognised and nurtured wherever they exist.

Looking ahead

The UNEARTHED™ season demonstrated the power of combining creativity, exploration and engineering to inspire the next generation.

As demand for STEM enrichment opportunities continues to grow, support from the IET Futures Fund remains vital in helping more schools and community groups take part, ensuring that even more young people can develop the skills, confidence and aspirations needed for the future.



Because every mission builds a skill for life

Through *FIRST*® LEGO® League, pupils at George Stephenson High School have developed coding, engineering, teamwork and communication skills while tackling real-world challenges.

Over the past four years, the programme has helped students build confidence, resilience and problem-solving skills beyond the classroom.

In 2026, an all-girls team of Year 8 and 9 pupils, Mission Possible, researched challenges faced by archaeologists and designed their own solution, the 'Arch X suit', while also building and programming a robot for competition.



Support from Sage enabled the school to participate by covering entry fees and equipment. When the team qualified for the *FIRST*® LEGO® League national finals in Harrogate, Sage also funded transport to the event.

The team became the first all-girls team from the North East to reach the national finals and won the Core Values Award, recognising teamwork, resilience and what *FIRST*® LEGO® League calls 'gracious professionalism'.

Read the full case study here.

> We've got a couple of girls taking up computer science from that experience alone, proof the programme is building more than robots; it's building the next generation of female STEM talent…the skills they get from it are invaluable.

Natalie Fenn, Curriculum Leader Computing and Digital Learning Lead



Over three years, Team Activ8 has grown from three beginners to ten confident young engineers through their involvement in *FIRST*® LEGO® League.

> What I learned at 22, they're learning at 10. That's amazing!

Coach Isha

During the MASTERPIECE℠ season, the team travelled to the Australian Open Championship and won the 'Rising All Stars Award' for their innovation project, SenSea, a Raspberry Pi powered underwater submersible for ocean monitoring.

Thanks to funding from the IET Futures Fund, the team has been able to return year after year, developing confidence, resilience and engineering skills.



Future Talent Awards

Investing in the engineers of tomorrow

Great engineers come from all backgrounds, but not everyone begins their journey with the same opportunities.

The IET Future Talent Awards are designed to support students, apprentices and degree apprentices who have faced personal or financial challenges and have a passion for engineering. Through donor-funded scholarships, the programme helps talented individuals overcome barriers and reach their full potential.

In 2025/2026, support from IET Futures Fund donors enabled 72 aspiring engineers and technologists to receive Future Talent Awards, providing financial assistance alongside access to professional development opportunities, peer support and connections that can help shape their future careers.

Importantly, these awards do more than help with the cost of study. They enable recipients to take part in networking events, professional development activities and wider engineering opportunities that might otherwise be difficult to access. These experiences help students build confidence, expand their networks and strengthen their connection to the engineering profession at a critical stage in their development.

These figures demonstrate why the programme matters. Many talented future engineers face additional challenges on their path into higher education and professional careers. Through donor support, the IET Futures Fund helps ensure that those challenges do not prevent potential from flourishing.

More than a scholarship

Every Future Talent Award represents an investment in the future of engineering.

Recipients receive financial support, but they also join a community of aspiring engineers who are encouraged to develop professionally, build industry connections and become ambassadors for the profession. Many go on to use their experiences to inspire younger generations to consider careers in engineering and technology.

For donors, this means supporting not only an individual student or apprentice today, but helping to build a stronger, more diverse engineering workforce for the future.

Impact highlights

72 donor-funded scholarships

123 students, apprentices and degree apprentices supported



Of these Launch Scholarship recipients:

76% come from households with an **income under £25,000**

42% are the first in their family to **go to university**

31% are in **receipt of benefits**

41% are from **single parent** families

28% have **caring responsibilities**

Because a career in engineering deserves the right support



When Adam Warnock started his apprenticeship at 30, an IET Future Talent Award gave him more than financial support and it opened doors he never expected.

Adam began his engineering journey when he joined Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) Networks as an apprentice.

After recently buying a house, taking a pay cut to move into engineering and with a young child at home, he applied for the IET Future Talent Award. The support he received through the award helped make this journey possible.

As part of the award, Adam attended a networking event at IET London: Savoy Place, where he met apprentices, students and engineers from across the industry and took part in career development workshops.

Looking ahead, Adam plans to work towards EngTech professional registration. For Adam, the Future Talent Award represented something bigger than its individual benefits. "You feel part of something," he says.

"I used the scholarship money to buy a laptop and stationery for my foundation degree. It also really helped with fuel costs – I had a 150-mile round trip to college every Wednesday."

> Visiting IET London: Savoy Place was brilliant. The first hour alone was just networking – going around speaking to people, hearing what everyone was working towards. Some of them had really crazy jobs. I thought it was fantastic. I could have stayed for a week!"

Adam Warnock

Read the full case study here.

IET The Institution of Engineering and Technology

Because progress needs





people like you.

Leave a gift in your will and help shape what's next through the **IET Futures Fund**.



Leave a gift in your will to the IET Futures Fund

Leaving a gift in your will to the IET Futures Fund is a powerful way to make a lasting impact on the future of engineering.

We know that this is a deeply personal journey, and that it can also be a complex process. That's why we have produced a 'Gift in wills guide' to provide you with more information on leaving a legacy and the impact it could have on future generations.

Your collective support enables us to have a bigger impact on the future of engineering. Together we'll make a difference because better never stops, and thanks to you – neither will we.

If you would like to know more, please take a look at the brochure, email fundraising@theiet.org or call 0333 049 9123 then press 0.

We would like to express our sincerest thanks to our sponsors and donors for their fantastic support, without which our inspirational programmes could not have the impact they achieve.

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T +44 (0) 333 049 9123 then press 0
E fundraising@theiet.org
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donate-futures.theiet.org

Contact information

theiet.org

London, UK
T +44 (0)20 7344 8460
E faradaycentre@ietvenues.co.uk

Stevenage, UK
T +44 333 049 9123
E hello@theiet.org

Beijing, China*
T +86 10 6566 4687
E china@theiet.org
W theiet.org.cn

Hong Kong SAR
T +852 2521 2140
E infoAP@theiet.org

Bengaluru, India
E india@theiet.in
W theiet.in

New Jersey, USA
T +1 (732) 321 5575
E ietusa@theiet.org
W americas.theiet.org

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