

Appendix E – Case Study Examples

Community Facility

In 2016 notification came through that a community facility would be closing down, as the provider at the time had decided to withdraw services. This came as a tremendous shock to the users of the facility and the local community.

The facility was supported by a community association and local residents and had become an important part of the lives of the service users and their families. It provided an opportunity for individuals to come together in a safe and caring environment. It was a place that people looked forward to going to, so they could catch up with friends, have entertainment and a nice hot meal. In addition it provided respite and support to families and carers. Individuals and families within the community were upset and unsure of what the options were without the facility or any other suitable provision. Although the town has a wealth of voluntary and community groups there were no other suitable alternatives for the users of the facility.

Initially the facility was due to close in 2016 but Suffolk County Council managed to extend the closing date. This gave us time to work together to find a positive outcome.

After discussions with the five Ward Councillors within the town it was clear to see the community were passionate about keeping this facility open. The Locality Officer pulled together a steering group to discuss the current situation and what the options were moving forward. This included representation from the community association, town council, Forest Heath Cllrs and SCC officer representation and later included the Community Champion from Tesco.

From this meeting it was clear that the town were passionate about keeping the facility open and SCC worked very hard to source a new provider to take over the centre. A social enterprise took over in 2017 but prior to them starting they were invited to the steering group meetings so we could bring them up to speed on the history of the day centre, how the local area works and for us all to support the provider for the success of the facility.

The provider made it clear from the outset that their approach would be focussed on delivering services in a sustainable way and wanted to be a part of the community. They discussed how they planned to change things for better, providing more opportunities with the support of the steering group. The Locality Officer introduced them to many of the key contacts within the town to build upon the existing relationships formed within the steering group. In addition the Steering Group offered up a wealth of information.

As a group we meet together with the provider once a month to discuss progress and support moving forward. Funds are being raised for replacement mini buses.

This has been supported by District Locality Budget and Community Chest, along with other funding streams which Forest Heath and SCC have recommended.

There have been positive steps and numbers have increased at the facility. In addition alternative activities are taking place including a Community Café, Men's Shed and different health clinics. The provider now works closely with community healthcare and also OneLife Suffolk.

It is evident to see that the passion of the community saved this facility and this was done through the support of Suffolk County Council, Forest Heath District Council and the Steering Group. This demonstrates effective partnership working and how we have supported the desires of the community.

Community facility

A piece of land was identified as having potential for a community garden. A team of community volunteers were formed, with the main idea being:

- Leasing the piece of land from SCC
- Renovating buildings and the area into a community facility
- Provide a place for communities to come and enjoy

The locality officer was contacted along with CAS to highlight the project, assist with the legal aspect of transferring the land to the project group and assist with sourcing funding in the future.

The lease was secured in late 2016 and work is ongoing, with volunteers clearing a large piece of the land and uncovering a number of outbuildings.

The work will continue with the main aim to provide a multi use area including toilet facilities, kitchen, tea room, outbuildings, community gardens, sensory gardens, arts and crafts, wild life areas and conservation.

The project is in its infancy and has a long way to go and a lot to offer. Already, it has enabled several people living alone, to work alongside skilled tradesmen. Others have dementia issues and their relatives have expressed continual gratitude for the respite the facility offers, a safe environment where their family member feels worthy and is taken care of.

Residents Association

In the 1960s major changes to a community began when a complex of streets and houses was demolished, making way for blocks of flats. Today many people remember with affection the jumbled warren of streets, houses pubs and shops, and the community spirit that was lost with the buildings.

Although the flats are in close proximity to one another, the sense of community had all but disappeared. The Police responding to community complaints about Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and worrying trends of drug related crime and behaviours set up a street meet. The street meetings have been ongoing every 4-6 weeks. In

the initial stages the wider community who have lived in the community for almost three decades were not interested, and the newer tenants even less so.

When the F&C Officer became involved, the street meets had almost reached a point of development but lacked direction and knowing who to ask for help from, although participation from residents had greatly increased. The steering group attached to the street meetings had many delegates but this was new ground being broken and they needed direction.

The F&C Officer was able to speak with a ward member to support the work. This provided an alternative direction for the street meeting. The ward member was already looking at the housing association due to complaints he was receiving from the community.

What the F&C Officer was able to do is bring the two worlds together with willing partners and one goal they all shared, 'make the community a place people wanted to live again, not have to live'.

From this point onwards the street meet were able to drive more energy into the community. The street meeting was feeding into the steering group also. But the Police officer whose energy had got this far was dwindling due to other commitments. The F&C Officer was able to work with them to establish what was needed to ease the pressure. The F&C Officer led the partners at the steering group and asked the ward member to sit as chair.

There have been several outcomes and changes as a result of the F&C intervention:

- The community group has come together to create a residents association, bringing the right people together and supporting the street meetings.
- The ward member leading the group has led work with the landlord housing association, supporting residents in reporting faults and seeking solutions
- The ward member has taken the lead as figurehead of resident community group, working with the community Chair of the group, providing leadership and direction.

The F&C team have been instrumental in bringing this together by drawing on bringing the right people, accessing funding and building relationships. The ward member has taken the opportunity to get involved with the development of the residents group and the steering group with many partners.

The diverse population are now starting to communicate and engage with each other and access services they once may not have done.

Masterplanning – example of inter-departmental working within West Suffolk councils that is now embedded for future work of this type

In 2017, the masterplan was prepared in order to add detail to and help implement policies set out within the Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, and the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy which was adopted in December 2010. The masterplan was formally prepared as a supplementary planning document (SPD) thereby forming part of the statutory planning policy framework for Bury St Edmunds.

It was decided at a very early stage that the masterplan needed to be co-produced with the people who live in, work in and visit BSE town centre. BSE will be subject to

a growth in population and the town centre needs to meet the needs of everyone who does, and will, use it for whatever purpose.

The F&CO became part of the core officer group in autumn 2016, when the masterplan process was initiated. She developed, in partnership with the other officers, a consultation plan for each stage of the process, closely linked to the communications plan.

During the preparation of the Issues and Options Report, the first stage, the F&CO brought together the Bury Assembly of Associations – all the residents associations across the town, and formed an Accessibility Group consisting of 10 organisations working with people with additional needs. These groups came together and gave their views on issues in the town centre and possible ways these could be addressed. The outcomes of these meetings were passed to the appointed consultant and form part of the masterplan evidence base.

The F&CO, in close collaboration with the core team, wrote the content for the consultation materials and liaised with the consultant to design and produce them. She also contributed to reviewing the consultant's materials and the online survey with a view to making them as accessible as possible.

She organised 20 public consultation events throughout the two consultation periods at which the public can meet the project team, organised installations at five venues throughout the town centre and information points at a further seven public venues. She also provided updates on the consultation to the Working Group, WSc committees and the Town Council.

Over 8,000 comments were received during the two consultation periods and the final masterplan, which was built on the view received, was adopted in December 2017.