

Community Development – Project Updates

Our Community Organising team has been working on a number of community engagements projects over the last few months. A summary of these projects is included below:

The Friary Youth Engagement Project

The team recently completed a youth engagement project for Salisbury City Council which aimed to develop positive relationships and understand the needs and ambitions of young people who live on The Friary Estate in Salisbury. This project was delivered over 18 months with direct outreach and delivery with young people and their families. As part of the project the team delivered a skills-based training programme, co-produced a youth action plan and supported the provision of new youth activity. Young people took part in a six-week engagement project with fun games and group activities designed to understand how youth activity could be delivered locally.

10 young people received Community Organising and listening training, they also attended a residential at Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre and a reward trip to a trampoline park. As a result of the project, a new youth club called 'The Hangout' was created, with 22 young people signed up to attend regular activities. Young people who took part in the project reported improved self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing, as well as feeling more connected to the community.

Rural Youth Project

The team has continued to deliver the rural youth project with door-knocking and engagement activity. Four pop-up events have been held so far in 2023, with 56 young people taking part in positive activities. As part of the project, the team has also supported the creation of a new youth club. This included governance advice and support for the newly formed youth club committee. 3 potential Young Leaders and 3 adult volunteers took part in First Aid training and will continue to receive support from YAW clubs.

Community Transport Association Project

Outreach and engagement activity has continued across eight key areas in Wiltshire as part of a project funded by the Community Transport Association (CTA). The project aims to recruit new volunteers for Link Schemes and reduce loneliness and isolation. Through direct outreach, the team has recruited 46 potential new volunteers for Link Schemes. Our Community Organisers were also joined by volunteers from local Link Schemes who took part in door-knocking activity with our team.

Community Engagement Services

Our team has a wealth of experience in supporting and delivering community engagement projects. We work with Councils, voluntary groups, charities and partner organisations to speak to local people about issues which are important to them and their community. Our team works on the ground, at the grassroots by knocking on doors and talking to people in public places to find out what they have to say. This approach is very effective at identifying different views (including from harder-to-reach groups) and produces actionable insights and solutions to often complex problems.

In addition to listening activity through door-knocking, our team delivers bespoke training and youth engagement projects. We have also worked with a number of Town and Parish Councils to create online surveys for digital consultation on neighbourhood planning and community needs analysis.

For more information about how we can help you reach out and connect with local communities through door-knocking, community engagement initiatives or digital surveys in 2023, please see our information leaflet (included with this briefing) or contact Harry

Tipple: htipple@communityfirst.org.uk

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Link Schemes Audit 2022

Each year, Community First gathers data from Link Schemes to prepare the annual Link Schemes Audit. The Link Audit is important because it demonstrates how vital local transport groups are to the health and wellbeing of Wiltshire residents, particularly those who live in rural areas. As well as collecting information about the number of miles travelled, tasks undertaken and volunteer hours given, each Link Scheme also collects data on the type of journeys carried out e.g. trips to local doctors surgeries, community hospitals and dentists. This helps us build up a picture of the important role Link Schemes play in helping people to access healthcare and other services that help them live fulfilling and independent lives, reduce isolation, manage health conditions and keep active.

Summary of findings:

- There are 1,620 volunteers involved in supporting local Link Schemes in Wiltshire, with an average of 38 volunteers per Link Scheme.
- The number of volunteers for Link Schemes increased by 3% in 2022.
- In 2022 Link Schemes travelled 689,661 miles, which is a 39% increase from 2021.
- There was a 38% increase in everyday tasks (34,125) completed by Link volunteers in 2022.
- Volunteers for local Link Schemes gave over 100,000 hours of their time in 2022. This is a 22% increase from the previous audit.
- 26,249 health related journeys were completed in 2022, which is a 27% increase from 2021.
- The economic value of Link Schemes is £1,262,102 based on ONS South West Average hourly pay (£12.48 per hour). This is a 22% increase from 2021.

The Link Schemes Audit shows that Link Schemes have gone above and beyond to support their local communities in 2022, with a significant increase in service delivery against a small increase in volunteer numbers. We hope you will join us in congratulating Link Schemes for their fantastic achievements and their commitment to supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the county.

A copy of the Link Schemes Audit 2022 can found on the [Community First website](#), a PDF copy of the audit is also included with this briefing document.

Support for Village Halls and Community Buildings (WVHA)

Wiltshire Village Halls Association (WVHA) is a membership network for village halls and community buildings in Wiltshire and Swindon. This is a specialist advisory and support service with opportunities for networking, training, promotion and help with local/national guidance. In addition to the support from our Village Halls Advisor Helen Akiyama, WVHA members also benefit from a profile on our dedicated WVHA website for members of the public who are searching for halls to hire.

Helen Akiyama has recently attended two re-opening events for Sherston Village Hall and Berryfield Village Hall. Both halls have received advice and guidance from WVHA. Before and after photos for these amazing renovations can be found on our [website](#). It is fantastic to see funding and investment going to local halls in Wiltshire. Helen is currently working with member halls who have applied for grant funding through the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund which is administrated by ACRE.

For more information and how to join our network visit: www.communityfirst.org.uk/village-halls/ - membership fees are very affordable and many halls and buildings have offered positive feedback on our service.

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MiDAS – Minibus Driver Awareness Training

Community First offers accredited MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness) Training for organisations and groups, led by our fantastic Training Co-ordinator Martin Carter.

It has been a busy few months for MiDAS with over 50 drivers trained in the safe driving and operation of minibuses. Feedback from trainees has been very positive and we continue to enjoy a busy training schedule as we move into the Spring.

“Great session! Martin was so informative and helpful – thank you so much.”

“Very efficient and thorough training from Martin.”

MiDAS is taking new bookings for Spring/Summer 2023 and early booking is recommended to secure a training place. Please contact mcarter@communityfirst.org.uk for more information about MiDAS and how to book your training.

Building Bridges Programme – Learning, Review and Reflection Event and Upcoming Impact Report

The Building Bridges programme Lead Team and programme partners (including Key Workers) attended a Learning, Review and Reflection Event at Market Lavington Village Hall on Wednesday 1st March 2023. The event aimed to highlight the achievements of the Building Bridges Programme and those who took part. We are currently in the process of preparing a project impact report with highlights from the programme including outcomes, case studies and quotes from participants. This will be shared with joint funders The National Lottery Community Fund and The European Social Fund, as well as through the Building Bridges website. Since launch in 2016 the programme has delivered the following outcomes for participants and the wider region:

- 1,910 participants supported through the programme.
- A work or education outcome delivered every 1.9 days.
- £12.9m of economic benefit to the region delivered through the programme, with a cost benefit of £1.67 return per £1 invested (£1.71 pre-pandemic).
- 64% of participants have achieved a positive outcome through the programme.
- 27% of participants achieved employment, 30% moved into education (including 291 who were NEET or at risk) and 7% moved into job search.
- 59% of participants reported increased confidence, wellbeing and self-esteem upon leaving the programme.

Support was maintained to an average of 343 participants throughout the pandemic. Thank you to everyone who has been involved in delivering and supporting this fantastic programme in Swindon and Wiltshire. Work is ongoing to secure continuation funding for the programme.

Youth Action Wiltshire – New Fundraising Events for 2023

The fundraising events calendar for Youth Action Wiltshire has been updated for 2023, with events including Auction of Promises (Chippenham Lions), a Golf Day at North Wiltshire Golf Course and our popular carol service Carols by Candlelight at Malmesbury Abbey. For more information about how you can support Youth Action Wiltshire by attending one of these fantastic events, please visit our website:

www.communityfirst.org.uk/yaw/fundraising

Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre and Linkenholt Countryside Adventure Centre – Book now for 2023

Community First owns and operates [Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre](#), a not-for-profit activity and residential centre in the heart of the Wiltshire countryside. Oxenwood is the perfect setting for school, club and group residentials or day trips. We offer a bespoke package of historical enrichment, outdoor education and adventure activities, led by our friendly and experienced outdoor education instructors.

Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre is a heritage building located in an area of outstanding natural beauty near Marlborough, Wiltshire. During your stay, your group will have exclusive use of the Centre and access to variety of exciting activities including climbing, rifle shooting, archery, hiking, canoeing and mountain biking. We have a wealth of experience working with schools, clubs and youth groups to create memories for a lifetime.

We also work in partnership with The Blagrave Trust to manage [Linkenholt Countryside Adventure Centre](#) which offers a range of day activities and residential campaign experiences designed to meet your group's needs. The venue is located 6 miles from Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre and situated in a 2,000-acre estate near the Hampshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire borders.

Please see the links above for more information about each of our outdoor education settings, this includes updated pricing information for 2023. Copies of our information leaflets and pricing sheets for 2023 are included with this briefing pack.

To find out more about the bespoke packages on offer or to make a booking, email enquiries@oxenwoodcentre.com or telephone 01264 731274.

Briefing prepared by:

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