

Families and Communities case studies

Each of the following case studies provides a snapshot of some of the work undertaken by West Suffolk Council's Families and Communities Team. To find out how the team can work alongside you and your community, see our website: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community

September 2018

Brandon Perinatal Support Group

- Identified a need for more community based support services including group support and advice/information.
- Identified a volunteer in West Suffolk who wished to enhance community based support and was willing to work with additional volunteers to establish support groups in the area.
- Connected the volunteer with Homestart Mid Suffolk and West who could help to facilitate group work.
- Venue and funding identified.
- Group established in September 2018.

Ixworth Patient Association

- Village transport scheme to help patients with transport problems to access doctors. Concerns were raised with the Families and Communities officer over a lack of volunteers and sustainability of the scheme.
- After an initial discussion and gaining an understanding of the needs of the group it was evident that what was needed was more connections rather than funding and new volunteers.
- The Families and Communities officer connected the group to the CCG patient participation officer and a meeting was arranged with patient association chair, One Suffolk and the surgery practice manager.
- The following actions have taken place:
 - get help to get fit session arranged which led to the recruitment of five new volunteers
 - transport issue been resolved with funding secured for three years
 - new volunteer drivers are being sought through raising the profile of the group, and
 - further activities are being developed to ensure sustainability.

Haverhill Terrific Tuesday Dementia Group

- The Families and Communities officer for Haverhill was asked to support a Synergy Dementia Group that was meeting once a week at the West End Congregational Church.
- The weekly sessions were being run and supported financially by Sue Ryder Foundation, however, due to their change in operations were unable to run the café after October 2017.
- Support was needed to sustain the group as it was a well-used by participants and their carers. There was always one support volunteer from Sue Ryder who made lunch for the group plus another worker who oversaw the session.
- The Families and Communities officer worked with the volunteers to relaunch the group at a new venue and the group is now thriving in its new location. A Sue Ryder Navigator visits Haverhill once a month to give advice and support. The group feel supported and as a result the number of participants has increased.

EPICS Dads

- Community Chest funding from Forest Heath District Council was granted in April 2016 for Epic Dads; a project based in Lakenheath that celebrates, supports and empowers fathers and male carers to be their best for their children and thrive in the role of being a dad.
- The project encourages connections and friendships so that everyone feels valued and supported. In its first year, the project ran a number of successful groups including Epic Tots, Time out for Dads and Saturday Fun Club.
- The project is now in its second year of operation and is working with over 70 families. The Families and Communities team has provided support for EPIC Dads to become a community interest company and helped expand the project into other areas of West Suffolk.

Exercise Classes in Newmarket

- It was identified that a number of organisations were running chair based exercise classes for older people however they were not joined up and so there was very little interaction between the classes.
- We brought the organisations together to discuss the similar sessions they were running and how they could be joined together.
- As a result of this, the Racing Centre agreed to provide a venue to expand the sessions run in the Day Centre and widen audience participation. Furthermore, Abbeycroft has provided funding for transport and a venue, using Sports England funding, and instructors if required in the future.

The Shed, West Row

- In 2016, a team of community volunteers known as 'The Shed' identified a piece of overgrown land in West Row as having potential to be a community asset.
- In 2017, the volunteers worked hard to clear the area and turn the land into a community garden.
- This project demonstrates how our residents play a vital role in determining the future of their communities by working together.
- The Families and Communities team provide support in terms of locality budgets, providing funding advice, along with general support dependent on the needs of the group (for example, advertising).

Brandon Day Centre

- West Suffolk and the county council supported the Brandon Day Centre through a stakeholder steering group and helped deliver different initiatives to cater to the needs of residents of Brandon.
- One project, Men's Sheds, works with West Suffolk College for adult education opportunities and allows students to get involved in community projects.
- In addition, the Families and Communities officer with local councillors and the town council to bring in funding for two new mini buses; providing transport to those who need access to the day centre. This serves Brandon, Lakenheath and the surrounding rural villages. This enables those who want to use the day centre to come together, get active and enjoy a hot meal.

Newmarket Interfaith Forum

- Since 2017, the council has been working with representatives of the Muslim community in Newmarket to help further bring together the wider faith and non-faith communities.
- By working with the leaders of the Muslim community group, the council enabled the wider community to come together in January 2018 for the first Newmarket Muslim and West Suffolk Interfaith and Community Forum.
- Over 100 people attended the event and more work is being done to establish an interfaith forum to support future gatherings.
- By having these relationships and linking people together at the right time, a platform for integrated working and community cohesion is developed, ensuring our families and communities are resilient.

St Olaves Community Space

Bury St Edmunds

- St Olaves Community Space was an exposed area of tarmac owned by the council, with one bench, adjacent to a well-used local shopping precinct on a popular housing estate in Bury St Edmunds.
- The local residents' association (HEART) took action and, with our help, some new designs were developed.
- Work began in early December 2017 and finished with a planting session involving children from nearby schools in January 2018 and a formal opening of the area by Bury St Edmunds MP Jo Churchill. The council has taken on the ongoing maintenance of the area and it is already well-used.

Haverhill Youth Action Group

- The Youth Advisory Group in Haverhill is responsible for overseeing the delivery of Haverhill Town Council's Youth Strategy that was adopted in March 2016.
- Young people are encouraged to get involved with the design and delivery stages of the individual projects developed by the group.
- A survey conducted with young people in 2015 by the charity YMCA highlighted activities for young people as a key area for development in Haverhill. The council has subsequently supported the delivery of a number of projects in Haverhill.
- Work is progressing well on the Urban Sports Park Consultation survey, the Social Media Project, elements of the Creative Arts Strategy, and the Chill Out Zone.

Newbury Community Centre Transfer Bury St Edmunds

- The council has continued working with the Newbury Community Association, (NCA), Suffolk County Council, Havebury Housing Partnership and the local community to ensure the replacement of the Newbury Community Centre is designed by the community to meet their requirements.
- Turning 50 years old in 2018, the community centre has been an important facility for local residents since the Howard Estate was built and it has been a priority to ensure its design is shaped by the people it serves.
- In 2017/18, partners have built on the view of the community expressed in the public consultations and are working towards a new combined development of much needed housing and a new community centre.

Carols on the Green

Flempton cum Hengrave

- Flempton cum Hengrave community came together in December 2017 to enjoy Christmas carols in what is hoped will be the start of a series of village events.
- The event was organised by a local resident alongside Flempton cum Hengrave Parish Council and was backed by £440 of locality budget funding from the council.
- It is hoped that Carols on the Green not only becomes an annual event, but also part of a series of events throughout the year that will bring residents of Flempton and Hengrave together to socialise and make new friends.

Locality budgets

- Our locality-based approach is supported by our Locality Budget Scheme, where councillors each have an annual budget of £2,500 that they can allocate to community-led activities in their ward.
- In 2017/18 West Suffolk councillors contributed £164,369 towards initiatives and projects in their ward areas including:
 - supporting a new Walking Netball initiative in Bury St Edmunds for people who want to play a gentler version of the sport
 - encouraging people to get creative with the Mildenhall Art Forum
 - purchasing an indoor curling for Red Lodge Millennium Centre and establishing a group who can now, on a weekly basis, enjoy sport while within the centre.

Community Chest

- The West Suffolk Community Chest provides voluntary and community sector groups the opportunity to apply for funding for projects and services which will bring benefits to local people and help West Suffolk Council achieve their priority of supporting families and strengthening communities.
- In total, £593,264 has been paid to voluntary groups and organisations across West Suffolk in 2017/18 to support their valuable work.