

# MAKING IT HAPPEN!

**November 2021**

Making it Happen is about discovering, celebrating and building on the positive things in local neighbourhoods. Community Development Workers work with people to make the most of the opportunities that exist to create positive change.

Since lockdown restrictions began to lift, the team have made the most of opportunities to get out and meet people in neighbourhoods, and to work with them to make things happen. This update provides a snapshot of the amazing things that are happening.

The logo for 'Making It Happen' features the text 'MAKING IT HAPPEN' in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. The text is positioned within a white circular area at the bottom right of the page. Behind the text are several overlapping, thick, curved lines in various colors: yellow, pink, red, and purple, which create a sense of movement and connection.

**MAKING IT  
HAPPEN**

# Start Small

People, their interests, skills and knowledge; community networks, groups and organisations; physical things, like schools, parks, shops and transport; and the culture and history of an area, all help to build foundations for better health and wellbeing for everyone.

The starting point for Community Development Workers is to create opportunities to meet people and to encourage them to share their ideas, passions and priorities.

They build relationships with 'connectors', such as local Councillors and others who live and work in the area, to find out about the area, and to explore the places that people like to go.

They hold pop up events in popular places, knock on doors or attend local events to meet local residents, learn more about the area and to find out what's already happening.

## Hampden Park Discovery Walk

Teams in all of the Making it Happen neighbourhoods have been on 'Discovery Walks' with local residents to get to know the areas.

In Hampden Park, the Team went out with a newly elected councillor who had lived in the area all his life. He showed them around and told them anecdotes about the area from his childhood. He described how the area has changed over time and explained its history.



## Pop Up events

"Pop up" events have been held in most of the neighbourhoods, such as in Walshes Park in Crowborough; Shinewater Park in Eastbourne; and at the Fish Festival in Newhaven.

These provide opportunities for people to map positive things happening locally, and to share their ideas, hopes and dreams for new things they might like to see or set up.



## Willingdon Trees Fun Day

In Willingdon Trees, the Team created a Making it Happen pop up lounge at the Trees Community Centre Fun Day. It was a comfortable, welcoming space for people to relax and talk in confidence.

The Team reported that "People queued up to attend this event. It was really well received and supported by local people."

# Lead by stepping back

Key to the Making it Happen approach is to make connections between people, groups, organisations and places, and to work with them to identify positive things to build on.

The team work with people to find common ground, and then they step back to ensure that action is community led.



## Willingdon Trees Art Hub

The Willingdon Trees Art Hub was started by two residents during lockdown. The Making it Happen Team worked with them to develop their plans and the group now runs regular sessions at the Trees Community Centre. The Team were connected to them by Compass Community Arts who provide mentoring to ensure the group can continue to be fully inclusive. Members are experimenting with different materials and are planning an exhibition in the Town centre.

*Willingdon Trees Art Hub*

Willingdon Trees Community Centre is collaborating with Compass Community Arts to create a brand-new community lead Art Hub. We will be welcoming adults of any age to come along and get creative! Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.



The group will be hosted by local residents I and C every Friday 2-4pm, starting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June. This is an amazing opportunity to come along and meet like minded creative people to share and learn from each other.

We are excited to see you there!



## Tidemills Community Choir

The Hillcrest Community Centre in Newhaven worked with local residents to set up a community choir to perform at the Tide Mills Heritage event. The spectacular five day free event, celebrated the history of the lost Tide Mills village. Local people wanted to be involved and to support the event, so they applied for a Small Spark grant. The choir was a wonderful opportunity, once lockdown began to lift, to come together to sing, and to contribute to a really special cultural event.

## Rye Plant Swap

In Rye, the Team were approached by a resident who wanted to set up a Plant Swap project. People turn up with plants they'd like to swap, or they can take one for a small donation. Donations can be home made compost or rotted chicken poo!- the aim is to 'grow a community of plant lovers'. He was awarded a Small Spark grant to get his project off the ground.

## Stubbs Lane Open Garden

In Eastern Rother the CDW attended an Open Garden event to meet local people and make connections. She reflected on "the learning we can take from the group being able to put on an event that has not cost anyone any money. They managed to put on a lovely 'Covid' safe event with minimal help from the local authority or any other organisations- just the good will of neighbours."



# Community led activity:

people, place, planet, mind, body & spirit

People are planning and organising social activities to address loneliness, to support people in dealing with mental health challenges, climate change and food security. There are initiatives to encourage people to take part in sport, to foster a sense of belonging, and to build community connections.



## Marline Court Community Garden

In Hollington, Denise has been rallying her neighbours to help turn their communal green space into a community garden. Using a small sparks grant to buy the materials, they have successfully put up a new bench & have purchased top soil & seeds to grow some veg. The Community development worker reflected that the group has helped create a sense of belonging: "[it] is as much about getting people together socially as about planting."



## Futsal in Newhaven

M had recently moved to Newhaven and wanted to bring this football style game to the area. She completed a Making it Happen 'getting support form' and discussed her idea with the team. M wanted to ensure that money wouldn't be a barrier for anyone to join in. The Team connected her to [Active Sussex](#) for advice and funding, and helped her with social media posts and flyers to promote the Futsal Summer Camp to local residents. The response was overwhelming and the sessions hugely popular - it was even discussed in a local Town Council meeting!

## Crochet Club, Hailsham

'The Crochet and Chat Club launched in October 2020 and initially had to navigate online meetings to get started. The club has become a lifeline for members of the group. The Community Development Worker reported: "One lady said that it had been her only "me time" when she was caring for her mum. She said that she had been able to learn and get advice and tips from others in the group who had gone through similar experiences"



## Peace Community Centre and Mosque

In Peacehaven the Community Centre is keen to work with the local community to foster a sense of belonging for the whole area. They worked with two local children to write about their experiences of life in lockdown and have received a Small Spark grant to get these published. They hope to use the books to promote writing workshops for young people from the area.



# Small Sparks Grants

Since the start of Making it Happen 42 Small Sparks grants of up to £500 each have been allocated.

## The Library of Things

In Hastings The Library of Things is a way for people to borrow things they need, rather than buy. Members browse online and choose what they want – a cake tin, a carpet cleaner, a drill then book a collection spot and pick up their “things” from an accessible collection space.

## Sunflower CIC

The Sunflower mental health and wellbeing hub was a weekly information hub providing resources and signposting around mental health and wellbeing, from counselling, anxiety to domestic violence. It was a 12 week project held alternately at Polegate Community Centre and Polegate Town council Offices. The idea was to reach different client groups as well as building relations with the host organisations.

## Fit Revolution

Fit Revolution is a community fitness group, based in Hastings. The project provides classes to keep healthy and fit, for anyone from any background.



## We've Got Mail!

This project matched children in Peacehaven with older people who were isolated during lockdown as pen pals. The project sparked lots of interest and forged some lasting relationships, including between The Helping Out CIC, Meridian School Parent Friends & Teachers Association and Kempton House Day Centre.



## BourneThisWay

Bournethisway is an LGBTQ Parent Support Group based in Eastbourne which aims bring people together to be themselves in a safe space and for mutual support to enhance their well-being and bring a sense of belonging.

## Battle Wildlife Meadow

The group run a wide range of activities. Their main project is the management of a large green space at the top of Caldbec Hill which they are turning back into a natural meadow. Participants fed back that they found the project “refreshing”, and had helped alleviate the isolation that some felt during lockdown. Volunteers reported that it had given them a sense of purpose during lockdown.



# Making it Happen

## Important Information

### Getting Support

Have you got a good idea to make positive change in your neighbourhood?  
What do you need to put in place to make it happen?

Making it Happen Community Development Workers can support you to turn your good idea into reality. From listening to your idea, connecting you up with others who feel the same, signposting you to training or putting you in touch with people with the right expertise, resources or information about funding, they can provide as much or as little support as you need. Contact us by email or [fill out this form](#) to tell us about your idea and to find out more about how we can support you, including information about Making it Happen funding opportunities.

Emails for more information:

To get support: [hannah.sherman@sussexcommunity.org.uk](mailto:hannah.sherman@sussexcommunity.org.uk)

To find out more about the programme: [angie.greany@sussexcommunity.org.uk](mailto:angie.greany@sussexcommunity.org.uk)

### Making it Happen is Delivered by:

- Eastbourne: [3VA](#)
- Hastings: [Hastings Voluntary Action](#)
- Lewes District: [Sussex Community Development Association](#)
- Rother District: [Rother Voluntary Action](#)
- Wealden: [Action in Rural Sussex](#)



### Context

"the assets within communities, such as the skills and knowledge, social networks and community organisations, are building blocks for good health"  
(‘A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing’, Public Health England 2015)



### Key Information

- Making it Happen is funded by East Sussex County Council Public Health
- Delivered in partnership by 5 local voluntary sector organisations
- Initially targeted in 17 neighbourhoods spread across the Districts and Boroughs