

COMMUNITY, CONNECTION & CAKE!

April 2022

**Community, Connection & Cake! Core
Team: Vicki, Lucy, Lily, Martha, Hannah,
Angie & Kaye**

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

It is delivered in partnership by five voluntary sector organisations: SCDA, HVA, RVA, RVA & AIRS

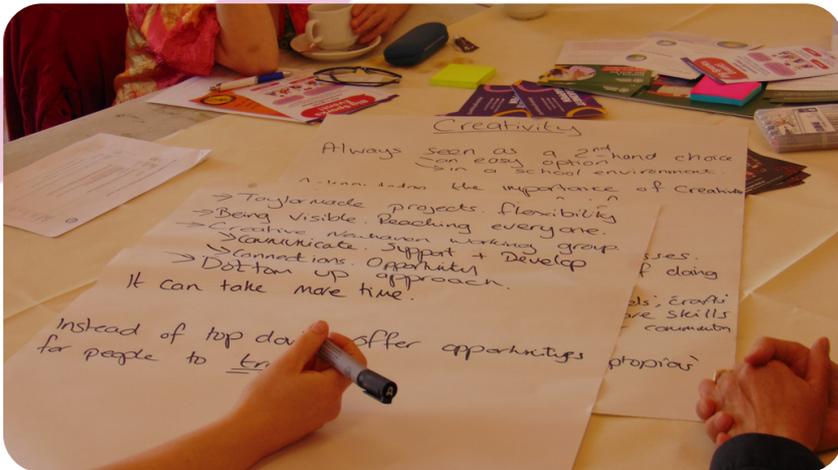
**MAKING IT
HAPPEN**

IN THE MAKING...

Community, Connection & Cake! was designed to bring together those who work to make positive change for people and places, either in their community or in their job roles. The aim was to create opportunities to share ideas, tips and challenges, and to network & explore how we can make the most of the opportunities that exist to create that change. And of course, eat cake! All this would be delivered in a fun, informal and highly participative way.

Core Team Planning

The host team for this session was identified at a Making it Happen learning programme session in February 2022. The SCDA team volunteered to host the pilot of Community, Connection & Cake! in partnership with representatives from Friends, Families & Travellers and the Trust for Developing Communities. The core team gathered input from local community members to understand what was happening in the area and to get ideas on how the session could work well. The core team met twice in preparation for the event to organise the who, what, when, where & how.



MAKING IT HAPPEN
COMMUNITY, CONNECTION & CAKE!

Do you work with others to make positive change for people and places, either in your community or in your job role?

Would you like to share ideas, tips, challenges & network with other likeminded people?

Join us to explore how we can make the most of the opportunities that exist to create positive change.

Everyone welcome from across East Sussex!

Thursday 21st April
10am-11.30am
Main Hall, The Hillcrest Centre, Bay Vue Rd,
Newhaven BN9 9LH

To book your place, click on [this link](#) or scan the QR code

For more info:
makingithappen@sussexcommunity.org.uk
07920 526224

#MakingItHappenES
Funded by East Sussex County Council

In the lead up to the event, invitations were sent out to people that the core team had previously engaged with, or who had shown an interest in the programme and it's approach. A wider net was also cast via social media & local networks. On the day of the event 46 people had booked on, and 36 people attended!

WELCOME & NETOWOKRING

As people arrived they were greeted by the core team and invited to grab a drink, catch up with people they knew and, more importantly, connect with people they might not already know.

Once everyone had arrived, Angie & Kaye welcomed the group, took them through some housekeeping and reminded them of the purpose of the session:

- To share ideas, tips and challenges
- The explore ways to make positive change

Kaye also gave an overview of the approach which was to be highly participative, in an action-learning style and drawing learning from the experience in the room .



Identifying Discussion Topics

Key themes were shared back to the wider group.

These included: how we support the creation of inclusive communities; working with volunteers; and how to maintain a support network of practitioners (see photo, right). Many of the conversation topics were interrelated, and we ended up with a set of 5 broad themes. These were agreed and voted for by participants who then moved around the room to join the discussion that spoke to them the most.

Make connections



Check-In

People were then asked to take part in a 'check-in' with the others sitting at their table, to establish names, roles & what people wanted to get out of the session. It was the job of the table host to draw out the top two conversation topics- not an easy task!

Themes for today

Level of support to communi

Inclusive communities

(13)

→ how to reach people

→ collaboration

Volunteers 3

Young people - intergenerational

(6)

Creativity -enabling

(4) (5)

How to support each other to engage

(4)

- communications

DISCUSSION & KEY LEARNING

There were two stages to the discussion.

- To explore the issue.
- To explore what we can do to make positive change together.

Someone from the table then fed back the ideas to the whole group. Here are some of the key feedback points from each discussion...



Young people and Intergenerational work

- Projects can mutually benefit each other- the perks of effective networking.
- Discussion around the importance of building connections between activities already happening.
- How we can ensure consistency – longevity & sustainability within projects.
- Potential to provide a better offer of training and mentoring to volunteers who run projects.



Connecting Services/ Shared Common Purpose

- Working together for the benefit of the community; keeping people safe, living independent lives.
- Identify what is already happening that we don't need to recreate.
- Communication: regular networking with a purpose
- Consider how we add value to each other.
- Supporting each other's projects, collaboration as a network!

Volunteering

- Making connections & joining up networks can make volunteering more accessible & can help projects to find the right person.
- How we might make volunteering more rewarding.
- To engage more people, especially young people e.g. qualifications.

Support communities
to take a lead



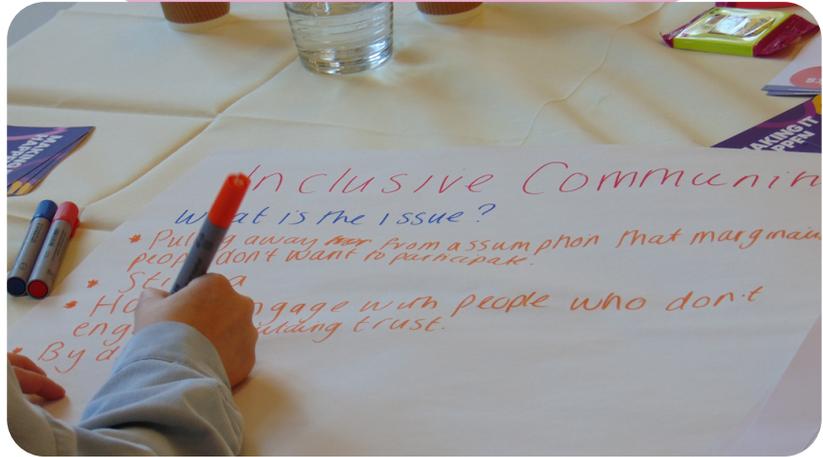
Build relationships



Key Learning Continued...

Inclusive Communities

- Explore how we can engage with people who don't usually get involved.
- Allow time for building relationships and trust, which can take a long time!
- Invest time in understanding how to be inclusive in practice.
- People are not hard to reach- services are hard to access.
- Need to question our own unconscious bias and assumptions.
- Focus on goals and aspirations, not just needs & deprivation.



Creativity

- Creativity as a vehicle, an opportunity for other things to happen- engagement.
- Acknowledge the importance of creativity in all aspects of life.
- Specific focus on engaging with young people
- Opportunities to reduce social isolation through creativity, clubs & groups & create a sense of place.
- Create opportunities for people to try!

Core Values & Principles

These emerging key pieces of learning & feedback highlight some underlying interrelated values & principles that ran through most of the discussions:

- The importance of networking, making connections & collaborative working.
- The importance of building relationships & trust in communities.
- Commitment to inclusivity & reducing social isolation.
- Commitment to engaging with children & young people.

FEEDBACK & CAKE!



To draw the session to a close, Hannah asked everyone to think about one thing that they would take away from this session to write on a sticky note. Some people then shared their thoughts with the rest of the group & all were invited to place their comment on a flipchart before enjoying come cake together.

What one thing will you be taking away from today?

- Real commitment to the idea of a collaborative network
- Wealth of help available, idea of human library, need for volunteers
- Think about using middle men to reach the harder to reach e.g. taxi drivers & barbers. Use the community as a whole
- Creating better links with organisations and breaking communication boundaries
- How wonderful to have so much passion in the room
- Building connections/networking face-to-face
- New friends to take back to my community
- Reinforce how important creativity is in all development & community work
- Great to meet with other people working to similar aims
- How much great stuff we have on offer
- Use connections to access more people and offer more support to the wider community
- Connection network! Know more about who is out there
- NEW CONNECTIONS & IDEAS
- Importance of networks and collaboration
- Feel reassured and refreshed. We're not alone!
- Re-energised, Re-assured, Re-enforced
- Making connections on the table, things to take forward
- Learning about organisations who might be of use to us
- Feeling that everyone's experience is of value. As a community we need to encourage everyone to share those experiences.
- Networking, Learning what organisations/charities are out there to signpost to
- Unconscious bias within the community
- COMMUNICATION
- Taking away information on volunteering from different orgs
- Wider connections beyond physical activity!
- Networking, communication & sharing resources

In addition, participants were asked to fill out a short feedback survey which would contribute to the running of future sessions, as well as the Making it Happen evaluation. The feedback was extremely positive! The below data is based on the feedback of 20 participants who consented to their data being reported on.

Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
A positive learning environment was created in the session	15	85
Everyone's perspectives were welcomed and valued	15	85
The discussions were useful and informative	20	80
I would recommend sessions like this to others	15	85

Feedback Continued...



Participants were asked to detail three things they got out of the session:

Most frequently reported

9 comments related to connecting with new people and tapping into a wider network: *"Connected with people I wouldn't have met otherwise"*

4 comments referred to reflections of their own practice: *"Consider not having too much written info for activities- can be exclusion"*

9 comments related to new inspiration and ideas: *"Broader connections -Creative ideas -Renewed enthusiasm"*

10 comments about having new/refreshed knowledge of what is on offer locally: *"Much richer sense of the range of activity already established"*

3 comments referred to how good it was to learn from the experiences & perspectives of others: *"Sense of so many creative ideas that overlap but come from different perspectives"*

Participants were asked to comment on how the learning will inform or influence their practice:

Examples of comments

"Have a refreshed view of own practices and different ways of communicating to people"

"I have two connections that I will be taking forward to work with"

"Inspire me to focus on how creativity can help individuals & groups move forward"

"Feel I can approach others with ideas"

THANK YOU!

Big thanks to everyone who was involved in this event, the core team, the participants and to the lovely staff at the Hillcrest Centre in Newhaven.

The next Community, Connection & Cake! Session will be held in October 2022 in Rother. More information will be released in due course

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

To find out more about the programme: 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