



MAKING IT HAPPEN BULLETIN

July to September 2023



**MAKING IT
HAPPEN**



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Welcome to the latest edition of the **Making it Happen Bulletin**.

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

Read on to find out more about the work we've been doing, and the projects we've been supporting across the county over the last quarter.

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Introduction

While there is very rarely a quiet period for the project, the summer months were particularly busy for the Making it Happen team, thanks to the number of great ideas that developed and flourished throughout the quarter. Many of these ideas have now come to fruition and are now in action in areas across the county, while others will continue to grow towards the end of the year.

The quarter also saw preparations begin for events and workshops in winter, as well as sessions of our learning programme and, in August, the release of our 2022-2023 Annual Review, which can be found on our website, at making-it-happen.org.uk/annual-review-2022-23/.

The Four Shifts

A framework to evaluate the changes that communities are making and which Making it Happen is contributing to.

The Four Shifts represent four drivers behind the Making it Happen programme. These drivers support genuine involvement and collaboration to encourage more joined-up and responsive ways of working. The Four Shifts framework is being developed alongside our evaluation partners, Collaborate CIC, who are evaluating the Making it Happen programme and helping us to capture any learning from our work.

The Four Shifts are:

Deficits to Strengths: Working with people to become more confident in their own abilities, and more collaborative in working with and delegating to others who have their own individual abilities, knowledge, and strengths.

Central to Local: Focusing on local areas and neighbourhoods, not larger geographies, to ensure community relationships and connections on the ground are prioritised over a blanket, one-size-fits-all approach.

Isolation to Collaboration: Encouraging groups to work together and collaborate to make the most of resources in their communities, share strengths, and ensure more joined-up provisions overall.

Assuming and prescribing to learning and responding: Making sure work in communities doesn't just impose 'solutions' without listening to voices in those communities, so that lived experience is valued in how services are developed, shaped, and delivered.



Deficits to Strengths

This edition of the Bulletin concentrates on the *first* of the Four Shifts: **Deficits to Strengths**. Making it Happen works alongside people to draw out their strengths by building Foundations (confidence and skills), making connections, leading activity and encouraging health and wellbeing (HWB) outcomes. Just as Making it Happen focuses on four shifts overall, the programme also looks at how these shifts occur across four levels. These shifts can take place:

within a person

person to person

person to services

services to services

Read on for more on how work over the last quarter reflected these four areas.



Deficits to Strengths

Within a person



- People feel they are helping and valued, and are healthier
- People recognise their own skills, capabilities and contributions

Making it Happen Community Development Workers (CDW) took advantage of the summer months to get out and about, to meet people in the communities they're based in across East Sussex, listening and asking positive questions to gain an understanding of an area or group of people.

Making it Happen works to encourage people to build more diverse social networks, connections and awareness of what else exists within their communities, so opportunities to have these kinds of conversation and build on these kinds of relationships are vital to the work CDWs do.



Women of Vision

The women behind this group have been meeting regularly for 18 months. They recently staged an event at the Bandstand in Bexhill. The group are strong but would love to have some younger women join them.



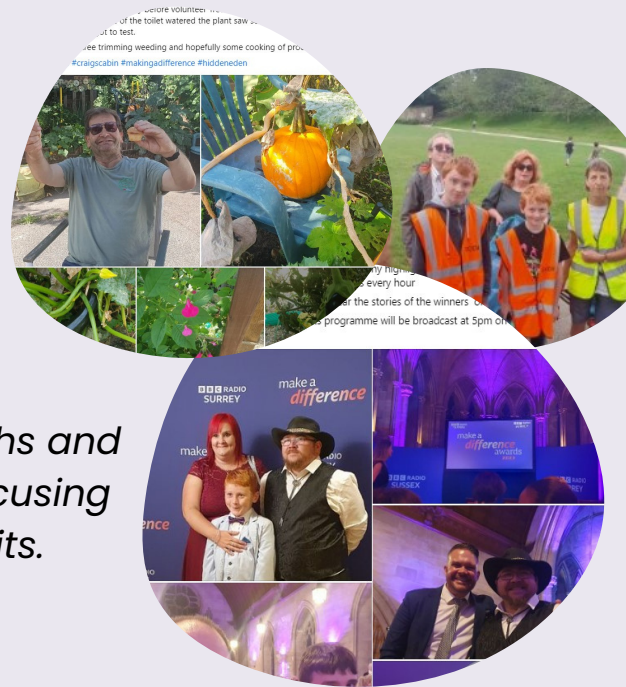
Selby Meadow

In Uckfield, the Selby Meadow group staged a Community Picnic, where Making it Happen hosted a stall with an ideas tree. People from the area provided crafts and yummy cup cakes.

Deficits to Strengths

Within a person

Individuals are recognised for their strengths and supported to build on these rather than focusing on the individual's or place's needs & deficits.



Spotlight: Craigs Cabin Hastings

In Hastings, Making it Happen is delivered by Hastings Voluntary Action. There, our Community Development Worker, Su, has been seeing a lot of great changes at Craigs Cabin, a group of community volunteers who seek to promote positive wellbeing through outdoor activities:

“CB [the lead volunteer] leads several activities; a men’s walking group, a regular ‘out and about’ group, litter picking, and he and his team have reclaimed a small play area creating a community garden, which local residents can access, and be a part of. His group retains a core team and remains fairly small, however the social connectiveness of those people is down to the commitment of CB. CB seems to have grown in personal confidence and wellbeing. The people in his group also have become more skilled and understand about growing plants & vegetables etc.”

Su comments “In terms of my practice as a CDW I aim to always leave the community person with a more confident sense of self than they walk into the meeting with. I feel it is important to acknowledge the potential challenges but to encourage people to just ‘give it a go’.”



Deficits to Strengths

Person to Person

Collectives of people within communities. Individuals interacting with other individuals.

- People recognise their complementary skills, capabilities and contributions
- People build an understanding of the assets in their community
- Community resilience increases – people (could) turn to one another for help and support

Building Foundations and Making Connections

In Peacehaven, our CDW commented that “despite the heavy thunderstorm halfway through the event, people didn’t leave – people were really enjoying the Summer Fayre and there was a good community spirit”



Shinewater, Eastbourne

In Shinewater, the 3VA team held a pop-up stand at the local Fun Day in July. They gathered feedback from local people about what they love about the local area, their skills, talents, passions and ideas for community projects.

Polegate Nature Reserve

Suzi, our Action in Rural Sussex CDW in Polegate, has been supporting the Polegate Nature Reserve project:

“The commitment shown by the small group of volunteers amazes me. They clearly care a great deal about this piece of land and have worked tirelessly to create a magical space for both people and wildlife. Creating this balance isn’t an easy task but their collective experience, knowledge and connections have proved to be a recipe for success. I look forward to supporting this group further and exploring ways to engage new volunteers.”



Deficits to Strengths

Between People and Services

Making it Happen supports people to link up and develop relationships with formal services, and encourages connections between community-led groups/collectives & formal services.



Crowborough Youth Club

The Youth Club in Crowborough has linked up with local schools and the police, but are also looking to gain more governance and structure support. As the project is run by volunteers, this is particularly key. Links to wider youth club resources are also being explored.

GIA (Gardening in Action)

GIA - a CIC focused on supporting gardening through workshops, practical support, work experience programmes and volunteering - recognised both a need and desire from the community to develop a localised 'toolkit' for people wanting to develop community gardens. The toolkit is designed to help people navigate the barriers faced when starting the journey of community gardening. The first step was a forum bringing together knowledge, skills and thoughts from likeminded people.

Our SCDA CDW says "It was fantastic to see local councillors at this forum, they were engaging and brought their knowledge of how the local authority works and what things to also include in the toolkit. It was interesting to see that while some wanted to use this to work together and combat climate change and influence system change, others just wanted to know how to grow vegetables"

At the Edge, Newhaven

In August, the At the Edge Community Sharing Event took place at the Hillcrest Centre in Newhaven, bringing together more than 30 local participants between the ages of 15 and 70 to take part in conversations about their local environment.

The session was a great success, with the project lead reporting that "unheard voices were heard", "new engagement" was achieved with neurodivergent young people and carers, and the sharing of resources and responses has resulted in a script combining work from the event with new original writing.

Deficits to Strengths

Services to services, and beyond...

More organisations adopt asset-based approaches and there are opportunities to influence commissioning

Making it Happen Learning Programme and Workshops

Throughout the summer we held further sessions of our learning programme, which seeks to encourage an asset-based - or ABCD - community development approach. These sessions work with community members, as well as people from voluntary and statutory organisations.

We also prepared to host two events in October and November, Sensemaking and Four Shifts, which aim to further champion ABCD values in East Sussex through collaborative learning between community representatives, statutory bodies, community development organisations and other key stakeholders. These workshops are intended to encourage participants to share the principles, values, and practice behind the asset-based approach, and promote wider engagement.

Annual Review

Our annual review provided an opportunity to demonstrate the kind of projects and support that can take place through asset-based approaches, by looking back on the work that that took place throughout the 2022-2023 financial year. This included 111 grants awarded in total for a wide range of activities.

As well as celebrating projects in action, the Review also hoped to further demonstrate the ABCD values behind the projects MIH has supported, and encourage further asset-based work going forward into 2024 and beyond.

Stage Two Evaluation

As part of our evaluation partnership with Collaborate CIC, we will soon be launching our Stage Two Evaluation Report. This is currently being prepared by Collaborate.

Watch this space for more information!



Getting Support

"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)*

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 the Getting Support form on our website 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.

For more information, visit **making-it-happen.org.uk**

Or to find out more about the programme, email **makingithappen@sussexcommunity.org.uk**

***We need your feedback! Please send any feedback regarding this bulletin to:
makingithappen@sussexcommunity.org.uk***



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

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