



# ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## *Learning Resource Pack*

Developed through learning with and alongside our wonderful communities in East Sussex

Section One: Introduction

Section Two: Start Small

Section Three: Build Relationships

Section Four: Make Connections

**Section Five: Support communities to take the lead; communities need allies.**

Section Six: Equality and Social Justice

Section Seven: Leadby Stepping back

Section Eight: Demonstrating the value of ABCD

Section Nine: Evaluation



[making-it-happen.org.uk](http://making-it-happen.org.uk)

## 5

# SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO TAKE THE LEAD

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# What does it mean in practice?

**"WHEN PEOPLE IN A COMMUNITY ACT TOGETHER, THEY DEMONSTRATE THEIR OWN POWER AND LEADERSHIP AND CAN BRING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGE. ABCD VALUES EVERYONE'S VOICE AND CONTRIBUTIONS AND PRIORITIZES THOSE WHO LIVE WITHIN A COMMUNITY."**

The ABCD Institute

For those who work in a community setting, this section is about working in ways that avoid 'doing to' or 'doing things for' people or communities, and instead seeking to 'work with' or 'alongside'.

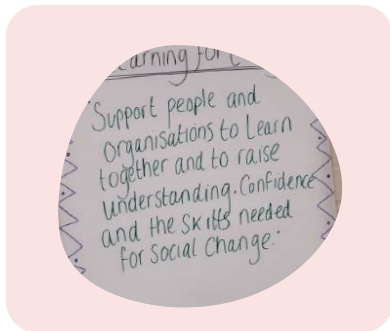
It includes tools which encourage good practice in working with communities as equals. It includes tools which are about hosting a space and encouraging equity, and tools for communities to use to design their own projects and plans.



# Discovery Tools

The tools within this section are primarily for those who work with local people and communities. They are used to encourage participatory design of projects and activities – essential to ensure all voices are heard and confidences kept. They can be a great way to build a supportive & engaging environment.

## IACD Standards



## Balancing the room



## A Recipe for Good Learning



## Check-in Questions



## Appreciative Enquiry



## Touching Base



## Ripple effect game



## Goody bag game



# International Standards for Community Development Practice

“Community Development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings.”  
(International Association for Community Development - IACD)

Making it Happen adopted the IACD standards to frame a programme of co-created ABCD learning with Community Development Workers supported by the Trust for Developing Communities. Themes and key practice areas are shared on the following page.



## IACD Standards – Continued

Themes	Key Practice Areas
Values into practice	Understand the values, processes and outcomes of community development, and apply these to the practice in all other key areas.
Engaging with communities	Understand and engage with communities, building and maintaining relationships with individuals and groups.
Participatory planning	Develop and support collaborative working and participation.
Organising for change	Enable communities to take collective action, increase their influence and if appropriate, their ability to access, manage and control resources and services.
Learning for change	Support people and organisations to learn together and to raise understanding, confidence and the skills needed for social change.
Diversity and inclusion	Design and deliver practices, policies, structures and programmes that recognise and respect diversity and promote inclusion.
Leadership and infrastructure	Facilitate and support organisational development and infrastructure for community development, promoting and providing empowering leadership.
Developing and improving policy and practice	Develop, evaluate and inform practice and policy for community development, using participatory evaluation to inform and improve strategic and operational practice.



# Balancing the Room

Tips and ideas for making everyone feel welcome.

## Making everyone feel welcome

- Greet everyone on arrival.
- Have refreshments available.
- Leave time for people to chat before a meeting begins.
- ID badges for everyone or no one.
- ID badges just with names (no roles or organisations).
- Get people to share an interest or interesting fact about themselves on a sticky label to wear.
- Avoid jargon.
- Organise the room in a circle.
- Start with a gentle warm up to encourage people to open up.

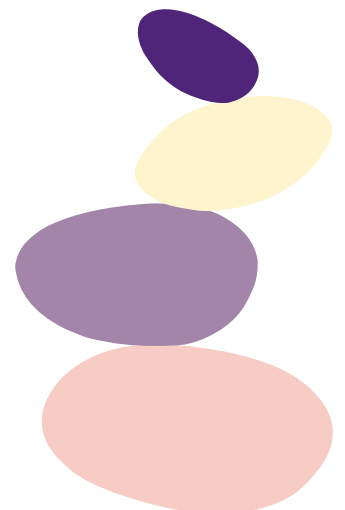
## Circle Practice

The circle, or council, is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversation for thousands of years. The circle has served as the foundation for many cultures. What transforms a meeting into a circle is the willingness of people to shift from informal socialising or opinionated discussion into a receptive attitude of thoughtful speaking and deep listening.

***(The Jeder Institute: Participatory Community Building Guidebook)***

## Hosting or facilitation

These terms are often used interchangeably, but are different, even while they may be incorporated within a single session, often alongside training. Facilitation encourages movement from one position to another, while hosting involves stepping back and 'holding space' for community members to step up and take the lead.



# A Recipe for Good Learning

A recipe for good learning in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) involves creating a collaborative, strengths-focused environment where community members actively engage in identifying and leveraging their existing assets—skills, knowledge, social connections, and resources. We were introduced to this simple tool by the Trust for Developing Communities who used it in learning sessions planned and delivered with CDWs.

**A**VOID ASSUMPTIONS

**R**ESPECT EACH OTHER

**E**VERYONE'S CONTRIBUTION COUNTS

**C**ONFIDENCE COMES FROM KEEPING CONFIDENCES

**I** SPEAK FOR MYSELF AND NOT FOR OTHERS

**P**ASS - NO PRESSURE TO PARTICIPATE

**E**VERYONES EXPERIENCE MATTERS





## Check In Questions

When using 'check in' tools we have found that some work in certain settings but fail in others. There is no wrong or right check in. Its useful to use something which is relevant to the group, encourages open conversations and restores a balance in hierarchy.

Examples could be:

What weather describes you today?  
Why?

Name? Role?  
What do you want to get from today?

A **gift** or **asset** you can offer?  
Something you know?  
Something practical?  
Something you feel passionate about?

Use fun images such as 'What sheep are you?' from the internet.

Name one thing you are grateful for today?

# Appreciative Enquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a strengths-based approach to creating change. Rather than identify a problem and look at how to solve it, Appreciative Inquiry adopts powerful questions to explore what is already working and how to build on that. It is used to support organisational and individual change.

**Appreciative Enquiry** focus reframes questions and might ask:

- What **possibilities** exist that we may not yet have considered?
- What is the **smallest change** that could have the **biggest impact**?
- What **solution** would have **everyone** win?
- What has **worked** in the past?
- What **needs** to happen?
- How would **you** like it to be?
- What makes you feel **happy, proud, or hopeful**?
- What **action** will you take?
- What could you do if there were **more people**?



## Touching Base

This is a useful warm up activity for an event or workshop, or to initiate a deeper ongoing collaboration. It aims to encourage participants to adopt an asset based, collaborative mindset, and is also a great way to encourage connections between participants.

### Activity

- Turn to your neighbour and each share a significant moment that led you to be in this workshop, event or process.
- Share your dream for social transformation.
- Listen deeply to your neighbour as they share their dream for social transformation.
- Sit for a moment and think: aside from money, what assets might you have access to that will help your neighbour realise their aspiration?
- This might be a reference to an article, a book, an experience or theory, or it might be a contact, or an insight into the potential for relationship building together. It could be encouragement or support - or anything at all.

### Debrief

- Invite people to share the gifts - ideas, encouragement, connections - which this brief exchange has brought.

*With thanks to Fenya Sharkey from Compass Community Arts for introducing us to this activity.*



# Ripple Effect Game

“This activity demonstrates how you can have a system wide effect by touching only one element in a system. Sometimes, in isolation, it can be difficult to see that everything we touch has the potential to cause a ripple effect throughout our system.”

(The British Columbia Health Quality Activities for Transforming Teams and Igniting Change. Visit: <https://attic.bcpsqc.ca/cards/ripple-effect/>)

## What to do

1. Have participants stand up.
2. Have them look around the room and secretly select two people. Tell them not to reveal who they have picked!
3. Instruct participants that when you say “go” they should try to make an equidistant triangle with those two people. That means they should stand so there is an equal distance between them and each of the two people selected.
4. Instruct participants that they are to stick to their original two people throughout this activity. They must keep the triangle intact. No talking. No touching!
5. Once they have had a few minutes to get into place, instruct participants that you are going to touch one of them on the shoulder and move them to a new location.
6. Instruct everyone that they must all try to maintain their equidistant triangles as this person is moved.
7. Repeat the exercise 2-3 times staying with the original two people.

*See over for the debrief questions*



# Ripple Effect Game

## - *continued*

### Debrief

- What did you observe during this activity?
- Did anything surprise you?
- How does this relate to your work?

In his book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*, Peter Senge offered this simple, yet profound axiom:

***“Small changes can produce big results – but the areas of highest leverage are often the least obvious.”***

Here, he refers to what systems thinkers call “leverage points” well-timed, well-placed actions that can produce significant, lasting improvements /changes. Most people immediately grasp the concept of leverage points, but to spot them in an actual system is often more difficult. This exercise quickly illustrates the concept of leverage points through concrete changes made to the group’s structure when one person is moved.

***With thanks to Sherry Clark from Transition Town Hastings who introduced us to this game.***





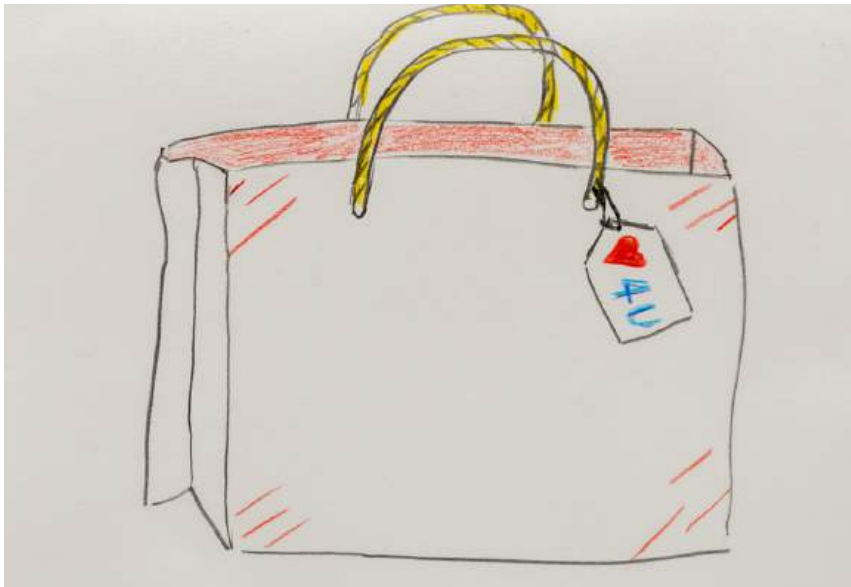
## Goody Bag Game

This activity is a great way to end a workshop or event as it encourages people to think about who they have met, what they have learned and how they can proactively share knowledge, ideas or resources.

Participants are invited to take a goody bag post card and to use it to share a *gift* for someone they met at the event.

For example:

- **An offer to connect** and your contact details.
- A suggestion for **a resource** they might find helpful.
- A **story** or example of a project from the community or a service they might find it useful to know about words of support or encouragement.
- **Something else completely.**



*With thanks to Fenya Sharkey from Compass Community Arts who shared the idea for this activity with us and the Compass Artists who created the illustration.*



# Design Tools

The tools within this section are used to support the planning and development of powerful projects and activities. The tools are designed to be engaging and accessible for all.

## Project Planning



## Event Planning



## Grant tools

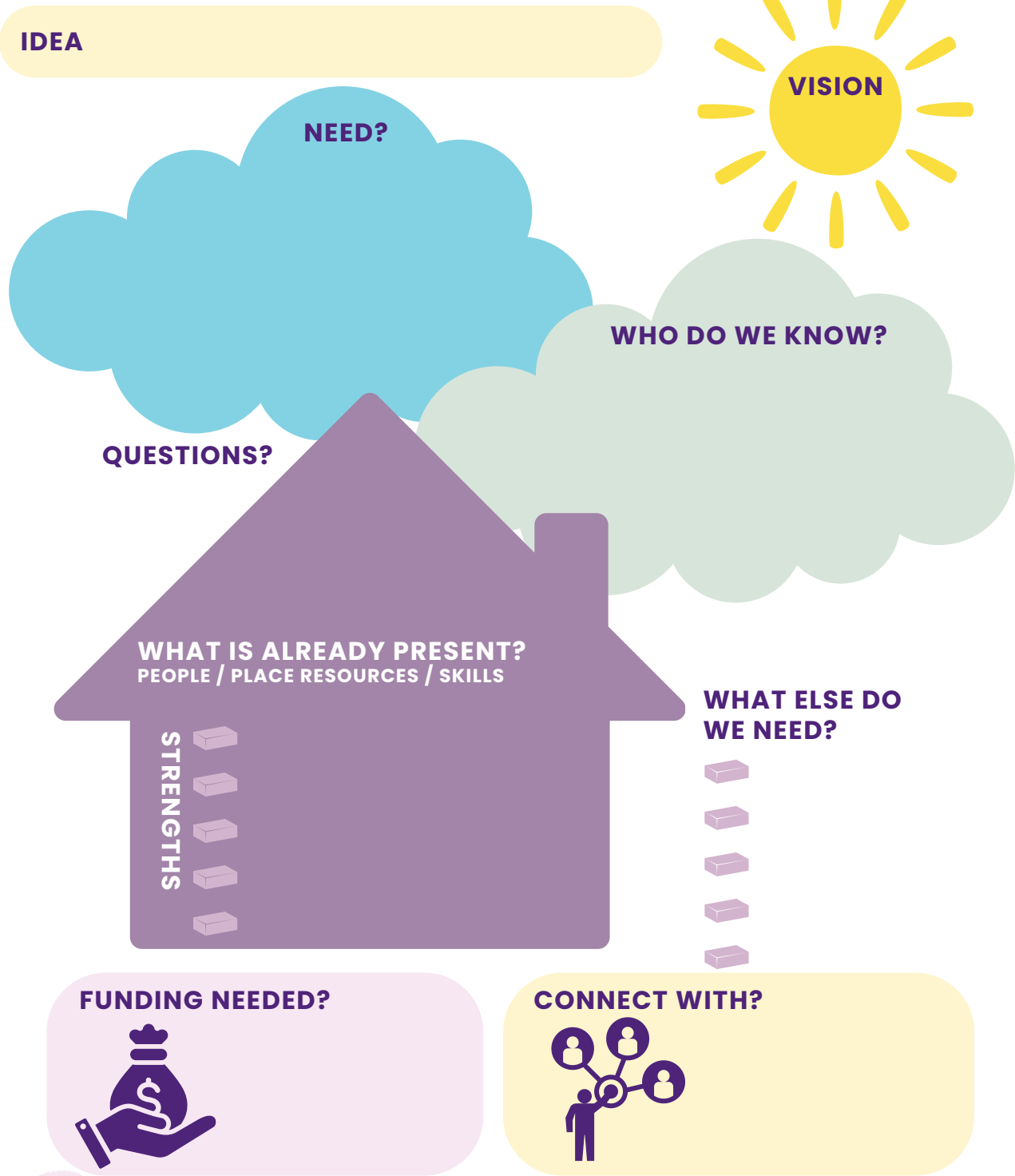


## Making grant funding accessible



# Project Planning Tools

This can be reproduced on large display boards or as worksheets for individuals or groups to plan a project using pens, post its or drawings to sketch out a plan against each section heading.



# Event Planning Tools

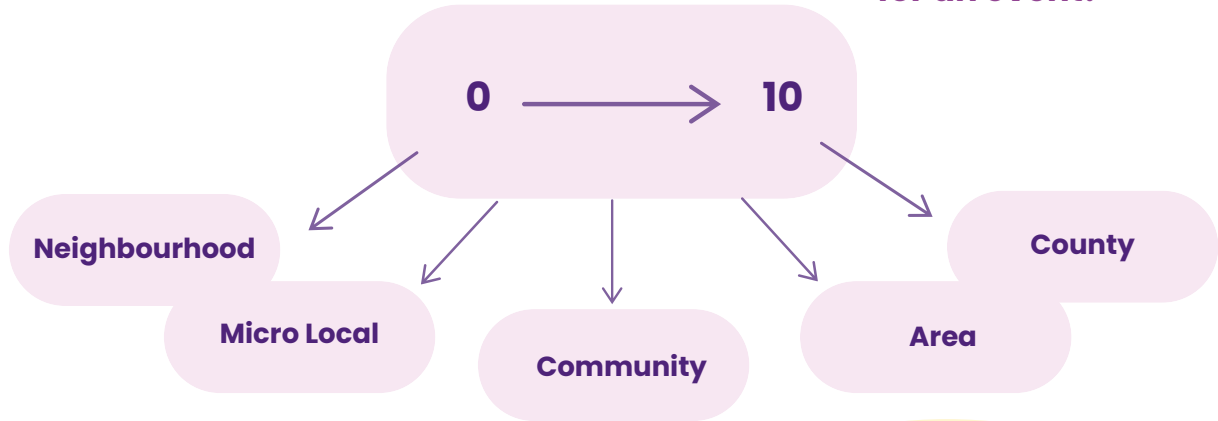
- Define the Purpose & Objectives**
- Engage Community Members in Planning**
- Identify and Leverage Local Assets**
- Create a Collaborative Team**
- Consider Health and Safety** - *(including Risk Assessments, Insurance or any legal permissions that may be required)*
- Set the Date, Venue, and Format**
- Promote the Event**
- Prepare Event Activities**
- Facilitate the Event**
- Evaluate**

For a comprehensive 'to do' list for event planning visit <https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/events.pdf>



# Event Planning Tools

What interest is there for an event?



Networking  
Learning  
Celebration  
Peer Support  
Other

How to Keep as ABCD as Possible?

What methods can we use to find out?

How do we ensure we are including 'everyone' in finding out?

What issues can we consider that might increase accessibility?

Anything Else?

**Remember:**  
Who, What, Where,  
Why & How's of  
event planning

# Event Planning Tools

**Purpose**

Celebration  
Peer support  
Learning  
Networking  
Other

**Event Name:**

Jobs to do...

Before

On the Day

After

PARTICIPANTS

FACILITATORS

CO-PRODUCTION  
TEAM

ACTIVITIES

PUBLICITY & SOCIAL MEDIA

Date  
Time

VENUE

- Permissions, licenses & policies
- Planning meeting dates
- Practicalities & safety
- Things we need help with

Accessibility

FUNDING

EQUIPMENT

REFRESHMENTS

VOLUNTEER  
SUPPORT

## Grant Tools

Removing hoops to make grants and community projects more accessible involves, simplifying application processes, eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy, and providing clear, supportive guidance. This ensures all community members, especially those from underserved backgrounds, can easily access resources and participate.

## Removing Hoops

Do they need a project bank account?  
Or be trusted to spend as per budget?

Is the form user friendly  
and relative to the amount  
of funding?

Is this person any less trustworthy  
than yourself? Do you have reason  
not to trust them?

Are the relevant checks reasonable to the  
amount of money applied for?

Does the project need to be  
backed by a local cllr?  
Why?

Are the forms accessible? Could  
the form be made in a more  
visual / picture version?



# Making grant funding accessible – tips

## REMOVE BARRIERS

The small grass roots ideas often come with limited structure initially. For smaller grants – remove barriers

**Take away the hurdles!**

## TRUST

We automatically become risk averse when £ is involved. The chance of an idea developing into something amazing often outweighs the potential risks.

**Trust communities to take the lead!**

## SMALLER POTS!

Ensure smaller pots of money are available for grass roots ideas. Ensure the amazing sparks within the community are enabled & supported.

**Empower communities**



## ACCEPT SOME IDEAS MAY NOT WORK CELEBRATE THE LEARNING!

It is not failure but important learning

**Trust communities to make mistakes**

## RELEVANT EVALUATION

Make any evaluation requirements useful and relevant to the group so it enhances what they do alongside information gathering

**Enable Communities!**

# Check in Activity

A visual picture check-in at an event or meeting allows participants to express their current feelings or state of mind through images, fostering connection and conversation in a creative way.

## Which Jackie are you?



We used a fun and playful check in of “Which Jackie are you today?” as a check in for one of our team get together. (Jackie is a member of the Making it Happen Team.)



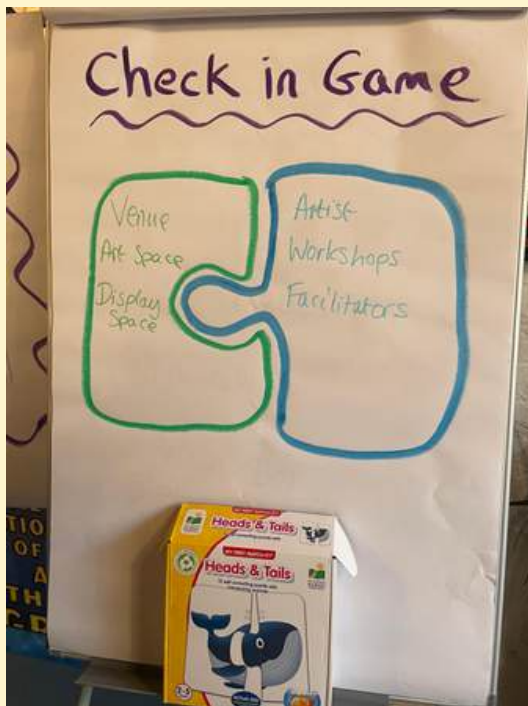
At the Eastbourne Community Table meetings the CDW’s used an online version called ‘On a Sheep Scale how do you feel today?’ You will find plenty of these examples in a simple online search!



## Check in Activity 2

We chose a simple check in activity from the Making it Happen Resources for a community learning event. This was to encourage people who haven't previously connected to discuss what they could bring to each other's ideas / projects.

- Count number of participants (hopefully you have an even number).
- Pick the correct number of matching pictures.
- Put the pieces face down and mix them up.
- Everyone picks a piece of puzzle (you can link shapes to themes - see pic).
- Then match the picture and start chatting with that person >



Heads & tails puzzle from Amazon

People found it really easy to do and commented on how effective it was in getting to know people



Here is an image of the discussions at the event





# Neighbourhood Sparks Events

Making it Happen Teams worked with residents from local neighbourhoods to plan and deliver local neighbourhood events. The aim was:

- To bring people together to celebrate local community action;
- To share experiences, stories and knowledge about positive things that exist locally;
- To identify local priorities for action;
- To encourage local residents to develop plans for projects;
- To support resident led decision making on the allocation of a £2,000 community budget.

Events were held in:

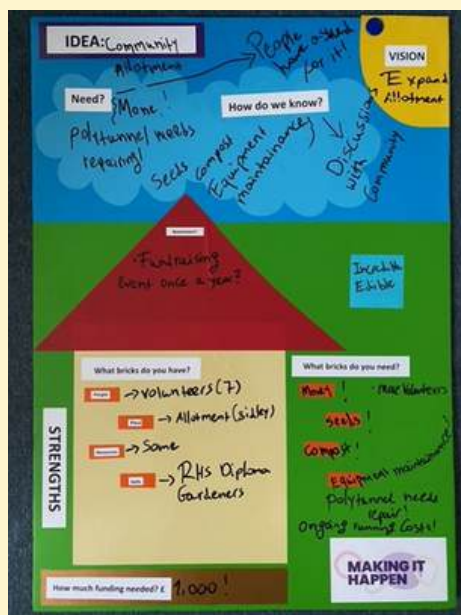
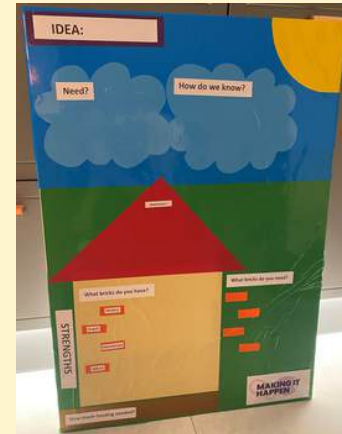
- Peacehaven
- Bexhill
- Hollington
- Hampden Park
- Polegate



# Rother Team Planning Boards

The Large visual Project Boards were used at the Rother Local Neighbourhood Sparks event.

Groups of community members worked together to explore assets they already had to develop the idea. Others brought suggestions and other ideas to grow the project. It was a really useful tool which prompted lots of discussion. Plus made project planning fun!



## Community Allotments & Incredible Edible (Edgerton Park)

Community Allotments and Incredible Edible worked together around ideas to use one allotment to help with growing to support other projects, including Incredible Edible. One main issue / barrier is the polytunnel which has been destroyed by badgers!

There were 5 separate project idea boards created at tables with people from various different groups. It was amazing watching the ideas and discussions spark. Lots of positive feedback regarding the project boards.






# Grant Application – example

Making it Happen is about discovering, celebrating and building on the positive things in local neighbourhoods. A budget has been allocated for a **£500 Sparks Grant** for projects and activities **that will benefit the wider community.**

**You will need:**

- An idea
- A plan to involve local people
- To keep a record
- To share the story of your project




Please use the following template to help you think of your idea in more detail...

**Group or Org name**

**Initiative name**

**Project overview – provide a couple of sentences to describe what the project or initiative is**

 **Where will your project or activity be based?**

- Hampden Park (East)
- Willingdon Trees
- Shinewater

**Are you...** 

- An individual with an idea
- Informal small group
- Constituted small group (income under £5,000)
- Charity
- CIC
- CIO

 **Does your idea link to any of the following themes?**

- Planet
- Body
- Mind
- Spirit
- People
- Place
- Other

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# Grant Application – example

How will local communities benefit from your project or initiative?

What elements do you already have?

People

Resources

Skills

Do you have a group bank account?

No

Yes

**Building Blocks:** What else do you need to make this happen?

i.e resources, training, venue, funding...

# Grant Application – example

Is there anything else you would like us to know or want us to ask us?



If you would you like further support to enable you to complete this form please let us know 😊

## What happens now?

### Processing

- After we consider your application you can expect to receive a response within 10 days but it is usually much quicker.
- If successful we will send you a form which will request bank details

### Monitoring & Evaluation

- We will require you keep all receipts and a breakdown of how the funding was spent.
- Also, we will be requesting you complete a very simple feedback form relating to how the project went.
- It would also be great if you could take photos and participant feedback as a record (if appropriate.)

## Your Contact Details:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you for your application!  
Your Community Development worker will be in touch***

## Explore the Arch

### *Community investment*

In Hastings, the HVA Making it Happen Team chose to invest some of their budget by commissioning activity from a local community arts organisation. Explore the Arch had already delivered a project with a MIH community grant which had been extremely successful in **engaging a group of young people as project leaders** within a local community arts festival.

The young people were hungry for more. They were keen to develop their own programme of **arts and cultural activities for their neighbours** from the Four Courts Estate and to share their learning from the activity. The young people have delivered a fantastic programme of activities including:

- Four Courts Connect participation in the Music for Youth Proms.
- Heritage walks with older isolated residents of the estate, enabling them to share their knowledge and make new connections.
- Attendance by one of the group at an international 'Community Pioneers Unconference' in Milan.

The funding and support also contributed to a number of other arts projects being led by ETA. **The impact for the young people and residents of the area has been profound.**

