

VSSP – Community Venues

Meeting held on Tuesday 6th December on Zoom

Hosts: Mary Robinson (BVA), Kevin Sawers (Action Hampshire)

The meeting was attended by 17 individuals representing 12 organisations.



Two Guest Speakers:

Rachel Campbell, Citizens Advice Tadley, gave background to the Advice First Aid training, which had been introduced to reach vulnerable people. The scheme, based on a pilot scheme run at Winchester CA, is designed for organisations that see people to be aware of what CA are, what they do and how they can help people. Sessions are an hour and a half and run once a month. The sessions provide a referral process into CA.

Kirsty Bennett, Basingstoke Neighbourcare, shared her experiences establishing 2 community cafes; Church Cottage and Brighton Hill, and training with Chat About a Hampshire County Council initiative.

Kevin Sawers from Action Hampshire, introduced himself and Action Hampshire. Kevin gives support to community buildings across Hampshire and has a bank of booklets covering specific issues to do with managing the premises.

Action Hampshire Community Buildings: <https://actionhampshire.org.uk/get-support-with/community-buildings/>

Issues Discussed:

Successes – attendees gave great examples of successes and where their activities had made a difference in their communities and to individual residents. It was accepted that some days could be more challenging than others but that the successes made up for these.

Issues with visibility and use of centres – there are lots of activities available, but the centres can be difficult to find due to poor signage. Also issues for centres near town centre; competing with new initiatives setting up in the centre of town and engaging businesses to make use of the centres. It can be an issue getting people through the door in the first place but also retaining them. Having regular hirers is important.

Promoting what is on - The difficulty in getting people who need support through the door was discussed. It was recommended that all media and age groups are covered including using Social Media, local newsletters, BVA Community In Action page, putting A frames out, leaflet drops, linking in with Social Prescribers and Word of Mouth. It was also highlighted that, due to the profile of some areas that print is still a relevant way of communicating.

Energy Bills - Discussed energy bills and the first step is to understand how you are using your energy and water. The Centre for Sustainable Energy has a checklist for community buildings. Also covers longer term projects.

Centre for Sustainable Energy – Resources for Communities: <https://www.cse.org.uk/local-energy/resources>

How to find out what is available in the borough - BVA is launching 2 directories in January 2023; a services directory and a venues directory to help people find support and activities that are available in the borough. There was a discussion about linking community centres across the borough so that residents can get a total view of what is available to them. This could also promote joint activities making them more viable to run.

Volunteers: Issue getting more people to run activities during the working day as the people attending the events are not necessarily able to run them. The importance of the activities to the people running them as well as to those attending was highlighted.

Running Activities - The question is how to link in with organisations willing to run activities at centres. Identifying possible partners is first part of resolving the issue but still question of how to do this.