

# Strengthening Local Communities Programme Evaluation: Kingsholm Community Building Project

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This report is part of a series of evaluation reports on the Strengthening Local Communities Programme, and should be read in conjunction with the Summary and Synthesis Report.

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# Kingsholm Community Building Project

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## 1. Introduction

This document sets out the evaluation of the Kingsholm Community Building Project, delivered as Gloucester City Council's project for the Strengthening Local Communities (SLC) programme. It documents the development of the project model and the delivery of key project activities with attention to the context, rationale, perceived benefits, challenges and learning. The final section summarises progress to date and identifies themes that distinguish the project.

## 2. The project's host agency

In July 2017, Gloucester City Council awarded the contract to deliver the project to Roots Coffee and Community CIC (Roots). Roots is a not-for-profit Social Enterprise, started at the end of 2014 by a group of friends from the local area, inspired by their Christian beliefs. At the time, it was the only local coffee shop and community centre of its kind in Kingsholm<sup>1</sup>, aiming to be "a place where everyone feels valued and special, where everyone can get involved, and a place that's helping to make Kingsholm a more positive, thriving area to live"<sup>2</sup>. It is now well established in the community and has a Management Team comprising mainly of local residents<sup>3</sup>. The team is a mix of volunteers and several paid staff, including community builders who work on specific projects.

Roots is housed in an old co-operative building, close to a GP surgery, the rugby stadium, and the Kingsholm Primary School. Downstairs, is the coffee shop with a large community table and a dedicated children's area. Roots serves locally- and ethically- sourced coffee, and uses locally-sourced ingredients in its cakes, sandwiches and snacks. Upstairs, in addition to a coffee lounge, there is a community hall, which is available to hire for meetings, parties, exercise classes, workshops, and other community activities. Roots provides free Wifi, newspapers, magazines and board games.

There is a timetable of regular activities, which people can dip in and dip out of, and where volunteering - or more subtle forms of contribution - are encouraged. These activities are promoted on the Roots Facebook page. Regular activities include<sup>4</sup>:

- Roots Knit and Natter, on Monday mornings
- Roots Craft and Connect, on Tuesday evenings
- Kingsholm Walking Group, on Wednesday afternoons
- Roots English Practice, on Thursday afternoons
- Roots Rocks, on Friday mornings - £2 per child, to do rock-painting and then to hide the painted rock in the area for other people to find, or for the child to keep it.
- Little Tots, on Friday mornings - £1.50 per child for snacks and drinks, while playing, colouring, singing and reading.
- Age UK Gloucestershire springboard group, on Friday afternoons, to provide support and activities for anyone over 60 living in Gloucester, coping with changes in their life.
- Roots Fix-It Café, on the first Saturday of every month, where volunteers help to fix things, e.g. broken toys or a loose wire in a lamp.
- Roots £1 Community Sunday Lunch, on the first Sunday of every month.

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<sup>1</sup> May18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rootscoffee.org.uk/about>

<sup>3</sup> Notes from ALS 1, Mar18.

<sup>4</sup> Roots Coffee Community Facebook page. Available at:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/RootsCoffeeCommunity/events/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/RootsCoffeeCommunity/events/?ref=page_internal). Accessed 2 August 2019.

Roots has partnered with the Gloucester Heritage Hub to raise funds for a community garden, where Roots will have its own herb garden. Roots provides its space to local artists to exhibit and sell their work. It is also one of the organisations referred to by the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group’s social prescribing service, via its hub coordinators<sup>5</sup>.

### 3. Profile of the project area

Gloucester District comprises 18 wards, with Kingsholm and Wotton being one of them. Therefore, profile data presented here covers both Kingsholm and Wotton<sup>6</sup>.

Kingsholm and Wotton mid-year population estimates for 2015 as reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) was 12,190. Some key indicators include:

- 56% (6,399) live in health deprivation ‘hotspots’, defined as neighbourhoods ranked among the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods in England<sup>7</sup>.
- 21% (2,295) have a limiting long-term illness compared with 18% across England<sup>8</sup>.
- The overall crime rate is higher than the average across England<sup>9</sup>.

Figure 1 shows self-reported data taken from the Place Survey (2008). The top row are indicators of community strength, the first three boxes in the bottom row are indicators of civic engagement i.e. volunteering and political decision-making, and the box on the far bottom right shows the number of active charities per 1,000 population.

**Figure 1: Indicators of neighbourhood satisfaction and community cohesion<sup>10</sup>**



<sup>5</sup> Kimberlee R.H. (2016) Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group’s Social Prescribing Service: Evaluation Report. Bristol: University of the West of England [Online] Available at <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/30293/3/Report%25406.pdf> (Accessed 5 Aug 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Gloucestershire City Council and Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (2017). Local Insight profile for ‘Kingsholm and Wotton’ area [Online] Available at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/1521192/kingsholm-and-wotton-2017.pdf> (Accessed 5 Aug 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Indices of Deprivation 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Census 2011.

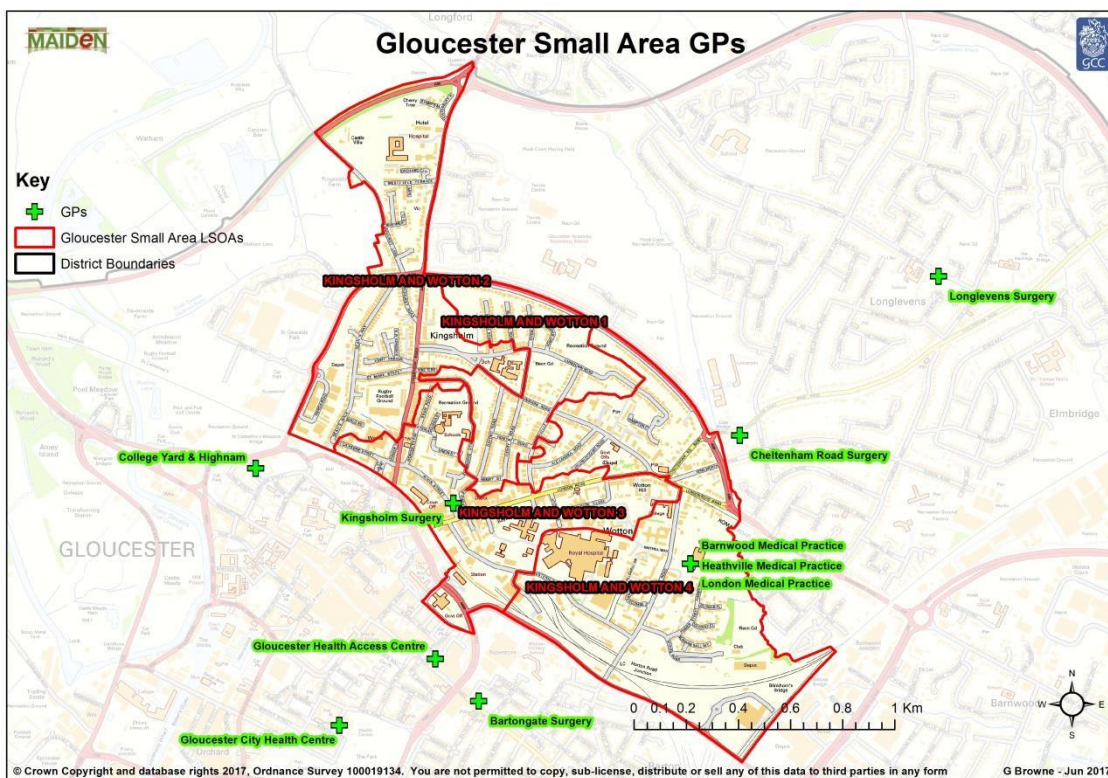
<sup>9</sup> Recorded crime offenses 2016. Available at [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk).

<sup>10</sup> Place Survey 2008.

The Gloucestershire Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment report of 2017 identified the following<sup>11</sup>:

- Kingsholm and Wotton were among the top 20 LSOAs (Lower Area Super Output Areas) prevalent with social isolation in Gloucestershire, based on 2013 data.
- Kingsholm Surgery had the third highest percentage of patients (1.38%) diagnosed with mental health conditions.
- Kingsholm and Wotton had the highest number of self-harm hospital admissions (317) in Gloucestershire, by ward, April 2012/13 to September 2016/17.

**Figure 2: Map of Gloucester showing GP's within and nearby the area**



Kingsholm Surgery, located in the Gloucester Inner City GP cluster, has about 4,800 registered patients<sup>12</sup>. Based on 2015 data, it had an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of 31.48, which is approximately twice that of the Gloucestershire average, weighting calculated by proportion of patients residential addresses<sup>13</sup>. Despite being under a lot of pressure, Kingsholm Surgery does not seem to engage with the local social prescribing services and therefore does not refer to them<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire NHS CCG (2017) Gloucestershire Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment [Online]. Available at [https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/1520644/mental\\_health\\_needs\\_assessment\\_2017-4.pdf](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/1520644/mental_health_needs_assessment_2017-4.pdf) (Accessed 5 Aug 2019).

<sup>12</sup> About Kingsholm Surgery [Online]. Available at <https://www.kingsholmsurgery.co.uk/practice/> (Accessed 8 Aug 2019).

<sup>13</sup> Gloucestershire County Council (2017) GP practice profiles – Wider determinants of health, lifestyle and deprivation [Online]. Available at [https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/1521051/gp\\_practice\\_profile\\_-\\_wider\\_determinants\\_-\\_201617.pdf](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/1521051/gp_practice_profile_-_wider_determinants_-_201617.pdf) (Accessed 8 Aug 2019).

<sup>14</sup> May18 locality meeting notes.

#### 4. Project model and origins

Gloucester City Council (GCC) set out to recruit a Community Builder (CB) for the SLC project at the end of 2017. The job description<sup>15</sup> stated that the purpose of the role was:

- a) To research and establish a deep understanding of the area, working with local residents and organisations to identify community assets and strengths.
- b) To support residents to make ‘connections’ in the community i.e. connecting local people who want to take action through conversation, story-sharing and sign-posting.
- c) To support residents to grow in confidence, enabling them to feel empowered and more connected to their local community. It is hoped that this in turn will help improve their health and wellbeing and have a positive impact on local health services.

The CB’s role was also described as “experimental” and “with a flexible remit, depending on the outcomes of the initial research within the area”.

The first recruitment attempt was unsuccessful and GCC subsequently put more focus on promoting the opportunity via social media, the Gloucestershire Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Alliance newsletter, and GCC’s community contacts distribution list. A Kingsholm CB was successfully appointed in March 2018 to start work in April 2018 for four days a week over two years.<sup>16</sup> The CB was employed and managed by Roots, and received supportive mentoring by Barnwood Trust; additional support was received from GCC, Kingsholm Primary School, and Kingsholm Surgery<sup>17</sup>. His induction programme was jointly delivered by all partners<sup>18</sup>.

The CB’s role focuses on the strengths of the community, having conversations with the community and bringing people together, but he has no fixed agenda.<sup>19</sup> This includes connecting people with various skills that they are willing to share with the community, e.g. a local florist who is willing to conduct flower-arranging workshops in old folks’ homes<sup>20</sup>.

The project works on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)-informed practice and uses a strengths-based approach – “*bringing residents together and [helping] them set up what they [want to] set up*”<sup>21</sup>. This is also the approach used by Barnwood Trust, a registered charity whose vision is “to create the best possible environment in Gloucestershire for disabled people and people living with mental health problems to make the most of their lives”<sup>22</sup>. Barnwood Trust was interested in getting these groups of people more involved in the community, e.g. talking to more people or doing more things with(in) the community. Roots similarly was interested in having more groups set up based on what the community wanted<sup>23</sup>. The project in Kingsholm therefore had less focus on health and wellbeing than perhaps some of the other SLC projects<sup>24</sup>. Its strategy was always to try and keep various agencies “at arms’ length” while community building, to allow the true effect of this approach to be evaluated.

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<sup>15</sup> Community Builder Job Description 2017

<sup>16</sup> Project Status Report, Mar18.

<sup>17</sup> Notes from ALS 1, Mar18.

<sup>18</sup> Project Status Report, Mar18.

<sup>19</sup> Notes from ALS 2, Jun18.

<sup>20</sup> May18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>21</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>22</sup> Barnwood Trust (n.d.) About us [Online]. Available at: <https://www.barnwoodtrust.org/about-us/>. Accessed 19 July 2019.

<sup>23</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>24</sup> May19 interview.

A project work plan was developed in partnership with Barnwood Trust and was based on the ABCD-informed practice for “building socially sustainable communities”<sup>25</sup>. The plan includes speaking to a number (e.g. five) of new people per week i.e. early conversations to “plant the seed” and build trust. This plan also involves inviting representatives from Barnwood Trust and GCC to observe or participate in conversations with the community, e.g. when planning community events. The CB set up a spreadsheet based on this ABCD-informed practice to record information about assets, including community activators. The spreadsheet also records participant information, e.g. contact numbers and postcodes, and captures notes from conversations with different community members in order to create a story.<sup>26</sup>

## 5. Main activities and project developments

### 5.1 Overview

This section sets out the main elements of the project. Table 1 provides a summary timeline of key events for the project.

**Table 1: Summary timeline of project events**

Project timeline		
<b>2017</b>	July	Initial meeting with Roots Coffee and Community to discuss project idea
	August	Follow-up meeting with Roots plus Kingsholm Primary School and GP Surgery
	September	Role advertised
	October	Short-listing, presentations and interviews
	November	Offer to top candidate who decides “it isn’t the right role for her after all”
	December	
<b>2018</b>	January	Re-advertised role
	February	Short-listing, presentations and interviews
	March	Appointment of the Kingsholm Community Builder (CB)
	April	The CB started work on the SLC project
	May	Induction by project partners; information-gathering i.e. spending time with the different partners
	June	Mentoring with Barnwood Trust
	July	Making links with existing groups and activities
	August	Making links with existing groups and activities
	September	Making links with existing groups and activities
	October	CB started door-knocking – Dexter Way and Longhorn Avenue
	November	CB started distributing baseline questionnaires
	December	
<b>2019</b>	January	Door-knocking – Deans Way
	February	Initiated community chat and drop-in sessions
	March	
	April	Easter Holiday Activities
	May	Teaching members of St Catharine’s Church how to Community Build
	June	Kingsholm Primary School Fete; summer ‘conversation starter’ engagement events

<sup>25</sup> Barnwood Trust (n.d.) Welcome to the future: A local model for building socially sustainable communities [Online]. Available at: <http://www.barnwoodtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Welcome-to-the-Future.pdf>. Accessed 12 July 2019.

<sup>26</sup> May18 locality meeting notes.

	July	Teddy Bears Picnic in Sebert Street Park; door-knocking with St Catharine's Church
	August	Kingsholm Parents Group coach trip to Barry Island
	September	Widen the community network; further develop ideas from summer engagements
	October	Door-knocking
	November	Kingzone Kids (youth club) properly formed CB facilitated a series of evening meetings with residents to encourage positive community action <sup>27</sup>
	December	Christmas events and activities at Roots <b>Original project end date</b>
2020	January	CB on indefinite leave for personal reasons; community groups aware that they can contact staff at Roots and GCC for support, if necessary
	February	<b>Revised project end date</b>
	March	

**Figure 3: Photos illustrating project activities**



*Clockwise from top:  
Community get-together to  
have conversations about what  
to have more of and making  
plans, with activities provided  
by BeeZee Bodies; Kingsholm  
Parents Group coach trip to  
Barry Island; themed Summer  
Cafés at St Catharine's Church.*



<sup>27</sup> Nov19 interview.



## 5.2 Early engagement and door-knocking

Within three months of coming into his role, the Kingsholm CB had made numerous connections with local residents, as well as built good relationships with local stakeholders and partners, developing an excellent reputation.<sup>28</sup> However, the CB still thought that it was not going as well as hoped: *“It was about six months in and I wasn’t really getting anywhere; there was nothing on the horizon, so I thought I need to up my game a little bit”*. Many of those he spoke to talked about specific streets and specific areas, which encouraged him to think about going out door-knocking. He was further encouraged by the willingness of officers from the GCC Community Wellbeing team to go *“out and about”* with him.<sup>29</sup>

So, in October 2018, the CB started going door-knocking, aiming to do this a couple of hours a week, provided he was able to find someone to join him, e.g. a Community Wellbeing Officer (CWO) or a local resident. He found that it worked very well, providing the opportunity to meet some great people that he could then go on to build relationships with. He thought that door-knocking made people more responsible, helped to improve the relationship between agencies, and also improved reach to people that he could not otherwise have reached by himself. For example, the CB supported a group of residents to set up a History Group with Age UK, which is hosted by the Heritage Hub.<sup>30</sup> The group were keen to help people who felt lonely and isolated, and door-knocking was seen as a possible solution to reaching this “difficult to reach” group.<sup>31</sup>

*“By doing the door-knocking, it really made me appreciate how important the views [of local people] are and that we should be talking to [them] about where they live and not thinking that we know what our communities need and want.”* [CWO, Feb20 interview]

## 5.3 Community asset-mapping

### *(a) Kingsholm Primary School*

The school provides additional support to the work of the CB and is a key local community asset. The CB attends the Pupil Parliament to ask students what they would like to do, and then he would ask the parents the same. This has helped to generate ideas for activities run outside the school during the holidays, e.g. a rock-painting activity (similar to Roots Rocks) – this was something that students and parents (i.e. whole families) came together to do, which does not happen often. The CB also co-organised a Bug Hunt at a Community Day with some parents he met outside of the school. Both these activities were very successful and generated further ideas for future school holidays, e.g. scavenger hunts.<sup>32</sup> Roots Rocks and the scavenger hunts are very popular and help the CB to connect with many different local residents during the school holidays. During the spring/summer months, school holiday activities include picnics in the park.<sup>33</sup>

Many other “useful relationships” have resulted from working with the school. For example, the CB has gone out door-knocking with one of the mothers, who lived on a particularly street that had shown some interest when he had gone door-knocking there previously. He has found that door-knocking with a local resident makes the task much easier. Although the CB enjoys being around the school and working with them, his role is not always understood by the parents. Some of them assume that his role is similar to that of a family, youth and children’s worker.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Project Status Report, Jul18.

<sup>29</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>30</sup> Project Status Report, Nov18.

<sup>31</sup> Nov18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>32</sup> Nov18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>33</sup> Notes from ALS 8, Mar19.

<sup>34</sup> May19 interview.

### *(b) Kingsholm Parents Group*

The Kingsholm Parents Group have created a Facebook page to advertise their group, organise regular meetings and share actions.<sup>35</sup> The CB supported the group to secure funding to organise activities like a Teddy Bears Picnic in the most popular park in Kingsholm, and coach trips. The group organised a coach trip to Barry Island in summer 2019, but instead of selling tickets through the school, the group offered them to neighbours and people that they knew. The cost of tickets was kept low, and although not done explicitly, tickets were offered to families that group members thought might struggle with their children and finances during the summer holidays. As a result, the coach trip to Barry Island included several mothers from the school that perhaps struggled with mental health issues.<sup>36</sup> They also organised a coach trip to Cattle County. All these activities were part of efforts to raise money for a bonfire night event with stalls and a children's disco, which would in turn raise money for events in 2020<sup>37</sup>.

### *(c) The Heritage Hub (revamped Gloucestershire Archives)*

The Gloucestershire Archives opened their new grounds in September 2018 and wanted to create a community hub based on the ABCD model. They subsequently renamed themselves as the Heritage Hub. They were keen to support a group of local residents wanting to start a community gardening project. They also had plans to host days when they interact with the public, and to offer a self-sustained training suite to the community.<sup>38</sup> As previously mentioned, the CB supported a group of residents to set up a History Group with Age UK, which runs from the Heritage Hub. This sparked an interest in the history of Kingsholm amongst local residents.

The CB also helped to set up links between the Heritage Hub and other agencies, to run intergenerational activities.<sup>39</sup>

- Link with Kingsholm Primary School to run activities, e.g. students from different year groups go in and “take over” for the day, doing volunteer work (e.g. answering the phone and running small errands). The Heritage Hub opens one Saturday a month and tries to run family/children oriented activities during that day and advertises these activities through the school. As a result of CB bringing them together, the Heritage Hub and the school now have a good ongoing relationship and organise joint activities regularly.
- Link with Gloucester Charities Trust (*see below*) to work together to set up memory cafes and reminiscence activities.

### *(d) Gloucester Charities Trust (GCT)*

GCT provides supported accommodation for the over 55's and is a day centre for dementia patients. Its residents pay a lot of money to live there, partly due to the high number of activity coordinators employed by GCT. As a result, the residents prefer not to get involved in organising activities themselves.<sup>40</sup>

GCT runs coffee mornings, which the CB has gone along to have conversations with residents. He would make suggestions, e.g. for residents to join the new walking group, and find out what they would like to focus on. The residents expressed an interest in history. Therefore, the CB linked them up with the Heritage Hub. In addition to that, a group of residents wanted to “get out and about and do stuff”. Since GCT has a minivan to transport residents, the CB linked it up with Gloucester Cathedral, who were keen to do more outreach. Gloucester Cathedral often struggled to sell tickets to their events. The CB therefore, encouraged them to offer their reduced price tickets to residents of GCT. This partnership has gone well.<sup>41</sup> Other activities that residents

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<sup>35</sup> Project Status Report, Mar19.

<sup>36</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>37</sup> Notes from ALS 8, Mar19.

<sup>38</sup> May18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>39</sup> Notes from ALS 8, Mar19.

<sup>40</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>41</sup> May19 interview.

have expressed an interest in are flower-arranging lessons by a local florist, and a tai chi demonstration<sup>42</sup>. Besides introducing residents to activities and linking up GCT to other assets, the CB does not do too much with them, as it is “not really residents-led”.<sup>43</sup>

#### *(e) Gloucester City Homes (GCH)*

The GCH Housing Association has two “tiers”: a higher tier that deals with strategic and organisational matters, and another tier that runs activities on the ground. The CB does not get involved in the former, but he encourages the latter as he feels that spending less time in meetings would help him achieve more in the community. For example, GCH organised its annual summer Fun Day. The CB did not get involved in the strategic planning of the event, but went out door-knocking with the community engagement officer to find out residents’ ideas for the event. This was challenging at the start as residents in that area showed very little interest. Eventually, the CB decided to run a rock-painting activity at the Fun Day. The CB described the issue as “generational”.<sup>44</sup>

*“There are some young families, which are quite challenging to get to, which is why I’m looking forward to doing rock-painting at the Fun Day, because I thought, well actually, I’ve spoken to all the old folk – I see them around all the time, they’re always in Roots, I’ve been in their residents’ meetings, they know who I am. So I thought it’d be much better to do Roots Rocks because it’s 3-5pm – I might be able to get the kids out of school [and] some of the parents might be able to come back from work. Actually, those [are the] people I haven’t met, so those are the conversations I would [want to] be [having].” [CB, May19 interview]*

The CB further described the “old folk” as saying they can do various things that in the end never amount to anything, despite his support. This has apparently been acknowledged by the GCH centre manager.<sup>45</sup>

*“They’re forever complaining there’s nothing to do and everything’s wrong. Well, I know full well that you have offered to help them set stuff up. They just like to have a whinge.” [GCH centre manager, as reported by CB, May19 interview]*

Nevertheless, the CB felt that GCH was getting better at going out door-knocking with him to find out details of what the residents would like more of in the area<sup>46</sup>.

#### *(f) Gloucester City Mission (GCM)*

GCM works with the homeless and vulnerable, providing food, clothes, showers and support. It deals with emergency cases rather than being a drop-in centre<sup>47</sup>. Initially, there was an “enthusiastic contact” there who wanted to introduce the CB to several people who were “stable” and had been involved in other things. This contact believed that these people would be receptive and keen to being offered a chance to set things up.<sup>48</sup> Due to the nature of the people that are there i.e. people with alcohol and drug problems, and anti-social behaviour, the CB felt that it was not possible to do anything residents-led<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Nov18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>43</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>44</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>45</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>46</sup> Notes from ALS 8, Mar19.

<sup>47</sup> Nov18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>48</sup> Project Status Report, Sept18.

<sup>49</sup> May19 interview.

### *(g) St Catharine's church*

St Catharine's offers a range of activities and services that are community-based, rather than religion-based. The people who are keen to grow the asset are volunteers within the group who have no faith agenda. St Catharine's has good practice of sharing information and working together to prevent duplication. The CB's aim was therefore mainly to help signpost people to these existing activities and services.<sup>50</sup> He also had discussions with St Catharine's about any obstacles to community engagement, and managed to convince them to try door-knocking to find out how best to offer their space for use by the community<sup>51</sup>.

One of the activities organised by St Catharine's is coffee mornings. However, these coffee mornings were not very regular and subject to availability of volunteers, which meant that they could be a bit last minute and ad hoc. Hence, they were only advertised on Facebook 2-3 days before. The short notice made it difficult for the CB to attend as he would have already planned to be somewhere else or had made another appointment. A big achievement for the CB was successfully supporting St Catharine's to have weekly coffee mornings, which happened every Wednesday throughout the 2019 summer school holidays. St Catharine's also offered people the option of enjoying a specially put together lunch following the coffee mornings. Knowing that these coffee mornings and lunches were going to happen at the same time every Wednesday was really helpful to the CB, and gave him the opportunity to engage with the people who came, who were from "the complete other side of [his] patch". This gave him some insight to what they wanted to see happen in the community and the ability to then try to initiate some activities.<sup>52</sup>

SC built a relationship with one of the local parents through St Catharine's coffee mornings, who was keen that Kingsholm should have its own bonfire party for 2019. She was a child-minder, active in the school, and knew some of the traveller community who put on a similar event last year. She had a clear vision, and following the CB's suggestions, wanted to go door-knocking to get local residents on-board. She understood how community building is meant to work, and enabled the CB to expand his links to the community through her. This was a positive step towards instilling confidence in others and could create a domino effect in the community.<sup>53</sup>

### *(h) Kingsholm Surgery*

The CB found it difficult to engage the local GP surgery at the start, but eventually managed to build a relationship with the healthcare assistant who is keen to get people to do as much as possible. She helps put up posters of Roots' activities at the surgery.

*"It's really good because a resident came to me wanting to set up a walking group for people with limited mobility. It was just a chance to reduce isolation and being more active but in a very gentle way. So I gave her a load of A5's and said could you give these to all the doctors because this is perfect for what doctors want to achieve. She was like, "That's brilliant. That's great. Thanks for that"."* [CB, May19 interview]

The healthcare assistant now refers people to the local social prescribing service, who then refers people to the CB when they are ready. She has also encouraged a few doctors to do the same, so that the CB does not miss out on being useful to residents that he might not have been able to meet due to the surgery not engaging with the project.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Nov18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>51</sup> Notes from ALS 8, Mar19.

<sup>52</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>53</sup> Nov18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>54</sup> Notes from ALS 8, Mar19.

### (i) Emerging Futures

Emerging Futures is a Community Interest Company providing counselling and mediation services, support for drug and alcohol recovery, and support around housing. They were keen to initiate coffee morning drop-in sessions, but it was decided that Roots was not a suitable venue: *“People were resistant on coming into the café because apparently it’s seen as a very middle-class mums [place].”* The CB subsequently linked up the charity with a city centre church. The church had a lot of “problem drinkers” in their graveyard, so they were interested to know how best to help the homeless that they were encountering.<sup>55</sup>

## 6. Community engagement with the project: summary

The project team have kept records and diary-based notes of people who have engaged with the project in a variety of ways. However, the project does not operate a formal registration and participation spreadsheet given the flexible and fluid patterns of contact. Therefore, it is not straightforward to determine rates of participation and participant characteristics in the sense commonly used in more structured community interventions. Nevertheless, in line with the original project plan and the CB job description, the project team maintained monitoring, register, and diary notes to provide a record of activity delivery and engagement. Table 2 below, gives a summary of leading forms of quantitative data related to the project. There are some limitations to the information, given that the records overlap, sometimes under-record, and can only partially distinguish individual patterns of engagement.

**Table 2: Summary of key projects and indications of community engagement**

Activities led or supported by the project	Indication of community reach or engagement	Source/Note
Door-knocking	50-70 residents	CWO
Initial neighbourhood meetings	25-50 residents	CWO
Roots Coffee and Community	>100 residents	CWO
Kingsholm Primary School	>100 residents	CWO
Kingsholm Community Group	10-15 residents	CWO
Gloucester Charities Trust	50-100 residents	CWO
Gloucester City Homes	>100 properties in the area	CWO
Gloucester City Mission	10-20 local people (difficult to say how many are Kingsholm residents)	CWO
St Catharine’s coffee mornings	10-20 regular members; attracted >30 families during the school holidays	CWO
Kingsholm Surgery	1 healthcare assistant and 20-30 patients	CWO
Kingzone Kids	20 young people	CWO

## 7. Perceptions of the effects of the programme

### 7.1 Impacts on community assets and partners

**Roots’** status as a community café has been further reinforced through hosting the various activities initiated as a result of the CB going out and about, asking people what they wanted to set up or get more involved in. Similarly, **St Catharine’s church** has solidified its status as a community-minded organisation through increased engagement with the community, e.g. door-knocking, more regular coffee mornings and regular community lunches.<sup>56</sup> The Pupil and Family Enrichment Manager at **Kingsholm Primary School** as well expressed how pleased she was with the CB’s engagement with parents<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Nov18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>56</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>57</sup> Sept19 locality meeting notes.

## 7.2 Impacts for community members

As a result of the conversations that the CB had with various members of the community, there are now more activity groups created by residents based on their interests; more people getting involved in these activities; and even if they were not getting involved yet, they have been pointed in the right direction. These are important outcomes for the project, since one of the common themes to have emerged from the CB's efforts in trying to build relationships with residents of supported accommodation is that they wanted to have "somewhere to go". These residents are encouraged to go out and try doing something new, e.g. chat to their neighbours or go along to a new group.

In addition, with support from the CB, community members have been empowered to do things for themselves, using funding received from various sources to continue running their activities for a longer term.<sup>58</sup> The project has helped to change people's attitudes and ways of thinking, and understanding that these groups and activities belong to them as a community, and not for example, Roots.<sup>59</sup>

*"A lot of the time it's 'objection handling', which is something I didn't think I'd need to do in this job. It's a bit like sales, you're objection handling when people go, "That's too difficult to get to" and you go, "Actually no, if you do this..." and they go, "Oh actually, I would like to do that" and you go, "I can come with you to the first one if you'd like, help you settle in". You normally do that three times, and they'd be like, "Ok". [CB, May19 interview]*

Thus, increasing residents' involvement in community-based activities has indirectly improved their health and wellbeing by creating more connectivity and reducing social isolation, as well as encouraging more physical activity.

*"...the youth club, a lot of the activities that they do, it's getting the kids doing a bit of gentle exercise, cos they've got table tennis in there, the Wii and a football table. So they're not just sat around on their phones – they're active, they're chatting to each other and they're getting a bit of exercise. They're walking there because it's on their doorstep. That's the same with a lot of the activities – they're local, so people are happy to walk to get to them. Karen's\* aspirations for doing more gardening and conservation is all about being outdoors in the fresh air." [CWO, Feb20 interview]*

\*NB: Read Karen's story in the next section.

## 7.3 Case studies

### (a) St Oswald's

St Oswald's is an area in Kingsholm that used to have numerous activities run by a Community Organiser who was previously employed by Roots as part of the National 2010 Community Organisers Programme from central government. However, because she took too much control over the activities rather than providing residents with the opportunity to lead, the activities stopped when she left the area. When the Kingsholm CB went door-knocking on Dexter Way and spoke to the residents, one of them suggested inviting neighbours to get together to chat and connect. The CB helped them organise these gatherings to take place at the community room of the local Tesco. Many good connections and ideas have subsequently come out of this:

- The residents had designs for a community garden and wanted to encourage other residents to work together to encourage birds and bees. They acquired free soil, free planters, a bird bath, and approached their local B&Q to supply seeds and plants.

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<sup>58</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>59</sup> Sept19 locality meeting notes.

- The residents expressed interest in helping the local children to learn about gardening and to get together as a group to help people with their gardens who may not have the ability to, in order to make the neighbourhood a brighter place.

In addition, the CB has been door-knocking with various people from the Community Wellbeing team, Housing Association, local statutory bodies, as well as the residents themselves. Several residents who they met while door-knocking wanted to set up a litter pick and engaged with the Housing Association to assist them with this.

Another outcome from these conversations with the community is that the St Oswald's Retirement Village has become more open to residents living outside the village. For example, it showed family films during the holidays and opened these up to the local residents rather than just to the grandchildren of the village residents. The village has a workshop and a large hall, which residents are slowly coming around to the idea of opening these up as well. The village residents were interested in setting up intergenerational activities with the local school. The CB has helped set up a board games night in the village, and also spoken to some of the village residents who are really keen on the idea of outside residents coming in to help them with their gardening.

The local MP has been around St Oswald's and informed residents that there was money available for them to help develop the community. The residents have spoken to him about this, saying that they wanted a play area for children but progress was slow due to problems with land ownership and distance from houses.

Other resident-led ideas and initiatives in St Oswald's include:

- Working together with the community officer from Tesco for better transport for their area.
- Engaging with Gloucester Wildlife Trust to work on the nature reserve near their homes.
- Planning an after school club and a knit-and-natter group.
- Planning a spring picnic and start having shared lunches.

The following is an account of Karen's story<sup>60</sup>:

Karen is a resident who has lived on Dexter Way<sup>61</sup>, St Oswald's for 2.5 years. In addition to a full-time job that involves shift work, she is also studying Paramedic Science at university. She has moved around a lot, but now wants to put down roots. This is the first time Karen has got involved in community work. She noticed that there is nowhere for residents to come together, for example there are no parks, play areas, central green community spaces, cafes or pubs. She thinks that all new housing estates need community spaces for social interaction. She also thinks there is a misperception that the area that she is living in is all social housing. There are traces of antisocial behaviour in the area, for example Traveller children have been seen using catapults and BB guns to harm wildlife. Social isolation is a problem, particularly among adults who do not have children, and addressing this would be good for the health and wellbeing of the community.

Karen is passionate about gardening and landscaping. She wants to encourage other residents/neighbours to get involved with the community garden, which the local Councillor has given money for, to create a sense of ownership and pride in the community. She has had some success, for example, her neighbour grows her own vegetables and is interested in helping to grow a vegetable patch in the community garden. However, trying to get people on board has been challenging. For example, Karen has been trying to set up a community bank account, but is having difficulty finding a fourth resident to be a signatory. She expressed her frustration in being busy and "not being paid" to do all the gardening on her own, but is willing to help

<sup>60</sup> Nov19 interview with Karen.

<sup>61</sup> Dexter Way has an estimated 44 homes and is run by Rooftop Housing Group. Longhorn Avenue nearby, has an estimated 108 properties including blocks of flats, and is run by Mainstay. There is an estimated 500 residents living in these areas. They are part of Westgate instead of Kingsholm, but there is no Community Builder based in Westgate.

rally residents together. The bad weather this time of year also does not help her cause. She thinks a change of attitude and some initiative among residents are needed to take forward ideas to improve the community.

Karen is concerned that developers often seem to be completing 75% of the job and then moving along. She mentioned a big green space that is unused – because it is still owned by the housing developer, there is nothing residents can do until it is adopted by the Council. The CB and Karen have found communication with Rooftop Housing Group problematic. For example, they want to go out litter-picking with other residents and have put in a request to Rooftop for litter-picking equipment, but have not received a response. Staff from the local MacDonald's have volunteered to help with the litter-picking as well.

Karen credits the CB for encouraging her to get out and get to know her neighbours better. She said his role as a CB is invaluable, especially in helping and empowering advocates like herself to connect with relevant organisations to gain resources, e.g. funding and equipment, to carry out community activities. She thinks that if funding for the CB role ceases, it would be difficult to sustain the community activities.

The CB and Community Wellbeing Officers have had further conversations with Karen and the residents of Dexter Way throughout November and December 2019, about the community garden project. This project is going to link up with the youth club, so the young people can have space there and do things like toad-housing (e.g. turning plant pots upside down). Some of the young people who go to the youth club expressed an interest in joining a few of the active residents who go litter-picking.<sup>62</sup>

#### *(b) Summer holiday engagement*

The Kingsholm Parents Group wanted a Teddy Bears Picnic and other activities for the children during the summer holiday. The CB supported the group in organising these activities, but unfortunately, several of the parents had a change of circumstances and so were unable to be as actively involved as they wanted to.

In order to keep the activities running, the CB approached a local organisation to ask for help in setting up small pop-up sports activities days, as it would provide good opportunity for both parties to engage with the community. The CB used his existing connections to encourage the residents to invite each other and to invite new neighbours that they had not yet spoken to.

The initiative was a great success as it brought families together to use their local green space, and encouraged many people to chat who would not have spoken to each other before. The residents discussed many ideas and came up with suggestions of things that they wanted to do. The CB informed them that he could help them get funding and get things off the ground.

Overall, it was a successful community engagement initiative and the group's Facebook page membership increased from six to 22 due to the CB inviting residents to join the group, so that he could invite them for coffee and they could carry on the conversation.

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<sup>62</sup> Feb20 interview.



**Figure 4: Teddy Bears Picnic, summer holiday 2019**



c) *Kingzone Kids*

The following story about the youth club – Kingzone Kids – was shared by Lyn, who despite having lived in Kingsholm for 15 years, was yet to know other parents from her son’s school.<sup>63</sup> Lyn is a former teaching assistant and has experience of helping the former Community Organiser run a youth club at the Gloucestershire Chinese Resource Centre (GCRC). When the Community Organiser left, the GCRC shut its doors. It was not until two years later, that a new approach to community development was tested in the form of a Community Builder. According to Lyn, unlike the previous person, the current CB is more focused on facilitating residents-led, self-sustaining community groups and activities. He has been involving the community more and helping them to take control i.e. empowering them.

*“My [12-year-old] son, last year still attended Kingsholm Primary School and used their walking bus to get to school. [The CB] along with the receptionist at the school, used to come and collect my son. I got to know [the CB] and he invited myself and my son to a Teddy Bears Picnic close by during last summer holiday. I'm quite shy and get anxiety, but I decided to go along. We were sat on our own. [The CB] got us to join some of the other parents. We were mentioning about a lack of things for the children to do. I said it's a shame we don't have a youth club. I also mentioned about the [Gloucestershire Chinese Resource Centre] we used to use 2-3 years ago. I used to help... the CB at the time, [and] we worked alongside [the charity] FareShare. We reminisced about how good it was for the community, families and children. Yet, now the building [is] still there but it seemed to be hardly used. The parents thought it would be a good idea [to have] something start up and they would all help. Unfortunately, most of them didn't come through. I knew this would be brilliant for the community. I approached [the CB], asking how I'd go about it. Last year I had a meeting with Jing who [ran] GCRC and she said she would be willing for me to run a youth club there. [She] told me the cost of the place [would be £24 for a 2-hour session, once a week].*

*I surprised myself as I had a meeting with several people, (not always possible with anxiety). I then spoke to [the CB], asking how I'd go ahead with this project. He advised me, got me in touch with Leanne [from GCC], who was brilliant in telling me what I'd need, parents etc... Got us a grant for £500 which is currently being used for the rent of the centre. My son and I made a flyer, which Leanne and [the CB] put up in coffee shops and the local school. I spoke to parents, went to the local school with [the CB] [to hand out] our flyers, [and] approached parents. I made a [Facebook] page and have just built us a webpage and app. We have our own logo too.*

<sup>63</sup> Nov19 interview with Lyn.

*I went with [the CB] and Isobel to see [the] community [champion] at Tesco. We visited Sainsbury's too. So, [we] had squash, biscuits and a few snacks donated. I spoke to friends who thought it was a great idea, and they offered to donate their time and energies into backing this project. I've since approached the Works (they donated craft items); I've filled in forms for Wilkinson's twice all to no avail as yet; I've a meeting with Asda on Monday, [and I've] just had a meeting with Barnwood Trust. I've emailed the local MP and wrote various emails – nothing backing us yet.*

*[Kingszone Kids opened] the [last Tuesday] night last October. [It] didn't help my anxiety and [I] had just gone through a bereavement. Leanne and [the CB] came to the first night – [the CB brought] sweets [and] Leanne [brought] paper and pencils for our craft table. A few children turned up. We had a tuck shop, snacks, tea and coffee. As the weeks have gone on, we have the regulars turn up, I provide a hot snack for no more than £1.20 that proved a hit – [this] ranges from hot dogs, kebabs, fish fingers, burgers with salad etc. I have to precook at home, keeping warm at the centre, as [the] oven there is no good.*

*[At] Christmas time, I managed to pick up a free table football, and we have managed to buy a second hand Nintendo Wii console out of the subs and tuck shop. We have the use of the table tennis table at the centre, which a friend coaches the children. We have crafts, and another parent who is qualified with massage and oils gives hand massages and knowledge on various oils and herbs. So we have something for all the children, even if it's just a quiet space to do their homework.*

*I've found the bank and constitution the hardest in all this; still short of another adult for the bank account. I didn't realise how difficult [it would be], what processes you have to go through, [for example] work[ing] out trustees and other things needed for a constituent, and the endless e-mails to write, sometimes all to no avail. It has been a hard journey sometimes and [it has] surprised me that some well-known shops won't [contribute to helping] their community.*

*Myself and the other two people who help, had a meeting, trying to think of ways to keep this community project going. I've learned [that] I can be tenacious when I'm passionate about something. It has helped my son with socialising, as he has Asperger's. Another parent said it has helped her daughter and her other children, [and] she feels her children are in a safe environment. I'm hoping this will be able to continue as it has been so refresh[ing] watching children from 10-15 years all bond together and become relaxed, and [their] acceptance of others regardless of disabilities."*

**Figure 5: Kingzone Kids**



The Community Wellbeing Officers are supporting Kingzone Kids to recruit more volunteers and to get them Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)-checked. While the volunteers are awaiting for their DBS checks, they have been asking parents to come along with the young people and stay during the sessions, which is forging

relationships between parents that perhaps would not have otherwise met. Kingzone Kids is now well-established with well-attended sessions that are going from strength-to-strength.<sup>64</sup>

## 8. Financial, resource, and social value aspects of the project

As with most SLC projects, staffing was the primary cost for the Kingsholm project. The funds were used to support the CB on a 4-day week contract over a 24-month period. The CB worked from Roots and The Growth Hub. While there was no charge to use either venue, GCC granted Roots a sum for IT equipment. All project partners provided training and mentoring of the CB equally. Other direct project costs were for the occasional meetings and training he had to attend outside of Kingsholm, and for hiring a meeting room when it was Gloucester’s turn to host the ALS. A breakdown of the project budget for different project aspects is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Breakdown of the Kingsholm SLC project finances<sup>65</sup>**

Project aspect	Details	Proportion of budget
Community networking, engagement, asset mapping	<i>Mainly at the start of the project</i>	15%
Training, facilitation and support of community members	<i>Mainly at the start of the project</i>	5%
Supporting community activity 1	<i>Roots Coffee and Community outreach</i>	10%
Supporting community activity 2	<i>St Catharine's Church members</i>	10%
Supporting community activity 3	<i>St Oswald's Community Group</i>	10%
Supporting community activity 4	<i>The Heritage Hub - supporting integrations with the community</i>	5%
Supporting community activity 5	<i>Kingsholm Parents Group events and day trips</i>	5%
One-off events	<i>Multiple throughout the month, changing each month</i>	5%
Work with key partners	<i>Fortnightly meetings</i>	5%
Admin, evaluation, reflection, professional development	<i>Work with UWE evaluation and Action Learning Sets</i>	15%
Management and overheads		15%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

The main areas of social value are likely to lie in the personal development support for community members leading or taking part in project activities. There is also value linked to each of the five main community activities listed in Table 3, which will benefit mainstream health and social care services.

## 9. Engagement with the SLC programme Action Learning Sets (ALSs)

The Community Wellbeing Officer and Kingsholm CB attended all ten ALS meetings between them, including the ALS ‘share and learn’ event, i.e. the Kingsholm project was always represented at ALSs. Two of the ALSs were hosted by Gloucester: ALS 2 was led by the Community Wellbeing Officer at the Gloucestershire Archives, and ALS 8 was led by the CB at Roots.

<sup>64</sup> Feb20 interview.

<sup>65</sup> SLC Tracker, Jun19

The CB found the ALS useful for reflective practice and as a sounding board. But this was not the case at the first few ALSs, as he felt that what was being discussed at these meetings was different to what he was trained to do and what was expected of him.

*“Barnwood Trust was like, “Take your time. There’s no rush. Let the residents go. No outside interference. Slow, slow, slow”. But then everyone in the ALS were like, “We’re doing this, we’re doing this, and we’re doing this”, and I’m a bit like how am I to be compared to the two. Barnwood Trust and Roots’ expectations were that I turn up, get to know the community, and help the community. They were like, even if I just bring people together, and those neighbours then become friends, that’s a success. [I didn’t] need to have a big group or a street party. Doing it the BT way is like, you may not see any of the fruits for the entire two years because you’re just bringing people together.” [CB, May19 interview]*

Similarly, the Community Wellbeing Officer acknowledged in her presentation at the ALS 2, that although the ABCD-informed practice takes a lot of time to notice any change, and it is sometimes difficult to measure this change or see the impact, she knows that the approach works because there is evidence of it working really well in other areas.<sup>66</sup>

## 10. Sustainability and future project plans

At the time of the interim report, the CB’s plan was to continue being more “out and about” in the community, having more conversations and doing more door-knocking, and getting less involved in meetings. He wanted to focus more on the quality of conversations rather than on the volume of conversations i.e. having better conversations in more places with the “right” people, instead of chatting to everyone.<sup>67</sup>

*“I think the idea of just being out and about chatting to people does work, but you just have to really throw yourself at it. Any tiny nugget of interest, you take them and kind of run with them.” [CB, May19 interview]*

The CB also wanted to do more promotion of the Barnwood Trust community grants, so that when the project ends, people are aware that they still have access to funds and support, to set things up for themselves and do more of what they want.<sup>68</sup> As the community building team has grown in Gloucester, there were plans to set up a “ground workers get together” for all staff to share ideas and resources.<sup>69</sup>

At the start of 2020, a Community Interest Company (CIC) was established by Gloucester City Council to “protect” the community building work in Gloucester, so that it exists as an independent entity and cannot be influenced by any change in leadership at the GCC. The plan is for the CIC to eventually be owned and managed by a number of key community leaders from across the city. It was felt that it would simplify matters by having all the community builders in one place, looked after by one organisation, with one overall vision and a common set of aims and objectives. The plan is for the CIC to have long-term funding and be at least a 10-year project. An individual who has experience of working at Barnwood Trust, has been contracted by GCC to support this CIC with large funding bids, e.g. for the National Lottery. He has also been looking at a number of different funding sources like crowd-funding, and the Gloucester Lottery fundraising page.

*“I guess the Council is trying to change local people’s mind-sets to say that “This is really beneficial for our city. If you believe in it, will you be willing to support it by donating however much a year”. It would be nice if people thought automatically, “Yeah, I’ll invest in that because it’s worthwhile.” [CWO, Feb20 interview]*

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<sup>66</sup> Notes from ALS 2, Jun18.

<sup>67</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>68</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>69</sup> Project Status Report, Jul19.

There are plans for another 300 homes to be developed in an area in St Oswald's, near Dexter Way and Longhorn Avenue. The Planning Department at GCC are aware that the Community Wellbeing team are working in that area and that relationships have been built with local residents through the SLC project, therefore they are going to involve one of the Community Wellbeing Officers in conversations on how that development looks. In turn, the Officer is going to be able to involve the community in shaping those development plans.

*"They're so isolated, they've got no community space, no play area for children. With the majority of it being social housing, there are a lot of families in that area, so certainly a priority for them would be some sort of formal play space. So that's certainly on my radar."* [CWO, Feb20 interview]

The CB has been on indefinite leave since mid-December 2019, and stakeholders are planning to recruit a new CB for Kingsholm in spring 2020. Despite the sizeable gap between his departure and the next CB starting, some of the key connections and activities remain strong and will continue regardless. This reflects what the whole purpose of community building essentially is – once residents have established groups, activities and friendships that are important to them, they do not need to rely on a paid professional i.e. a CB, to keep them going. In the meantime, members of the community are aware that they are welcome to drop in to Roots to speak to its manager or to get in touch with the Community Wellbeing Officers, if they need any help or support. The expectation is that the new CB will be working in the same way using a strengths-based approach, but will bring with them new experiences, a new skillset and a new outlook.<sup>70</sup>

## 11. Discussion of strengths and main areas of project success

There were several strengths to the project model in Kingsholm:

- The host organisation i.e. Roots, and Barnwood Trust provided pre-existing community connections and local experience that helped the project make an effective start. The CB being linked to and having the support of well-respected organisations in the community, e.g. Roots, Kingsholm Primary School, and the Kingsholm surgery initially, helped to accelerate the process of trust-building and also helped with the challenge of time.<sup>71</sup>
- Residents were encouraged and fully supported to take forward ideas of what they wanted to do, when they felt ready to do so. This included using creative methods such as 'Cards of Community' (Figure 5) to start conversations, which worked particularly well when there were other organisations trying to "interfere" and "help" the residents.<sup>72</sup>

**Figure 5: Cards of Community**

**Cards of Community**

What do you like about where you live?

What skills do you have or would like to share?

Name & contact details

<sup>70</sup> Feb20 interview.

<sup>71</sup> Feb20 interview.

<sup>72</sup> Notes from ALS 8, Mar19.

- Barnwood Trust expressed a willingness to share their Kingsholm Community Building evaluation data and report, which would complement UWE’s evaluation of the SLC project. Barnwood Trust have been working with residents to build more inclusive communities since 2010. They have employed a number of community builders to work across Gloucestershire during this time, each achieving similar outcomes to that of the Kingsholm CB.<sup>73</sup>
- The Community Wellbeing officers had the support of the GCC to use a strengths-based approach and were given the time to spend in communities to get to know the people and the area.<sup>74</sup>

## 12. Discussion of challenges arising for the project

Some challenges that the project has encountered have been:

- There were challenges in trying to convince other officers within Gloucester City Council and other agencies that the strengths-based approach works.<sup>75</sup>
- On the other hand, it was difficult to demonstrate some of the actual impact made by the CB on individual’s lives, as most of what he does is pointing people in the right direction.<sup>76</sup>

*“A lot of what I do is pointing people the right way like, “Oh, did you know there’s Little Tots on Friday?” and they go, “No, I didn’t know about that” and I go, “Yeah, it’s really nice. People get together and chill, hang out”. They might then go to Little Tots in a couple of months to make a new friend. How do you show that they might have made a new friend, or for that hour, they had some adult time that they didn’t normally have?” [CB, May19 interview]*

- There was potential for other stakeholders, e.g. those working in community engagement, community safety, environmental health, and housing to offload complex issues that were occurring in the area and expect the CB to ‘fix’ them.<sup>77</sup>
- Various organisations approaching the CB with new ideas and demanding a lot of his time to attend meetings, risked taking over from other SLC tasks, such as supporting the development of existing groups who have received funding.<sup>78</sup>
- The initial framework for the UWE questionnaire-based evaluation with participants was not compatible with the project principles for community building.<sup>79</sup>
- There was resistance from the Gloucester Rugby Club to engage with community activities.<sup>80</sup> It was also difficult to engage local doctors, who would not share data required to show potential impact of the project.<sup>81</sup>

*“There could be people who because they now go to a group and they’ve made a friend, they might feel better and there’s a drastic reduction in [the doctors’] waiting lists, but we can’t prove it.” [CB, May19 interview]*

<sup>73</sup> Statement from the CWO, Sept19.

<sup>74</sup> Feb20 interview.

<sup>75</sup> Notes from ALS 2, Jun18.

<sup>76</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>77</sup> Project Status Report, May18.

<sup>78</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>79</sup> Project Status Report, Nov18.

<sup>80</sup> Nov18 locality meeting notes.

<sup>81</sup> May19 interview.

- As the project has five different partners – GCC, Roots, Barnwood Trust, Kingsholm Primary School, and Kingsholm surgery – it has been a challenge for the CB to make sure that they all see that he is achieving what they hope he would achieve. While he is not able to be everywhere at the same time, he needs to remain “visible and involved” in the work of all five partners. Since all the partners have different priorities, he often just does as instructed.<sup>82</sup>
- It was a challenge trying to change people’s perceptions and behaviours from negative to positive, and for the CB to keep himself motivated.

*“You’re almost self-employed in a way, because you’re out trying to make the work happen. If you don’t have the energy or you just need a quiet day, it’s a lot of pressure to get out there and have conversations with people and to be really enthusiastic.” [CWO, Feb20 interview]*

- Time was also considered a challenge since community building was likened to a “slow burn” – 18 months to two years was not enough to try and achieve the desired outcomes of community building.<sup>83</sup>

### 13. Conclusions

Roots Coffee and Community CIC provided strong existing community connections and local experience that helped the project make an effective start. Residents were encouraged and fully supported to take forward ideas of what they wanted to do, when they felt ready to do so. This included using fun, informal and creative methods such as ‘Cards of Community’ to start conversations. These worked particularly well in contrast to other initiatives that had tried to “interfere with” or “help” the residents. The long-term vision and neighbourhood commitment of the lead agencies, including Barnwood Trust and Gloucester City Council, meant that the project has not been side-tracked by short-term and unsustainable goals.

### 14. Sources of data

The evaluation is based upon a variety of sources of data collected from the inception of the project. These include:

- Gloucester Project Status Reports
- Notes from four locality meetings with the Kingsholm project delivery team (May18, Jul18, Nov18,, Sept19)
- Notes from a meeting with Barnwood Trust and the Kingsholm CB (Apr19)
- Interview with the Kingsholm CB (May19)
- Interview with the Community Wellbeing Officers (Feb20)
- Notes from programme Action Learning Sets

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<sup>82</sup> May19 interview.

<sup>83</sup> Feb20 interview.