

Community Development for Older People in Greater Fishponds

**Evaluation of The Care Forum's
Bristol Ageing Better project**

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July 2021



ABOUT THIS REPORT >>

This report is a collaborative effort between BAB Community Researchers Penny Beynon and Jeremy Groome and UWE researchers Amy Beardmore and Mat Jones. We would like to thank everyone who agreed to be interviewed or take part in discussions for this report, including The Care Forum staff and partners, BAB Community Researcher team, BAB staff and UWE staff.

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Acronyms >>

| | |
|-------------|--|
| ABCD | Asset Based Community Development |
| BAB | Bristol Ageing Better |
| BCC | Bristol City Council |
| CMF | Common Measurement Framework |
| CDOP | Community Development for Older People |
| CR | Community Researcher |
| CKSF | Community Kick-Start Fund |
| LOSA | Lower Super Output Area |
| NP | Neighbourhood Partnership |
| PC | Project Co-ordinator |
| PO | Project Officer |
| UWE | University of the West of England |

Executive Summary >>

Greater Fishponds is a large area of Bristol that incorporates the three wards of Hillfields, Frome Vale and Eastville, an area with a culturally diverse population and wide-ranging socioeconomic needs. Previous community development initiatives in the area have been patchy to date with minimal prior investment from either Bristol City Council or local charitable organisations, therefore qualifying it as an 'area of exceptional need' within the Community Development for Older People (CDOP) part of the Bristol Ageing Better (BAB) programme.

The BAB CDOP projects were established with the aim of tackling the issues of loneliness and social isolation within specific communities within the City of Bristol, using various approaches to community development depending on local need and existing services. Before community development work in the Greater Fishponds area commenced, a small group of BAB Community Researchers (CRs) were tasked with conducting an initial asset mapping exercise in the area, which highlighted a number of local assets on which to build, as well as some gaps in local provision. Unlike some other areas of the city, Greater Fishponds was found to have a number of significant assets, with 70 identified by the CRs during this process.

Different providers were subsequently invited to tender for the CDOP work in each area, using a 'test and learn' approach tailored to the local community receiving the intervention. Following this bidding process, the well-established local voluntary and community sector organisation The Care Forum took on the task of delivering the project in Greater

Fishponds by way of an ambitious plan which laid out ideas to create 'community signposter' roles within the community, as well as to establish a steering group for older people and to make links with the local Carers Support Centre.

Despite the sheer breadth of the project area and the many challenges it presents, good progress was made towards these goals in the first year of operation, with some popular intergenerational activities becoming established in that first year, along with the successful 'Considerate Friends' initiative. Door knocking and early pop up activities made good early progress too, and the support and training provided to local volunteers was well received and popular. As a result a number of events sprang up, including a Coffee Social and a Food Share and Eid Celebration.

However, the project also faced a number of challenges throughout the funded period. Recruiting volunteers for example proved challenging in some parts of Greater Fishponds, indicating that perhaps early scoping activities had not successfully gauged the local appetite for engagement in such activities. This somewhat hindered any early aspirations the project had to establish a network of community signposters, and adaptations were soon required to be made to the project plan as a result. Equally the determination to establish a steering group, whilst well intentioned, ultimately didn't work and the project struggled to instigate any meaningful consultation activities with older local people. This was by no means an issue that was unique to this CDOP project however, and is an indication of the need to find flexible solutions that take into

consideration the level of engagement local older people want to have in strategic level activity.

There were also a number of significant staff changes in year 3 of the project which led to gaps in provision and a significant slowdown in progress. Again, this was not unique to the Greater Fishponds CDOP and staff vacating posts is often unavoidable for any employer. However, given that consistency of delivery was impacted as a result it does highlight a lack of contingency planning for such activities. Future commissioners may therefore wish to incorporate provider contingency plans into their list of requirements during the bidding process.

Another staff-related issue was the number of contracted hours and working patterns of community development workers employed by the project. The evaluation team found that for an area as large as Greater Fishponds there was insufficient contracted time or flexibility in hours to successfully deliver some of the goals of the project, particularly given that community development activities can happen day or night across the week and into weekends.

There were also some problems in evaluating the project successfully due to inconsistencies in record keeping and reporting, which affected the evaluators ability to judge whether the project had been successful in meeting some of its goals. Again, this indicates that projects need to have stringent reporting procedures in place so that funders and evaluation teams can fairly assess project outcomes in an evidence-based way. As a result the evaluation that follows has been compiled as a chronological account of the project and its milestones.

Towards the end of the project the team were using terminology that implied the project was reaching a conclusion, and whilst this may have referred to the funding period coming to an end, the evaluators were not convinced that sustainability had been considered well enough. It was also unclear which activities were still running at this stage, and there is clearly a need for community projects to adopt an attitude that provision of local activities will outlive the life of the funded project (as was the case in other CDOP areas where sustainability was 'built in from the start').

Overall, whilst good progress was made by a number of very dedicated and skilled community development workers - particularly at the start of the project - there is much to learn from this CDOP project about the value that should be placed on the more procedural elements within organisations providing such activities, as it is clear that insufficient consideration of such issues can significantly hinder progress.



Introduction >>

Bristol Ageing Better (BAB) is a partnership of individuals and organisations. It is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund to develop and deliver a 5-year programme (over £5.9 million) that identifies the best ways of reducing both the isolation and loneliness of people over 50. The funding runs from 2015 to 2020 (recently partially extended to 2021) and is part of the National Lottery Community Fund Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme.

BAB aims to create an environment in which partner organisations can deliver effective services, share their knowledge of what works, and be noticed by the people who matter. The partnership is led by Age UK Bristol and the programme aims to reduce isolation and loneliness in older people in Bristol through commissioning projects across four main themes:

- 1) Creating the conditions to reduce and prevent loneliness
- 2) Identifying and informing older people at risk of loneliness
- 3) Working with communities to increase the services and activities available
- 4) Supporting individuals to live fulfilling lives

In Bristol, a key element of the programme is Community Development for Older People (CDOP), with ten such projects taking place under this theme across the City. The aim of these projects is to create vibrant communities that meet the needs of older people and provide them with a range of social and cultural activities to take part in as they age (Bristol

Ageing Better, 2020). The CDOP projects use a 'test and learn' model in which different community development approaches and techniques are employed in a range of contexts in order to develop theories of best practice.

WHY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR OLDER PEOPLE (CDOP)?

With the number of people in the UK aged 60 or above set to rise to an estimated 25% of the total population within the next 20 - 40 years (Dickens, Richards, Greaves and Campbell, 2011), creating 'age-friendly' environments is an increasingly important part of the public health agenda. A key priority is to create local settings that can positively influence the lives of an ageing population (Lui et al, 2009), and there is increasing recognition that consulting older people on what that should look like is integral to this process. Older citizens can - and frequently do - make a positive contribution to their communities, and therefore constitute a valuable asset to communities. It is estimated, for example, that contributions made by older people in a voluntary capacity are worth over £10 million a year to the economy (Klee, Mordey, Phuare and Russell, 2014).

However, increasing levels of social isolation and loneliness present a major potential setback to successfully engaging older people in the communities in which they live, and could represent a major risk to a person's health and wellbeing. Some have even suggested that loneliness could be as dangerous to a person's physical health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Holt-Lunstad et al, 2015).

The terms 'loneliness' and 'social isolation' are often used interchangeably, but it is important to differentiate between the two states as they can mean different things to different people, and may be dependent on personal circumstances or other contextual factors. Loneliness is defined by Age UK as:

>> "A subjective feeling about the gap between a person's desired levels of social contact and their actual level of social contact. It refers to the perceived quality of the person's relationships. Loneliness is never desired and lessening these feelings can take a long time."

Whilst social isolation is said to be:

>> "An objective measure of the number of contacts that people have. It is about the quantity and not quality of relationships"

- Age UK, 2019

Whilst these issues can affect people of all ages, older adults are particularly vulnerable. The risk factors for social isolation and loneliness may be broadly the same for the whole population, but importantly they are more likely to occur amongst individuals who are in older age. They include:

- ▶ Issues associated with housing tenure (ownership, renting)
- ▶ Living alone and the potential impact of a lack of social interaction on health and wellbeing
- ▶ Marital status (especially if divorced or widowed)
- ▶ Those who report being in very bad or bad health (these individuals are 2.5 times more likely to report loneliness)

- ONS, 2015



These problems are further compounded by the fact that this age group are much more likely to experience more than one risk factor at the same time. It is therefore imperative that strategies are put in place to support the development of inclusive communities that encourage participation for all older adults in order to increase levels of inclusivity and interaction before they impact negatively on an individual's quality of life. This will not only help to address problems associated with social isolation and loneliness (perhaps even before they start), but will also make our communities safer, friendlier and healthier places in which to grow old.

With evidence to suggest that older people are increasingly likely to age 'in place' and now tend to stay in their own homes for longer (Gardner, 2014), developing communities that can support and empower older people during this time is key to them living fulfilling and rich lives. Much of this work involves utilising Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches that build on what already exists within a community, connecting groups and services and using them as effectively as possible (Klee, Mordey, Phuare and Russell, 2014). Community development has therefore been integral to BAB since its inception and is a key element of the overall programme.

The CDOP projects therefore exist to tackle the issues of loneliness and social isolation in six specific communities within the City of Bristol, using various approaches to community development dependent on local need and existing services. Different providers were invited to tender for the CDOP work in each area, using a 'test and learn' approach tailored to the local community receiving the intervention.

This report is an evaluation of the CDOP work undertaken by the local organisation The Care

Forum in the Greater Fishponds area of the city, and the evaluation was led by a small team of Community Researchers. The report identifies activities available to older people in the area, the strengths and weaknesses of the organisational approach and reflections on whether the project has successfully delivered meaningful community development for older people locally. The evaluation draws on various pieces of fieldwork and project documentation that are detailed in the 'research design and methods' section.

Context >>

WHY GREATER FISHPONDS?

It was BAB's original intention to fund Community Development projects in each of the 14 Neighbourhood Partnership¹(NP) areas that had previously been defined by Bristol City Council (BCC), with each NP made up of 2-3 adjoining wards. The aim of NPs was to bring together key people from across each area, including residents, community groups, organisations and local councillors to establish a force for local development. Each NP was given a budget by the council and was able to make decisions about how the money was spent within each locality, identifying their own priorities and funding appropriate projects. In Greater Fishponds the NP comprised the wards of Eastville, Frome Vale and Hillfields.

However, by the beginning of 2016 several factors had contributed to this ambitious plan being changed. Firstly, BAB recognised that the actual amount allocated to Community Development projects - just over one third of the £3.8 million proposed in the original business case - would be insufficient to cover such wide areas across the whole city.

>> "The re-thinking was necessary because it was felt that splitting the available funds (£1.3 million) between 14 Neighbourhood Partnership areas was not feasible, since the amounts would not be enough to employ a full-time worker, which most projects felt to be necessary."

-CR Meeting Minutes April 2016

..... Footnotes

1: In 2017 BCC announced that NPs were to be abolished, with funding to be cut by half in 2017/18 and then completely in 2018/19.

Secondly, the Community Researchers' Neighbourhood Asset Mapping reports on the NPs of Greater Fishponds and Greater Brislington - areas where BAB considered relatively little was known about existing neighbourhood assets compared to other areas - influenced the thinking on where the CDOP projects should be placed. For example, one of the key findings of the Greater Fishponds exercise was that, from the point of view of both community groups and older people themselves, the boundaries of both Neighbourhood Partnerships and wards were artificial and irrelevant in their day to day lives. The results of the Greater Fishponds asset mapping exercise therefore proposed:

>> "...the reconfiguration of the commissioning process which will place less emphasis upon neighbourhood partnership areas in the future."

- The Neighbourhood Asset Mapping of Greater Fishponds ed. Means & Woodspring (2016), p.5

BAB subsequently commissioned Dr. Naomi Woodspring to review their original plans and make recommendations as to how the Community Development programme could be commissioned to develop best practice around 'approaches to engaging, empowering and inspiring older people and developing projects that engage and involve older people in a variety of initiatives and activities' (The Blueprint for the Delivery of Bristol Ageing Better's Community Development for Older People Project). BAB accepted Dr. Woodspring's report and her

proposals for 4 streams of recommended funding areas to be included in any ABCD work. These recommended funding areas were:

- 1. Areas of exceptional need.
- 2. Communities in transition.
- 3. Communities of interest.
- 4. Investing in strategic coordination and organisation.

Woodspring identified “The three wards of Greater Fishponds as areas of exceptional need. Neither charitable organisations nor the City Council have made funding investments in these areas. They represent not only large geographic areas but also areas with high numbers of older people.” She went on to “... recommend that Hillfields is the targeted funding area in Greater Fishponds.” (Woodspring, 2016).

BAB management accepted these recommendations and the CDOP tender invitation document published in September 2016 with a closing date of 28th November reiterated these recommendations and invited proposals for a 3-year Community Development project in Greater Fishponds “with a specific focus on (the ward of) Hillfields”.

Despite the inclusion of these specific parameters in the specifications, when The Care Forum (TCF), who were the only tenderer, made their submission, their focus was on the much larger Greater Fishponds area. Subsequently, they included all three wards of the Greater Fishponds area in their work programme:

“The Care Forum will pursue the following action plan in year 1.

- Publicise and promote the need for

volunteers in Eastville, Frome Vale and Hillfields, including Community Champions and members of the steering group.

- In partnership with Carers Support Centre, work to promote the needs of carers in Eastville, Frome Vale and Hillfields, to reduce isolation and improve quality of life.”

At no time did BAB make any comment either on the original submission or the work plan to clarify the confusion in the interpretation of the bid document.

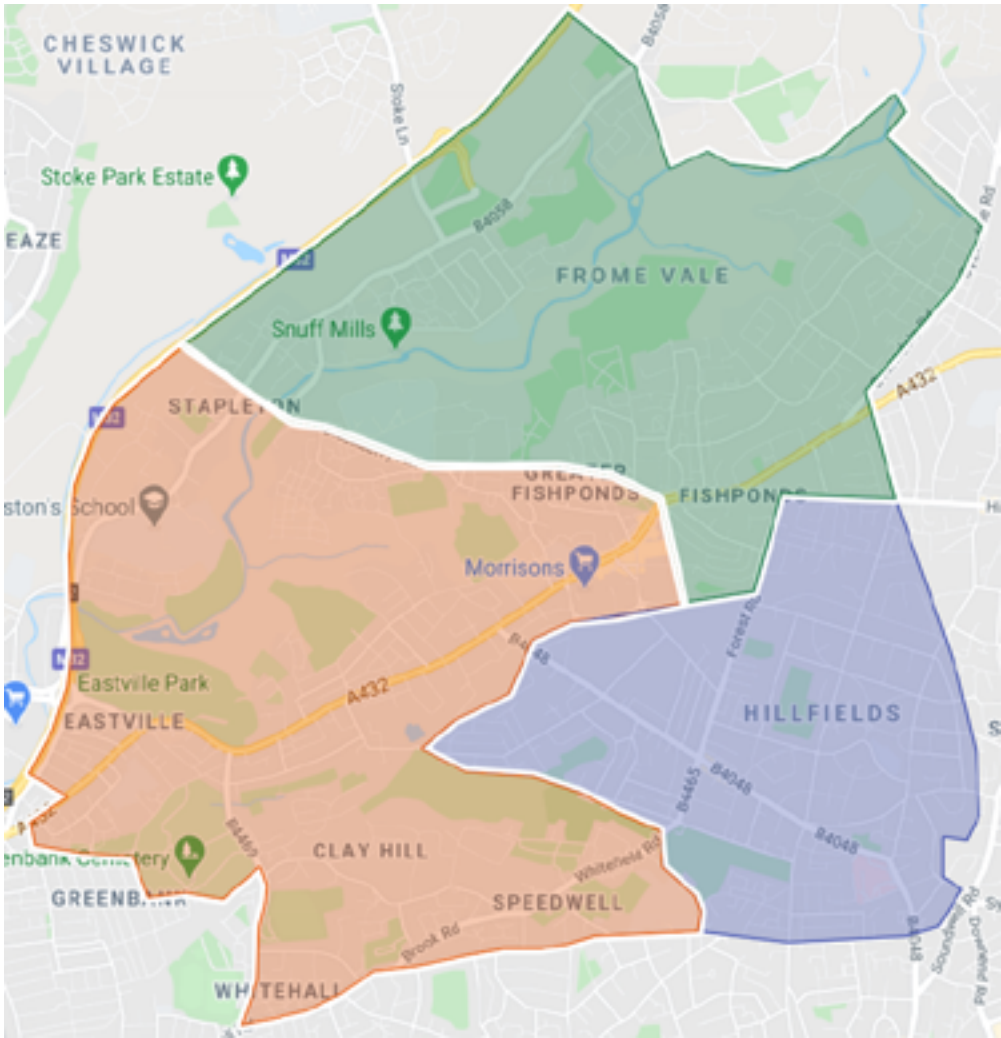
ASSET MAPPING

Prior to the setting up of the community development project, volunteer researchers from BAB undertook a social capital analysis of the area entitled ‘The Neighbourhood Asset Mapping of Greater Fishponds’ (2016) which revealed the area to have relatively few community-based activities for older people. CRs involved in this early project were tasked with mapping the organisations, venues, clubs and local activities where older people may engage, either as participants or as volunteers. Some of these were not necessarily specifically aimed at older people, but rather presented potential opportunities to connect with that age group. The idea of conducting an asset mapping exercise at this early stage was that it would inform the community development programme which followed.

» “Asset mapping provides information about the strengths and resources of a community and can help uncover solutions. Once community strengths and resources are inventoried and depicted in a map, you can more easily think about how to build on these assets to address community needs.”

- Centre for Health Research and Policy, University of California

Figure 1: Map of the CDOP project areas for Greater Fishponds – Eastville (red), Frome Vale (green), Hillfields (purple)



The CR team identified around 70 assets within the three wards of Eastville, Frome Vale and Hillfields, ranging from churches to service providers, and from cafes to gardening clubs. Whilst the exercise served to reveal the existing assets within the community, it also revealed several areas of need and gaps in provision, as well as some barriers to participation. These latter included poor transportation, and a lack of basic facilities in some areas.

As noted previously, an important insight uncovered by the CRs who conducted the asset mapping exercise was that the ward boundaries were somewhat meaningless and that individuals did not necessarily identify with a specific area. It was also noted in the asset mapping report that the area is vast, with a large population and geographical spread that contains several different communities.

THE THREE WARDS
COMPRISING 'GREATER
FISHPONDS'

EASTVILLE

Geography and Transport

The culturally diverse ward of Eastville is an inner suburb of the city. It borders the other two wards of Greater Fishponds to the East, Frome Vale to the North East, and Hillfields, St George Central and St George West to the South. The inner city ward of Easton is located on the South West side and Lockleaze can be found to the North West. Within Eastville geographical and physical factors significantly contribute to barriers between, and isolation of, different communities or neighbourhoods.

The M32 motorway runs the full length of the western boundary, making it difficult for those on foot, who live nearby, to access supermarkets and popular shopping outlets at the nearby Eastville Retail Park, just off Junction 2 of the M32. Access by foot or public transport can require a long and unpleasant trek negotiating traffic islands or an even longer roundabout route emerging in the IKEA car park. The River Frome forms a further boundary, physically separating Stapleton from Upper Eastville and the Whitefield/Fishponds area.

Eastville Park, although a large attractive green leisure space, has no artificial lighting, making it an undesirable place to walk alone except in broad daylight. Much of the ward is hilly and not felt by many to be easy walking.

The whole ward is bisected west to east by Fishponds Road, a main arterial road in and out of the city, which is also the main bus route and subject to heavy traffic. The other main feature is the Bristol/Bath cycle path - formerly a railway line - running south-west to north-east, cutting off Rose Green from the rest of the ward and Upper Eastville from the neighbouring ward of Hillfields. In parts it runs in a cutting with only 3 bridges linking the areas on either side. As a walking path it provides links to Fishponds library and supermarkets and is a well-regarded resource; but for some, the high usage by cyclists, can be off-putting.

The above physical barriers are not relieved by public transport, which is regarded by many as a major contributory factor in the isolation of older people. There is no bus service linking Rose Green in the south with Stapleton in the north. For many who rely on buses it is easier to get into the city centre from Fishponds Road, and to areas along that route, than to somewhere in Eastville or elsewhere in Greater Fishponds.

Demographics

Within Eastville ward there are significant demographic differences, particularly regarding ethnicity.

For the ward, the number of residents identifying as white is 65.4% and as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) 34.6%, but these proportions are very nearly reversed in some neighbourhoods. Black and Asian communities are perceived as having, and seem to have, closer links with the cultural and religious activities in Easton ward, which has similar demographic ethnicity patterns, than it does to the cultural and religious resources of Eastville.

Of the three wards in Greater Fishponds, Eastville has the youngest age profile. The comparative figures between the 3 wards relating to age may also be significant. In Eastville, 10.8% are 65 and over, of which just under 5% are 75+, compared to Frome Vale where those of 65 and over form 19% of the population, of which 11% are over 75.

Community Facilities

There is no public library within Eastville ward, although 'Eastville Library' did once exist - purpose built in 1950 - but located on the far side of the M32 in neighbouring Lockleaze ward until it was closed by the City Council in Spring 2016. A vociferous campaign to save it resulted in it being re-opened as a volunteer run community hub and facility in September

2016, renamed 'The Old Library' and providing a range of activities for all ages from the surrounding area. Neither of the nearest two existing public libraries are within easy walking distance. Both are a significant bus journey away for those living in the north, west and south areas of the ward.

Other than 'The Old Library' there are no easily accessible active community associations or community centres within Eastville ward itself. The few venues that are available for the public are mostly church properties. Funding for well-established and well-used services and activities, including from previous long-term support grant providers, has become more difficult to obtain in recent years, thus putting their continued existence in jeopardy.

Table 1: Age breakdown of Eastville residents compared to whole Bristol population²

| Population | Eastville | % | Bristol | % |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|
| Total usually resident population | 13,255 | 100.0 | 428,234 | 100.0 |
| Total males | 6,655 | 50.2 | 213,071 | 49.8 |
| Total females | 6,600 | 49.8 | 215,163 | 50.2 |
| Age 0-4 | 1,086 | 8.2 | 29,633 | 6.9 |
| Age 5-9 | 749 | 5.7 | 22,837 | 5.3 |
| Age 10-15 | 833 | 6.3 | 26,111 | 6.1 |
| Age 16-24 | 1,946 | 14.7 | 67,004 | 15.6 |
| Age 25-44 | 4,285 | 32.3 | 135,912 | 31.7 |
| Age 45-64 | 2,932 | 22.1 | 90,865 | 21.2 |
| Age 65-74 | 778 | 5.9 | 27,725 | 6.5 |
| Age 75 and over | 646 | 4.9 | 28,147 | 6.6 |

Footnotes

2: Bristol 2011 Census Selected Statistics

Table 2: Ethnicity of Eastville ward compared to whole Bristol population²

| Ethnic group | Eastville | % | Bristol | % |
|---|--------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| White Total | 8,673 | 65.4 | 359,592 | 84.0 |
| White: English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British | 7,856 | 59.3 | 333,432 | 77.9 |
| White: Irish | 127 | 1.0 | 3,851 | 0.9 |
| White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 13 | 0.1 | 359 | 0.1 |
| White: Other White | 677 | 5.1 | 21,950 | 5.1 |
| Black and Minority Ethnic Group Total | 4,582 | 34.6 | 68,642 | 16.0 |
| Mixed: White and Black Caribbean | 455 | 3.4 | 7,389 | 1.7 |
| Mixed: White and Black African | 46 | 0.3 | 1,533 | 0.4 |
| Mixed: White and Asian | 159 | 1.2 | 3,402 | 0.8 |
| Mixed: Other Mixed | 127 | 1.0 | 3,114 | 0.7 |
| Asian/Asian British: Indian | 491 | 3.7 | 6,547 | 1.5 |
| Asian/Asian British: Pakistani | 911 | 6.9 | 6,863 | 1.6 |
| Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi | 234 | 1.8 | 2,104 | 0.5 |
| Asian/Asian British: Chinese | 92 | 0.7 | 3,886 | 0.9 |
| Asian/Asian British: Other Asian | 205 | 1.5 | 4,255 | 1.0 |
| Black/Black British: African | 717 | 5.4 | 12,085 | 2.8 |
| Black/Black British: Caribbean | 546 | 4.1 | 6,727 | 1.6 |
| Black/Black British: Other Black | 354 | 2.7 | 6,922 | 1.6 |
| Other ethnic group: Arab | 84 | 0.6 | 1,272 | 0.3 |
| Other ethnic group: Other | 161 | 1.2 | 2,543 | 0.6 |

FROM VALE

Geography

The Frome Vale ward is bounded on the north-west by the M32 and the north-east by South Gloucestershire and is divided into two parts by a green belt either side of the River Frome which flows from north-east to south-west through the ward. In addition, this division is accentuated by the UWE Glenside Campus and Blackberry Hill Hospital.

Frenchay Park Road provides the main access route in the north-western section and the complex of Manor Road, Fishponds Road and Downend Road provides access to the south and south-east area of the ward.

The ward is a diamond shape and it is about 2 miles or a 40 minute brisk walk from one end to the other. From the north-west corner to the shops and medical centre around Fishponds Road it is a 30-minute walk with an additional 10 minutes to the supermarket/library/BCC Information and Service Centre; this last was closed in 2018.

The area is reasonably flat although the poor upkeep of some pavements can make them hazardous. The area is basically residential with a high street shopping zone which is generally busy, active and friendly plus a supermarket/library area which is convenient if bleak. Housing around these streets consists of Victorian terrace houses in small twisty Victorian side roads. Travelling away from the centre, the houses expand into late Victorian suburbia, many tree-lined, and then to between the wars and post WWII middle class housing. There is an area of council housing near the Vassall Centre in the centre of the ward (built in the early 1950s) which, conveniently, has

a small parade of shops on Sheppard Road, Oldbury Court. Other than this there are no corner shops, cafes/bistros, toilets or seats away from the two main shopping areas in the ward. The bus stops in the centre and close to the Vassall Centre have seats and shelters but those in the residential areas have neither. There are no seats anywhere along the pavements throughout the ward although Fishponds Park has good seating.

Demographics and Ethnicity

There are significant demographic and ethnic differences between the population in Frome Vale and the other wards of Greater Fishponds and Bristol city.

The below tables indicate that Frome Vale has a higher population of over 65s than other wards of Greater Fishponds area and Bristol as a whole, whilst a significantly lower BAME population than the other wards in Greater Fishponds. However, there is still nearly a fifth of the population that is non-white British. From the limited experiences of visiting different groups, meetings and activities the non-white population does not appear to be represented at these activities in proportion to their population in the ward.

The Bristol City Council population projection estimates indicate little change in the population of the over 65s in the three wards at 17.9% for Frome Vale, 10.8% for Eastville and 12.4% for Hillfields. In the longer term, these figures are likely to expand dramatically with an estimated 56% increase in the numbers of over 75s in the area by 2041.³

Footnotes

3: The Population of Bristol, September 2020; www.bristol.gov.uk/population

Table 3: Age breakdown of Frome Vale residents compared to whole Bristol population²

| Population | Frome Vale | % | Bristol | % |
|--|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Total usually resident population | 12,164 | 100.0 | 428,234 | 100.0 |
| Total males | 5,867 | 48.2 | 213,071 | 49.8 |
| Total females | 6,297 | 51.8 | 215,163 | 50.2 |
| Age 0-4 | 738 | 6.1 | 29,633 | 6.9 |
| Age 5-9 | 538 | 4.4 | 22,837 | 5.3 |
| Age 10-15 | 671 | 5.5 | 26,111 | 6.1 |
| Age 16-24 | 2,089 | 17.2 | 67,004 | 15.6 |
| Age 25-44 | 3,027 | 24.9 | 135,912 | 31.7 |
| Age 45-64 | 2,790 | 22.9 | 90,865 | 21.2 |
| Age 65-74 | 973 | 8.0 | 27,725 | 6.5 |
| Age 75 and over | 1,338 | 11.0 | 28,147 | 6.6 |



Table 4: Ethnicity of Frome Vale ward compared to whole Bristol population²

| Ethnic group | Frome Vale | % | Bristol | % |
|---|--------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| White Total | 9,858 | 81.0 | 359,592 | 84.0 |
| White: English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British | 9,275 | 76.2 | 333,432 | 77.9 |
| White: Irish | 103 | 0.8 | 3,851 | 0.9 |
| White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 6 | 0.0 | 359 | 0.1 |
| White: Other White | 474 | 3.9 | 21,950 | 5.1 |
| Black and Minority Ethnic Group Total | 2,306 | 19.0 | 68,642 | 16.0 |
| Mixed: White and Black Caribbean | 282 | 2.3 | 7,389 | 1.7 |
| Mixed: White and Black African | 50 | 0.4 | 1,533 | 0.4 |
| Mixed: White and Asian | 97 | 0.8 | 3,402 | 0.8 |
| Mixed: Other Mixed | 99 | 0.8 | 3,114 | 0.7 |
| Asian/Asian British: Indian | 216 | 1.8 | 6,547 | 1.5 |
| Asian/Asian British: Pakistani | 346 | 2.8 | 6,863 | 1.6 |
| Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi | 134 | 1.1 | 2,104 | 0.5 |
| Asian/Asian British: Chinese | 81 | 0.7 | 3,886 | 0.9 |
| Asian/Asian British: Other Asian | 125 | 1.0 | 4,255 | 1.0 |
| Black/Black British: African | 357 | 2.9 | 12,085 | 2.8 |
| Black/Black British: Caribbean | 267 | 2.2 | 6,727 | 1.6 |
| Black/Black British: Other Black | 133 | 1.1 | 6,922 | 1.6 |
| Other ethnic group: Arab | 41 | 0.3 | 1,272 | 0.3 |
| Other ethnic group: Other | 78 | 0.6 | 2,543 | 0.6 |

Transport

As is the case in Eastville, the physical divisions mentioned above, are accentuated by a deteriorating public transport system. Nearly every older person approached by the community researchers during the evaluation named transport as a major problem and constraint to their access to services. A 'poor and inadequate – and recently reduced - bus service' was given as the main contributory factor in the isolation of older people as expressed by older residents. Dial-a-ride is reported as being unreliable, not regularly available and there was confusion as to whether it was available for 'social' events. Bristol Community Transport did not currently (in 2016) offer services in Greater Fishponds.

The one important transport asset is that parking for cars is free both on the street and in the various car parks along and adjacent to Fishponds Road.

Existing Community Facilities

Public Library:

There is a public library in Frome Vale ward (Fishponds library). Although it is situated in the south-west corner of the ward there is good access with buses and parking plus there are two supermarkets nearby, one with a toilet and cafe.

The library runs a fortnightly knitting club and according to the librarian "has facilities to provide support for coffee mornings for older people" although there have been disagreements between council employees and coffee event organisers.

Activity Centres:

There are active community centres in all parts except the north-west of the ward, which offer a range of activities appealing to all ages, including those over 50. All centres are close to bus stops, have wheelchair access, most with adjacent car parks or at least turning areas nearby and toilets plus catering facilities.

Social centres in commercial areas:

There are numerous restaurants, coffee shops and pubs in the main Fishponds shopping area and, as mentioned above, a café at one of the supermarkets. More recently, a drive-through fast food outlet has opened on Fishponds Road.

Green Areas:

Fishponds Park is an area of green right in the centre of the commercial part of Fishponds Road and is therefore a major asset. The facilities (play area and walking paths with shrubs and flower beds) are well supported by local charities.

Oldbury Court has a large play area centred on a water and sand play zone with a pirate play ship. There is also a café with terrace seating providing refreshments that is accessible for wheelchair users and the park also includes play equipment suitable for children with disabilities.

Snuff Mills, also known as Whitwood Mill, is a wooded area either side of the River Frome. There are pleasant walks along the steep wooded banks of the River Frome and the area forms a section of the Frome Valley Walkway.



HILLFIELDS

Geography

The ward of Hillfields is situated on the north-east boundary of the city with the wards of St George Central to the south, Eastville to the west and Frome Vale to the north.

Primarily a residential area, the original council estate is separated from much of the older housing in the ward by the main thoroughfare, Lodge Causeway, which consists of a small number of mainly independent shops, a café, post office and other small businesses. Around 60% of the housing in the ward is owner-occupied.

In 1920, Hillfields was the first council estate to be built in Bristol, and one of the first in the country. It resulted from the Housing Act of 1919, which for the first time gave local authorities the right to buy land to build houses

for the working class. By 1921 it was the largest garden suburb in the city consisting of mainly 2 storeys, 3-bedroom, semi-detached brick-built houses.

There is very limited community transport. There is no bus route running the whole length of Lodge Causeway, the main artery through the ward. While several bus routes operate along the outer boundaries of the ward only one bus route, the number 6, traverses the ward to a limited extent, from the very south-west corner to Lodge Causeway, from where it turns north to the centre of Hillfields estate and out again by the south. It runs approximately twice an hour during the day. The Greater Fishponds Neighbourhood Asset Mapping Report 2016 describes the area as having 'large pleasant green spaces' but that these same spaces 'act as a barrier for older people because of the distance to access shops'.

Demographics

In terms of the proportion of older people, Hillfields closely mirrors that of the rest of the city, with 12.5% of the population aged 65 and over.

Hillfields has a higher percentage of BAME residents than the average for the city as a whole, with 22% falling into that category.

East Hillfields LSOA (Lower Social Output Area) falls into the most deprived 10% in the city.

The local library is in the middle of the estate, a significant walk away from the shops in Lodge Causeway and thus fails to attract passers-by. The churches provide most of the opportunities for older people to meet. However, funding for community activities is hard to come by and Hillfields appears to lack a community focus. There is no community hall, no community notice boards or community café. A long-time resident of Hillfields and community activist described the area as “*lacking community cohesion*”.

Table 5: Age breakdown of Hillfields residents compared to whole Bristol population²

| Population | Hillfields | % | Bristol | % |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Total usually resident population | 12,156 | 100.0 | 428,234 | 100.0 |
| Total males | 5,944 | 48.9 | 213,071 | 49.8 |
| Total females | 6,212 | 51.1 | 215,163 | 50.2 |
| Age 0-4 | 1,006 | 8.3 | 29,633 | 6.9 |
| Age 5-9 | 845 | 7.0 | 22,837 | 5.3 |
| Age 10-15 | 994 | 8.2 | 26,111 | 6.1 |
| Age 16-24 | 1,500 | 12.3 | 67,004 | 15.6 |
| Age 25-44 | 3,583 | 29.5 | 135,912 | 31.7 |
| Age 45-64 | 2,709 | 22.3 | 90,865 | 21.2 |
| Age 65-74 | 777 | 6.4 | 27,725 | 6.5 |
| Age 75 and over | 742 | 6.1 | 28,147 | 6.6 |

Table 6: Ethnicity of Hillfields ward compared to whole Bristol population²

| Ethnic group | Hillfields | % | Bristol | % |
|---|------------|------|---------|------|
| White Total | 9,481 | 78.0 | 359,592 | 84.0 |
| White: English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British | 8,923 | 73.4 | 333,432 | 77.9 |
| White: Irish | 83 | 0.7 | 3,851 | 0.9 |
| White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 4 | 0.0 | 359 | 0.1 |
| White: Other White | 471 | 3.9 | 21,950 | 5.1 |
| Black and Minority Ethnic Group Total | 2,675 | 22.0 | 68,642 | 16.0 |
| Mixed: White and Black Caribbean | 321 | 2.6 | 7,389 | 1.7 |
| Mixed: White and Black African | 36 | 0.3 | 1,533 | 0.4 |
| Mixed: White and Asian | 93 | 0.8 | 3,402 | 0.8 |
| Mixed: Other Mixed | 106 | 0.9 | 3,114 | 0.7 |
| Asian/Asian British: Indian | 316 | 2.6 | 6,547 | 1.5 |
| Asian/Asian British: Pakistani | 428 | 3.5 | 6,863 | 1.6 |
| Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi | 153 | 1.3 | 2,104 | 0.5 |
| Asian/Asian British: Chinese | 64 | 0.5 | 3,886 | 0.9 |
| Asian/Asian British: Other Asian | 139 | 1.1 | 4,255 | 1.0 |
| Black/Black British: African | 357 | 2.9 | 12,085 | 2.8 |
| Black/Black British: Caribbean | 300 | 2.5 | 6,727 | 1.6 |
| Black/Black British: Other Black | 250 | 2.1 | 6,922 | 1.6 |
| Other ethnic group: Arab | 20 | 0.2 | 1,272 | 0.3 |
| Other ethnic group: Other | 92 | 0.8 | 2,543 | 0.6 |

THE CARE FORUM

The Care Forum (TCF) is based at The Vassall Centre in Fishponds and is an independent voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisation. It supports activities across Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Swindon.

TCF has worked in the field of health and social care since 1996, providing services to individuals, representing the views of communities and diverse groups of users, and supporting the voluntary and community sector to provide and influence health and social care interventions. TCF activities fall into four broad categories:

1. The direct provision of services to individuals, primarily through information and signposting, advocacy and social prescribing.
2. Involving and promoting the opinions, views, needs and aspirations of local people in the development and delivery of health and social care.
3. Facilitating, supporting and developing the voluntary and community sector's involvement in and influence of service delivery within health and social care.
4. The provision of volunteer opportunities for local people, with a view to increasing personal self-esteem and wellbeing, skills, confidence and readiness to work.

THE CARE FORUM'S PROJECT PLAN

TCF made the only bid for the Greater Fishponds CDOP project funding and was subsequently commissioned to undertake the work. In summary, the main points of their project plan – named by them and referred to as their 'Community Champions' project – were as follows:

- ▶ Recruit, train and support active members of the community to be Community Champions in each of the 3 wards of Greater Fishponds. *'TCF will recruit a diverse group of older people including those whose voices are seldom heard'.*
- ▶ Prioritise areas with few community resources and people *'more isolated due to ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality or because of caring responsibilities'.*
- ▶ Recruit residents and those working in local services as 'Community Signposters' to give out information about BAB and local support.
- ▶ Work with Carers Support Centre (also based at the Vassall Centre) to support older carers to become 'Considerate Friends' to review how local services impact on older people and recommend how they could be improved.
- ▶ Develop a steering group of older people to direct and monitor project achievements and lead on the more formal evaluation to be conducted in year 2.

- ▶ Promote and support applications for grants e.g. BAB's Community Kick-Start programme for new activities to meet the needs of older people.

The year 1 Service Level Agreement listed the following staff: Project Coordinator (5hrs/wk.); Project Officer (21 hrs/wk.); Communications Worker (8hrs/wk.); and, Administrator (3.5hrs/wk.). The main responsibilities for these posts were identified after the project had started in April 2017 as:

- ▶ **Project Coordinator (PC)** - lead the project, represent TCF at all BAB events and monitoring meetings. Recruit and support a steering group of local older people.
- ▶ **Project Officer (PO)** - recruit, train, support, work directly with and provide key contact for volunteers.
- ▶ **Communications Worker (CW)** - specific focus on articulating developments within Greater Fishponds generate and distribute content about the specific BAB developments in Greater Fishponds to maximise coverage.
- ▶ **Volunteers** - In year 1 a minimum of 4 Community Champions in each ward - a total of 12 volunteers - to work alongside paid members of staff, all to work within the ABCD approach.

The 3-year project budget was £150,000 with delivery dates of 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2020.



Methods >>

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overarching aim of the evaluation of BAB CDOP projects was to explore the elements of good community development for older people. In this context, the following research questions were used to inform and guide the direction and focus of the evaluation.

| Research questions |
|---|
| 1. What is the added value that The Care Forum CDOP project brings to community development activity in Greater Fishponds? |
| 2. What is the perceived effectiveness of the training, support and networking offered through The Care Forum CDOP project? |
| 3. What are the key successful elements of The Care Forum CDOP project's model for community development? |
| 4. What aspects of The Care Forum CDOP project activity are associated with core BAB outcomes for older people? |
| 5. What are costs and benefits of some elements of The Care Forum CDOP project? |

However, at the heart of all the CDOP evaluations is the overarching primary research question:

>> *"What does good community development for older people look like?"*

This therefore guided the evaluation process above all other sub-research questions.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The evaluation consisted of both fieldwork (including formal and informal interviews, meetings and ethnographic observations) and the analysis of project documentation (see Table 7 below for details).

A team of Community Researchers (CRs) conducted the fieldwork and attended a broad range of activities throughout the three-year funding period. The CRs were recruited at the start of the overall BAB evaluation programme to lead the fieldwork and report writing processes across all project streams. Two of the CRs volunteered to work specifically on the Greater Fishponds CDOP evaluation.

In the context of the CDOP evaluations, 'ethnographic observations' refers to classes or project activities involving older people that were attended or observed by the CRs in order to witness community development in action. Meetings and interviews were conducted with key people and informal conversations were held with a broad cross-section of project staff and participants. The notes and observations from these sessions were used to inform the findings of this evaluation, along with a transcript from the interviews with various project workers.

Table 7: Project fieldwork and documentation

| Date | Description |
|--------------|---|
| 11/09/2017 | Participate in steering group |
| 30/01/2018 | Interview with Project Officer |
| 15/05/2018 | Participate in steering group |
| 23/05/2018 | Interview with Project Officer |
| 25/05/2018 | Interview with Project Manager |
| 4/09/2018 | Interview with Care Forum Project Managers and CDOP Project Manager |
| 7/09/2018 | Interview with Oldbury Court volunteer |
| 11/09/2018 | Interview with Volunteer Leader |
| 18/09/2018 | Interview with Community Activist |
| 12/12/2018 | Discussion with coffee group organiser and members |
| 04/04/2019 | Informal interview with participants – Bangladeshi Bristol Women's Group – yoga and Zumba class |
| 26/06/2019 | Interview with representative Considerate Friends project |
| 3/07/2019 | Interview with CDOP Project Officer |
| 9/07/2019 | Interview with Project Manager |
| 5/11/2019 | Interview with Project Officer |
| 19/11/2019 | Interview with Project Coordinator |
| 10/02/2020 | Interview with Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Group Coordinator, Bristol Meets the World food and nutrition project |
| 11/02/2020 | Interview with Over 50s club volunteer |
| 21/02/2020 | Discussion with coffee group organiser and members |
| Date | Document description |
| April 2018 | Quarterly reports – year 1 |
| April 2018 | Successes and challenges from year 1 |
| April 2019 | Y3 addendum to BAB delivery partner Contract |
| April 2019 | Quarterly reports – year 2 |
| October 2019 | CMF report |
| January 2020 | Quarterly reports – year 3 |



Findings >>

There were several staff changes during the life of the project that resulted in inconsistencies in reporting. For that reason, it was decided that this report would best be structured as a chronological account of activities during the three years. The following section summarises the findings by year.

YEAR 1 (APRIL 2017 - MARCH 2018) - PROJECT ESTABLISHMENT

Recruitment and secondment of staff was started immediately after approval of the project proposal. The Project Officer (PO) was externally recruited and contracted to work 21 hours a week. She took up her post in mid-May and had a workstation in a shared office in The Care Forum (TCF) offices at The Vassall Centre. An existing TCF manager was appointed as Project Coordinator (PC) contributing 5 hours per week.

Other TCF staff who contributed to the team were a Communications Worker at 8hrs per week and an Administrator at 3.5hrs per week.

The PO established the framework of an in-house database of contacts based on the BAB Neighbourhood Asset Mapping Report and information compiled by the Well Aware service based at TCF⁴. She also set up a Facebook page that, by September 2017, had attracted 292 followers.

In cooperation with the communications/marketing team at TCF, the PO prepared

promotional materials to advertise for volunteers. This information was posted on the TCF website and advertised through the VOSCUR website, the Carers Support Centre website and advertised in the Fishponds Voice plus being promoted in a poster/flyer and leaflet that were distributed through a variety of venues in the Greater Fishponds project area. Similarly, a press release describing the project was prepared and this went out to local newspapers and magazines. This variety of promotional activities started in July and continued, on a periodic basis, until the end of the year.

In preparation for offers from potential volunteers the PO had conversations with LinkAge Network (a BAB funded strategic CDOP project) concerning the provision of training in ABCD; unfortunately, this did not occur due to changes in the LinkAge Network project plan. As an alternative, the PO herself attended an ABCD training session run by BCC in September (quarter 2) to acquire the necessary skills to pass on to prospective project volunteers.

During this first half year (April to September 2017) the PO undertook a wide-ranging series of visits to key local organisations to explain the objectives of the project, encourage support and foster involvement. These included meetings with local councillors, library staff, pharmacists, patient champions at GP surgeries and staff and members of the Beechwood Club (a popular venue for activities in Frome Vale ward run by a local charity). In parallel with this the PO attempted to build relationships with local retail businesses and faith groups to

get them to act as sign-posters for the project. However, contact with some of this latter group met with a disappointing lack of response.

Project strategy

The original proposal submitted to BAB by TCF had introduced the concept of 'Community Champions' – identified, trained and local volunteers – 4 in each of the three wards, who would form the core contact group between the project and the community. The TCF team decided, after their initial assessment of the project environment, that their strategy needed to be more asset based, informal and grassroots and so rejected the concept of 'Community Champions'. This new approach was considered necessary *"because there were not the skills available in the area"* and that *"a grassroots approach was more likely to generate continuity within the local community"*.⁵

Therefore, the overall aim agreed between the PO and PC at TCF and with BAB was to support the development of existing local groups and assist the start-up of new groups within the community. It was decided that this was to be achieved by working directly with local organisations and giving them management support, promoting volunteers on an informal and individual basis as 'active citizens' and developing partnerships with established groups. It also recognised the need to respond to the differing conditions and needs of likely participants in each of the three wards. Some localities in specific wards were seen as 'deserts' and in that situation, there was a requirement to work proactively with established organisations from adjacent areas to encourage them to expand.

Activity plan

The methodology that became the core of this informal strategy was 'door-knocking'. This was implemented by a small team, perhaps just 1 or 2, of local residents who had responded to the initial advertising campaign for volunteers. They were supported by the PO and at times by local councillors or a BCC community development worker. The group selected a specific area (a street or housing block) and went from door-to-door providing information and inviting feedback on ideas of needs of the older members of the community. The first areas selected were the Oldbury Court estate in Frome Vale ward, specific areas of Hillfields ward in collaboration with the BCC community development worker (both started in quarter 3, October to December 2017) and in Eastville ward where two volunteers braved the winter weather (started in quarter 4, January to March 2018).

This approach speedily led to the development of a preliminary list of ideas; a retirement group, an intergenerational activity group, a library coffee meeting group, other 'meet and chat' coffee groups, an art group, etc. At the same time, the PO was trying to enlarge the core group of volunteers and identify grassroots leaders who could facilitate specific activities.

The door-knocking was found to be very time consuming and was best done at anti-social times in the evenings. During the day, the PO ran a series of pop-up information stands where she distributed materials and answered questions about the project. These were set-up at locations regularly used by older people e.g. supermarkets, libraries, GP surgeries, etc.

The next stage was to generate enough momentum to implement 'concrete' activities

Footnotes

⁴: An online and telephone service based at TCF that provides information on a wide range of local organisations, support groups, community groups, events and activities that can help improve health and wellbeing.

Footnotes

⁵: Interview with Project Coordinator (PC)

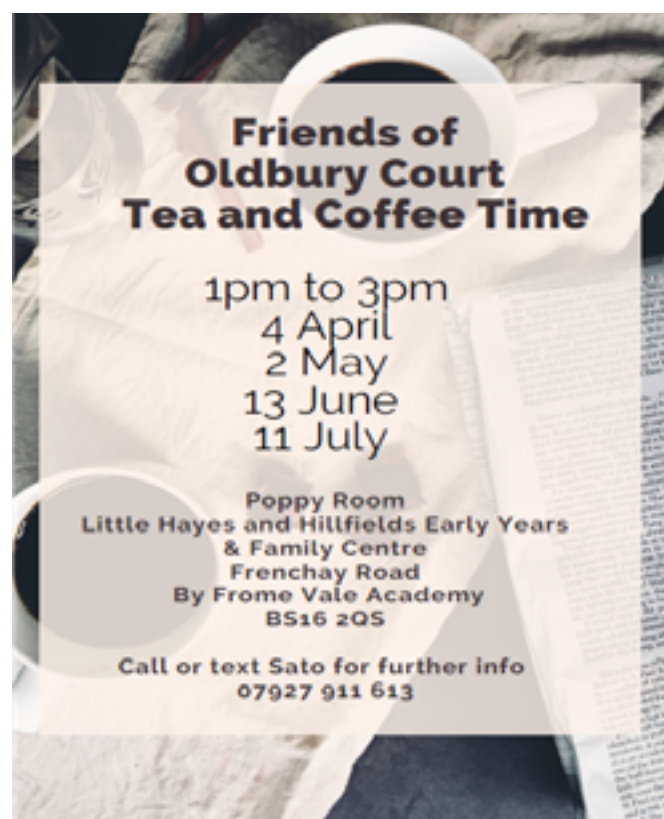
engaging older people – but not solely with older people. The PO felt strongly that a mix of activities that included groups of over 50s plus intergenerational groups would likely be of most interest and more self-sustaining after the project funding period.

» "Community development is for a mixed community...older people and younger people all living in a mixed generation society."

- Project Officer

The results by the end of year 1 (March 2018) were:

- ▶ The retirement group idea matured into a successful application to BAB for Community Kick-Start funds by the Begbrook Retirement Club (a programme of armchair exercises) and support for the Stapleton social club to make the venue more accessible and have better storage facilities;
- ▶ The intergenerational activity idea spawned two groups; both practical links between care homes and pre-school nurseries to set up and run 'stay and play activities'. Frenchay House (retirement home) and Little Hayes (nursery) started in early 2018 but had to suspend because of staffing constraints; Quarry House (retirement home) and Fledglings Nursery established a programme for the pre-school children to visit the home on a fortnightly basis;
- ▶ The library coffee groups became a regular activity at Hillfields Library and Fishponds Library (the latter later moving to the Van Dyke Forum); also, a coffee group was established at the local Oldbury Court nursery.



By the end of the calendar year (quarter 3), BAB had initiated meetings and information sharing activities between staff of the different CDOP projects. However, the PO could not attend these on a regular basis because the meetings were sometimes scheduled on her non-workdays. However, as a number of the project staff of other BAB CDOP projects also worked on a part-time basis, the sharing of information was later improved by the establishment of an informal mutual support group among the CDOP workers.

Considerate Friends

The partnership agreement with Carers Support Centre (CSC) to manage the Considerate Friends programme was signed during the second quarter of the year (July to September 2017). On a practical level, the plan sought to address the need to reduce loneliness and isolation within a group of carers over 50 (but younger carers were also welcome) through

meetings at the Kingfisher Café on Straits Parade in Frome Vale ward. Secondly, the programme aimed to assess the compatibility of commercial service providers with the needs of older people with disabilities and their carers.

To promote the principle of Considerate Friends, CSC launched a leaflet in October 2017 (this was updated in January 2018 with new language and an update of some of the service places already visited). To promote the project to a wider audience, a publicity campaign during year 1 included two articles in Carers News and one in Fishponds Voice, an advert in the Bristol Older People's Forum newsletter and the circulation of flyers and leaflets to Fishponds cafes, libraries, the Vassall Centre, Beechwood Centre, Begbrook Community Centre, Downend and Fishponds churches, Busy Bee café in Staplehill, and at carers' groups and events. Flyers were also handed out at East Bristol Community Development meetings.

In addition, there was online publicity (two posts on Helpfulpeeps, two Facebook and Twitter promotions and articles on the CSC website) plus advertisements on the webpages of DIY, VOSCUR and South Gloucestershire CVS.

By the end of year 1 (March 2018), four volunteers, three of whom were carers, had been recruited, and three of them were active. Volunteers were informally interviewed and inducted into their role. In addition, two attended an internal training session in December 2018 which included a background to BAB, a background to CSC, plus information on carer awareness, what to expect from the project and the role of a Considerate Friend.

Visits to service providers to assess their suitability to the needs of older people with disabilities and their carers started in January

2018. In the period to March 2018, six visits were made; to the Kingfisher Café, Café Grounded, Café Number 1, Porto Lounge, Hillfields Library and Beechwood Club. Each venue received a report with recommendations. Follow up visits were scheduled for year 2 which allowed the establishments time to consider and perhaps address the proposed changes.

The main challenge for the Considerate Friends project was recruiting volunteers. Early on this was judged to be because carers have limited time available and therefore strategies were developed to overcome this. These included recruiting carers from outside the area and also accepting volunteers who were older service users but not necessarily carers. During the last quarter (quarter 4, January to March 2018) this led to the recruitment of two additional volunteers.

Steering group

A steering group was established by the PO in September 2017. The membership was selected through personal invitation to contacts within the community who had indicated a willingness to contribute to project activities. The group met for the first time on 11th September at The Vassall Centre where a draft Terms of Reference was introduced and agreed. The attendees at this first meeting represented a cross section of interests with 4 older local residents, a councillor, a local business owner and a BAB CR as observer. A further meeting was held on 10th October which was attended by 5 new people, 2 who had attended in September, the PO and 2 CRs. There was a subsequent meeting in December with 6 attendees and 4 apologies. The topic at this meeting was '... the progress of the project and what was wanted in year 2'. Unfortunately, apart from the PO, CRs and one or two others there was no consistent attendance at these

meetings. The PO recorded in meeting minutes that this was because it was hard to find dates and times that suited all the potential attendees. For this reason, the original idea to have monthly steering group meetings was revised to a quarterly event.

Results at the end of first year

Separate interviews with the PO and PC at the end of year 1 (April-May 2018) resulted in very similar views on the activities of the project. They agreed the project had:

- ▶ Implemented a customised approach that created an environment where individuals could volunteer to establish initiatives of their choice that supported older people. This was achieved by supporting/enhancing current initiatives or starting new ones to fill gaps. Both individual groups and established centres were supported.
- ▶ Encouraged intergenerational activities (this essentially meant for the under 5s and older people).
- ▶ Successfully established a programme of Considerate Friends through Carers Support Centre.
- ▶ Provided a comprehensive sign-posting service for social contact and entertainment opportunities in the area that were relevant to older people.

It was thought that the intergenerational work went *“really well”*. The PO linked with a worker at Alive! to gather contacts of interested care homes and then began to promote the idea in the community. The PO supported local nurseries to link with local care homes to set up stay and plays. Frenchay House and Little Hayes held an initial Christmas carols session

and started sessions in early 2018, and Quarry House and Fledglings day nursery started sessions in February 2018.

Door knocking in Oldbury Court was reported as *“very successful”*. Initially, one volunteer was supported to door knock their neighbours. This grew into a team of about six people who came together to door knock throughout their area. They mapped peoples’ interests and generally got to know one another. They covered about eight streets and two main themes emerged. One was to do with activities for young people, which was developed outside of the project remit, although older people expressed interest in helping with this. Through the door knocking a group of five individuals volunteered to be involved in the establishment of a coffee morning for older people and met up to identify a suitable venue to host the session.

One important result of the door knocking in several locations across Greater Fishponds was that it became clear that this approach when conducted by a team of residents was much more successful than knocking with a professional (i.e. the PO, BCC community development worker or city councillor) trying to establish the initial contact. The response by the resident was more welcoming and open, rather than a response that implied ‘Why are you here?’ and ‘What do you want?’.

Holding pop-up stands and door knocking across the area was considered as having been *“a good way of reaching those more isolated”*. While most interactions were one off, it still proved a useful way of promoting the project and gathering ideas of peoples’ interests and garnering views from those who may not normally have engaged in community activities.

However, finding contacts to start the door-knocking model in other areas proved difficult, although this was thought to be partly due to

limited people resources within the project as the PO only worked part-time. No residents could be found in Hillfields ward who were personally and individually interested in door-knocking and the PO described the general response to her own door-knocking as ‘thanks but we’re ok as we are’.

Identifying a strong team of individuals to sit on the steering group was not as successful as hoped. With some additional people and time given to support and develop their capacity it was thought that this should not be an ongoing issue.

Comment

The reporting documentation prepared by TCF for BAB gave no detailed description of activities, information on numbers of attendees, the process followed, analysis by project staff or results/feedback from participants. In addition, there was no diary of events and ancillary activities conducted by the PO e.g. pop-up stand events. The descriptive information available was purely anecdotal, based on discussions with the PO and members of some of the groups. Perhaps this was partly because the reporting format required by BAB was cumbersome and did not integrate planning, activity description, quantification of outputs and reporting of outcomes.



YEAR 2 (APRIL 2018 – MARCH 2019) – SECOND YEAR REVIEW

The programme of events and activities organised by the project team based at TCF during the second year (April 2018 – March 2019) of the project was built on the experiences of year 1 and took on a more structured and strategic approach. Whereas the first-year activities had relied on ad hoc decisions based on door-step interviews and coffee morning chats, the second year moved towards building linkages with already established groups and implementing ideas for supporting older people based on their own ideas and interests. At the same time, the individuals who had become involved in year 1 were encouraged to continue their activities.

Perhaps this transition to working with other organisations was partly due to the low level of results and frustrations experienced in the process of door-knocking during year 1 and the negative effects this was having on the enthusiasm of volunteers. An additional and more complimentary reason would be that the ad hoc activities of year 1 were starting to produce tangible results and the project was becoming better known and understood throughout the Greater Fishponds area. Another thought is that perhaps established organisations and already functioning groups began to see the project as a worthwhile partner.

Mass media

The PO continued to maintain and update the Facebook page, and this was undertaken in cooperation with the Communications Worker at TCF. By the end of the financial year (March 2019) there were 64 followers (up from 21

at the beginning of the year) and the content was regularly shared with other popular pages in Greater Fishponds. It was estimated that the Facebook posts in quarter 3 and quarter 4 reached over 1,200 people.

Articles continued to appear in Fishponds Voice and in quarter 3 a What's On Guide was published that listed local venues where social events were held, and lists of activities related to 'Hobbies and Special Interests', 'Sports, Exercise and Dance', 'Social', 'Music and Singing' and, 'Arts and Crafts' that would be of interest to older people. The initial print run of 500 booklets were distributed through 13 outlets and ran out in a few weeks, requiring a reprint.

The idea of pop-up stands that was started in the first year was rolled over and continued to encourage interest. A total of 10 events were held at GP surgeries and libraries which resulted in around 100 conversations. The major outputs were in sign-posting people to relevant services in the community. One



encouraging outcome was that several enquirers (around 7) expressed an interest in volunteering for the project.

Work with volunteers

The project management decided that the investment of time in supporting individual and micro groups of volunteers was a major activity of the project. These volunteers were both individuals who had offered themselves as leaders and organisers or management teams of small clubs and social groups. It was thought that providing them with skills, confidence and linkages to others in similar situations would improve the likelihood of the continuation of the project after the funding stage.

The PO described her approach to community development as identifying key people in the community who want to make a difference but

» *"Maybe (they) don't know where to startI support them and encourage them and nurture them to do something It's not about me putting on projects and putting on activities, it's about me working with the people in the community to fulfil their goals and aspirations for their community."*

- Project Officer

As examples, the PO organised 1:1 sessions to encourage an individual to act as treasurer for a local food festival and for a recent retiree to become the organiser of a weekly coffee group meeting; the project supported individuals to attend ABCD training run by BCC; and, encouraged another enthusiastic individual to attend a national community organisers training event. TCF appeared to be willing to take some role in continuing these activities in the future.

In addition, the PO worked with volunteers who were already participating in committees of clubs for older people. For example, the Begbrook Retirement Club committee were supported to make a successful Community Kick-Start Fund application.

Project activities

Frome Vale

The door-knocking initiated in year 1 had started in Oldbury Court and the conversations with individuals and micro groups there generated two proposals for activities: a coffee social and a food share and an Eid celebration event.

The group that was established to organise a monthly 'coffee social' designed and prepared the printing of a flyer and trawled the area for a suitable venue. They eventually established themselves at the Little Hayes Nursery (in quarter 1) and the ensuing coffee group, was led, each month, by different people. At first, the group was sustained by a core membership of about 8 people plus a few new individuals every month. Following a 'dip' in attendance during the summer (in quarter 2), the group decided to meet in their individual houses/flats on a revolving basis.

The same group was involved in the 'food share and Eid celebration' within Oldbury Court. A team of volunteers worked with the PO (in quarter 1) who supported their application to Food Connections for a grant and were successful in obtaining £1,000. More than 80 local residents attended on 16th June and it was considered as "very successful". It brought together people of different cultures and different ages.

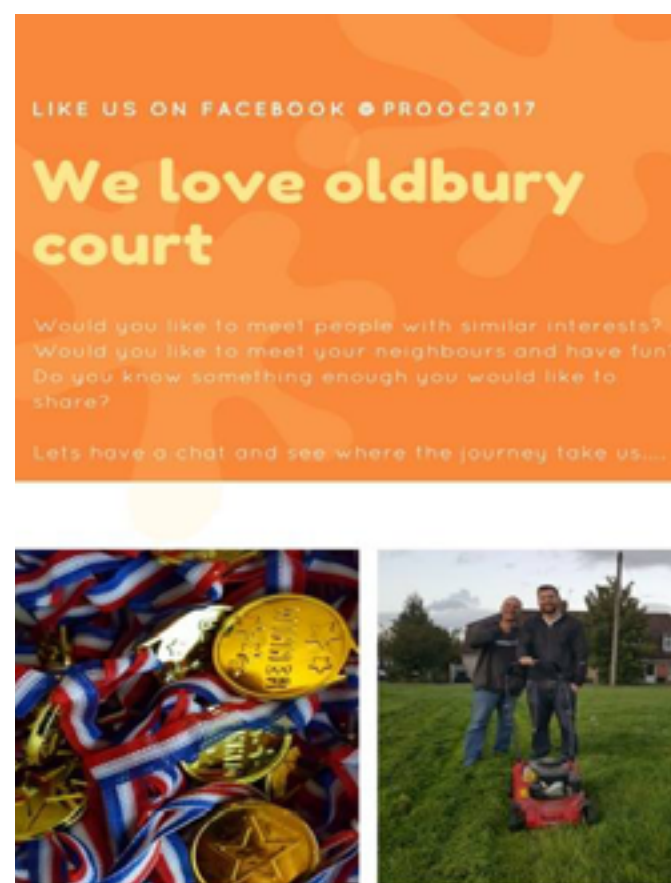
The Oldbury Court group then became independent of the project and established

a distinct identity calling itself 'The Peoples Republic of Oldbury Court'. They worked with TCF to apply for independent funding from Quartet (in quarter 4). At the end of the year they were in the process of discussing new activities and had produced their own newsletter with support from TCF.

During quarter 3, with support from the PO, Begbrook Retirement Club obtained additional Community Kick-Start funding through BAB for a fortnightly 'Soup and Pud' event. An earlier Community Kick-Start activity at the Retirement Club continued its programme of armchair exercises after the initial funding period. Two members were confident that they could manage the sessions when an instructor was not present.



Door-knocking in Symington Road had also started in year 1. This led to the formation of an active collaborative group that initially organised planters to be established in the road as part of a traffic calming measure. This was followed-up by play out sessions focussed on getting the involvement of older people; followed later in the year by a street party as a partnership between the local nursery and the project. A collection at the party raised money for tree planting in the street – to resurrect the atmosphere of earlier times.



Eastville

The door-knocking initiated in year 1 continued during quarter 1 and quarter 2 although the team was only 2 people and it was felt "there was limited success". However, the initial contacts provided an opportunity to stimulate the themes of a 'street party' and 'playing out'.

The PO worked with the members of the Eastville Community Network (ECN) and provided ad hoc support plus the offer of some formal training sessions on ABCD; the latter was not completed within the reporting period. By quarter 4 the PO had used these informal communications to link the ECN with the management of New Place – a local community centre. The PO offered funds to promote a community café and support some taster sessions of armchair exercises for older people. In addition, the PO encouraged the manager of the New Place to attend the East Bristol Community Workers gathering to raise their profile.

The Freemantle Road annual party was supported by the project and this led to play out sessions which encouraged the involvement of older residents.

The PO linked the East Park Residents Association (EPRA) with the East Trees Health Centre where there was space, at low cost, for occasional social activities. The initial ideas generated in quarter 4 were for a weekly informal coffee, chat and exercise group with some limited financial support from the project to allow the group to build up funds for the future.

The PO worked intensively with the Bangladeshi Bristol Women's group and this resulted in funding by the project for a series of taster sessions in yoga (8 sessions) and Zumba (again 8 sessions). All these events

were regularly attended by a group of 24 older women.

» "I used to get asthma – after yoga there's so much difference. I still have medication, but I don't feel I need to take it because the breathing is so clear."

- Participant at Bristol Bangladeshi Women's Group Yoga and Zumba class

» "Yoga makes more difference to my body – relaxing, moving better..."

- Participant at Bristol Bangladeshi Women's Group Yoga and Zumba class

Hillfields

Again, the PO established linkages with a local community organisation and venue, the Hillfields Community Trust (HCT) and The Hub. The trustees had recently acquired the building through asset transfer and wanted to develop the centre for all the community; the PO supported their work with older people in the community. During quarter 1 there was an event, attended mostly by people over 50, to gather ideas on what they wanted and what they could offer. The initial ideas included looking at funding opportunities for transport and generating links with other organisations that could offer walking sports. In quarter 2 the first event was held – a 1950s theme party – which attracted all age groups, particularly grandparents and grandchildren.

Continued discussions in quarter 3 did not provide any practical ideas for The Hub but an application, supported by the PO, was made for a Community Kick-Start Fund grant to purchase a kiln and support the costs of a programme of glass-work classes in quarter 4. This was not accepted by BAB because funding for the

capital equipment could instead be resourced through underspends in other areas of the project budget and underspends in other BAB activities. This interest in the arts expanded to include a series of water colour painting classes that also ran during quarter 4 and was financed by the individual participants and the good will of the tutor who worked for free.

Other events in the ward included a Christmas party at Woodland Court independent living complex run by two of the residents. The idea was that this would develop into a regular social activity for the residents.

Considerate Friends

Two additional volunteers were recruited during the second year. This established a team of 6, and four of these were active participants. Volunteers were informally interviewed and inducted into the role, plus attending training that followed the same pattern as that undertaken in year 1.

14 visits were carried out during year 2. The venues were Colliers Gardens, Fishponds Library, East Trees Health Centre, Brandon Trust Café, Carers Support Centre, Begbrook Community Centre, Eastville Park, Oldbury Court Café and park, Salvation Army, Hillfields Hub, Fishponds Health Centre, The New Place, St. Johns Church Over 50s group and Old Library. Each of these received a report with recommendations.

The group revisited Kingfisher Café in quarter 4 and found that they had continued to keep the tables as suggested from the previous visit, so that there is more room for people using wheelchairs.

The project coordinator emailed all the other places visited in year 1 to follow up on changes made.



A leaflet was launched in October 2017, which was updated in January 2018 with new language and an update of some of the places that had been visited. It was planned to update the leaflet again in April 2019.

Publicity in year 2 included an article in Carers News and an article in Fishponds Voice (April 2019). Flyers and leaflets were distributed to Fishponds cafes, libraries, the Vassall Centre, Beechwood Centre, Begbrook Community Centre, Downend and Fishponds churches, carers groups and events. Flyers were also handed out at East Bristol Community Development meetings. Online publicity included two posts on Helpfulpeeps, adverts on the webpages of DIY, VOSCUR and South Gloucestershire CVS.

Unfortunately, none of the Considerate Friends volunteers were available to attend the project steering group meetings, and so the Project Coordinator attended when possible.

The main challenge, as in year 1, was recruiting volunteers. This was mainly because carers have limited free time available; to address this constraint, the strategy that had focussed on finding carers and former carers from people who lived in Greater Fishponds was made more flexible and the project was promoted further afield. This resulted in one of the current volunteers not being a carer. There is a plan to recruit more carers and former carers in year 3 and some new ideas for this were built into the project plan. These included a monthly Fishponds carer's café at Kingfisher Café to help in the recruitment campaign. Additionally, the publicity at the start of year 3 will communicate *"how fun the project is and to emphasise more strongly what volunteers can get out of it"*.

Throughout the second year, targets were exceeded and double the number of planned visits were made.



YEAR 3 (APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020) – THIRD YEAR REVIEW

Staff changes

There were major staff changes both at the end of year 2 and during the first half of year 3 which significantly affected the operation of the project. The original PC had already been replaced in the summer of 2018. The second holder of this post also left and was replaced in February 2019. In mid-March 2019 the original PO left to take up a new job. Thus, year 3 started with both a new PO and a third PC in post.

Further, at the end of July 2019 both staff members (PC and PO) again left. For the PO post this resulted in a gap until 1st October 2019 when a third incumbent took up the post. Meanwhile the Operations Manager of TCF took on the additional role of PC in August 2019. The lack of continuity of staff, in addition to the two month gap between the departure of the third and appointment of the fourth PO, resulted in a considerable loss of momentum and a subsequent amendment of priorities from development work to the minimal maintenance of ongoing activities.

The PO appointed in October 2019 informed the CR research team that his priorities were to continue to provide support to existing projects if requested (although at the time of interview in early November he had not been informed of what budgets - if any - were available for these existing groups). He did not consider there were any new developments other than a possible unspecified one-off intergenerational event. The Operations Manager, in his project coordinating role, stated his aims were to ensure the groups and individuals the project worked with were informed and clear about what was happening; that TCF was stepping back from delivery, and, by end of March 2020, would produce a pack with practical guidance for distribution to the current groups. To the knowledge of the research team, this last was not produced.

Thus, since the end of July 2019, the effect of these major changes at TCF was that, according to the quarterly reports, hardly any identifiable activity had taken place and no development work had been carried out. However, there was a restricted number of projects that did continue thanks largely to the involvement of dedicated volunteers.

An overview of staff turnover throughout the project can be seen in the table below.

Table 8: Staff allocation to Greater Fishponds Community Development Project

| Staff | 2017 - 2018 | | | | 2018 - 2019 | | | | 2019 - 2020 | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|----|----|----|-------------|----|------|----|-------------|----|----|------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| Project Officer | PO#1 | | | | | | | | PO#2 | | * | PO#3 |
| Project Coordinator | PC#1 | | | | PC#2 | | PC#3 | | PC#4 | | | |

*Project Officer post vacant August - September 2019

Project activities

During the first 2 quarters a total of 15 pop-up events and promotional visits took place covering all 3 wards. The locations included Hillfields library, cafes, Pakistani Welfare Organisation, East Tree Health Centre and Oldbury Court.

Frome Vale

- ▶ The Community Kick-Start funded 'Soup & Pud' activity at the Begbrook Retirement Club continued fortnightly and became self-sustaining.
- ▶ The '50 Plus Coffee and Chat' group was also self-sustaining and continued to meet weekly at the Van Dyke Forum led by a volunteer.
- ▶ The original Oldbury Court group was independent and no longer in need of support from the project having applied for further funding from Quartet Community Foundation.
- ▶ Quarry House Care Home continued to enjoy regular visits from the Fledglings Day Nursery and, following the initial introductions and organisation by the PO again functioned independently of the project. The children and residents met in the main lounge but for those residents who are unable to get out of bed the children visited them in their rooms. The Care Home staff considered that the programme has made a massive impact on the wellbeing of the residents, "bringing joy and laughter to Quarry House."

In correspondence, the staff from Fledglings and Quarry House emphasised that they all worked well together, and this contributed to making the activity a success. This

intergenerational activity would appear to be an important legacy of the main project.

Eastville

Fitness and nutrition sessions for the Pakistani Welfare Organisation (PWO) were organised. This was as a result of meeting by the PO with the Pakistani Welfare Organisation, who expressed a wish for fitness and nutrition classes. Together with the PWO and the coordinator of the BAB-funded Bristol Meets the World project (run by Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Group), the three organisations worked together to organise a wellbeing taster day with separate sessions for men and for women, which attracted 30 women and 10 men. Following the success of the taster, the same groups continued to work together to arrange 2 separate men's and 8 women's fitness and nutrition sessions. A further 4 sessions for the men's group and 2 for the women's group were funded, the last of which ended in November 2019.

Hillfields

- ▶ Work to support St John's Church Over 50s group continued, including working with the church volunteer in planning activities and promotion by leafleting and social media marketing. The group included several vulnerable members with disability or mental health issues. Activities included a picnic outing to Blaise Castle, craft sessions and occasional pub lunches. After the departure of the second PO in July 2019 the church agreed to run the group as a church activity led by the church volunteer. Subsequently, they independently applied for - and secured - funding from East Bristol Partnership (of Anglican churches) and currently there is a core group of 6-8 regular attendees.

- ▶ The Watercolour Art Class, initially funded through the BAB Community Kick-Start Fund, continued for some weeks at Hillfields Community Hub with support from the volunteer tutor and voluntary contributions from the participants. A video case study of the group was made and shown on social media and the BAB website. The class continues but takes place at the tutor's home.
- ▶ Hillfields Glasswork and Enamel course was established at Hillfields Community Hub using the glass kiln financed through the project. A number of those attending the courses were over 50 but the Hub arranged that those attending the Hub for other activities had an opportunity to try their hand at glass activities.
- ▶ Eileen's afternoon tea with neighbours. In quarter 1, while leafleting and conducting other promotions together, the PO and BCC Community Development Officer visited a Brunelcare sheltered house and met Eileen, aged 86, who was housebound. Eileen explained that she would love to meet her neighbours and as a result both helped organise with Eileen a 6 month plan of fortnightly afternoon tea get-togethers at Eileen's home. Two neighbours came along for the first session and the afternoon continued fortnightly into quarter 2. In the third quarter Eileen's afternoon tea with neighbours continued but apparently not so frequently.
- ▶ A 'taster' session was funded and run for the Sims Hill Shared Harvest Gardening group of over 50s.

without any detail of either activities or process followed to achieve this end. In the fourth quarter TCF circulated an undated note headed 'March 31 sees end Bristol Ageing Better and First Contacts projects' a copy of which appears in the appendix. This was described by the PO as "a formal notice to put on to our website and social media outlets and distribute to our current contacts within the BAB project" (email from PO dated 24th February 2020) and advised the end of the Gt. Fishponds BAB-funded CDOP project and their First Contact service. The note thanked everyone involved and referred readers to the website for "the many success stories during these projects existence..." Unfortunately, the CDOP website was still advertising for volunteers to assist in the project as a 'Community Champion', a steering group member or in the Considerate Friends project. We are unsure who received electronic and/or hard copies of this notice.

Considerate Friends

The changes and then gap in staffing did not affect the work of Considerate Friends because it had reached a stage where it did not need external support as it was running satisfactorily led by, and based in, Carers Support Centre. The number of volunteers remained steady at around 4, although two were new volunteers; one replaced a carer who started a new job and another whose caring responsibilities took up more time.

Between May 2019 and March 2020 13 visits took place to the following venues:

M & S Café, Xercise4Less, Tesco Café, IKEA Café, Glenside Hospital Museum, Thingwall Park Allotments, Brunel Fitness Centre, Frenchay Quaker Meeting House, Stapleton Park One Café, and Staple Hill Cosy Café, Old School Surgery, Frenchay Village Museum and Beehive Café. As in the two previous years,

visit reports were sent to the PO who arranged for them to be displayed on The Care Forum website.

It was unfortunate that the plan proposed by CSC to prepare an 'accessible toilet map' was not followed up by the project.

Visits to assess public services were planned to finish at the conclusion of the funding at the end of March 2020. However, the monthly 'Carer Conversations' sessions at the Kingfisher Café were due to continue and be run by volunteers, with support from Carers Support Centre if need be. The majority who attended were over 50 and are very supportive of each other. The CSC lead for Considerate Friends considered the legacy of the project as twofold; the supportive relationships between carers and the significant improvements, albeit

small, resulting from the visit reports e.g. a café installed ramps to facilitate wheelchair users, park toilets had re-opened and a notice displayed in a café that music can be turned down on request.

Volunteers

The quarterly report listed 7 volunteers over 50 recruited in quarters 1 and 2; this included those associated with the Friends Ageing Better (FAB) group funded by BAB and managed by Age UK Bristol and held twice monthly at the Kingfisher Café. No volunteers were recruited in quarter 3.

Steering group

No meetings of the steering group were held in year 3.





Discussion >>

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

A key strength of the project in its first year was the PO's ability to successfully build relationships within the Greater Fishponds area. This was achieved by visiting local organisations, meeting people in the community and reaching out to local businesses and retailers. Although contacts made with the latter yielded fewer results, overall, this approach proved to be largely successful. However, building these relationships took time but establishing trust within the community was considered a key part of the project during the first year. This may, therefore, be an important lesson in relation to the time scale of future community development projects. There will seldom be an instant response from the wider community – even for an established provider such as TCF – and it may take many months for a new idea or concept to work its way into the established social environment.

In the second year it was clear that this approach continued to be a priority, perhaps with more success as more organisations began to see the project as a worthwhile partner.

Another important lesson that can be learnt from the process of relationship building is the result when the linkage between the project and the community is broken, even temporarily. The first and second PO achieved a successful handover and this resulted in both continuity and even strengthening of the linkages between TCF and the various emerging community groups. However, the real time gap between the departure of the second PO and the arrival and induction of the third PO, plus the lack of strategic continuity between the

third and fourth incumbent in the position of PC severely limited the chances of the CDOP project maintaining any relationship with projects which had been involved in the first two years or so. The few that still existed when funding ceased had achieved this through the endeavours of the initiating institutions and the energy of the volunteers and members.

PROJECT STRATEGY

The project had clear ambitions at the outset to recruit, train and support a total of 12 active members of the community to be 'Community Champions' within the three wards of Greater Fishponds to form a core group of volunteers to support community development activities. Unfortunately, this proved to be too ambitious a target, particularly as the earlier asset mapping exercise had not investigated the availability or willingness of volunteers locally. As such, there was little evidence that this would be an effective approach. Recruiting volunteers to the Community Champions role in the first year was therefore abandoned almost immediately and replaced with an asset-based approach aimed at developing 'active citizens'.

At this stage the strategy became a three-pronged approach:

- ▶ An informal process of volunteer self-selection stimulated by a variety of activities e.g. door-knocking, library socials, coffee shop get-togethers and one-off events. These provided an opportunity for individuals to get to know each other, generate ideas of what they would like to do as well as build individual

confidence to use and participate in already available activities.

- ▶ An intergenerational approach e.g. initiating links between care homes for older people and local pre-school nurseries to facilitate regular visits by the children.
- ▶ Stimulation and support for community hubs and existing local groups, including aid for the start-up of new ones where a need was identified.

The first PO worked with a clear asset-based approach to the project, with the aim of working directly with local groups or organisations to give them management support or to find out what local older people wanted and support the establishment of new activities. This was a particularly successful element of the project, and the first and second PO worked closely with existing groups across the Greater Fishponds area as a result. Amongst these were the Bangladeshi Bristol Women's Group, Hillfields Community Hub and Begbrook Retirement Club. The project adapted its approach over time to facilitating and supporting and a decision was made to focus on developing the skills of individuals and small groups so that they might be sustainable beyond the life of the funded term.

PUBLICITY

Generally, the approach to publicity appears to have been very effective. The team started with the production of several eye-catching flyers (as seen throughout this report), an active Facebook page and articles in 'Fishponds Voice', all of which proved to be excellent ways to promote project activities. In the second year, the production of a Greater Fishponds 'What's On Guide' turned out to be as popular as the

guides produced in other BAB CDOP areas of the City such as Brislington and had to be reprinted to satisfy demand.

DOOR-KNOCKING

Door-knocking was a key activity for the project, but successful outcomes depended on the area within which the door-knocking took place. For example, in Hillfields it was reported by local workers that there was a strong fear of crime in the area which was felt particularly keenly at night. Furthermore, the housing in some parts of the area is less dense and the houses are further apart from one another, which may also have led to a feeling of decreased security. However, in places such as Oldbury Court with an open housing layout there was a much better response to door-knocking, yielding good results that ultimately led to the establishment of 'The People's Republic of Oldbury Court' group and their associated activities. It should be noted that this is largely speculation, as any records from the door-knocking activity were not shared with the research team. It therefore remains unclear as to why it was more or less successful in some areas, or indeed how many residents actively responded to the activity.

A criticism that is often made of using door-knocking in community development work is that it can be notoriously slow and may yield limited results. It can also be very seasonal in terms of success rates – people tend not to want to open their doors in winter but can be more receptive in the summer months. Furthermore, it is an activity best conducted at antisocial times i.e. in the evenings which did not necessarily suit the contracted hours of the PO working on this project. However, the door-knocking was well organised, and, in some areas, it did result in a preliminary list of ideas for potential group activities. One

of the interesting findings from the door-knocking activities was that it seems to be more successful when conducted by local residents themselves rather than a professional, and fellow residents often evoked a more welcoming response from those visited.

The groups that were successfully established as a result of the door-knocking activity, including a coffee social and Eid celebration event. These were both initiated by the same group of people, so it may have been that they were just particularly active members of the community. They were well supported by the PO who assisted them to secure extra funding for the Eid event. This group is now a successful legacy of the project, running independently and with their own funding (as far as the research team are aware).

There was also an active group in the Symington Road area, following door-knocking there in year 1. The activities undertaken by the group were successful in bringing the

community together through street parties and 'playing out' events. As mentioned above, it may be that these kinds of intergenerational activities prove to be the most inclusive and sustainable. Similar activities took place in the Freemantle Road area of Eastville. Again, it is unclear what progress has been made in this area in more recent times, as there is no information in the recent (year 3) quarterly reports regarding this activity.

POP UP EVENTS

The various 'pop up' events mounted throughout years 1 and 2 proved popular and were believed to be successful in reaching some socially isolated older people. There was also evidence that this was a good way to recruit volunteers, as seven people came forward at these events to offer their time. No records were maintained of the numbers of contacts or the referrals.



CONNECTIONS TO OTHER BAB-FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Unlike other CDOP projects, TCF had the potential to benefit from the fact that they were also responsible for an element (promotion, relationship building with the voluntary/community sector, community development) of the BAB-funded Community Navigators (CN) work which covered the whole city. However, it is unclear whether there was any well-defined or sustained collaboration between these two BAB projects. There was, however, good uptake by clubs in the area in terms of applications for the BAB-funded Community Kick-Start Fund. Nevertheless, this did not necessarily benefit the right people in this locality, given that funds were awarded to organisations which were already established and operating on the outskirts of the designated Greater Fishponds area (the Begbrook Retirement Club (2 awards) and Stapleton Social Club). Successful applications from more centrally-based and accessible activities would perhaps have benefited more socially isolated or deprived local older people.

In year 3 the project submitted an additional Community Kick-Start Fund application to BAB for the purchase of a glass kiln and associated arts classes. This was rejected as a Community Kick-Start project application but money for the capital purchase was made available from the underspend on the Greater Fishponds CDOP project and other parts of BAB.

INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY

Very good progress was made towards establishing intergenerational projects in year 1, and there was a strong sense that this might be a way to make activities sustainable in the

longer term. The first PO considered that this was a more 'normal' approach to community development where all age groups in the community worked together to create, run and participate in integrated activities. She described her role as "*lighting the touch paper*" to get things going initially by signposting and connecting. However, once established, she considered that activities should be self-sufficient and not in need of her ongoing involvement.

The two links that were made between care homes and pre-school nurseries resulted in an on-going programme of collaboration. One still continues after a period of a year and a half and has had a significant impact on the well-being of the older residents. In addition, there has been a growing collaboration and understanding between the staff at the care home and the nursery.

STAFFING AND CONTRACTED HOURS

The potential development of the project was hampered by the limited extent of the PO's working hours (21 hours per week, supported by a PC working 5 hours a week). This constraint was exacerbated by the fact that sharing and learning activities with other CDOP projects consisted only of face-to-face meetings and these sometimes happened on the PO's non-working days.

This may represent some significant and wider learning about the minimum staff input required of organisations employing community development workers. Moreover, any limitations on the work due to the PO effectively working the equivalent of 3 days a week, may have been exacerbated by the lack of time input by the PC in the first two years of the project. The second PO considered that

the project needed a full-time worker, given the size and significant demographic differences between, and within, wards (see Geographical Area below).

There was a high turnover of staff across the life of the project, and losses at the end of year 2 and into year 3 had a major impact on the maintenance of the project and severely curtailed any expansion in activities. Whilst staff turnover is unavoidable in any organisation, in this case, as staff left the project, continuity and momentum were lost through incomplete records and, therefore, each new worker had to initiate their own ideas about how to progress the project. Furthermore, as community development work relies so heavily on relationship building (as was started so successfully early in the project) any trust between the paid worker and the community needed to be rebuilt with each successive worker. Good progress was made by the first two POs but unfortunately the gap of two months with no postholder in this role in quarter three of the final year meant that much of this was lost. Further, the third PO took up the post with just 7 months of the project remaining. Although he reported trying to contact some of the previously linked groups he achieved little response.

This perhaps represents a lack of contingency planning by TCF, and also inconsistent line management and inadequate handovers to new staff. The limited support from the PC role (which also suffered from high staff turnover) further hindered any progress. Consideration could also be given in future to the contracted hours of the role of PC, which consisted of so few hours that it left little time to engage with project groups. For example, the first PC stated that she didn't know what she could add by attending the steering group, although would have been happy to attend if asked (see steering group below).

Unfortunately, staffing issues also hindered this evaluation, as reporting of progress on field activities was inconsistent, and the research team, therefore, frequently found it difficult to evidence any progress.

CONSIDERATE FRIENDS

Considerate Friends was an activity that was sub-contracted to Carers Support Centre, based near TCF at the Vassall Centre. Considerate Friends worked independently of TCF, led by the same paid member of CSC staff for its whole duration. She provided regular reports to the PO/PC for inclusion in quarterly reports to BAB and for display on TCF CDOP website page. The project was widely publicised and was successful in its outreach work, as well as in recruiting volunteers (a steady four until the project end), despite them having caring responsibilities themselves.

Do you look after a friend, family member or neighbour who couldn't manage without your support? Then you are an unpaid carer.

Carer Conversations At Kingfisher Café in Fishponds



Would you like to take some time out for yourself? Come and have a chat with carers at the Kingfisher Café in Fishponds on the third Wednesday of each month from 2-3.30pm.

Carers Support Centre will treat you to your first cuppa each month. There's lovely cake available for you to buy at the café too!

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Carers Support Centre
Bristol & South Gloucestershire



www.carersupportcentre.org.uk

Carers Support Centre, Vassall Centre, G8 Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 2QJ CarerLine: 0117 965 2290
Registered as The Carers Centre (Bristol & South Gloucestershire) Company number: 3077108 Charity number: 1046328

Thirty three local services, including a local park, health centres, fitness centres and several local shops and cafes were approached, and a number successfully engaged with this part of the project. The Considerate Friends project lead expressed the legacy of the project as:

- ▶ The 'Carer Conversations' monthly café group, stating that "It's become quite lively and the group has started to really support each other really well.
- ▶ The small but significant improvements for older people made by local services as a result of the visit reports.

STEERING GROUP

TCF project bid stated that a key responsibility of the PC was to recruit and support a steering group of local people which would 'direct and monitor' project achievements. In the event, the PC did not participate in the recruitment process and did not attend any of the steering group meetings. Her view was that she didn't know what she could contribute although

she would be willing to attend if asked. The PO undertook all the liaison, recruitment, organisation and chairing of the meetings in addition to her normal duties. The first monthly meeting (held in September 2017) had good representation from across the community, including local organisations, residents, businesses and councillors.

However, despite the initial enthusiasm, attendance quickly dropped off and, unfortunately, there was no consistent attendance at any of the later meetings, which had to be rearranged on several occasions due to the lack of availability of attendees. At that stage, the decision was made to hold the steering group meetings as a quarterly, rather than monthly, event. Ultimately, the PO was never able to garner support from within TCF or identify strong local representation to drive this group forward. With the PO needing to concentrate on the day-to-day running of the project this shortfall in management contribution likely impacted significantly on the failure of the steering group as by year 3 all related activities had stopped.



REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The evaluation of this project has suffered from a lack of available project reporting information and as a result much of the information on attendance at activities discussed in this report has been anecdotal. It was very frustrating that records of specific amounts spent on each community activity were not required. All of this made it difficult to verify the extent to which the project aims had been achieved, although this may have been an indication of inadequate reporting requirements from the BAB team rather than the shortcomings of TCF. In addition, the standard quarterly report should have been supported by a monthly contact and monitoring meeting with BAB management. Whilst initial face-to-face meetings did take place, in the later stages of the funding period it became a phone call. The initial management meetings were not minuted and we are unsure if any record of the subsequent conversations were made. The CRs did not have access to any documentation.

A further observation by the research team is that it would have been beneficial for the project to report separately on the three project wards rather than a quarterly report that provided a succession of general notes on activities across the three wards.

PROGRESS IN YEAR 3

Achievements in year 3 appeared to be largely limited to pop-up events and promotional visits. Existing clubs and activities continued largely as self-sustaining entities with funding from elsewhere, including the Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Group and the Pakistani Welfare Organisation.

Eileen's afternoon tea with neighbours, although small in comparison to other groups, appears to have been successful in reaching a small group of socially isolated individuals. However, it is once again unclear from project records if this activity is ongoing.

The 50 Plus Coffee and Chat weekly group at the Van Dyke Forum continued to run independently and unfunded, which was largely due to the commitment and dedication of the individual who organised it.

Fortunately, the work established by Considerate Friends continued despite staffing issues as it was run independently.

PROJECT LEGACY

The staff changes identified above led to a complete change of focus in the last two quarters of year 3, with the current PO concentrating purely on existing projects with a view to TCF completely stepping back from any new elements of project delivery. No new developments were considered under the banner of the CDOP project and the aim was to contact existing partners, groups and group leaders to inform them that the project was coming to an end. It is unclear how much input TCF continued to have in the projects that were ongoing, given that they were largely led by dedicated community members, who aimed to self-source their funding and run independently. Other groups continued to run without funding purely due to the commitment and dedication of the group leaders. It is therefore unclear what the legacy of the project will be.

Terminal interviews with the current PC and PO at TCF revealed that "they intended to produce a pack with positive guidance for groups the project has worked with and on how to start

a group. We want to ensure the groups and individuals worked with are informed and clear about what's happening, that TCF are stepping back from delivery." The PC at TCF however decided, after liaising with BAB and Bristol Community Health, that there were a number of similar projects that were producing related 'wind-down' packs. "We decided to liaise directly with the groups we had worked with over the duration of the project and talk them through specific actions." The CRs contacted four of the remaining active groups but could not get any confirmation that any consultation or practical activity had taken place.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE AREA

The decision by TCF for the project to cover the whole Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) area of Greater Fishponds despite the Woodspring recommendations to target the funding on Hillfields ward spread the resources - 21 hour/week PO and 5 hour/week PC - too thinly. The three wards contained within the project are disparate, incorporating a wide range of ethnicities, cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, areas of deprivation and affluence, housing stock and age ranges. Covering such a large area on a small number of hours was incredibly challenging for the project, and both the quality and quantity of the work appears to have been affected as a result.



Conclusions >>

Our conclusions are based on interviews with paid project staff, participants and volunteers carried out at intervals during the whole course of the project up to February 2020, scrutiny of quarterly reports submitted to BAB and limited findings from the Common Measurement Framework quantitative analysis. Current salaried staff at TCF involved with the CDOP project were involved only since July 2019, and we were provided with limited contact details of ongoing activities. It was difficult in the last months of the project to make contact with many of the activities or groups operating in the first two and a half years in order to verify their current status.

1. PROJECT SCOPING & DESIGN

There were significant changes to BAB's original aims for the CDOP work in the Greater Fishponds area. BAB's invitation to tender followed the recommendation in Woodspring's commissioned report that 'Hillfields should be a specific focus' of the project due to issues affecting older people in the ward. However, TCF project proposal accepted by BAB placed no special emphasis on the needs of Hillfields and simply aimed to work in each of the three wards, which differed significantly demographically and culturally.

TCF's main approach to community development expressed in their project proposal also changed. Their submitted and accepted plan to recruit 12 volunteer Community Champions - 'In year 1 a minimum of 4 Community Champions working in each ward within the locality' - was abandoned almost as soon as the Project Coordinator and Project

Officer were appointed, for reasons outlined in the Year 1 - Project Strategy section of this report.

The original ambitious plan to devolve much of the active development work in each ward to committed skilled volunteers, trained and supported by the Project Officer seemed to recognise the need for local "active feet on the ground" and that the work would be "labour intensive".

The almost immediate rejection of the plan indicated a surprising lack of prior scoping to support the viability of the role of a 'Community Champion' and the reality of successful recruitment, in a short period of time, in an area already identified as having no recent significant funding, a dearth of community services and serious obstacles faced by older people wanting to participate socially.

The consequent need, in the second quarter of year 1, to totally rethink the key strategy inevitably used valuable time at the start of the practical work and demonstrated the necessity for realistic research and scoping in the design of major aspects of a complex project in community development. The disappearance of the proposed role of 12 skilled volunteer 'Community Champions' by the end of year 1 left the PO with changed priorities and a heavier workload. However, the name of the project remained, even though, as a description, it didn't represent the new approach, and may indeed have seemed somewhat daunting or meaningless to some.

2. PROJECT STRATEGY

The original approach was replaced by a more informal grassroots asset-based strategy summarised as developing 'active citizens' by supporting individuals and identifying what would help them to engage more socially in their community.

Reaching and Engaging People

The project used two main methods to reach individuals directly:

'Pop-ups'

'Pop-up' events held in libraries, GP surgeries and cafés etc. in all three wards up to quarter 2 year 3 undoubtedly reached residents who might otherwise have been unaware of the project. These activities resulted in signposting and useful conversations with residents about what sort of community action they would like to see in their locality as well as several offers to volunteer. It is very unclear whether detailed records were maintained, and therefore is not possible to establish how successful these events were in engaging people in further project involvement.

Door-knocking

Door-knocking by the PO together with two or three local residents began in the first year and continued sporadically until the end of year 2. As a method of community engagement, it proved to be a time-consuming and 'person' intensive means of getting residents to come together and required complex skills on the part of the worker. It was also difficult to ask residents with no recent experience of community action to get to know and trust each other, decide what mutual activity interests them, learn what practically needed

to be done to get it up and running and sustain it. It was arguably even more challenging when the aim was to involve lonely or isolated older people who may be more anxious about engaging socially. In practice, it is easier to get people involved in community activity when focused on a topic which has personal meaning or on something that rouses strong feelings within a locality, e.g. the closure of a local library or plans for multi-storey housing in a suburban area. Once people work together on such issues, they appear likely to continue to be more socially active when the original issue has been resolved one way or another.

Nevertheless, door-knocking in Frome Vale seemed to prove successful in one small locality, in not only getting a couple of one-off public events funded and organised but in sustaining a small social group which continued to meet up regularly - although small in number - and was understood to have become independent of the CDOP project. It may be no coincidence that the resident who took on much of the initial organisation of this group herself had a background in community development. One of the challenges of this grassroots approach was that not everyone had the skills, experience or confidence needed to take on the variety of tasks involved - completing funding applications, note-taking, basic administration, booking venues - or to contribute ideas or initiatives. Some training to develop useful skills and thus increase confidence can spread the ability and willingness to share responsibilities and avoid the need for one person to reluctantly take on the role of - and be perceived as - leader.

The door-knocking activity in Eastville failed to result in similar self-organising groups, with lack of interest by residents. In Hillfields door-knocking was abandoned very quickly as no residents were willing to join in. As a side issue the PO's experience was that the reception by

residents tended to be more positive when the door-knocking was carried out by residents only rather than professional community development workers, who were viewed with an element of suspicion.

Intergenerational work

The intergenerational work of liaising with a nursery and care home for older people to initiate visits by the children proved successful and continues to date, attributed in part to the staff from both organisations working well together.

» "It has made such a massive impact on the well-being of our residents, bringing joy and laughter to Quarry House. What has been working really well is every now and then the children will go around to see the residents in their rooms if they are unable to join in, in the main lounge...when they see the children visit it gives them such a lift."

- Care Home Activities Coordinator



Work with existing community organisations

The BAB quarterly report [year 2 quarter 2] clearly set out the basis of the CDOP project regarding setting up activities:

» "The Community Champions [CDOP] project is firmly grounded in Asset Based Community Development. The role of the project worker is about bringing people together and enabling them to identify the need and fill it. It is not about the project worker doing things for or to participants. The project worker has been asked to put on activities herself, but without volunteers to lead on it, this has not happened."

The liaison and support work initiated by the PO in cooperation with existing organisations and community 'hubs' provided useful networking especially with regard to initiating successful funding applications to get activities 'off the ground' such as art classes, a variety of health and wellbeing courses, lunch clubs

etc. The involvement and support of the project worker was welcomed and appreciated. However, the potential for developing work with older people in partnership with an existing organisation did not always materialise and needed to take account of - and was perhaps limited by - the needs, priorities, means and capabilities of the organisation itself.

3. SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of activities in receipt of initial short-term funding for components such as materials, trainers and room hire, depended, when funding ended, on enough participants being willing and able to contribute to the realistic costs involved; in some cases this proved not to be possible. Simple activities, such as coffee groups, that relied on the hospitality of the service provider and participants' individual purchases tended to survive. However, it did appear that basing such short-term funded activities within an existing community organisation tended to prove more sustainable as there was already a built-in, albeit it informal, infrastructure to provide support and administration.

The establishment and sustainability of an independent new group, whether based on a specific activity such as an art class or simply a social get-together like a coffee morning, relied heavily on a key person, a volunteer, willing to take responsibility for the organisation of the activity. The continuation of the 50 Plus Coffee and Chat group and the Hillfields watercolour classes without funding were good examples. But it raised the question of sustainability if that person subsequently opted out for any reason with no-one else willing to take over the role.

4. CONSIDERATE FRIENDS

The Considerate Friends component of the project was sub-contracted to Carers Support Centre (CSC) from the start. It benefitted from having a CSC staff member in the leadership role throughout the three years, which provided the stability and continuity important when working with volunteers. The visit reports were provided regularly and the subsequent take-up of suggested practical improvements by the service providers visited was a positive recognition and validation of the work of the volunteers involved. While CSC did not plan to continue the visits without further funding, the mutual support of the volunteer carers involved led to the decision to continue to provide minimal funding necessary and support if needed to the monthly café group for carers, which will be volunteer-led. In addition to the above achievements, its success was partly because the project had a clearly defined task and objective, an effective management lead and documented outputs leading to visible and practical outcomes. These benefitted both the carer volunteers themselves as well as those for whom they cared.

5. COMMON MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK (CMF) EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

From the start of the project it was felt that the design of the CMF evaluation forms was not appropriate for the initial grassroots activity, such as door-knocking, one-off events and library socials where attendance was intermittent. The forms were felt to be intrusive, took a long time to complete due

to their length, contained personally sensitive and potentially upsetting questions, and the complex negative wording of some questions was confusing.

By the end of quarter 3 year 3, enough forms had been completed to show that there had been a statistically significant improvement in participants' health using the EQVAS scale (based on 40 matched pairs). Although not enough matched pairs of forms had been completed to show other statistically significant improvements for participants, the CMFs showed the project reached people with an average age of 69 [age range 53 - 96] and with:

- ▶ Higher levels of loneliness than the UK average for older people – a De Jong Gierveld scale mean score of 2.41, based on 29 matched pairs (compared to a mean score of 1.60 for people aged 63+ in the UK, TNS Omnibus 2016⁶).
- ▶ Reasonably high levels of social contact with non-family members in the local area – a score of 7.08, based on 40 matched pairs (compared to a mean score of 7.36 for people aged 63+ in the UK, TNS Omnibus 2016).
- ▶ Reasonably low levels of social participation in groups/clubs etc. – a score of 1.47 out of 8, based on 36 matched pairs.
- ▶ Lower levels of mental wellbeing than the UK average for older people – a SWEMWBS scale mean score of 23.17 based on 28 matched pairs (compared to mean scores of between 25.20 – 26.40 for people aged 55+ in the UK, ONS 2015/16).

- ▶ Poorer self-reported health than the UK average for people aged 55 – 84, and similar health to the UK average for people aged 85+ - an EQVAS scale mean score of 63.85, based on 40 matched pairs (compared to mean scores of between 71 and 80 for people aged 55 – 84, and between 60 and 70 for people aged 85+, Health Survey England 2012). At follow-up approximately 3 months later, the scores had improved a lot, bringing it within the national average for this age group.

6. STEERING GROUP

Despite a broad representation at the initial meeting of the steering group it subsequently never attracted either a regular or a broad representation from the community. The lack of input or support from TCF as a whole and especially from the Project Coordinator - in spite of it being a specific responsibility of that role - was particularly disappointing from an organisation with long established connections to community health and care organisations across the city, and which could have provided a valuable steer and support for the part-time, contracted PO. The value of a supportive steering group for community development work cannot be over-emphasised: it can 'spread the word', provide experience and useful contacts, suggest ideas and validate the work of project workers.

Footnotes

6: A bespoke survey conducted for Ageing Better by national evaluators Ecorys.

7. STAFFING

As alluded to in the Introduction above and Section 1 Project Scoping and Design, there were significant staffing issues with this project. The decision to cover the whole NP area of Greater Fishponds, despite Woodspring's recommendation to focus on Hillfields ward, spread the resources - a 21 hour/week Project Officer and 5 hour/week Project Coordinator - too thinly. It did not consider the Asset Mapping report findings relating to the demographic, transport and other differences both between and within wards, let alone the geographic size of the area.

Community development work itself can be a lonely activity especially when starting 'from scratch'. Those involved benefit from networking with others in the same role, both in terms of sharing knowledge and experience and personal support. BAB did not set up networking meetings for the CDOP project workers until towards the end of year 1 of the project and these consisted of quarterly physical face-to-face group get-togethers. The PO reported that there was no sharing of reports of activities and results between the different workers at these meetings. Even then, the PO was not able to attend all these meetings, due in part to her limited hours. She described those she did attend as *"interesting"*, and especially useful in making links with the other CDOP workers but the outcomes of the meetings *"always felt like something and nothing"*. The addition of social media communication tools such as a WhatsApp group, an online notice board and/or a blog to promote interaction and discussion could have added value to the exchanges between the field staff.

However, the PO's achievements, working only 21 hours per week and given the perceived inadequate supervision and support in the first

year, formed a sound base for the work of her successor when she left in mid-March 2019.

Successful community development, especially the 'grassroots' approach used in this project, is by its nature, long term and depends in large part on personal relationships based on trust and the complex skills of the individual community development worker. The complete turnover of project staff members, twice for PO and three times for PC, coupled with a 2 month staffing gap between the second and third PO led to an end to any development work for the remainder of the project. From October 2019, according to the quarterly reports, there was little contact with previous or existing project activities other than a couple of visits and an official notice prepared for TCF website in February advising that the CDOP project would end in March 2020.

In short-term funded projects employing part-time staff it is inevitable that workers will start to consider more permanent job opportunities. The significant staff turnover in this project may also possibly be linked to other major staff changes in the delivery partner organisation itself. But in this case, the resultant loss of consolidation of work carried out in the first 28 months highlights that community development needs long term funding, continuity of staff and commitment from delivery organisations if it is to be viable and long-lasting.

Recommendations >>

REPORTS & RECORD KEEPING

To fairly evaluate a 'test and learn' project it is essential that both project staff (based with the delivery provider) and monitoring staff (based with the funding organisation) keep detailed records and reports of all their activities. This need was amply demonstrated by this project when, following a significant turnover of staff at the delivery provider, there was not a single person left with any direct experience or knowledge of the activities and participants involved in the first two years.

If the sustainability of those early ventures is to be evidenced, it is essential for regular contact to be maintained between the PO and the activity by means of reports/visits to provide an accurate chronological picture.

STEERING GROUP

For a steering group to successfully provide support and guidance to a local community project it needs to have members who can contribute the following:

- ▶ Bring practical experience of the activities to be undertaken.
- ▶ Be representative of the community where the project is based and/or potential participants.
- ▶ Have established links/relationships with potentially supportive key organisations within the community e.g. local authority, parish council, funders, networking or umbrella organisations.

These individuals need to be approached by the delivery provider at the very start of the project, before even paid staff have been employed, so relationships and the broad approach of the project can be established between staff and steering group members at the outset. This information and timeline should be provided by the donor in the initial project protocol.

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Appendix >>

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CARE FORUM REGARDING THE END OF THE BAB FUNDING PERIOD

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March 31 sees end Bristol Ageing Better and First Contact projects

The Care Forum specialises in improving the Health and wellbeing of people across the South West. We do this in 2 ways; by supporting local older people to stay connected with their community with our Bristol Ageing Better funded; Greater Fishponds Community Champions project. The other by our involvement in the Community Navigator Partnership. The Care Forum supported voluntary sector services to provide support to older people across East, Central and South Bristol, as a partner within the BAB Community Navigator scheme.

At Greater Fishponds Community Champions, we've helped people over the age of fifty to build connections and create lasting relationships by getting involved in their local community. By reducing isolation and loneliness, this helps to improve the health and well-being of our participants and at the same time, it serves to strengthen the Greater Fishponds community at large, creating a vibrant and thriving area for local residents.

There have been many success stories during this projects existence and you can find out more about them here; <https://www.thecareforum.org/bristol-ageing-better-bab/>

The project has ran for three years, and will sadly be finishing on March 31st 2020. The project was managed by The Care Forum. The Care Forum is part of the Bristol Ageing Better (BAB) partnership. Led by Age UK Bristol, the partnership has £5.9 million in Lottery funding for Bristol and includes 150 organisations working together to reduce social isolation and loneliness among people over 50, helping them live fulfilling lives. The Care Forum would like to thank everyone involved in supporting or engaging with these projects over the past 3 years.

Another service drawing to a close at the end of March is First Contact; a service which helps the over 50s access basic services and support in their area. People can complete the First Contact checklist through a number of means, including through partnerships agencies, online or by post. The checklist allows service users to check the box of any service or organisation they wish to be contacted by, with all forms being processed centrally by The Care Forum.

Some of the First Contact partners and their associated services include Age UK for financial advice, Centre for Sustainable Energy for energy advice, and Avon Fire & Rescue for fire safety visits. In the past year nearly 100 people around Bristol have been able to access basic services and support through this scheme.

The Care Forum continues to provide a wide range of services in both Bristol, B&NES, Swindon and South Gloucestershire – if you want to find out more, how you can get involved, and the difference we make, then please get in touch: <https://www.thecareforum.org/contact-us/>

