



The Village Hub

A PLACE WHERE WE MEET, CREATE, CARE AND GROW

The Village Hub 2023-24 Report

“I don’t know what I would do without The Hub my daughter has said that I’m now leaving the house” Pat

Our first full year after receiving 4 years of core funding from the National Lottery Community Fund has been a roller coaster of activity, meeting new people, deepening relationships, figuring out roles and responsibilities and meeting challenges, complexity and larger than life characters with humour and resilience.

It has NOT been easy, but it has definitely been worth it and we are hugely grateful to everyone in our community who has played a part.

Our Funding

Our funding enabled us to increase our staff from 4 to 8 plus 2 working once a month and one freelancer working on a separate project full time. This meant we could do a lot more of what we love but also mean that there were challenges with difference working styles and varying skills levels. We were able to work through this with our Coaching sessions which enabled us to learn and grown as a team.

“I loved the coaching sessions they taught me how to have meaningful conversations with visitors and each other” Jade

We are also following our values:

Collaborating with visitors to explore and reach their full potential.

Creating new way of doing things

Respecting each others values

Ensuring all our diverse **communities** are represented



Our Feedback

Measuring the impact of The Village Hub is essential part of what we do. We have various methods on how we do this:

Our Tablet

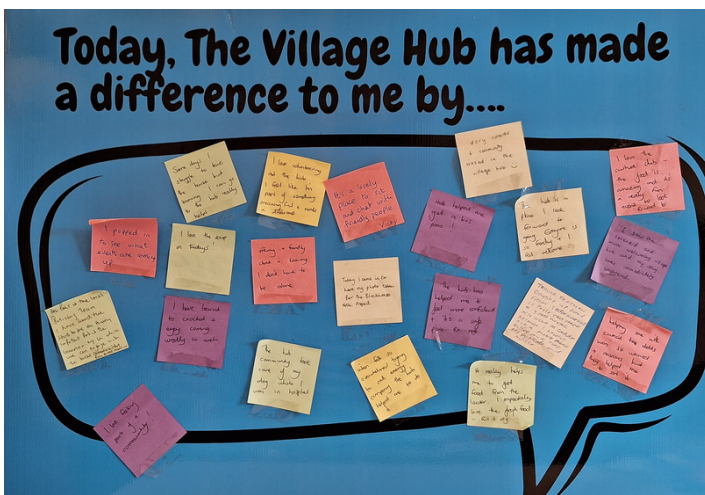
Quantative data is captured via our tablet -this gives a good idea of who comes into The Village Hub and why.

Our Postcards

Our postcards enable people to write how and why they feel connected, proud and involved in their community

Our Stories

Some staff and volunteers has been on a Researching Stories course this has enabled them to learn how to get richer learning and input.



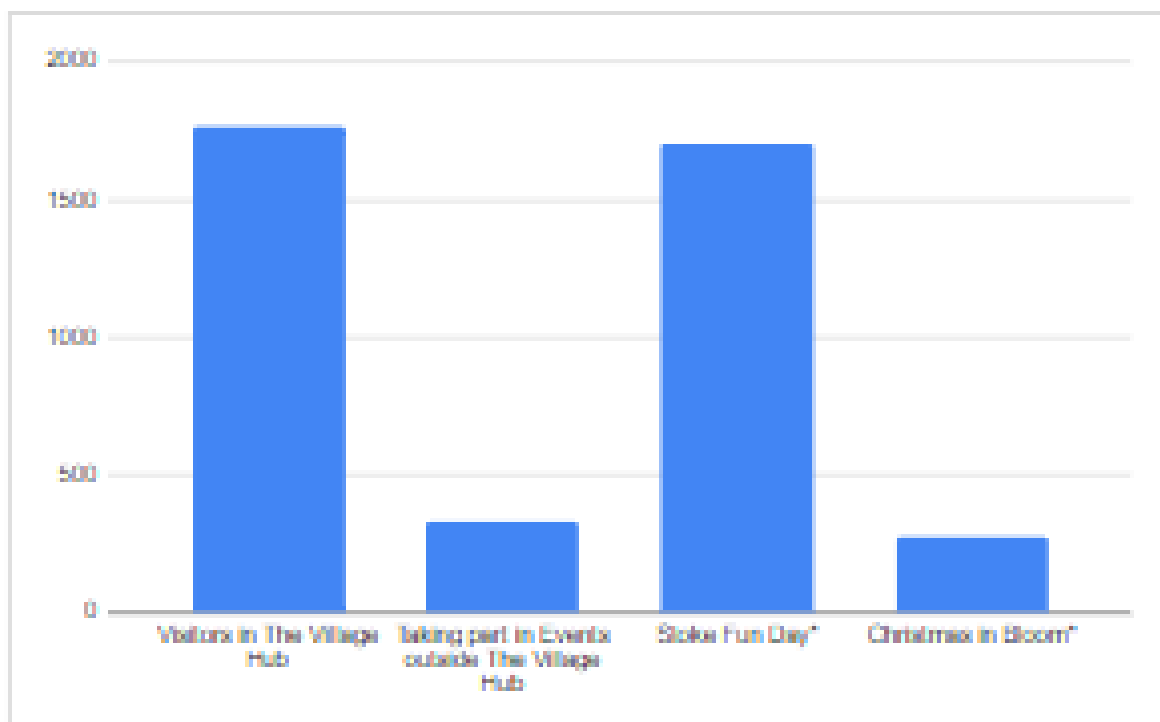
Our Visitors

Connections to The Village Hub	2020	2021	2022	April 2023 - March 2024
Members	0	58	30	160
Volunteers	23	60	84	95
Staff Team (p/t)	0	3	7	8
Board Members	0	11	9	9

Number of people visiting The Village Hub april 23-march 24

Visitors in The Village Hub	Taking part in Events outside The Village Hub	Stoke Fun Day*	Christmas in Bloom*	TOTAL
1785	334	1700	275	4074

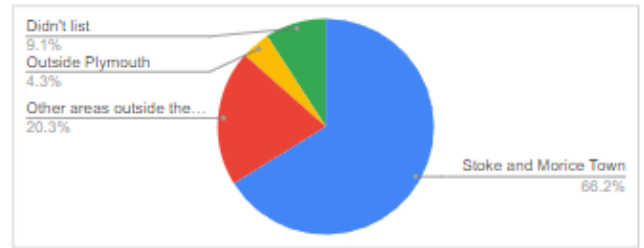
*Conservative estimate



Where people come from to visit TVH*

Stoke and Morice Town	1389
Other areas outside the above	427
Outside Plymouth	91
Didn't list	192

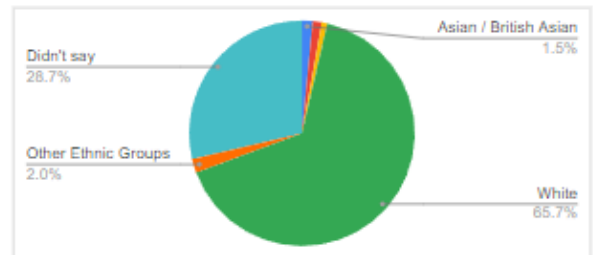
*Doesn't include Stoke Fun Day or Christmas in Bloom



Demographics of TVH visitors*

Asian / British Asian	32
Black / Black British	27
Mixed / Multiple Backgrounds	17
White	1379
Other Ethnic Groups	42
Didn't say	602

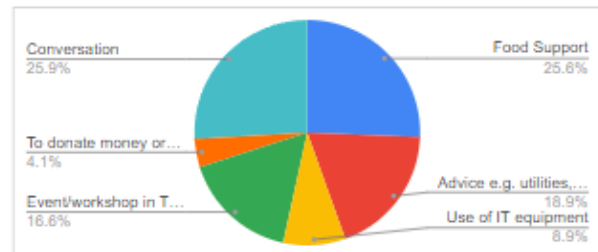
*Doesn't include Stoke Fun Day or Christmas in Bloom



Reasons Came into The Village Hub*

Food Support	452
Advice e.g. utilities, housing	334
Use of IT equipment	157
Event/workshop in TVH	293
To donate money or an item	72
Conversation	457

*Based on the 1765 visitors that came into The Village Hub



How people heard about TVH*

Visited before	1027
Passing by	193
Word of Mouth	207
Referral	79
Facebook / newsletter	93
Didn't Say	166

*Based on the 1765 visitors that came into The Village Hub



Our Achievements

We have run numerous activities throughout the year using NLCF Core Funding as part of our day to day working to connect with local residents. Some of our highlights are listed below

Reuse and Recycle event (with Oly)

The Village Hub

Total reach: 50 (many new people to The Village Hub)

Organised in The Village Hub with a member of the community. Collected material and held a quiz to see if people knew what they could and couldn't recycle. We also went to visit the Recycling to see how it was achieved on a big scale. Oly is a local resident and active retiree. She has a passion for recycling and wanted to share this with a wider audience.

"I learnt so much about recycling - so much more can be recycled than I thought. Such a useful session" Caroline



Jamm Inn

Stoke Youth & Community Centre

Reach: approx 16 people at each session

Jamm Inn came about as there was a lack of intergenerational activities - something that young and old could do together and learn from each other. The sessions are run weekly during term time. Jamm Inn is run by one of our Directors and their partner as volunteers as they wanted to incorporate their love of music and desire to have activities that young people would enjoy going to.

"I love playing along with my dad, its really fun" Tom



Love Your Park

Blockhouse Park

Reach: meet monthly approx 10 people at each event

This group was set up as a result of two volunteers wanting to do something positive in Blockhouse Park. Everyone is working and learning together - this year raised beds have been built to grow our own veg to share and we also have a compostor.

Jan and Rudi have been developing the Friends of Blockhouse Park Group, using the support of the Village Hub with the hope of becoming an independent group one day able to access their own funding once they have sufficient volunteers to be sustainable.

"I love being outside and making a difference to this community space. People are always coming up to us wanting to find out more". Rudi

I haven't been to Blockhouse Park before - what a lovely space and so nice to see it being used"

Safer Stoke Meetings with Councillors, Traders and The Community

Stoke Youth and Community Centre

Reach: every six weeks with between 10-20 attendees

These have developed out of a need for the community to talk about safety following some restorative justice conversations with tenants of a housing block who were experiencing anti social behaviour.

"Many thanks for this and the work you are doing." Sally Cresswell, local councillor

Community Fitness Event (organised by Keep fit with Jane)

Blockhouse Park

Reach: 10 sessions over summer with approx 15 people at each session

Held in Blockhouse Park with a member of the community who was keen to offer free classes to get people active in the area. They were offered free and without equipment and anyone could join in. We had a lot of people join that were not aware of The Village Hub - they were invited to come to The Hub afterwards for a drink and chat. Jane volunteered at The Village Hub by helping to deliver our newsletter. She has a qualification in sport and was keen to share then with the community and offer free keep fit sessions.

"So nice to see Blockhouse Park being used and such fun classes" Claire



Village Hub Open Day

The Village Hub

Reach: 37 + 6 staff members

To celebrate all our achievements we held an open day - volunteers were encouraged to bring along a friend and so they could hear about the work that we do. We handed out information on what we do to encourage people to take part. As a result 2 people became volunteers and we had food donations towards our larder.

"I never knew what was going on in The Hub, I've learnt there is so much. So nice to have it in Stoke and I will be coming to more events". Becky



Culture Clubs

Stoke Youth and Community Centre

Reach: monthly where a minimum of 30 people attend

These are really popular and attract the whole community of ages. This year's themes have included a Wassail, a bread swap, celebrating summer equinox and All Hallows.

"It has made a real difference to me by coming to Culture club. I like being part of the community and meeting new people" Sue

"Coming to Culture Club makes me feel proud of my community"

"Being in connection with a diverse group of people" Lindsey

"Its made me Integrate into the community and seeing friends" Ellie



Health Chats

The Village Hub and Stoke Youth and Community Centre when numbers get too high

Reach between 7 and 30 per session, running fortnightly since October

We were approached by Livewell to ask if two of their Wellbeing at Work support workers could run a drop in at The Village Hub. They had spoken to people that they work with and found that people were talking about The Village Hub as a space they use. This has developed with medical students popping into the Hub for regular health chats with the community and a Researcher into Dementia offering support and applying for a research grant to continue these equal interactions between community members and health professionals.

We also ran a sense making workshop with community members and invited statutory and health professionals to talk about social isolation and its affects on our health and wellbeing. This has led to more collaborations including a visit to all the pubs promoting the visit of the mobile health unit which was offering free liver scans. (They had a lot of take up.)

"It was great to chat about my mental health to the Livewell Team and what support I could get. Got me out. Reconnected me to The Hub, sense of belonging. Made me think about feeling well - positively." Jen



Craft and Art Workshops

The Village Hub

Reach between 3 and 10 twice a week.

These are run weekly led by volunteers and one of our team, Nic. They offer quiet spaces where people can engage in conversation over making stuff, which we have found to be a therapeutic space where deep listening and empathy take place.

Claire came into the hub as a very nervous volunteer but was keen to do something in the community. From chatting to Clare we learnt of her love of crochet. This has developed to Claire running the Crochet and Chat drop in's each week. This had enabled her to meet people on her street who she has become friendly with and to teach others a new skill.

"Made me feel less anxious - positive distraction from pain in my body" Claire

I love it today and realise I need to make more effort joining in the activities at The Village Hub" Veronica



Summer Fair

The Village Hub, Stoke Youth and Community Centre, Blockhouse Park, The Whole Street

Reach 1500+

This is a very well attended annual event which has also been increasing local engagement to help run it. This year one of our directors, Mel, has taken on booking local bands and musicians and has been working with the Scrap Store and other local charities to deliver free of charge activities. We also have built with more businesses, with free pizzas provided by a local Kebab House, plans for a fashion show organised by a local hairdresser and nail technician, and more of our local shops staying open and running their own activities on the Sunday of the event.

"Got me out of house was tempted to stay in but getting out and mixing has done me good." Matthew



Sarah's Labyrinth Event Stoke Youth and Community Centre Reach 60

During Covid Sarah used to walk past The Village Hub, slowly we build up a relationship learning that she liked writing poetry, this is now displayed in The Village Hub. We also learnt that she worked on the documentary for Labyrinth in the early 1980s. With support of staff she grew in confidence and put on 'An Evening With...' event - shared the documentary and her time meeting David Bowie and hanging out with members of the cast and crew. The event was at capacity with every chair used from both the Community Centre and the Hub.

"I was desperate to visit - I asked the team at the Life Centre Evacuation centre to help me and they got me a taxi! Bonnie - event was the same day as the bomb removal from Keyham"



Stoke In Bloom Throughout the Neighbourhood Reach 35 Gardens plus 139 members of the private facebook group

Kenny was new to the area and keen to share his horticultural knowledge (he has previously worked in Covent Garden). Kenny pulled together a few friends and Stoke in Bloom was created in 2022. This saw near 50 entries, the following year Kenny involved more sponsors and had more categories and judges promoting it.

We were successful in winning Silver Gilt from the RHS in 2023. This year (2024) he has involved a local person to help part time with promotion which has been a real asset to her as a young mum of 2. Stoke in Bloom is exploring becoming its own entity as its popularity grows and more people take on its running.

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Christmas

Christmas is a significant time in our community. For the first time in our memory we had a Christmas Tree in the newly developed Village Square Garden (planted and maintained by Stoke in Bloom). Stoke in Bloom helped source the tree and decorate it. For the grand light switch on we had nearly 500 people turn up. We ran a Christmas Market at the same time with free hot drinks, soup and home made brownies.

Suzi has recently suffered from ill health but was slowly recovering and keen to do something in the food line. She makes excellent brownies so chatting to a member of staff we encouraged to take this further. She went on a food hygiene course organised by the Hub and was able to sell them at The Stoke Fun Day. She also supported The Village Hub making soup and brownies for Our Christmas in Bloom event.

We also raised funds at the Christmas Market to help pay for a Christmas Lunch in partnership with St Michaels Church as well as money for hygiene donations and to pay for our Christmas Tree at their Tree Festival. Over 40 local people were fed for free at the Church, served by our team of volunteers.

We hand wrote Christmas cards to everyone at the meal and our regular visitors at the Hub, over 80 cards. We received over 30 cards.

"I've never seen so much food on one table!" Mandy



Food Larder and Volunteering

The Food Larder is open every week day morning for local people to access. They become part of a cooperative which entitles them to buy items on our shelves for 20p as well as access fresh vegetables and out of date food on our honesty shelves. This project is overseen by our new staff members Nic and Andrea. Andrea has developed from using the larder herself to volunteering to pick up from the local Coop every evening, to working for the Hub and running a small team of volunteers to help collect and redistribute food that would otherwise go to waste.

"I come to The Hub once a week and its a life saver for me and my family. I love that there is fresh veg outside so I know I can make something healthy for my kids". Joanna

Our Volunteers

Trevor

Trevor had been popping into The Village Hub to use the computer - from being very unskilled he is now able to navigate without help. He has also developed into being a volunteer - helping out when he is in and now regularly picking up food from Albert Road Coop twice a week, which supports Andrea.



I love coming into The Hub each day and I've got to know everyone. I started off as a visitor and now I collect the food twice week from the local coop. I really like helping out - it give me a purpose.

Chris

Chris came in to volunteer on a Friday and from conversations about his love of food he completed a Food Hygiene Course. He now makes soup for visitors and volunteers in the Hub on a regular basis using food from our larder and what we pick up as surplus from Coop. Chris also helps Andrea with pick ups.



I came to The Village Hub as a volunteer and through chatting to staff I told them about my love of cooking. I now have my food hygiene certificate and make soup on a Friday and even did a cooking demonstration at Culture Club. I also help with pickin up food. I love being part of The Hub.

Caroline

Caroline has been volunteering for the Hub for over a year now after a period of illness after suffering domestic abuse. She works with Andrea ensuring that food deliveries are properly packed away each week and has been sharing her love and knowledge of gardening in our courtyard garden. She also helps Andrea decorate the Hub for the seasons and maintains our ever changing window display.



I love coming into The Hub. I started off helping out with the food and with my love of garden I have been encouraged to help out in our Court Yard garden which I love .

Clare

Clare has been volunteering in The Hub for over a year - a quieter volunteer, but she has grown in confidence. She has a love of knitting and crochet and with her we have set up a weekly Crochet and Chat Drop in. This is a relaxed friendly session and Clare has shared her skills. The group are now going to make items to sell at The Stoke Fun Day.



Coming to The Hub really cheers me up. I have developed role and now teach crochet and the Crochet and Chat sessions. I taught someone to make a hat and another a bag!

Our Area

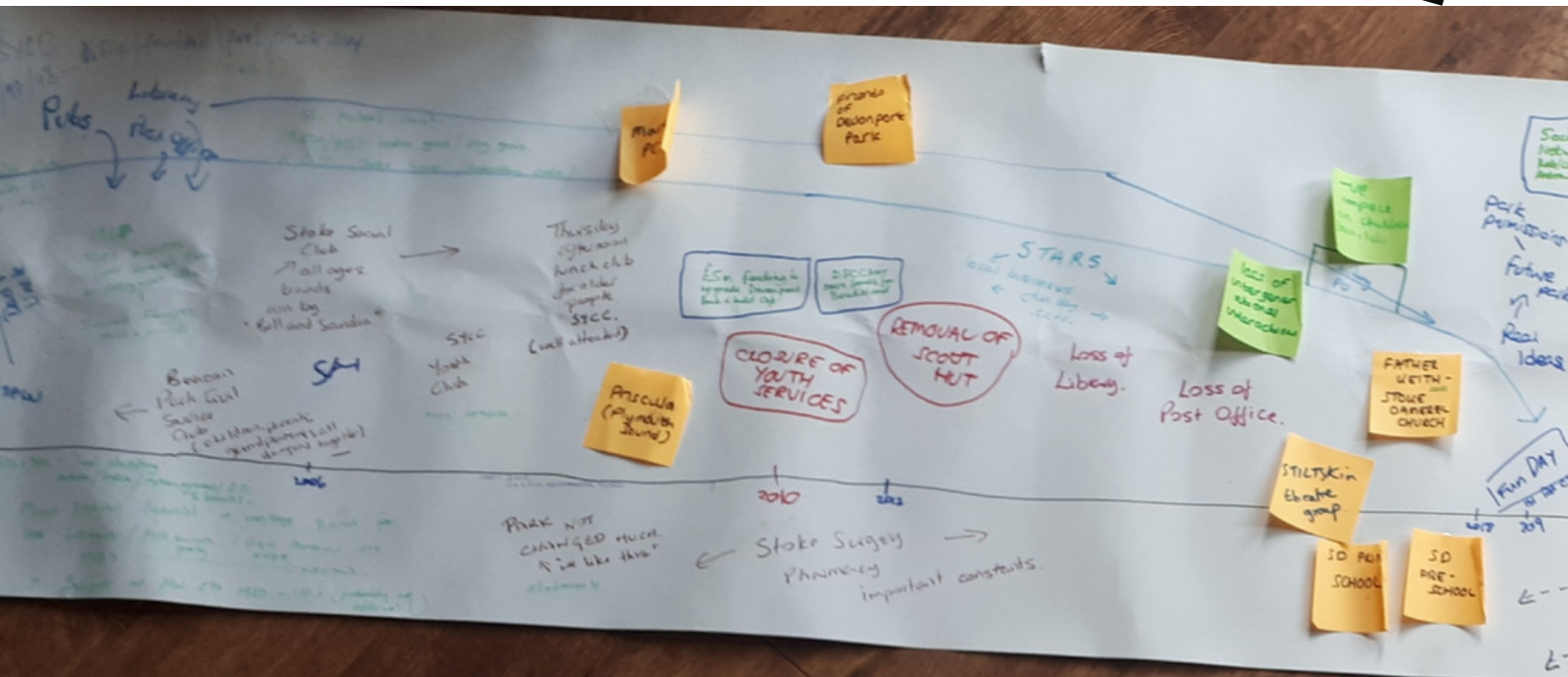


Mapping

We ran a ripple mapping exercise to determine what has come and gone over the years in Stoke and what difference the Village Hub has made. A total of 10 local residents got together to make their mark on the map, some who had lived here for decades.

Developing Spaces

We are aware that we are outgrowing our space. We are looking into working with a local church and with the trustees of the Stoke Youth and Community Centre to explore new spaces for community use in Stoke. Watch this space!



Our New Staff

The funding enabled us to increase our staffing team from 4 very part time workers to 8 very part time workers. In order to gel together as a team we spent our training budget on external team coaching. This has been a highlight and definitely something we are keen to repeat. It is so easy to revert back to doing things for or to people, bringing out the fixer parent in us and we have needed some deep skills to help us seek the resilience and wellbeing of others, especially those who have had needs met or unmet by services for a long time. It is easy to get sucked into old ways of doing things that treat people as problems needing to be fixed.

Here are some of our staffs' highs and lows of this year in their own words

ANDREA

I am responsible for the food larder and in doing so I have established a small team to support this role – Trevor, occasionally Chris, Ben, Julie, Caroline to help with food pick up. I've supported individuals to feel more part of the community and more useful and interactive.

I also manage the new pick up from M&S – working with the store, community connections and PCC officers.

I've Worked with Caroline (a volunteer) to look after food larder, also decorate seasonally for The Hub, this has been useful for bringing the community into hub. My window displays has included: Halloween, Easter, Christmas and Stoke in Bloom. This is something I really enjoy as I enjoy being creative.

I've also organised fund raising raffles, sought gifts in kind, prize collection and raising awareness.

One of my greatest achievements was our Christmas Meal in St Michael's Church. For this I planned the menu, shopped, prepared and helped cook for 40 people fed plus volunteers in kitchen. I never imagined that I would be able to do this and was proud of what I did.

Stoke in Bloom flower arrangements with community members – organised and worked with local business to train up people.

I've worked with the local Coops, both coop managers now come to Safer Stoke meetings.

My training and development has included: Safeguarding training with Changing Futures. Food Hygiene, Food Safety and coaching with Sybille which was great. I'm learning to build relationships and trust.

I've learnt accountancy requirements, banking, responsible for a till. Created a way of knowing which money went where. Learnt how to operate till.

I am working and understanding neuro divergency. Learning about ADHD and autism as someone with an ADHD diagnosis, and working with local organisations, peer led, and lived experience. Changing the phrase I'm a weirdo to I'm wonderfully weird because.....



“I have seen tremendous growth and development in my colleague Andrea. She has grown in confidence and being more able to manage her negative emotions and handle difficult situations more professionally rather than having emotional outbursts. She has faced a lot of challenges and really has grown so much! It's wonderful to see. I think we still have a long way to go to really get to know each other well as a team and learn to understand each other and especially to offer her the support and understanding she needs with some of the limitations she has but also to celebrate how much she has overcome.” Lisa

Lisa

Over the last year I have felt the benefit of doing training together as a team, starting to get to know each other better and building individual relationships. I have learnt more about our values and how to implement them and not just operate in my default mode of doing for/helping/rescuing. I have seen the benefit of coming alongside and supporting/encouraging rather than taking over and doing for. I saw the benefit of this when one of our volunteers whose a pensioner asked for support to get a gardening service to complete a job after months of no shows and taking a large deposit. It was lovely to see her taking ownership of the process when pointed in the right direction and how empowered she felt having resolved it herself. If I had done it for her, she would not have had that feeling of achievement or empowerment.

I have also seen the benefit of changing larder to paying for items. I was against this change but now see the benefit of it. People feel less ashamed to access the larder now that they are paying for items. It has also deterred others from hoarding and taking much more than they really need. Much more in line with our values of doing with not for.

We would benefit from spending more time together socially as a team too. To build relationships and understanding of our differences, strengths and weaknesses. My support role varies tremendously. I have helped a widow with 5 children to access emotional and practical support and assist her in applications in getting support for her children with additional needs. She is a very strong and capable woman who just needed some encouragement and someone to point her in the right direction. And to have someone just to listen and remind her how amazing she truly is!

I have come alongside others with debt applications, legal issues with energy companies, council tax, applying for bus passes, DLA, PIP, ESA and accessing various other support services, other food banks etc.

I also have just been a listening ear, offering emotional support or just go for a walk or a cuppa to volunteers and community members that pop in or are regulars. I have also been supported by colleagues and I have offered support as well.

I have accessed Safeguarding training, energy advice training, coaching training and have other training coming up to enable me to grow in my role and understanding of myself and others. Debt, Loan Sharks, Alcohol Awareness

Nic

I started working at the hub just under a year ago and feel my role has grown and expanded in ways that were not expected.

Initially I was taking care of the food larder and other aspects of food at the hub, such as networking, along with Andrea. It became apparent quickly that this had become established in its own routines with Andrea and other volunteers and therefore I began to get creative with my role and I looked for other opportunities within the hub.

We began sessions with local CIC JarSquad in the hopes to engage local people in the community to preserve foods. It started off very slow, but I have recently begun talking to volunteer Jan Ward to offer a seasonal Jarsquad in Stoke. We are aiming for four sessions this year and it was my first financial proposal to the hub to help support our venture. It gave me the confidence to think more seriously about proposals and I would like to move forward applying for funding for other areas. I had a brief input at Culture Club where I offered support to help with preparations and posters for the events - my personal circumstances changed and therefore I couldn't continue working Saturdays. On the plus side it enabled me to mix with different people and work on personal relationships (good and bad) which ultimately taught me a lot about myself - which alongside the coaching sessions we had with Sybille at the time, helped me step back and take in other people's situations and perspectives, as well as honouring my own boundaries.

Helping design the newsletter, staff lanyards and logo for Stoke In Bloom felt really great. Being a highly creative person this lends itself more naturally to my abilities - but it felt really good to start showing the side of my personality and life to my colleagues. Selling my own creations at the Christmas Market encouraged local business Flower Fayre to sell some of my pieces in the shop - another good feeling.

I have put in an initial proposal for a startup group called Stoke Lunch Box where myself and local resident Suzi would like to encourage people to eat healthy and delicious meals. This is at a premature stage but is moving forward with the hope of beginning early summer. A funding bid to Plymouth Culture was submitted but wasn't successful, however we plan to persevere.

On a Monday afternoon I facilitate a quiet group for a couple of hours at the hub, where quieter members of the hub have a chance to craft, read or talk about their lives. It's aimed at those who don't feel as vocal, or confident to be around larger groups or louder people. It's an invaluable part of my week - mainly as I am quieter than my colleagues - but I have learned more about those that come in the short space of two months than I have since I started.

More recently I have signed up for Adult Safeguarding training and Reflective Practice training.

There have been a few challenges, mainly regarding how we approach things as a team and individually. The coaching sessions we had helped with this a lot, as we learned a lot about each other's strengths and weaknesses. It became clearer at the time where we could fill the 'gaps' and lean on each other when needed.

As a team member I feel strongly that my 'quietness' is my strength. It enables me to remain calm and make more considered decisions. Although this may be, at times, perceived as benighted, I would like to think that my personal boundaries have gained me the respect of my colleagues. I will always offer my support where I can to everyone I come across at the hub, but never to the detriment of my own mental or physical health.

Overall I feel absolutely proud to work for the hub, I feel fully supported, cared for and trusted.





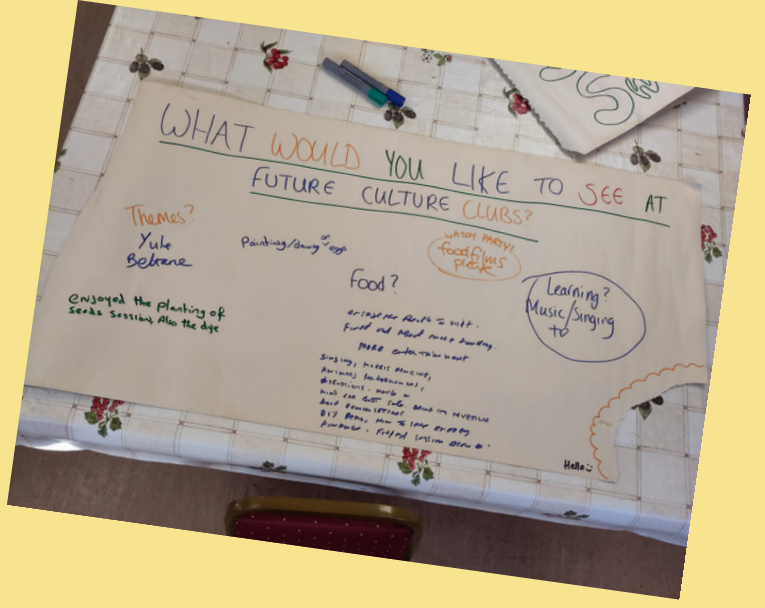
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WHERE WE CREATE, CARE & GROW

Our Year in Photos









COMMUNITY
FUND