

Dunton Green Annual Report



1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Produced by: Dunton Green Community Development Officer
August 2020

Acknowledgements

Sevenoaks District Council would like to thank the Dunton Green community and Dunton Green Parish Council for giving the Council and other partners the opportunity to be part of this community project. We would like to thank the Cabinet Member and Cllr Brown and Cllr Bayley for their support. We would also like to thank the project's funders, which includes Berkley Homes, Kent Sport, Kent Shed, Kent Police (Diversionary Fund) and Dunton Green Parish Council.

Contents

Introduction	4
Background.....	4
Aims of the Project	4
Previous Reports	4
Project Updates.....	5
Basketball Camp.....	5
Prices Wood Biking Project	6
Art Project	8
Ryewood Bootcamp Fitness Class.....	10
Summer at the Pavilion - Dunton Green Village Fete	11
Youth Street Dance	12
Easy Netball.....	13
8-12's Project.....	14
Over 55's Social Club	17
Project and Partners Support.....	18
Overall Evaluation.....	19
Community Feedback	20
Conclusion	20
Recommendations.....	21

Introduction

This final annual report covers the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 for the Dunton Green Community Project. The report focuses on the sustainability of the project's initiatives as well as providing an update of the successes from the final year of the project. This year's work has involved extensive sustainability assessments and a flexible approach to planning initiatives to ensure that the project has a long lasting impact on the community of Dunton Green.

Background

In 2009, Berkeley Homes was granted planning permission to develop the old West Kent Cold Store site in Dunton Green. This, along with subsequent amendments, resulted in permission to build up to 500 new homes and 4500sqm of commercial space.

The development was subject to a Section 106 agreement. Members agreed, at Cabinet on 6 December 2012, that a proportion of the Dunton Green Section 106 funding would be used to fund a Community Development Officer initially for 3 years. The officer would work with the existing and new communities to identify community need and any specific services that should be provided. For example, youth work and provision for teenagers, social opportunities for older residents, working with new residents to bring the existing and new communities together, to assist in crime prevention and anti-social behaviour and to maintain a good local environment through community pride.

Wherever possible this project would endeavour to make links with other service providers to lever in additional funding for the community.

Following the decision by the Portfolio Holders of Housing and Health and Economic Development & Community Development, it was agreed to use the Section 106 monies to extend the Community Development Project in Dunton Green until 31 March 2020.

Aims of the Project

- To bring the existing and new communities of Dunton Green together.
- To identify and respond to the needs of the local community.
- To enable the community to continue this work after the end of the project.

Previous Reports

The Dunton Green Mid Project Report July 2015 to December 2016, (published 2017), outlined the project progression from its initial stages of when the Community Development Officers were appointed (job share) through to the mid-point of the original project.

A subsequent Annual Report was produced covering the period from January 2017 to March 2018 due to the successful application to extend the project until March 2020. A successive Annual report was produced to cover the important successes and development from 1 April 2018 report to 31 March 2019.

Project Updates

Basketball Camp

One of the outcomes from the successful basketball taster sessions during Summer Activities 2018 was the demand for regular community basketball sessions on recreation grounds that are suitable for all abilities. As a result Sevenoaks District Council Community Development Officers launched a Community Basketball project in partnership with Sevenoaks Suns basketball club.



The aim of the project was to increase interest and involvement in basketball for young people in Dunton Green aged 11 - 14 years old. It was also to ensure that young people make best use of the facilities available at the Multi-Use Game Area (MUGA). The funding for the project was twofold; Community Development Officers were awarded a £427 grant from Kent Sports towards the project and additionally used Section 106 money towards publicity of the project.

The Basketball camp ran for consecutive 14 consecutive weeks, from the 29 April to the 29 July 2019, on Mondays from 5pm-6pm. Sessions were publicised through the Dunton Green Parish Council newsletter and website, through our own Facebook, Twitter, website and magazine, Sevenoaks Chronicle, local Facebook groups in Dunton Green and leaflet delivery to every household in the Parish.

Challenges

Following the success and positive feedback from the community on the original project, we were planning to extend these sessions during August and September 2019. However we were unable to secure the coaches from the Sevenoaks Sun Club, due to summer holidays and their availability. The Community Development Officers liaised with alternative coaches from the local area by contacting Bromley, Dartford, and Bromley Pythons basketball clubs. We then successfully partnered with Maidstone Panthers

basketball club to ensure that we sustained a pool of available coaches for the project.

The other challenge was a regular marketing strategy for the new initiative. Originally the club was responsible for promotion and advertising of the sessions as part of their community outreach strategy, which was inconsistent. As a result the Community Development Officers developed and maintained the publicity of the project through press releases in local magazines and through social media platforms.

Sustainability

Following feedback from Community Development Officers and the club, Dunton Green Parish Council is keen to explore an opportunity to support the community basketball sessions going forward providing a suitable coach is available. Therefore SDCs Community Development Officer will source a new provider to continue with the project in spring 2021, due to current lockdown restrictions.

Prices Wood Biking Project

The impetus for this project was born out of 2018 community consultation asking local residents what projects they would like delivered in the village during the coming year. Cycling was determined as a priority.

Price's Wood, near Pounsley Road, was identified by Dunton Green Parish Council as a space that could accommodate a bike trail. They had recently been gifted the woodland by Mr Price for it to be cared and maintained for the benefit of the local community.

The woodland, in the main, had been left to its own devices prior to this change in ownership. Brambles had overgrown so much they had a strangle hold on the wood, some trees had become unhealthy and therefore a potential risk. The abandoned woodland was a hot spot for fly tipping and dog fouling.



Sevenoaks District Council, in partnership with Dunton Green Parish Council and Live Biking devised a project that would bring the woodland back to health and provide it with a new lease of life via a bike track for young people and families to enjoy. The bike trail sits within the natural environment and designed to be in keeping with the woodland as possible.

The wood has the benefit of a Tree Preservation Order, so we worked with a tree specialist to best understand the work required to make the wood safe and to improve its health and longevity. Following a successful application, the trees have been taken care of by a specialist. The brambles cut back to a boarder that allowed light to get to the woodland floor and encourage native flowers to bloom in the spring. We also cleared off all the rubbish; from glass, dumped paint pots, a tyre, many bricks, an abandoned wheel barrow and a shopping trolley to name just a few items and then built in community use in the shape of a bike trail.

Making the bike trail

Thirteen volunteers from the local community attended the two day bike trail 'build' on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 October 2019. Despite the wet weather, it was a wonderful couple of days and saw Price's Wood transformed into a new community asset for the village. Community Development Officers were heartened to receive warm words of encouragement from some of the Ryewood residents who popped over during the 'build' days to see what was happening.

Embedding the trail into the village

As part of ensuring this new asset is a positive addition to the village the project team committed to delivering some organised sessions with local young people. We had planned to run the activities below during February and March 2020. Sadly we have had to postpone this because of the wettest winter in recent memory and then due to the coronavirus. Live Biking is still committed to delivery these activities and they will be advertised locally by Dunton Green Parish Council. However, the trail is regularly used by the community.

Explorer Scout Sessions	10, 11 February 2020 8.00 - 9.30	Delivering biking sessions for this local community group
'The First Ride'	Monday 17 February 2020 1.30 - 3.30	An open invitation to the Dunton Green community to come and ride the new bike trail.
Pre-Schooler Sessions	Monday 9, 16, 23 March 2020 10.00 - 11.30	For parents/carers and their pre-school children to ride the track on bikes or balance bikes.

Strengths

Our success during this project was our strength of partnership between Sevenoaks District Council, Dunton Green Parish Council and Live Biking. This cohort worked in unity to address any challenges together and pushed through to successfully providing the village with a new community asset and public amenity space.

Challenges

There were three main challenges the project team worked together to address; one was working in harmony with the woodlands tree preservation order to ensure the wish for the project was possible in the first place.

The second challenge centred on engagement with the neighbouring community and addressing any fears or concerns some of them initially felt, around possible antisocial behaviour by opening the wood for public and promoting the asset to local community. This was overcome by holding a site meeting with residents, Parish Council, Live Biking and SDC. The meeting was well attended and residents were able to air their concerns and were reassured and many of them use the trail with their families and there have been no reports of anti-social behaviour in the area.

Finally, the long wet winter meant the bike trail took longer than planned to bed in.

Sustainability

The woodland and bike trail are under the care of Dunton Green Parish Council and they have maintenance agreements in place to ensure both are looked after. The project team are committed to maintaining an overview of the site for the first six months to ensure it is being treated with respect and care whilst this new asset is embedded into the village. There have been positive signs that people have been using the trail for informal use and the trail is settling down well.

The postponed organised biking sessions (listed above) will be delivered as soon as it is safe to do so. As the sessions were planned and pre booked with participating organisations, we have agreed with Live Biking and Dunton Green Parish Council (DGPC) that the instructor will liaise directly with DGPC to provide a new dates for the sessions as soon as social distancing rules will ease to allow groups larger than 6 people to train outdoors.

The idea for the project came from feedback following the community consultation in 2018 about the desire to have an intergenerational project for the local community focusing on an arts & crafts activity.

Strengths

The half term activity at the Dunton Green Pavilion was also very successful with a myriad of activities for families to get interactively involved in art, including residents

from Ryewood development. Feedback received indicated requests for there to be more activities like this and asked if similar projects could run every holiday. These comments have been passed on to the Parish Council to explore such opportunities.

Challenges

Unfortunately, for the first Tea, Talk and Draw session the turnout was low, this was attributable to poor weather conditions, however this session was re-arranged and more people attended.

Sustainability

The main aim of the project was to create a long lasting community mural that can be enjoyed by all. The Community Development Officers have ensured that the tiles are weather and graffiti proof to help preserve its longevity. We have gifted the mural to Dunton Green Primary School.

Ryewood Bootcamp Fitness Class

The idea for this project came out of the partnership work with the Parish Council as a way to promote the local sport facilities at their Recreational Grounds, including the Pavilion to new Ryewood residents. The project is also aimed to enhance the cohesion of the communities in Dunton Green through a shared sporting interest.

Community Development Officers worked with local fitness provider, Jacqueline Bowen, Backyard Boot Camps, to encourage Ryewood residents to join the regular Boot Camp classes in Dunton Green. The original idea was to run a series of free taster sessions for the residents at Ryewood development. This approach was successfully used previously with the Tai Chi project to engage with new audience at Ryewood. The sustainability plan was to offer the participants to join the existing classes on the Dunton Green recreation ground at a discounted rate following the taster sessions.

Unfortunately, Berkley Homes denied permission to use the land at Ryewood to run any taster sessions, due to lack of space and Health and Safety concerns. Instead Community Development Officers had to re-devise the project and offered an opportunity to all Ryewood residents to join existing classes at a highly discounted introductory rate.

2 FREE bootcamp sessions
Exclusive offer to all Ryewood residents

New customers can book a first block of 6 sessions for only £28
Usual price £48 | Offer expires on 15th of March 2020

All equipment is provided just bring your determination and a sense of humour!

Where & when
MUGA on Recreation Grounds
Monday to Thursday 9.15am - 10am
Saturday 8am - 8.45am

Hurry limited time offer!
Book you free trial now

How to book
Contact Jacqueline Bowen*
T: 07803 050431
E: enquiries@backyardbootcamps.co.uk

BackyardBootcamps

* Level 3 qualified and insured personal trainer and bootcamp instructor
(Completion of a health questionnaire will be required pre-participation)

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Sevenoaks
DISTRICT COUNCIL

There have been some interest to this scheme from the residents however there have been no bookings made from interested participants on the project.

One of the factors that adversely impacted the initiative was that there was a perceived opinion among the beneficiaries that the sessions should be offered free of charge, as this initiative was part of a Community Development project funded by the Section 106 contribution. Another reason was the altered the model of the initial project where participants were required to join an established class with other regular clients, this was perceived as a barrier to joining a fitness class.

As a result any future similar initiative with a new group of beneficiaries should offer free taster sessions to draw the interest and appetite prior merging it into sustainable sessions.

Summer at the Pavilion - Dunton Green Village Fete

One of the outcomes from the consultation 2018 was a request to have a community event to bring everyone in Dunton Green together. As a result, Community Development Officers organised a village fete called 'Summer at the Pavilion' with help from local volunteers, existing community groups and partner organisations. It was held on the Recreation Grounds on Saturday 29 June 2019 with access to the Pavilion which helped to emphasise these facilities to local residents.



The main purpose of this event was to bring the community together and enhance cohesion within the community particularly with residents from Ryewood development. It was also an opportunity to raise an awareness of local voluntary groups, services and businesses. Wider purposes of the event was to use contact with the community to investigate an appetite for additional projects and initiatives.

The 'Summer at the Pavilion' event offered plenty of leisure and social opportunities for the residents, more than 20 stalls with information and support, food and drinks and various activities including; a bouncy castle, circus skills workshop, climbing wall.

Community Development officers ensured that the format event kept informal and

diverse range of stall holders would appeal to wider community of all ages, including a gentle chair exercise demonstration with instructor, Sue Larken. During the event live music performed by Foxy Lauz and the Hounds of Sound and Dunton Green Youth Street Dance Crew entertained guests by performing some of their well-rehearsed R&B medley.

The event was a great success, with glorious sunny weather and nearly 300 attendees, the majority of them being local residents, including families from the Ryewood development. Community Development Officers engaged directly with 250 people at the event.

This event offered small local charities and voluntary organisations a chance to fund raise much needed funds and raise awareness of their work to wider audience. Sevenoaks District Council also donated the proceeds from the hog roast to Dunton Green Primary School's PTA. This meant £221.00 went to benefit the local school.

Youth Street Dance

The Youth Street Dance project, which was launched in 2017, has been growing from strength to strength over the past year. In early spring we had received great news that the project's volunteer instructor was expecting a baby in September 2019.

The instructor was keen to continue to deliver the sessions as normal until end of summer term to minimise the disruption for the group.



Following the guidance from HR we felt confident that she was able to lead the group preparing them for a performance for the summer community event 'Summer at the Pavilion'. In the meantime a dance company *Cascade* dance have been sourced to replace the instructor following her maternity leave from September 2019 until Easter 2020. The new dance instructor was introduced to the crew before the summer holiday to insure smooth transition from September and the project sustains participant's retention. As a result all of the former participants had returned in September term apart from one who had moved out of the local area.

During the following two terms the *Cascade* dance instructors had sustained the project and forged a good working relationship with young participants. In addition they also delivered one taster session at Dunton Green Primary school to recruit new beneficiaries. As of March 2020 there were 13 regular members of the class with 10 of living within Dunton Green parish.

Sustainability

In view of the Covid-19 virus, current restrictions and subsequent consultation with our volunteer instructor, the project is temporarily suspended until September 2020. The Community Development Officers have met with the dance instructor to evaluate all options available and produce a plan to ensure sustainability. She will continue to deliver the sessions from 16 September 2020 autonomously. Initially the sessions will resume via Zoom however it is hoped that the session will recommence in its original format early in 2021.

Easy Netball

Last year had been challenging time for the project.

A number of group training sessions were cancelled on the outdoor court (MUGA) where weather conditions regrettably had been unpredictable; with excessive heat during the summer or torrential rain. There had been further impact on the project due to work commitments and also injuries of the Volunteer instructor, which prevented them from obtaining UKCC Level 2 Netball Coaching qualification, as part of sustainability plan for this project.



As a result Community Development Officers advertised for an additional volunteer instructor in order to provide support and build a resilience into the project. Despite a number of attempts it was not possible to source either a qualified coach or willing volunteer (with training provided) to independently lead this group.

In the meantime the netball group has formed a real bond during the sessions with up to 6 regular participants and communicating actively via a WhatsApp chat group, supporting each other and organising social events together outside of training sessions.

The group wanted to move to an indoor training facility over the winter season to mitigate the impact of the weather. However due to the nature of this project it was not possible to relocate to an alternative venue.

When devising the sustainability for the project Community Development Officers looked at overall progress of the project due to its previous success and reviewed grassroots schemes in the local area to evaluate the viability of the project. Due to the previous success of this project in the local community and the lack of informal netball initiatives in the local area. It was decided that the project will be sustained and moved under Sevenoaks District Council Community Development Officer which covers sports initiatives as an over-arching organisation mainly for public liability insurance purposes. The Community Officer will take a lead the sessions following the necessary coaching training to support the current volunteer to lead the project as when safe to do so following all Covid - 19 restrictions, as allowed in accordance with Netball England guidelines.

8-12's Project

Launched on 9th January 2017, by the Community Development Officers as a direct response to the need for regular youth activities in Dunton Green. The project, delivered by West Kent Housing Association, funded through the Community Development Project Dunton Green provides young people aged between 8 and 12 to develop 'soft' skills such as self-esteem, confidence, social and emotional responses and building friendships. Club 8-12s is currently in its fourth year of operation and has grown considerably since the last report, with nineteen young people on our registers with regular attendance every week. The club has forged many links in the community, including a very strong partnership with Dunton Green Primary School, who have referred most of the young people. The partnership with the school means children who are in need of extras support are identified and get that much needed engagement though the tailored approach at the club.

In 2019 the club had a total 402 attendances from the nineteen registered children.

Programmes for the club session is purposely planned and organised to help the children experience a sense of achievement, make new friends, feel empowered and feel that



they have ownership of the club. The young people typically have a great deal of involvement in the programme to ensure that the programme is up to standards and provides a mixture of fun and educational activities. It is also proven that by giving the young people the opportunity to give ideas for the programme gives them a sense of ownership to the club. West Kent Housing Association even organised an animal workshop (Our Amazing Animal World) to come to the club. Some of the animals that were included were a Naked Mole Rat, Meerkat and various reptiles.

As part of the 8-12s programme several trips have been organised, giving children a chance to do things they might not ordinarily do and visit new places. The club has introduced two swimming trips each school term to promote a healthy lifestyles and give the children the opportunity to learn to swim when they usually wouldn't get the chance to with their families. With the use of swimming aids, the children have been challenged to swim further, deeper or faster. The project makes use of the excellent swimming facilities available in the District. Also in 2019 the children went to Adventure Kidz in Aylesford, an indoor soft activity centre, which gives the children a chance to run, play and have no worries just fun.

It is a tradition that every year the club attends a pantomime, this year it was Aladdin at the Stag Theatre and the feedback received was that the young people loved every minute of it. For that trip other 8-12 clubs in the area were included to encourage young people to meet and to make friends in different areas of the district.

At the residential trip to Thriftwood Scout Activity Centre the group were able to take part in activities such as raft building, team games, orienteering and swimming. Some other exciting activities included rock climbing, zip- wire and 3D - Maze.

Some of the comments we had back from the children were "when is the next one, I can't wait". One parent said, "my child had the best time and I have noticed a massive change in his confidence".

Residential trips are vital part of the club provision as it encourages and supports young people's development giving them the opportunity take part in activities that would not normally be able available and additionally to be away from home for the first time. For some of the young people that attended this is the only holiday that they will have for the year where they will take away skills, confidence and memories that will embolden them for the rest of their lives.

Case Study

YP* name changed for confidentiality

YP has been attending the club since February 2019 and when he started, he was very shy. When he was referred into the club the Dunton Green Primary school had said that he was not very talkative and did not like joining in on activities. He is diagnosed with ADHD and finds it hard to make new friends. Since joining the club he has grown in confidence. He is starting to talk a lot more to the children in the club and is also trying new activities that he would not have done if he has not of joined the club. YP finds it difficult to talk to other adults, will only answer with one-word answers and will find it hard to raise any worries or concerns he has.

YP has since become more talkative and seems a lot happier in himself. His mother has said that he enjoys coming to club every week. He always asks what is on at club and is starting to give us ideas of the things that he would like to do at the club.

YP enjoys the swimming sessions that we put on at the club. When he first came to the swimming session, he was not a very confident swimmer and would only stay at the shallow end trying not to get too wet. With the support from a member of staff in the pool with him he is now going to the deep end and is a very confident swimmer. His family do not often get the chance to take the family swimming and this is great opportunity for him to experience this. YP's Family Liaison officer at school has said that they have seen significant improvement in his confidence and also that she believes that the club is a good outlet for him because otherwise he would just be hanging around in the park with older children.

Case study has been produced by West Kent Housing Association

This project has been fully sustained and taken on by West Kent Housing Association.

Over 55's Social Club

Since the club started in 2016 it has been coordinated by an enthusiastic local resident, along with a number of other volunteers from Dunton Green. Between 10 - 15 regular members continued to meet on the third Sunday of every month for a hot drink and snacks. The group have evolved over time and regularly play bingo and hold raffles.

Historically the group relied a great deal on one person to organise the sessions with a few helpers to assist with the opening of the hall and setting up of tables, serve the refreshments etc. As a result record keeping has been difficult to achieve and should the lead be unwell the group are unable to function effectively.



Working with partner organisations in Dunton Green the Community Development Officers were keen to create a sustainability plan for the club which would enable them to flourish and grow, including support with public liability insurance, health and safety, volunteer management and managing funding. This would enable them to apply for external funding and manage their finances and manage the club efficiently. Community Development officers approached Age UK Tonbridge and Sevenoaks, to ask if they could act as an umbrella organisation under which the Social Club could sit, as they are already had local working links and relationship with Dunton Green and it's Parish Council.

As a result Age UK Tonbridge and Sevenoaks has included the Over 55's Social Club and its activities under Age UK public liability insurance and has ensured that risk assessments and health and safety arrangements are all in place. Age UK holds a bank account which is ring-fenced for the club to allow the group to organise their finances better, apply for the external funding and receive donations from other organisations. Community Development officers have produced a new poster reflecting new partnership arrangements.

A donation of £200 was made to assist the club to organise a day away trip for its members. In addition the Community Development Officers funded their Christmas get-together to enable them to have the opportunity to celebrate together.

Project and Partners Support

In addition, the Community Development Officers supported initiatives, events and projects that our partners have set up in the community.

Following the request from the Dunton Green Faithworks, Community Development officers has assisted with a promoting of the fundraising event they have organised 'Education in Full' Barn Dance, which took place at Donnington Hall on Saturday 5th of October 2019. The event which included a silent auction intended to raise money for a bursary fund for the Dunton Green Primary School 'Education in Full' aims to support the needs of individual children whose families are in financial difficulties. The fund would ensure the children can make the most of their education, for example, adequate school clothing, subsidised swimming lessons, contribution to the school trips etc. as well as helping publicise the event, Community Development Officers has donated a few items for the silent Auction: wine, £25.00 Amazon voucher and a chocolate hamper. The event was a great success with 60 people attending and raising just over £3,000 to initiate the fund.

Some previously set-up projects continue to run in the community either autonomously or with the support of partner organisation such as Dunton Green Lunch club (managed by Age UK), Pop up Pop in Café (Age UK with support from Dunton Green Parish Council), Tamz Tai Chi (independent club).

The Community Development Officers supported all of the Parish Council events.

Overall Evaluation

In the period between April 2019 to March 2020 the project aims have been met in the following ways:

- **To bring the old and existing communities of Dunton Green together**

The project has been successful in achieving over **1040 attendances** in the activities which were either organised by the Community Development Officers or funded through the project.

Residents from all areas within Dunton Green, including Ryewood, have attended the events and sessions provided. Projects have been developed to ensure that there is something for everyone, whether you work full time, are retired, are unemployed or still at school. Thus enabling the community to come together at a time that is convenient to them. All projects are promoted across the entire parish by a variety of means including posters, via newsletters, flyer delivery to every household, face to face and via social media.

- **To identify and respond to the needs of the local community.**

The Community Development Officers also have made sure that for all new initiatives a need or a demand in the community either through resident's consultation or our work with a partners can be identified. Some of the new ventures have been developed as a result of the most recent 2018 community consultations.

The Community Development Officers have also ensured that they continue to do outreach work in the community meeting with Dunton Green residents by supporting various local groups, community events and speaking with residents first hand. Ongoing feedback is therefore received and can be acted upon.

- **To enable the community to continue this work after the end of the project.**

Throughout the development of the initiatives a clear exit strategy has been identified.

- Basketball - links established with Dunton Green Parish Council to take it forward
- Youth Street Dance - Volunteer continues to drive the project autonomously
- Easy Netball - continues district-wide initiative through Sevenoaks District Council Community Development work
- Tamz Tai Chi - independent club
- Lunch Club - run by Age UK Tonbridge and Sevenoaks

- Over 55's Social club - run independently and supported by Age UK and Dunton Green Parish Council

Community Feedback

The following feedback has been received from residents:

"I enjoyed learning new skills, community spirit of the project and using local facilities with my kids" Feedback from participants on Easy Netball.

"Social club is valuable asset in the community it's a way of seeing people and having a chat." Feedback from participants on Over 55's Social club.

"I enjoyed being able to just get stuck and play. It is great way meeting other people from the village (especially being new to the area)." Feedback from participants on Easy Netball.

"I come to the Lunch club regularly primarily to chat to my friends in Dunton Green who I've known for years and enjoy a meal cooked by someone else." Feedback from participants on Lunch Club.

Conclusion

Dunton Green Community Development has been a very successful project, showing why community development work is so vital for local communities, it brings people together, highlights what the local community has to offer and what new initiatives can be put in place. Originally a 3 year project, the success was that we was able to extend for a further 2 years and develop more intatives. The community development work has brought many benefits to the community such as:

- It has fostered a greater involvement to residents of Dunton Green in the local community and additionally has brought social benefits.
- The community took ownership of a number of initiatives such as Health walks for example and created their very own plan - 'Saturday morning walk and chat'. Another example is Over 55's Social Club which was set up by the community in response of Older People forum.
- Success for the Youth Street dance project has been sustained through managing and empowering of a volunteer. Community Development officers provided leadership and mentoring to the volunteer to obtain the dance qualification, something she is very passionate about and has enabled her to teach dance classes to young people in the local village.
- Some of the individual projects incorporated elements of education and training components for residents who volunteered through the initiative to different degrees and with different emphases.

- In addition to the formal projects and activities that has been developed, the Officers have worked within the local community to support and encourage residents to get involved. Two local residents became Parish Councillors as a result of participating in the projects which had been set up.

The initiative was not without a number of challenges, most can be attributed to the originality of the programme and demanding working relationships with Berkley Homes at the initial stages of the Cold Store development. Effective partnership work has been proven to result in better outcomes for beneficiaries & stakeholders alike, lower project costs and a greater sense of community ownership.

Overall the project accomplished the goals set out from the project inception.

Recommendations

Community-centred approaches similar to the Dunton Green Community Development project, funded through Section 106, has been proven to enhance the lives of a local community by improving health & wellbeing, empowerment of residents to take part and also take the lead on projects, improves confidence and pride in the community, and a focus on mobilising assets within communities therefore increasing engagement.

The major contributing resource required to undertake the similar type of work elsewhere within the district is staffing. The community development worker would utilise a number of different community-centred approaches to ensure that the community is truly empowered depending on their needs and resources:

- strengthening communities - where approaches involve building on community capacities to take action together on various issues such as Over 55's social club, Young People, cohesion in the community and affordability.
- volunteer and peer roles - where approaches focus on enhancing individuals' capabilities to provide leadership, co-ordinate programmes, facilitate and mentor volunteers to promote and encourage a local participation, in their or other communities such as Youth street dance, Art Projects, Community Groups and easy netball.
- collaborations and partnerships - where approaches involve community development workers networking extensively to build collaborative partnerships, contacts and raise funds, liaising with interested voluntary groups to build new programmes and services, mediating and negotiating with opposing parties. Such as Faith Works, Local charities and businesses
- access to community resources - where approaches connect people to community resources, practical help, existing and already established services and volunteering opportunities to meet the local community needs and increase social participation. For example with Dunton Green - Tesco groundwork fund for Dunton Green Primary school,

support towards the Faithwork's 'Education in full' project, Funding from Police for Youth Work.

Therefore, the community development officer plays an extremely important role in grass root developmental programmes and have been instrumental in improving lives of the local community. Community Development officers have identified the assets within community, such as the skills and knowledge, social networks and community organisations all of which are necessary building blocks for cohesive and resilient communities.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance endorses community development as a strategy for health improvement and improving wellbeing of the residents. There is a substantial body of evidence on community participation and empowerment and on the secondary health benefits of volunteering.

Following on from Dunton Green and taking on what could be achieved across the District, an area that would benefit from such community development work is Edenbridge Town, following their large housing development scheme. It could also incorporate adjoining villages to combat rural isolation and social inequalities in the communities. An alternative site which would tremendously would benefit from a similar initiative is Swanley and Hextable, this area historically has suffered from depravation where some wards fall within 10% of the most deprived areas in Kent and the South East.

By engaging with such communities the main objectives of both the communities and partnering organisations would be to ensure that the health & wellbeing of residents are improved. The current and ongoing Covid-19 situation has highlighted the need for resilience and strong community cohesion, while still too early to effectively to analyse the impact of the pandemic it is becoming evident that a healthy lifestyle, both physically and mentally, is a major potential factor in combating this dreadful virus. As such, with the support and guidance of SDC in the implementation of these community projects residents will actively engage in ensuring that a strong and supportive community is created.

