

BAB's Community Development projects in St Pauls and Old Market ran from April 2017 – March 2019, delivered by Livewest (formerly Knightstone).

In March 2019, Livewest presented their learning at a Share & Learn session for BAB Community Development projects. This Learning Digest summarises the key learning from these two projects.



### Getting to know the make-up of each geographical area

**Within a geographical area there will be multiple parts each made up of different populations with different characteristics and histories.** For example in Bristol the broad area of Old Market is made up of three very different parts; Old Market, Lower Easton and St Judes, each with their own unique characteristics. Old Market and Lower Easton both have a large proportion of men, something which is clearly visible when walking through the area. St Judes has a mix of younger Somali families and older people who are White British.

Livewest learnt that it is **important to get to know the area**, recognising the differences between each part. Some parts of the area will have changed more than others in recent decades which will affect residents' sense of community as well as the assets available in that location. Similarly, geographical features such as whether it is used as a cut-through to the bus stops or city centre will also have an impact on the community.



### Community engagement and promoting activities

When working in a community development project there is **no single method that will work to engage with a community**. Livewest tried a variety of methods and found the following successful, particularly at the start of their projects:

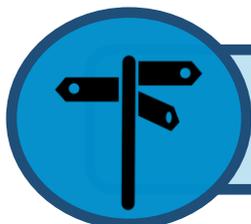
- **Walking around the area**, observing who is out and about on the streets (and who is not).
- Setting up a **pop-up marquee** in the street, particularly in busy spots such as routes used as a cut-through. It worked well to hold these at times when grandparents might be collecting their grandchildren from school.
- **Speaking to others** such as community workers, caretakers of blocks of flats and those delivering the post.

When having friendly conversations with people in the street, Livewest gained knowledge about the community, found out what people were interested in and what skills they had to offer, and asked them to complete a light hearted questionnaire. They felt it **made a difference to speak**

**to people face-to-face** rather than through online surveys. Once they had 100 questionnaires, they analysed the answers and invited everyone who had completed a questionnaire to a free social event.

In terms of continuing to engage with older people and promoting different groups and activities, Livewest found that the most successful method was taking the time to talk to people face-to-face, and **networking as much as possible**. The following also worked well for them:

- Local radio stations, magazines and newspapers (particularly Babbers, Ujima Radio, Vocalise and Up Our Street)
- Word of mouth – asking people to pass on information about an activity and the project's contact details to neighbours who might be lonely
- Mixing with existing groups in the community
- Facebook and websites
- Local people such as shopkeepers, building caretakers, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and post men/women
- Creating a local newsletter and 'what's on?' guide for activities in the area
- Messaging people directly using Whatsapp, for example to tell them that the latest newsletter is ready.



## Local groups and activities

These two community development projects helped older people in the community to set up a variety of groups including a sewing group, DIY group, art club, a coffee morning and a lunch club. Livewest's key learning from these groups includes...

- The sewing group built up a good relationship with the caretakers in two blocks of flats, which led to them being able to meet in the community rooms for free as the caretakers wanted the rooms to be used by community groups.
- The focus of the group will influence the genders attending, for example the DIY group was open to anyone but it was mainly men who came along.
- The art club meet in an art space where there is a manager who can support the group to be sustainable, for example to apply for funding.
- Signposting the groups to funding and supporting them to apply for it has helped towards enabling some of the groups to be sustainable after the project finishes.

They held a number of one-off events to engage people, including a BBQ, garden party, tea party, theatre show, a health and wellbeing event and an awards ceremony. A key factor in the success of these events was that they were **planned jointly between the two community development projects and also supported by other roles** within Livewest's wider organisation.

They also offered training such as first aid, fundraising, food & hygiene, a health and wellbeing course and volunteering opportunities on a local radio show.

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