

Summer Conference 2016

Communities Network: 'The joy of collaboration'

Attending

Alex Mackain-Bremner	Impetus	Rachel Beck	Brighton Women's Centre + Hangleton & Knoll Multi-Cultural Women's Group
Alison Marino	Community Works		
Carley O'Hara	Cascade Creative Recovery		
Carol Smith	Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project	Ratna Bibi	Fabrica
Caroline Ridley	Impact	Rev. Martin Poole	St. Luke's Advice Service
Catherine Kirby	NPC	Roland Marden	Healthwatch Brighton & Hove
Chirsty Caple	Cascade Creative Recovery	Sabiha Khan	Trust for Developing Communities
Chris Martin	Volunteering Matters	Sam Warren	Brighton and Hove City Council
Duncan Blinkhorn (facilitating)	Community Works	Samantha DeBanks-Hirst	Royal Pavilion & Brighton Museums
Ellie Moulton	Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project	Sue Brown	Albion in the Community
Emma Callar	Adventure Unlimited	Valerie Foucher	Hangleton Community Association
Gail Gray	RISE		
Gail Shanahan	Action on Elder Abuse	APOLOGIES:	
Gary Collins	Community Safety Team - LATs	Amy Dickinson	BSUH
Grace Smyth	St Luke's Advice Service	Joanna Martindale	Hangleton and Knoll
Georgia Wilkes	Martletts	Mike Randall	Pots of Talent
Helen Jones	MindOut	Mike Holdgate	B&H CCG
Helen Russell	CHIBAH	Pip Dorkings	Martletts
Imogen Forbes	Citizens Advice Brighton & Hove	Claire Morgan	Brighton & Hove City Council
Jane Trueman	University of Sussex Students' Union Project	Denise Wilmot	Patcham Community Action Team
John Cook	Patcham Community Action Team	Gary Pargeter	Lunch Positive
Jordan Back	Trust For Developing Communities	John Fitzgerald	NPC
Kalinda Totham	Community Works	Khadija Khan	Active Student Volunteering – University of Brighton
Kat Tucker	University of Brighton		Brighton Oasis Project
Lev Eakins	Faith in Action	Laura Ward	Red Cross
Lisa Matthews	SafetyNet	Matthew Moors	Sussex Nightstop
Lucy Maldoom	Sussex Wildlife Trust	Pippa Green	Age UK Brighton & Hove
Maureen Winder	Level Communities Forum	Robert Brown	Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard
Meghan Lewis	LGBT Switchboard	Robert Smith	Brighton & Hove SpeakOut
Melanie Barnard	Brighton Housing Trust	Sarah Pickard	the Synergy Centre
Natalie Brook	Impetus	Steven Peake	Sussex Interpreting Services
Natalie Cowley	Brighthelm Community Centre	Vikki Gimson	

1. Introduction

The Communities Network is for all voluntary and community sector organisations members to come together around current issues facing local communities.

The session involved sharing and analysing examples of effective collaborative working between community and voluntary organisations and partners in the public sector and elsewhere, in the context of increasing financial pressures on public services. The session aimed to highlight the essential qualities and behaviours that make for successful collaborations. Key points that emerged will be incorporated into the 'Collaboration Framework' which will be used to develop a culture of collaborative working in the city between local citizens, communities and public sector colleagues.

2. The Collaboration Framework

The session started with a presentation by Sam Warren from Brighton and Hove City Council on the work so far in developing the Collaboration Framework and the 'collaborative behaviours' which enable this. Trust, communication and honesty were highlighted as key components to any collaborative working across sectors. She introduced the draft City Council document which will be developed into a toolkit to support a shift toward a culture of collaborative working in the future. The first draft is due to be completed in August 2016.

3. Group discussion – collaborative behaviours

The workshop divided into five groups – each tasked with identifying what makes for effective collaboration focusing on the following two questions:

1. What do communities need to do to be collaborative?
2. What do services need to do to be collaborative?

Points noted:

- Time is needed to **build trusting relationships** with openness, transparency, flexibility and honesty.
- **Overcoming competitiveness** between organisations and address conflicts of interest that may emerge.
- Recognising **shared goals** that collaboration could lead to and consistently check these.
- A commitment to make things happen and improve working relationships with other sectors or organisations.
- A willingness to **do things differently** and adapt to the needs of others by bringing a passionate approach to achieving objectives.
- **Realistic timescales** and **realistic ambitions** that all parties can benefit from, ensuring a **collective responsibility** to achieving outcomes.
- Positive role-modelling in leadership.
- Building resistance so that organisations are not pressurised to take a particular direction.
- Clarity and **evaluation of risks** and how to manage them.
- A positive '**can do**' attitude and open mind to ideas and planning.
- Recognising that partnerships can bring more work, funding and services.
- A confidence and **assertiveness to make changes**. What about marginalised communities without these strengths?
- Staff **structures that ensure the best outcomes** in different collaborative settings - marrying up people in the partnerships.
- **Planning** what you want from the partnership, who is going to do it and why, how long will it take and response times?
- Ensuring a **shared objective** is set so that challenges later on can be managed. This will aid in building rapport and trust.
- Peer audits/meetings/outgoing **shared learning** and two way communication.
- Services need **resources** - time, money, skills and people to be collaborative.
- A mutually beneficial partnership of skills, knowledge and learning.
- Setting objectives early on to manage expectations.
- Simplified jargon/ language barriers and accepting the mess and complicated areas that may arise.

- Having permission to ask questions or be potentially critical.
- Collaborate with all sections of the community (volunteers, council, and private sector) to use already held skills and enable further commissioning opportunities.
- Networking (but is time-consuming) and sharing information with service users that promote meaningful connections.
- Creating a directory so that organisations know who to speak to and to approach collaboration in a simple and accessible way.
- Bigger groups working with smaller groups to promote a common cause and profiling lesser known organisations in the community.
- ‘Organisational behaviour’ **culture that overcomes barriers** and ensures responsibility and accountability e.g. is the use of volunteers appropriate?
- Be open to hearing new ideas on an equal platform in a safe environment.
- **Balance risk and opportunities** with reduced resources - think long term.
- Negotiate to uphold support systems.
- **Face-to-face** collaboration based on mutual understandings of the term – ‘working together’.
- Make **prior agreements**; purpose, who’s doing what, time constraints, sharing skills, review, reassess, brainstorming and create ground rules.

4. Summary of challenges

- Staff changes
- Own agendas
- Risk aversion
- Personalities
- Insurance
- Security
- Prejudice about certain communities
- Top down instructions

Groups then shared examples or positive stories of collaboration or lessons learned from partnership working.

5. Collaboration examples and stories

- City wide connect hubs.
- Community led housing- Bunker Housing.
- Fabrica/Job Centre: positive aspects - direct communication, expenses paid and a passion and energy from individuals.
- Hollingdean (Valerie) - opening up weekend access to the Children’s Centre was very difficult. Community activists organised a petition of 400 signatures evidencing the need. The collaboration involved talking to the right person and managing the centre – ultimately the intervention of the City Council CEO shifted the situation. It all took much longer than if a collaborative culture had existed from the outset. Following instructions of chief executives and remaining resilient and determined in objectives. The transparency of working relationships made the process easier.
- Friends of William Clarke Park: recently funded and installed a hired porta-loo in their park in response to requests from park users. The community group ran a survey to evidence demand

and organised a rota of volunteers to check the toilet each day. Installation needed City Parks to give permission and not to put up barriers which were mooted such as health and safety and insurance liabilities. The local park ranger helped to broker agreement and demonstrated a collaborative approach which made a positive outcome possible.

- Patcham Community Action Team: Worked with the Alzheimer's Society to promote dementia champions who then linked up with Possibility People to facilitate a 'Dementia Café!' They are now hoping to work with Brighton Buses to advertise their dementia café all around the city.

The end of the session brought all the key ideas and tools needed for more collaborative behaviour. The main points are summarised to consider how we can work together to do things differently in our city in light of the City Council's reducing budgets.

6. Summary of positive points for collaboration

- **Transparency:** two way, timely and tea and cake! These create more meetings and opportunities to network, reduced hierarchies and a top down approach.
- **Openness:** by listening to others, being flexible and noting any shared or overlapping goals that arise.
- **Sharing** resources and information to facilitate needs and projects so that any expertise can be used.
- **Teachable:** bringing a 'can do' attitude, passion and energy to a working partnership.
- **Willingness** to do things differently by not prejudging the collaboration or communities or sectors involved.
- **Positive** behaviour.
- **Communication** in same meanings, language and building trusting relationships that guarantee more honesty and collectiveness.
- **Adaptability:** readiness to work with all sectors even the private sector to help funding services and support.
- **Governance** in collaboration initiatives: systems and staff structures to help partnerships in the short and long term.
- **Information:** ensuring new members, staff and volunteers know about current or future collaborations.
- **Peer audit** reviews and timely meetings.
- **Learning:** continuing processes in knowledge and development involved in collaboration.
- **Relationships:** recognising personalities that would be conducive to collaboration.

Collaboration can come in many forms and must be adaptable to a changing community climate.

The workshop ended with a round up the session, a reminder that the council document for collaboration is ongoing and the council welcomes feedback from groups.

The council is working with Community Works and the Collaboration Framework steering group to develop the collaboration documents and promoting positive relationships within the community.

APPENDIX:

Brighton & Hove Connected

Equality & Inclusion Partnership

Collaboration Framework (Jun2016)

The Framework will develop principles and guidance to support each of these key elements. This will build on existing practice and incorporate national guidance and research.

Below are some early indications of the content of the Framework, this will be subject to discussion with a wide range of organisations, groups and individuals.

1. Collaborative Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing the capacity of communities to be more resourceful and resilience - asset based approach building on the positive and tapping into the skills and passion.• Supporting capability and independence• Building relationships between citizens and services – 2 way dialogue not done deal• Embedding guidance on co-production, co-design and working with service users and residents to design services• Building relationships across communities of place, interest and identity• Changing organisational culture to promote and reward collaboration with citizens and communities• Rewarding collaborative communities and collaboration champions
2. Collaborative systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outcomes focused processes and systems – including ICT• Guidance and tools to support holistic and person-centred approaches, designed around the identified assets and needs of the neighbourhood/people• Examples of the benefits of providing services that are closer to the people• Impact on demand, with corresponding savings• Support services enable collaborative working
3. Collaborative services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance on how to collaborate, across service silos, and between sectors• Benefits of shared space and time across silos and sectors – cost savings and improved outcomes• It will include examples of cost savings and other benefits to cross sector collaboration• Solution focused and integrated services – examples of best practice• Risk and opportunities of collaboration
4. Collaborative places	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighbourhood Hubs• community budgets• Devolution of budgets/services/buildings• Members' roles as champions of their communities and as leaders.• Working with residents and small community groups such as LATs, to develop and create better services to the public.• Neighbourhood governance/ neighbourhood management (to be confirmed)• Enabling residents and small community groups to independently deliver activities and services to including neighbourliness, better/cleaner public spaces, safer places and community events and activities

5.	<p>Collaborative commissioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Evidence to support the benefits collaborative commissioning. • Tools to support co-design and coproduction with residents, service users and CVS • Tools for integrated commissioning activity where possible, across sectors and organisations. • Guidance on collaboration between commissioners and providers. • Skill and behaviours needed for collaborative commissioning
6.	<p>Collaborative behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-sector and organisation values and guidance that links with the emerging BHCC competencies framework • Culture and behaviour needed to enable organisations to engage with each other, residents and communities. • Guidance for communities and residents on the changing relationship between citizen and state- what behaviours and culture could be promoted in the communities