

# Stratford Social Inclusion Partnership Development Officer



Annual Report  
**2021/22**

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Stratford-on-Avon District

**COVID-19**  
**CORONAVIRUS**

COMMUNITY RECOVERY  
ACTION PLAN

Stratford-on-Avon District

Social Inclusion Statement  
Action Plan 2021 – 2024

# 1.

## Introduction

Welcome to Stratford-on-Avon District's Social Inclusion Partnership's Development Officer annual report for 2021-22.

The part time Development Officer came into post on the 14th April 2020 and started in unprecedented times within the worst public health crisis for over a century. The second full year of the post also saw continued disruption with COVID, the introduction of mass vaccination, new variants of the virus, various restrictions and the eventual phased exit from lockdown restrictions.

The Voluntary and Community Sector in the District and countrywide have faced significant challenges of increased demand for their services, reduced funding from traditional funding streams, changes and reductions to volunteering and increased restrictions to respond to.

The report is a record of what has been achieved in collaboration with and support of Stratford-on-Avon District's Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) by the Development Officer in these unprecedented times, the challenges faced, the funding secured for the district, the networks and relationships developed and ambitions for the future for the work and the post itself.

# 2.

## Executive summary

The Development Officer supported 29 funding applications in total of which 23 were successful. Total funding applied for totalled £489,251 and £295,057 was secured for the Social Inclusion Partnership priorities. This was around a 74% increase on the first year of the project. 45 voluntary, community or charity groups were supported.



of funding was applied for



VCSE groups were supported



increase on funding secured in year one

# 3.

## Background and Challenges

The country and the VCSE sector within Stratford on Avon District again faced significant challenges in 2021-2022

April 2021 saw 50% of the population receiving their first dose of the COVID vaccine and the month before the finish of the third national lockdown. By July the vast majority of COVID restrictions had been removed.

New variants hit the country and by December 2021 the country saw the highest ever reported new cases in 24 hours and a concern that the NHS would be overwhelmed.

WCAVA conducted a State of the Sector survey for 2021/22 and key findings were that the number one priority was funding to enable groups to deal with increased overhead costs, an increased demand for services and reduced funding. There was also an increasing difficulty in recruiting paid staff and volunteers had decreased.

Overall a strong case could be made for the increased importance of the work of the Social Inclusion Partnership and the Development Officer to enable the VCSE sector to respond and face the once in a lifetime challenges for the country.



# 4.

## **Purpose and key objectives of the Development Officer post**

The Development Officer post's purpose is to support voluntary and community organisations (VCSE) operating within Stratford-on-Avon District, working closely with the Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Statement priorities and Covid 19 Community Recovery plan.

The COVID Recovery Plan was in place through the first months of this year and then a new Social Inclusion Statement Action Plan 2021-2024 was introduced.

### **The posts key duties and responsibilities are:**

- Identify funding opportunities relating to SIS opportunities
- Ascertain the funding requirements of local Voluntary Community Organisations (VCOs)
- Identify opportunities for partnership, collaborative working and operational efficiencies related to SIS
- Take a lead in submitting funding bids
- Build and maintain key relationships
- Provide advice, support and promote good practice in VCSE management, governance and development.

### **The Development Officer focused on the following priorities in the first part of 2021-22:**

Thematically:

- Community Venues
- Financial Hardship
- Health and Wellbeing
- Isolation
- Under and Unemployment
- Younger People
- Empowering communities to harness local resources and expertise to help themselves, Stratford-Upon-Avon- Maybird and Bishopton, Alcester, Henley, Southam, Lighthorne Heath, Studley, Bidford and new communities- Meon Vale, Gaydon Lighthorne Heath, Marston Mead.

### **Followed by the following priorities in the later part of the year:**

- Improving education, employment and training; increasing income and reducing debt within Stratford-upon-Avon Maybird, Bishopton, Alcester, Henley, Southam, Lighthorne Heath, Studley, Bidford, Quinton and Shipston North
- Combatting social isolation Alcester, Henley, Southam and Studley,
- Combating rural isolation in Lighthorne Heath, Kineton, Quinton & Long Itchington
- Supporting Older People
- Empowering communities
- Improving health and wellbeing.

# 5.

## Priority achievements

### Improving health and wellbeing

A key achievement in the year was the continuation and delivery associated with the L and Q/ Sport England funded Tackling Inequalities programme.

## Case Study: Tackling Inequalities in Stratford District through collaboration

### The initial approach

WCAVA'S Stratford Districts Development Officer was approached by L and Q Housing to see if WCAVA would be able to identify and submit applications from 5 organisations, in 2 weeks, to support their application for National Partner status with Sport England and their Tackling Inequalities fund.

### Short timescales

In view of the short timescales it was decided to approach and work with groups who met the Tackling Inequalities criteria and had a recent good relationship with the Stratford office. The groups that came on board were: Citizens Advice South Warwickshire, Change Grow Live (CGL), Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership and two projects which did not immediately have a host, the Community Builder project and the Meon Vale Estate. All of the projects would contribute to the district's Social Inclusion Partnership priorities.

### Tackling Inequalities

The Tackling Inequalities Fund has been created to try and help reduce the negative impact on activity levels in under-represented groups, with a specific focus on lower socio-economic groups, black, asian and minority ethnic communities, disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.

### Initial success leads to considerable work

L and Q came back to say they had been successful in their National Partner application to Sport England and that the 5 initial projects submitted had passed stage 1. What was now required was full detailed applications and the provision of due diligence information from the 5 groups. The Development Officer was able to part complete all 5 applications as all the groups had limited capacity and passed them back for the groups to add contact details and due diligence information before they submitted.

Two projects also had to be found hosts and after considerable work the newly formed Meon Vale Residents Association and Stratford District Council came on board, with Everyone Active, the local Leisure provider, also recruited to get involved in the projects.

# 5.

## Priority achievements

### Case Study: Tackling Inequalities in Stratford District through collaboration Cont'd

Two projects also had to be found hosts and after considerable work the newly formed Meon Vale Residents Association and Stratford District Council came on board, with Everyone Active, the local Leisure provider, also recruited to get involved in the projects.

Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) were written for the 3 organisations which had no paid staff and very limited capacity. The PIDs included aims, background, priorities, risk assessment, project gant chart and role descriptions.

Role job packs were also created for the Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership to recruit their volunteer project team, chair and project lead. Project leads were also sourced for 2 other projects.

All projects were underway in 21/22 and some have sought and been successful in securing additional funding for the continuation of the work.

#### Outcomes

- Improved relationship with L and Q Housing who are now a National Sport England Partner
- New and developing relationship with Meon Vale Residents Association and Everyone Active
- Cohort created for future funding applications on physical inactivity
- Strengthen existing relationships
- 3 voluntary projects have solid project foundations and project managers identified
- All 5 projects underway and those most effected by lockdowns supported back into physical activity.

Which has led to direct impact such as this:

*'S saw the seated chair class advertised but didn't come straight away as she finds walking into a new activity quite daunting. We initially spoke over the telephone to address her worries. S came to her first session and found the exercises quite difficult due to her health conditions. She finds walking difficult and experiences significant pain when she walks. She also has othern health conditions that restrict her movement.*

*S has found each week that her coordination has improved as well as her range of movement.*

*Since starting the class S has been doing some of the exercises at home to help with her circulation. S has noticed that she can walk further than she could before she starts to get pain which has improved her ability to be out in the community.'*

Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership

# 5.

## Priority achievements



Meon Vale 'Bat and Chat' Session

Thank You does not convey my gratitude Chris. It has been great learning. 😊  
I am working on it now and have a great example of a project we have just had funding for.

Thank You Again. 😊

Change Grow Live



### Dr Sue Pritchard Memorial Challenge IN SHIPSTON ON STOUR

In partnership with Sport England and L&Q, the Stour Health & Wellbeing Partnership will be running FREE activities in the Stour area including:



# 5.

## Priority achievements

### Dad Matters Partnership

The Development Officer worked closely with the Warwickshire Dad Matters Partnership to secure significant funding for the pilot project. 2 funding applications were written during this year and one via the Social Impact Fund was successful and resulted in the Dad Matters Coordinator being advertised and recruited in 2022.



The Partnership is made up of Homestart South Warwickshire as the employer and accountable body, the Parenting Project, By Your Side and Barnardo's.

The Dad Matters Coordinator will bring dads, families, services and organisations together to fundamentally change the way dads are listened to, involved and supported in the first 1001 days of a child's life. The Coordinator will recruit and train volunteers, identify new dad's mental health needs, work with dads and services to generate change and provide for example 1:1 support for those dads with poor mental health, feeling isolated and lonely and with an emphasis on better relationships. Co-producing resources and training materials that will promote the involvement and importance of dads and share them with services.

As a dad has said:

*'it's great to be able to talk with other dads who have been through this already. I can't speak to my family about it'*

The intention is to secure enough funding to enable the pilot to be for 2 years. Commissioners have been involved since the start and asked the VCSE sector to pilot the idea in Warwickshire with a view that this may be mainstreamed in the future. As such it has good learning for similar approaches elsewhere.



# 5.

## Priority achievements

### Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership

The Development Officer continued to support the Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership including on:

## Case Study: Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership (SHWP) Workstream Chairs online workshop

### The community

SHWP is a volunteer, local resident led partnership that was started in 2019 and became a Charitable incorporated organisation in November 2020. It has quickly developed good local credibility and regularly has up to 60 organisations and individuals at key meetings.

It's purpose is: 'To improve the health and wellbeing of all residents in the Stour area through better partnership working'

WCAVA have been improving support and partnership development advice since January 2020.

### The Challenge

The Trustees of the Partnership had with CAVA's help developed a Partnership vision and a set of values. For these to be effective it was important to cascade these throughout the Partnership and gain commitment to their implementation. Working with the Trustees and Executive Committee Chairs a process developed which involved holding a workshop for the Workstream Chairs of the Partnership. The workstream groups are for each of the strategic priorities of the Partnership such as mental health, transport, healthy ageing, etc.

### Meeting the Challenge

CAVA organised and facilitated an online Zoom workshop with the aim of involving Workstream Chairs and Members in the development of the Partnership values, vision and strategy. At the same time to understand and develop partnership team working.

The workshop covered areas such as:

- Background and context to SHWP
- What makes an effective partnership? - introduction of effective partnership model
- Values-Vision - Discussion and feedback

Good engagement was achieved and Chairs resolved to discuss and cascade the vision and values at their workstream groups.

### The Outcome

- Feedback received on the vision and values with subsequent changes to these as a result
- Commitment of chairs to cascade the vision and values
- Greater ownership of the vision and values by key Partnership leaders
- Clarity on what makes an effective partnership
- Improved relationships and communication
- Commitment to a second workshop looking at strategy.

# 5.

## Priority achievements

### Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership Cont'd

Other work supporting the Partnership included:

- Writing an application to the Prince's Rural Community Fund for their POP-UP HUBS project
- Advice on the tackling Inequalities project with organising a kick start project team meeting
- Production of planning on a page template
- Creation of a digital inclusion funding application
- Instigating conversations with the National Lottery, Public Health and WCC
- Chair of Trustees support.

Other work in support of improving Health and Wellbeing included:

- Guidance for Friends of Hastings House Surgery in Wellesbourne on funding applications and opportunities
- Guidance for Social Impact Fund applications including Escape Arts
- Signposting Studley to secure funding for their Quiet Breathing Space
- Support to successful applicants for the Mental Wellbeing and Resilience Fund
- Confirmation that Change Grow Live had been successful for a grant from L and Q Housing for new equipment for their move to the Fred Winter Centre.

Feedback from CGL included:

Hi Chris,

I hope you're well.

I just wanted to let you know that we have received our funding grant from L&Q and also to say a big thank you for all your advice, help, guidance and support over the past few months in identifying potential funders and putting the applications together. I knew we'd get there in the end

I believe the Fred Winter Centre is due to open in early September so hopefully we'll see you at the grand opening.

Thanks again, 😊  
Chris.

- Confirmation this period that Stratford Music Network had secured £19,628 from the COVID-19 Mental Wellbeing and Resilience Fund.

# 5.

## Priority achievements

### Isolation

The post worked with Rubbish Friends and environmental charity to support them and submit funding applications to enable them to sustain and grow after the COVID lockdowns. As well as the environmental impact as their name suggests it is a force for reducing social isolation by bringing local communities and people together.

Warwickshire Youth Carers were also supported by identifying potential funders for their Volunteer Co-ordinator proposal.

A funding application to the Social Impact Fund was co-ordinated and written for the Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership aimed at digital and social inclusion within the Stour area.

Alcester's Crafty Lunch Club was successful for their Social Impact Fund application which was supported. The club is aimed at providing activities for people with disabilities in the Alcester area. A meeting was held and advice given on the potential long-term legal structure for the club.

Worked with Warwickshire County Council Community and Partnership Team to identify groups that could benefit from Loneliness and Social Isolation funding. As a result, £5900 of funding was secured for Stratford District groups.

### Under and Unemployment/Financial

Supported Forest of Hearts with a Skills for Sustainability European Social Fund application for £19,150 These enabled participants to attend weekly skills sessions and work in teams to develop their confidence and skills using work based community projects.

### Younger People

Attended the Warwickshire Youth Alliance meetings held by Warwickshire County Council Youth Service and as a result enabled a volunteer youth club to access the WCC Youth Work Small Grants fund.

Continued to support the renamed Children and Families Partnerships in Alcester, Southam, Studley, Stratford town, Henley and Meon Vale. Also attended the Stratford Advisory Board meeting and helped with signposting possible governance training options. Led and facilitated by Barnardo's the Partnerships provided an excellent way to network, build relationships and secure intelligence on local communities.

# 5.

## Priority achievements

The Studley Local Network Group led by Barnardo's, aimed at children and families, was re-launched with a productive first meeting including representatives from the Town Council, Blue School, Foodbank, Scouts, Curate, Guides, Brownies, Methodist Church and County Council. From this WCC Cllr Kerridge was supported in his quest to set up outreach youth provision in the village. Links were made to Escape Arts and Alcester Town Council so that Studley could learn how they have introduced the provision.

Guidance was provided to the Studley Youth Foundation on setting up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Worked with Shipston on Stour Primary School and Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership to identify possible funding for the Schools Thrive programme.

### Geographical emphasis

Marston Sicca Parish Council were supported to establish the legal status of their new Community Café and Foodbank in Meon Vale.

Supported Meon Vale Residents Association with their Tackling Inequalities application, writing a Project Initiation Document for them as well as supported their WCC Cllr Fund application

Meeting held looking at various legal structure options for the Meon Vale Village Hall.

Continued support for the Community Builder project including writing a successful application to the Town Trust. Facilitated elements of the first in person Community Builder Project Board and drafted their Terms of Reference. Met Wychavon District Council to talk about recruitment and delivery of their and Worcestershire's Community Builders programme. Guidance provided on impact measurement system for the project.

### Support for older people

Advice on funding was also provided to Alcester Dementia Care regarding the proposal to build a dementia day centre in the town.

Provided governance advice to Stratford Men Shed regarding their constitution, AGM and Trustees. They subsequently recruited all new Trustees and a Trustee induction day was delivered for them.

# 5.

## Priority achievements



The proposed new Wixford Village Hall

### Community Venues

The post supported a variety of applications for the WCC Green Shoots fund. Wixford Village Hall was successful and advertised as an example of best practice.

Meon Vale facilities were supported in terms of set up as a charity and legal structure options.

Attended the Road Map out of Lockdown Webinar and was one of the panel members.

# 6.

## Impact and Value

A key responsibility of the Development post is to identify, support in ways such as providing funding opportunities, providing evidence and data, sense and proof-reading applications, advising content and writing funding bids for the VCSE sector within Stratford-on-Avon District. This table highlights the funding applications made in the 2021/22 year that the Development Officer was able to support in a meaningful way.

Project	Funder	Applied for	Successful
Tackling Inequalities-CASW	Sport England L@Q	£4,820	£4,820
TI- Change Grow Live	Sport England L@Q	£3,170	£3,170
TI- Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Sport England L@Q	£6,674	£6,674
TI- Meon Vale Residents	Sport England L@Q	£5,700	£5,700
TI- Community Builder	Sport England L@Q	£6,192	£6,192
Change Grow Live- Fred Winter move	L@Q	£7,000	£7,000
Wixford Village Hall	WCC Green Shoots	£24,065	£24,065
Stratford Town FC	WCC Green Shoots	£25,000	£25,000
Shipston Baby and Toddler Group	WCC Cllr Grants	£2,000	£1,000
Community Builder	Stratford Town Trust	£20,000	£20,000
Stratford Music Network	Mental Health Resilience fund	£20,000	£20,000
Stratford Music Network	Stratford Town Trust	£20,000	Withdrawn
Alcester Youth Forum-play area	National Lottery	£10,000	£10,000
Clopton Community Action Group	WCC Cllr grants	£2,000	Not submitted
Bishopston Community Centre	WCC Cllr Grants	£2,000	Not submitted
Shipston Youth Club	WCC Youth Work Fund	£3,000	£3,000
Meon Vale Residents Association	WCC Cllr Grants	£1,500	£914
Stratford Music Network	WCC Cllr Grants	£1,000	£500
Rubbish Friends	National Lottery	£10,000	Not successful
Friends of Hastings House	Social Impact Fund	£49,800	Not successful
Dad Matters Warwickshire	Social Impact Fund	£49,900	£39,437
Stour Health and WB Partnership	Social Impact Fund	£19,971	Not successful
Dad Matters Warwickshire	National Lottery	£86,874	Postponed
Forest of Hearts	ESF Community Grants (National)	£19,150	£19,150
Alcester Town Council	Social Impact Fund	£41,000	£40,000
St Nicholas C of E Primary	Improving MH Wellbeing/Resilience	£4,000	£4,000
Studley Parish	Improving MH Wellbeing /Resilience	£8,435	£8,435
Escape Arts	Social Impact Fund	£65,000	£65,000
Stour Health and Wellbeing P	Sport England (National)	£6,000	£6000
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>£489,251</b>	<b>£295,057</b>

# 7.

## Build and maintain key relationships

Build and maintain key relationships is a key responsibility of the Development Officer.

The table below highlights those organisations/partnerships/networks which the Development Officer has worked with and added value to:

- Alcester Baptist Church
- Alcester Dementia Cafe
- Alcester Town Council
- Alcester Youth Project
- Autistic Girls Network
- Barnardo's
- Bishopton Community Centre
- Carers4Carers
- Change Grow Live (Stratford)
- Change X
- Citizens Advice South Warwickshire
- Clopton Community Action group
- Escape: Community Arts
- Ettington Hub
- Forest of Hearts
- Friends of Hastings House
- Henley Parish Council
- Henley Primary School
- Home-Start South Warwickshire
- Lighthorne Parish Council
- L and Q Housing
- Marston Sicca Parish Council
- Men Shed Stratford
- Meon Vale Residents Association
- Meon Vale Youth Club
- Orbit Housing Group
- Parenting Project
- Rubbish Friends
- Shipston Baby and Toddler Group
- Shipston Primary School
- Shipston Foodbank
- Shipston Youth Club
- Stepping Stones
- Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership
- Stratford District Council
- Stratford Local Network group
- Stratford Music Network
- Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Partnership
- Studley Youth Foundation
- Toolshed
- Warwickshire County Council - Community Team
- Warwickshire County Council - Youth Service
- Warwickshire Young Carers
- Wixford Village Hall
- Young Minds Matter

# 8.

## Ambitions and future challenges

Challenges-threats	Ambitions-opportunities
Maximising contribution of VCSE sector to SIP priorities	Further development of VCSE SIP Network. Thematic sub groups?
Large geographical area	Conscious of District wide need. Having Southam based drop in. More work in Lighthorne Heath via Support Group. Meon Vale Support Group.
Reduction in Government backed COVID recovery/ relief funds- less disposable money for donations, reduced funding for the VCSE sector	Unsure if there will be Cost of Living support grants for VCSE sector. Information on Cost of Living funding available for groups
Cost of Living Crisis	CAVA and sector wide response required. Support for Warm Hubs concept
Identify more opportunities for partnership, collaborative working and operational efficiencies related to SIS  What if there is a gap in VCSE provision for the SIP priority?	Via expansion of VCSE network  Creation of new Voluntary and community groups
Improve success rate for funding applications from Stratford groups	Online training opportunities

# 9.

## Conclusion

The Voluntary and Community sector within Stratford District played a huge role in responding to the COVID pandemic and supporting the key priorities of the Stratford Social Inclusion Partnership.

The Partnership's Development Officer was able to support 45 groups in 2021/22 and support many of them to secure £295,057 for the Partnership's priorities.

Key work included the Tackling Inequalities Project involving 5 communities in the district, Dad Matters a much-needed resource for local dads and an excellent example of partnership working, securing funding from the Social Impact Fund and the County Mental Wellbeing fund.

Future challenges will be the withdrawal of COVID related support funding despite the sector not fully recovering as yet and the Cost of Living Crisis when increased demand will meet less funding and volunteers. As a result, the Social Inclusion Partnership and the Development Officer post would seem to be needed even more.