

St Matthew's Church

St Matthew's Community Development Project

How Can a Small Organisation Make a Big Difference?

(2017 – 2018)



Executive Summary

Through this project we are *breaking down the walls of social isolation and empowering our community.*

We are doing this through...

- networking,
- supporting,
- leading and managing, and
- shaping values and influencing.

Our Community Development Manager, Pam Robinson, has had another ground breaking year. Her value to this area as a community builder cannot be over emphasised

This report looks at the impact of Pam's role over the last 12 months.

Some of Pam's achievements are easily delineated whilst other work relates to the breadth of her role.



How can the resources of a community be used to the best effect?

By *Networking*: drawing together small groups and establishing a network, creating robust communication, facilitating and sharing resources, forging new links, and raising awareness of opportunities.

Pam continues to build and strengthen the network she has developed across the local area which currently encompasses over 60 groups and impacts over 1000 individuals.

Networks don't just happen, they need forums in which to connect and someone to facilitate.

Key highlights of this year...

- **Building key relationships** with *Targeted Prevention Alliance, Stockport Community Shed Group, Stockport Homes, Targeted Prevention for Youth Services, Spaces of Hope, Neighbourhood Charity Crafters, Digital Annie, OWLS (Ongoing Women's Local Support), Stockport SEND group (families with special needs' children), Stockport MBC, Greenspace, Probation Service*
- **Continuing** to strengthen partnerships with *local councillors, schools, police, community services, groups and charities.*
- **Extending** the reach of group and community websites and social media, including management of 4 websites, 4 Facebook pages and 3 Twitter accounts.
- **Continuing** to raise our profile via the local press, social media and presentations to local forums, including *Funding the Future (Stockport Homes), Spaces of Hope video for Friendly Fridays (viewed over 1,000 times), We Stand Together, Carers Day, World Health Day, Welcome to Edgeley*
- **Connecting with *Health as a Social Movement and Spaces of Hope*** which aim to reduce social isolation and strengthen communities.
- **Combatting "holiday hunger"** by providing 100 packed lunches during our holiday club (supported by two local supermarkets)



Where next?

- **Continue** to build and facilitate the network, working closely with *Spaces of Hope* and look for innovative ways of connecting the community
- **Progress** with the **Pop Up Restaurant project**
- **Consider other ways** in which **Open Opportunities** could help people gain in **confidence and skills**
- **Develop** a deeper awareness of how the local community can connect with the wealth of support and information which is available in the area

Impact statement – *Digital Annie*

*Pam is **recognised** by people in the local area as someone who is **very much involved** in community projects with a passion and desire to help others. Pam has core desire to reduce social isolation and to create a harmonious inclusive community within the area where she lives. Pam is involved with many hubs of community spaces such as the Olive ROC (community cafe), York Street (community centre), Rose Walker Community Centre and St Matthew's Church. Whilst Pam is a trustee or other defined role in all of these places her work goes far deeper than this.*

*In the past year I have worked alongside a number of projects where Pam has sought and successfully gained funding to **make a difference**. For example Pam came up with the idea of enabling local people who have been out of a job for a while to gain some recognisable skills by enabling them to learn how to operate a commercial coffee machine. This was taken up by a number of members of the public and in one particular instance gave the person the **confidence** to actually then volunteer at the cafe. At York Street her leadership has seen the community centre grow, become more organised and better managed on a day to day basis. At St Matthew's Church Pam supports a number of different groups to make use of the facilities, she organises most of the fairs, community and heritage days welcoming the local community into the space. At the Rose Walker Community Centre Pam who was part of the team who **saved the centre** has been integral in enabling this centre to grow and become sustainable in its own right.*



Pam's **network of connections is vast** and one of the things she does really well is **connecting** people to each other where they maybe mutual benefit. **Understanding** where there is a need and how that need can be filled by someone or some people who are looking to help. This is clearly seen on a day to day basis and witnessed as the community networking events which Pam attends on a regular basis. But it's not just at networking events, when Pam meets people in the community and listens to what they have to say she recommends a number of different events and places the person could attend and benefit from.

Pam's work reaches **all members of the community** who may experience isolation or feel marginalised by society from mum's with young children, to people new to the area, those living alone, to refugees new to our county and to the older generation all who struggle to find connections. Pam is also keenly aware of the low income individuals and families in our neighbourhood. She has sought **funding** to enable free drinks to carers, free juice for children at many events and hubs, reduced costs for food at events and to attend various events and days out.

Anna Rogers, Founder of Digital Annie and co-Project Lead Friendly Fridays



How do we help groups to become sustainable?

By Supporting: multiplying resources through partnerships, offering information and practical advice, promoting groups, attracting new volunteers from the community and sharing skills.

Pam has helped to support over 20 groups which work with over 500 individuals.

Key highlights of this year...

- **Participating as a member of the *Spaces of Hope* and *Stockport Community Hubs Network*** which brings a wide range of local groups and leaders together to share best practice and help resolve issues around a range of difficulties faced by community groups.
- **Securing approximately £11,000 of funding for local groups as well as the new *Friendly Fridays* project.** These groups now have far better resources enabling them to buy equipment and materials and cover the costs of room hire.
- **Taking a greater role in developing the *Rose Walker Community Centre*** including: working with Stockport MBC, Public Realm, GreenSpace and the local Probation/Community Payback team to secure an extensive plan of improvements in Cheadle Heath park, in which the centre sits. This includes cutting back all the verges of the park, general litter pick, cleaning the football area, remarking the lines, putting in new nets, and cleaning and painting the walls around the pitch.
- **Enhancing the offer of the *Olive community cafe* by:**
 - **re-introducing Storytime**, with a partnership with *Loreto College* to provide students as storytellers, and *Neighbourhood Charity Crafters*, who made the storysacks
 - **running a pilot of Open Opportunities Barista training**, to help people gain skills and confidence
 - **joining the Community Toilet Scheme** to allow public access to conveniences
 - **joining the national Refill scheme**, to offer **free** top-ups of water bottles, and to **replace** plastic straws (both will help reduce plastic pollution)



- **securing funding** from Stockport MBC *Ready to Grow* fund to try out an innovative **Pop Up Restaurant project**, to bring new food experiences to the high street
- **Organising a Dementia Friends training session**, leading to 20 new Dementia Friends in the local area

Where next?

- **Continue to develop the Rose Walker Community Centre**, working with the local Councillors and Stockport Council. The long-term aim is to install: a new heating system, with greater ventilation and a new damp proof course; broadband facilities; and a new semi-commercial kitchen.
- **Identify further personal and professional development** to further increase Pam's value to the community.



Impact statement – Geraldine Sullivan, Patron, Edgeley ROC Centre (Olive Cafe)

Without exception, Pam is the most **diligent and enthusiastic person** to deliver and promote projects which are meeting proven social needs. The **value** of her work in the community is immense. She brings together local groups and agencies enabling help to be accessed by all sections of the community, in the areas of health, disability, social isolation, children's work, volunteering, enabling people to get into work and much more.

I have worked in the Edgeley area for 30 years and helped establish two charities. Without Pam's **consistent, reliable support**, the Olive ROC Centre, would not be what it is today. Pam is at the **heart** of the Edgeley community and networks without bias for so many community groups. I have the highest regard for her **professionalism and caring attitude** towards everyone she meets.

I hope she will be able to **continue** to build on the strong foundations she has established and you will support her work. By doing so, Edgeley will continue to develop a safe, strong community for all.

Geraldine Sullivan MA. MBACP (Accred).



How do we engage with our community?

By *Leading and Managing*: bringing people together through large scale community events, holiday activities, developing existing activities and building partnerships.

This year Pam has been instrumental in planning or leading a number of major events across our community which have involved over 1000 individuals. Additionally, Pam manages regular groups which involve around 100 people per month, and, most significantly for this year, secured a large grant to help to set up the ground-breaking *Friendly Fridays* project.

Key highlights of this year...

- **Securing £6000 grant from the Equity Foundation Wellbeing scheme to co-develop and deliver the Friendly Friday project at the Rose Walker Community Centre.** This innovative project is free to access and open to all ages. It is building partnerships with local support groups and charities as well as local business, such as Home Instead Senior Care, who offer a monthly lunch club. The project is run by dedicated volunteers, who are being equipped with support and training, such as free Food Safety Level 2 and First Aid qualifications. An additional £1000 grant was secured from the Stockport Local Fund, managed by Stockport Council.
- **Mentoring a Church Related Community Work student on a two year placement,** and supporting her development in community work. This includes her development of the revised Storytime sessions at the Olive Cafe, supporting students from Loreto college who came to be Storytellers and recruiting new volunteers.
- **Working with the National Citizen Service to enable a number of young people to plan and deliver an afternoon tea for The Challenge 2018**
- **Organising displays and presentations to showcase the work of the Community Hubs that Pam helps to lead** (St. Matthew's Church, Olive ROC Centre, and the York Street and Rose Walker



Community centres). This including *Funding the Future*, *Welcome to Edgeley*, *World Health Day*, *Volunteers Week*, and *Carers Day*.

- **Organising Dementia Friends training** resulting in 20 new Dementia Friends in the local area.

Where next?

- **Participate, with others from St Matthew's Church, in the GRA:CE project (Growth, Relationship and Action in the Church of England).** *Theos* and the *Church Urban Fund* are conducting a three-year research project seeking to understand the relationship between church growth, social action and discipleship within the Church of England.
- **Speak at the Spaces of Hope, Call to Action: Community Leadership event at Chester Cathedral in September**
- **Interview for *One Voice*, Pure Radio**

Impact statement – Clare Cliff, Home Instead Senior Care

*I want to acknowledge the professional relationship that we have as a company with Pam Robinson in her current role as community development manager for St Matthews Church. Pam is extremely **passionate** about bringing the community together without any barriers and is greatly involved in lots of events that we attend.*

*We work very closely with Pam at Friendly Fridays the **intergenerational weekly event** where we facilitate the lunch club alongside the volunteers who support Pam. Pam's work makes a huge **impact** on so many people across the community either face to face, written or verbal communication. Pam always goes that "extra mile" and is so thoughtful and positive. Pam's role has a great impact on many people and her reputation goes before her. I have worked alongside Pam in my current and previous role and feel she is the "hub" of the Stockport community and links so many people together to greatly improve social inclusion.*

Clare Cliff, Head of CareGIVER experience



Impact statement – Catriona Duncan-Rees, Think Local, Act Person (TLAP)

*Pam is a highly effective development worker and over the last few years has invested a huge amount of time and effort into developing ways to support the Edgely and Cheadle Heath Communities. Olive ROC Café is one of her flagship developments, having grown into a part of the local Edgely High Street and become part of the community there. Pam has been **hugely successful** in securing **support** from a range of organisations and agencies across Stockport, most recently in relation to the refurbishment of the Rose Walker Centre and the development of Friendly Fridays.*

*The Friendly Fridays Team had planned to have 50 regular people dropping into the centre between 10 and 3 – all ages and backgrounds by the end of 2018. This was far **exceeded** in February 2 weeks after it officially launched.*

*Pam has built **excellent relationships** with Stockport Homes, Equity Housing and Home Instead (Care Agency) among other local voluntary and community organisations to support this with volunteers, and catering.*

*Pam is very **passionate** about ensuring the work that she does is **sustainable** and does not rely solely on her input – she is effective at identifying and raising up people from within the faith and local community to support the work, stepping back and moving on to new things, while maintaining a level of support and integrity that ensures things keep developing.*

Catriona Duncan- Rees



How do we speak out for justice to those who make decisions?

By shaping values and influencing: by being a force for good in the community, getting involved through taking leadership roles, attending residents' associations and by becoming a known presence in the communities of Edgeley, Cheadle Heath and Bridgehall.

With the move away from statutory provision, councils in particular are looking to the local community to “bridge the gap”. Pam’s breadth of knowledge of community development and the local community provides an invaluable resource to those in strategic planning positions. In this new environment, good decision making is essential when planning how the needs of the community can be met both effectively and fairly.

Key highlights of this year...

- **Carrying out public consultations to establish what local people love about their community and what could be improved.** This created the evidence needed to apply for funding and ultimately the establishment of the widely popular Friendly Fridays project.
- **Holding strategic leadership positions** across the local area: *Olive ROC Centre (Trustee), Rose Walker Community Centre (Trustee), York Street Residents' Association (Chair), Residents' of Edgeley and Cheadle Heath group (Member).*
- **Changing perceptions** of those who are homeless, refugees or asylum seekers by creating an opportunity for the community to donate food and goods to a local food bank, a homeless charity and refugee support group (*Loaves and Fishes*) and a group working with new mums in need and their babies (*Early Essentials*).
- **Supporting local Carers by securing funding so that 300 Carers Coffee vouchers could be given away,** funding secured from Stockport Homes Community Fund.



Where next?

- **Plan** the strategic development of Cheadle Heath park, home of the *Rose Walker Community Centre*, in line with major new investment in the local area, including a potential new games area, and new picnic tables.
- **Encourage deeper links** between York Street Community Centre and local residents.
- **Encourage deeper links** between St Matthew's school and the local community, particularly around involvement in Toddle Time and Olive Cafe *Storytime*.

Impact statement – local Councillor

*As a local Councillor, I am **very aware** of the contribution that has been made by Pam to various groups within Edgeley and Cheadle Heath. To name but a few, Pam has been highly instrumental in supporting Cheadle Heath Community Association. She is a member of the management committee and a project leader with a colleague in setting up Friendly Fridays at the Centre which is attracting 30-40 and more people each week, of all ages. In addition, Pam organises and supervises activities at St Matthew's Church such as the Summer Fair, Christmas Fair, Community Days, opening the church for Heritage Days and the regular Saturday morning cafe, encouraging anyone and everyone to drop in for a chat and a coffee.*

*Pam is also a trustee of the Olive Cafe on Castle Street, which is a charity aimed at providing a meeting place for the community as well as groups and events for the young and not so young. In addition, Pam is also chair of the York Street Residents' Association based in the York Street Community Centre. The organisation (which has been in existence for many years) **needed a steer** and support to get it up and running again. This is a very brief description of what Pam has been doing, there's a great deal more, all of it good.*

*All of these organisations have **benefited considerably** from Pam's energy, innovation, dedication and support. I believe the contribution she has made is clearly beneficial, of great value and will be long lasting.*

Sheila Bailey



Final Word

As we have considered all that has been achieved in the last year, we see that Pam's role contains a large amount of strategic planning, working with both individuals and groups, as well as hands on practical engagement.

We continue to aim to be flexible as we respond to the needs of the community and facilitate the engagement of community groups, charities, and statutory bodies.

We recognise, however, that in community development the best growth is often organic, so we look forward to seeing how this role will continue to develop.

We have a significant impact on the lives of those who live and work in our local area but we feel that there is much yet to be done so we continue to reflect on how we can develop this pivotal role of community development into the future.

Impact statement – *MP for Stockport*

As the local MP for Stockport since 1992, I have been familiar with the work which Pam Robinson has been leading in the Edgeley part of my community since 2014 on behalf of St Matthew's CE Church.

*Having some **hands-on community development** in an area where many people experience **social and economic deprivation**, or can feel **isolated** at home, has made a beneficial difference in the area.*

Thanks to the work of the Community Manager, we now have a hub which links St Matthews to all the community groups in the area, and are able to support local groups to become more sustainable – finding volunteers for them, putting them in touch with possible sources of local funding etc. Each time I or my



Constituency Office Manager catches up with Pam Robinson for a briefing, we are impressed by the new projects under way – for example the **partnerships** which have been established within the local voluntary sector.

The **development** at the community café (the Olive ROC Centre) continues to benefit my constituents by providing much-needed information sessions and training opportunities. Local people now see this as the place to go for help and advice.

Other venues in the Edgeley area have also been strengthened – for example the Rose Walker Centre and the York Street Centre with activities like craft which people enjoy and which help decrease loneliness.

In all these endeavours I have offered my support to Pam and the Church, because I can see the beneficial impact it is having on the community and the lives of my constituents. I feel **confident** that the funding from the Tudor Trust is being used in the best possible way.

Ann Coffey, MP Stockport

