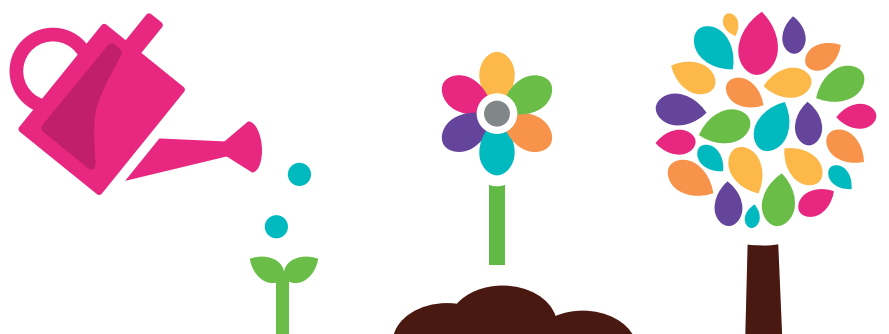




annual report
september 2018 - august 2019



Feed and it will grow

Foreword

During the past year Support Cambridgeshire partners have continued to support the voluntary and community sector, delivering a full range of activities and responding to needs as they arise.

We are proud of the collective impact the voluntary and community sector makes in our communities; and as a partnership proud of the role we play in ensuring that our communities are safe, healthy and vibrant.

As government at all levels continues to recognise the power and importance of communities, and the move towards a place-based approach gathers momentum true co-production is required.

Co-production is not just a word or a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find shared solutions. In practice it involves people who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them. For true co-production to become part of our way of working, a culture must be created where people are valued and respected, where relationships are built on trust, shared power and decision making.

We know how the funding crisis in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is having a negative impact on the sector, on our partners and on our communities. We are seeing less people doing more with scarcer resources. If we want to ensure the future viability of the sector, to build and sustain relationships, to support our communities we need great infrastructure support. This is what Support Cambridgeshire partners are known for.

Our annual report is a summary of our achievements and impact over the past year and celebrates not only our work but the work and commitment of voluntary and community groups across Cambridgeshire. We hope you enjoy reading it.

Julie

'Challenges are what makes life interesting and overcoming them makes life meaningful'



Community Facilities

There are over 300 community facilities in Cambridgeshire and well-run community buildings are critical for the sustained well-being of local communities and their residents.

Running these facilities often requires detailed knowledge of topics such as governance, legislation, funding and business planning. With many community facilities being run by volunteers, this can place a huge burden on those who step forward to help. Through Support Cambridgeshire, we offer support to those running community facilities.

Our community buildings advice network continues to see growth in the case work undertaken. Working closely with individual trustees or a whole committee allows us to bring about long-term change and increased confidence for trustees. We use regular communications to keep the village halls community informed through a dedicated [website](#), direct mail, online materials and an e-newsletter. We have delivered a programme of networking and training events that have proved popular.

Our Community Building Mentors scheme enables volunteers who already successfully manage their own community buildings to offer peer support to others. We have nine mentors available to support village hall committees. Feedback has been positive with plenty of informal 'buddying up' supplementing the more formal activity.

Support Cambridgeshire continues to promote and deliver the Hallmark quality standard for village halls and community buildings. Hallmark is a nationally recognised accreditation that uses trained peer visitors to assess performance and provide an external validation of achievement. Currently we have 32 halls engaged in the Hallmark process all working towards one of the three levels.

What's working?

- Our Year 3 casework has included work on 269 cases, an increase on Year 2's achievement of 256 cases. The top four areas of advice include governance, hall promotion,

funding and health & safety.

- Our Year 3 programme of networking and training events has seen 52 different halls participating.
- 13 halls achieved Hallmark accreditation, with 4 halls moving onto Hallmark 2 and 2 Halls achieved the top level of Hallmark 3.
- Our Community Buildings Mentor volunteering scheme and the Hallmark Accreditation Scheme are now well-embedded.

What's challenging?

Support and advice cases are often complex and require several interventions in order to deliver a successful conclusion. We often have to work with volunteers over an extended period of time in order to reach a resolution.

Changes of trustees or the loss of energy can often cause cases to stagnate, only for them to reappear at a later date for more support.



Community facilities – Effective and well managed community facilities

Town and Parish Councils

Local Councils in towns and parishes are the vital first tier of local government. They work towards improving community well-being and providing better services.

Much has changed for local councils in recent years; the widening scope of activity, the context in which local councils operate, the diversity of organisations they must work with and the changing needs and expectations of the communities they serve all present new challenges and opportunities. For these reasons and more, it is vital that the sector continues to adapt, to learn and to innovate.

Our work aims to improve the lives of local communities by ensuring that town and parish councils are vibrant, dynamic and effective. We believe that local councils can improve their practices by learning from each other. We run a programme of peer learning events and an annual conference for local council clerks and councillors to facilitate this networking and sharing of expertise.

What's working?

- We continue to grow our online audience. Our Twitter [@cambsparishes](#) feed has 429 followers (an increase of 128 on the previous year) and is a valuable way of connecting local councils over common issues.
- Our third Cambridgeshire Local Council Conference in November 2018 was attended by 227 delegates representing 85 local councils.
- We continue to deliver the Cambridgeshire Local Council Development Plan 2017 – 2022 which sets out the actions to be taken to strengthen support, engagement and collaboration between district and county councils, sector-specific organisations and the voluntary sector to support local council aspirations for their communities.
- We continue to encourage the development of Neighbourhood Plans.
- A further Rural Affordable Housing Mythbuster Coach Tour was held in July 2019 and took 28 delegates on a tour of rural affordable housing sites in Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. Delegates gave the event an average rating of 4.81 out of 5 (an increase on

- year 2 scoring).
- We undertook our second Local Councils Surveys of Clerks and Councillors in April and May 2019 which provides valuable intelligence on the views of those acting as local councillors and those who clerk for them. The data provided has been analysed and will feed into a refresh of the Local Councils Development Plan so that we can ensure that our continued delivery meets the requirements of those who should benefit from it.

What's challenging?

One of the challenges we face is engaging local councillors in participating in peer learning and networking events. Many councillors have been in post for several years and believe they have little left to learn. We must continue to ensure that learning outcomes are clear and that they appeal to those who we believe will benefit from attending.

Resourcing continues to be an issue, with funds available through Support Cambridgeshire being insufficient for the activity that needs to be delivered. We have undertaken additional fundraising, by bidding to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to ensure we can deliver activities such as the annual conference at the scale and quality which is now demanded by our local council audience.



Town and parish councils – Effective and vibrant local councils

Volunteering and Social Action

Social Action is when individuals, groups and communities come together to solve issues of mutual concern. In doing so, the very act develops and strengthens communities.

More emphasis than ever is now being drawn irresistibly to the concept of *Place*. As the county embarks on its Think Communities strategy, and 70 of the top 300 Foundation Trusts concentrate on funding all things place based, Support Cambridgeshire continues to bring people together to underpin and explore placed based possibilities.

Our placed based framework Love it, hate it and shape it continues to yield excellent results. This programme has been accredited by external funding bodies, bringing added value grants to the Support Cambridgeshire programme.

Pivotal to all of this is the bringing together of people: Support Cambridgeshire has run 13 network sessions over the past 12 months which have focussed on acts of social action which have forced people to think differently about the projects and services they run. This programme will continue in Year 4.

The annual Connecting Communities conference (match funded between Huntingdonshire District Council and the work-stream Volunteering and Social action) focussed on loneliness and social isolation, and how volunteering and social action can reduce its devastating impacts. The 2019 Conference was heavily oversubscribed and shows the thirst and hunger for networking and information which underpins the work of community organisations across Cambridgeshire.

The nature of volunteering continues to change and evolve. We will continue to support any new initiatives in Year 4.

Our work with business has begun to develop. How to extract the best from business relationships will continue as an ongoing social action theme.

What's working?

- A vibrant series of networking events across the county.
- An increase in delegates attending our year 3 training programme.
- The place-based approach has been delivered in 5 pilot areas and has brought a range of organisations together from both the statutory and voluntary sectors.
- 15 Cambridgeshire businesses giving their time to Support Cambridgeshire in Year 3.

What's challenging?

The State of the Sector Survey 2019 demonstrates that organisations across the county are working harder than ever to stand still. Taking the time to attend networks and partnerships which could ultimately provide long term gain is problematic given the issues of capacity and resource.

Working with communities takes time. The long-term benefit of engagement programmes like Love it, hate it and shape it are unlikely to be felt in a 12 month period, and therefore it is vital that ongoing support is provided so that fledgling organisations can feel confident about their future.

The difficulties in obtaining and maintaining grant funding is forcing more organisations than ever to consider some form of donor fundraising as a potential answer, but skills and capacity in a highly regulated specialism are difficult to obtain. The way in which the Support Cambridgeshire partnership approaches this in year 4 will be critical.



Volunteering and social action – Communities at the heart of social action

Our Impact

227

The number of local councils attending the County Wide Local Council Conference

See our success story 7

300K

raised through the Self- funding portal (SC4C)

222

The number of delegates attending coffee mornings

See our success story 7

95%

satisfied with face to face support

See our success story 8

9

Local councils supported with their Neighbourhood Planning

102

The number of attendees at the CEO and Commissioning Forums

85%

Satisfaction levels from local councils on the County wide Local Council Conference

See our success story 7

19

Village halls achieving Hallmark

See our success story 2

13%

increase in delegates attending network events

See our success story 3

40,032

In added value contracts

118

The number of halls participating in peer network events

120

The number of delegates attending our formal training

17,622

The number of website hits

506

The number of new and registered users to the funding portal

91%

Satisfied with our Training Programme

12,975

The level of match funding

NOVEMBER 2018
Local Council Conference



@CambsAcire

JANUARY 2019
Village Halls week



acre
VillageHallsW

MAY 2019
Food 4 Thought



JUNE 2019
Small Charities Week



JULY 2019
Mythbuster Tour



@CambsAcire

OCTOBER 2018
Inaugural
CEO Network

NOVEMBER 2018
Inaugural
Commissioning forum

APRIL 2019
More than A Giving
Machine

JUNE 2019
Connecting
Communities

JUNE 2019
National Volunteers
Week

*Statistics derived from the 2019 VCSE survey

Copyright myth buster tour photo is ©Cambridgeshire ACRE

Voice and Representation

Support Cambridgeshire supports and enables the ideas, experience and energy of the voluntary sector to influence funders, councils and government departments. We ensure a voice is heard which can influence policy and practice. We understand and champion the work of the sector, recognising the vital role organisations play in our communities.

Our annual State of the Sector report tells us that 89% of respondents felt it was extremely or very important that Support Cambridgeshire were able to represent the sector, showing a 7% increase from 2018.

We asked how important it was for Support Cambridgeshire to

- Promote the work that the sector does to the public and other stakeholders.
- Celebrate the work of the sector and the difference organisations make.

The results illustrate that 91% and 90% respectively felt this was extremely or very important.

'The third sector is a vital component of a fair and strong society, working alongside the public and private sectors to create opportunities for people to work together to tackle problems in their communities and providing a channel for disadvantaged groups to get their voice heard.'

What's working?

Building on the work in previous years we have developed a new structure for support across this strand which dovetails with local authority priorities: -

- Influencing Forums (10 strategic boards).
- Local Place-Based Forums (engaging and enabling participation by the wider sector).

Our CEO Network has defined both its role and priorities: -

- To encourage, guide, support and develop voluntary, community and social enterprise sector leadership skills. To help VCS leaders

have a real influence over the places and communities in which they live and work.

- We acknowledge the challenges faced by smaller organisations and promote Big supporting Small – a commitment from large VCS groups to support smaller VCS groups.
- Work work collectively to redress the issues of underfunding and disadvantage across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough: We are committed to working with commissioners to improve quality, influence service design, challenge perceptions and raise issues.

We see a clear desire for groups to share their experience and connect with and network with others.

- We have delivered 13 Network events covering subjects as broad as Community Cafes to the implications of GDPR, from how to market on a shoe-string or work with business on how best to pitch an organisation.

What's challenging?

- **Timely communication and engagement with the sector:** As the funding crisis within Cambridgeshire & Peterborough starts to take hold, the statutory sector continues to fail to understand the value and role the sector has in supporting our communities
- **Equal partners:** Last year the sector was positive about the integration of services. Statutory partners included them in discussions and valued their work. The funding crisis has precipitated a change: The sector no longer feels as valued and they feel done to rather than working with.

Information and Advice

The information and advice workstream covers all the work we do to help community groups, charities and other non-profit groups to deliver their aims. This includes both one to one advice and the delivery of a county wide training programme.

We believe that community groups and charities are key to making communities better places to live, work and study in. There will always be a need for existing and new groups, and these groups will always need to get answers to issues they are facing, or need access to quality information and advice.

What's working?

All the feedback we obtain illustrates that groups appreciate both the training and advice they receive. Over the last year, 120 people attended one of our formal courses. This is in addition to our peer networking events.

These courses are designed to give delegates practical information to assist in the running of their groups and attendees are very or extremely satisfied with the offer.

The programme is compiled and developed using local partnership knowledge and themes and trends which emerge from the Annual State of the Sector Survey which in 2019 is entitled *Rising to the Challenge*.

The year 4 programme is currently being developed and will include new courses which meet the changing needs of the sector.

"Good experience overall. I think the training you offer is very valuable."

"So helpful to come and have time to think things through. Great session, good collaborative approach, balanced and good opportunities for all to contribute."

Groups also appreciate the one-to-one support we provide. This can be through email, on the telephone or face to face. The most common queries concern funding and governance. These can be simple referrals or involve us in much more detailed and numerous 1-1 sessions.

Feedback from those who have received services show extremely high levels of satisfaction overall.

What's challenging?

The environment that groups are working in is not getting any easier. Our 2019 State of the Sector report shows that 86% of groups face barriers finding funding, and that there are also issues recruiting staff, trustees, and volunteers. We also know that the smaller organisations have been impacted the most by reductions in funding. Reductions across the board has led to communities replacing or enhancing the services once provided by the state. The need for resilience is recognised by the development of Think Communities, a new way of working endorsed by statutory partners across the county.

For a community to be resilient it needs groups that come together that offer support, services and places to share. The need for small community groups, registered or not, has never been greater, but these groups need to be able to access support and advice to give them the confidence, knowledge and encouragement they need to set up and thrive. The challenge is how this can continue to be provided to individuals and communities across such a diverse and unequal county to the level that is needed.



Voice and representation – Facilitating understanding between sectors

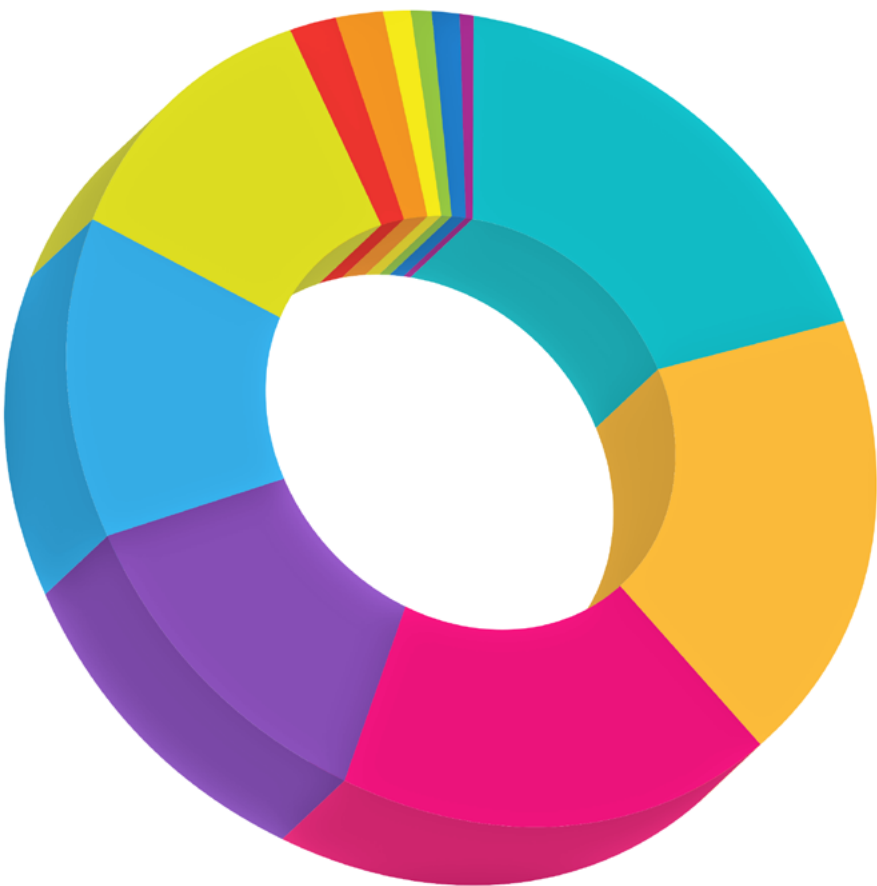


Information and advice – Strengthening community organisations through advice and support

Looking forward to Year 4



Year 4 will be about consolidating all of the lessons learned from the first 3 years and dovetailing with the Think Communities strategy set out and adopted by county and district councils. The partnership will continue to search for added value funding with which to support our work. Year 4 will also be about contract review – matching achievements to contract requirements.



- Community facilities £22,648
- Management and administration salaries £21,951
- Information and advice £20,678
- Volunteering and social action £15,000
- Voice and representation £15,000
- Town and parish councils £13,589
- Events £2,487
- Staff travel and subsistence £1,952
- Other expenses £1,192
- IT and phone account £1,005
- Support Cambridgeshire website £1,000
- Printing, postage and stationery £216

Success Stories



① A Double hit for Great Gransden

Great Gransden Village Hall has used two of the Support Cambridgeshire products to great effect over the past 12 months. The first is the self – funding portal known as Support Cambridgeshire 4 Communities.

By using this portal as a potential guide the village hall was able to raise 50K in grant from a local landfill fund with which to develop and extend their existing village hall footprint.

The self -funding portal can be viewed [here](#):

Over the past 12 months, the portal has been visited on 5,860 occasions with 506 new and registered users and over 650 repeat visitors, a substantial growth in numbers from year 2. Over 300K has been raised by community organisations using the portal (including Great Gransden), a substantial increase of 1164% on the previous year.

The top 5 areas for funding searches by area have been:

- Youth and engagement
- Older People
- Education
- Disability
- Youth and engagement

The top 5 funds that have been searched are:

- Cambridgeshire Community Foundation
- Tesco Bags 4 Help
- Peoples Postcode Trust
- Co-operative Community Dividend Fund
- Village Hall Improvement Fund

And here are what some organisation have been

saying about the Portal, including Great Gransden Village Hall.

"SC4C is incredibly easy to navigate. It's a really useful resource for community organisations."

"I use SC4C every week when I am browsing for new funding sources. If you use this in conjunction with the Support Cambridgeshire funding alert it really does help."

"We raised 50k off the back of a SC4C funding search. It's simple and easy to use."

Great Gransden Village Hall has also been working hard with Support Cambridgeshire partner Cambridgeshire ACRE to achieve Hallmark status. Hallmark is an external accreditation which demonstrates that village halls are both well run and well governed.

Take a look at the Trustees of Great Gransden Village Hall talking to Lisa Chambers of Cambridgeshire ACRE by clicking [here](#).



② Connecting Communities 2019 #CareDareShare

Connecting Communities 2019 was a great success, not just because the subject matter of social isolation and loneliness was a topical issue but that delegates attended in their droves and the learning which emanated from the event has been marked.

Over 90 delegates attended on the day from many different areas of the county, and from organisations both large and small. 15 delegates who wished to attend failed to gain a space due to number restrictions.

Attendees were treated to a superb key-note speech from Kate Gordon of the UK Men's Sheds Association, followed by a series of interactive work-shops led by a range of community organisations including Care Network, AgeUK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Cambridge Community Arts and The Wildlife Trust. A panel of external funders were also present which included the Community Fund and The People's Postcode Trust, The Wildlife Trust.

Delegate numbers increased by 97.9% from the previous conference held in 2018 and knowledge, lessons learned and confidence in

the subject matter increased by 27.6% based on post event evaluation.

Here is some typical feedback from the day:

"It was great to hear about the community development initiatives around social isolation. It helped me improve my skills and knowledge."

"The key-note speech was very thought provoking and the workshops were excellent."

"The conference was fantastic and will help me in my job role."

"I know I say it all the time but once again networking is so valuable for people like myself."

"Great conference and an excellent programme. The energy in the room was so strong."

Following the conference, the Medway Centre in Huntingdon started to exploit the learning.

Here's their story:

"We sat on a workshop table which looked at ways in which to engage with people and build a relationship. We came up with this idea of people who attend our services completing some decorative bunting with a key fact about themselves – something which was important to them or meant something to them. We took this idea one step further with our Seniors Club and we have been doing this ever since. The bunting now appears around the Medway centre and you would be surprised how much conversation and connection it provokes between people. It's a simple idea but it really works. Last week we had 2 elderly people who sat next to each other, completed the bunting and had no idea they had lived on the street as potential neighbours. Quotation supplied by Sally Marchant (Medway Centre) and Liz Megson (Care Network)."

Warboys and District Day Centre also found the event compelling: They stated:

"Following our attendance at the Connecting Communities Conference in St Ives we have had much interest shown from some of the participant organisations and have hosted a visit from the Open Arms Project, who will be working with us in the future to progress some new initiatives."

The Connecting Communities Conference is a match funded event led by Huntingdonshire District Council and supported via the Support Cambridgeshire work-stream Volunteering and

Social Action."



③ I love Wisbech - Added Value

If Infrastructure is about working with partner organisations then the I Love Wisbech work has been an unqualified success. Emanating from an original Prevention at Scale initiative, the I Love Wisbech team (which has consisted of 13 statutory and voluntary partners within the Town) have pursued a community conversation with those who live, work and invest in the area. Over several months, three broad questions were asked:

What do you like about Wisbech?

What do you dislike about Wisbech?

How can you help to shape any changes?

967 Residents responded including 150 students from the Thomas Clarkson Academy. Over 300 residents left their contact details and wanted to be part of any shaping process. As a result of these responses four engagement events were held exploring some of the themes that arose.

These themes included:

- A safe and clean town.
- Heritage and tourism.
- Connecting people to people and services.
- Transport.
- Young people and engagement.
- Helping those in crisis.

Priority leaders from amongst the I love Wisbech team have now been identified to work with those respondees who showed a particular interest in a certain theme. The future look interesting and shows the ability of communities to mobilise when they have shared issues or visions.



④ Building Steel Bones

Steel Bones works to connect the amputee community by sending out support packs to all new amputees, promoting stump health news, healthy lifestyles and the provision of flexible career opportunities. It also arranges networking and fundraising events, and lobbies statutory agencies on behalf of amputees and their families. The group has grown out of the lived experience of its founder members. Eight years ago Leigh Joy-Staines lost his leg as a result of an operation.

In the aftermath of this life-changing event, Leigh and his wife Emma felt isolated and struggled against a lack of understanding among the general public and statutory agencies about what amputation means for an individual and a family. As a result of their experiences they decided to form Steel Bones.

Steel Bones contacted Cambridge CVS (one part of the Support Cambridgeshire partnership) because they wanted to become a registered charity, seek funding and put in place policies and procedures to help them develop and support more beneficiaries. Steel Bones met with a development worker to discuss registering as a charity. A full review of what Steel Bones wanted to achieve was undertaken, together with a consideration of what charitable structure would best suit their long term needs and aspirations. Options reviewed and discussed, Steel Bones decided to become a Charitable Incorporated Company (CIO) and have since registered with the Charity Commission.

Steel Bones have also been able to access support in the development of sound and robust policies and procedures, underpinned by valuable training on Safeguarding, Financial Management and How to write the best possible funding application, a vital advice giving session in today's Charitable climate.

Steel Bones state:

"The training sessions I have attended have been phenomenal and what I find fantastic is they bring their own considerable charity experience to the training. CCVS have been a great brainstorming resource and have been brilliant at giving us a fresh perspective. I know I can email the team anytime with questions and they come back to me quickly with superb advice giving our committee the assurance we need to push forward in the best way possible."



⑤ More than a Giving Machine

For longer than the term Corporate Social Responsibility (or CSR) has been coined, charities have reached out to businesses for support. But charities can find CSR difficult to access, often being uncertain who in an organisation to contact, knowing if a business is receptive to being approached and the best way to do so, often thinking that a business is only interested in publicity for its donation.

Businesses too can find it difficult knowing how to deal with so many approaches made to them, not understanding the language that charities use and the hurdles and uncertainties they can go through. *However, when it works, it works well and makes a great difference to both sides.*

Coming from a desire to see this work better, have greater intention and impact, and create greater benefit for our communities, Rachel Briant (the Founder of Get Synergised) and Keith Johnson from Hunts Forum (on behalf of Support Cambridgeshire) organised a workshop: *Corporate Social Responsibility: More than a Giving Machine*. The title was deliberately chosen to emphasise that often the relationship can be about more than money and can include skills exchange, learning, mutual understanding and respect. The event took place in the boardroom of Barons Cambridge BMW in Cambourne, hosted by Kevin Appleton, their Head of Business.

Sixteen Charitable Organisations and social enterprises from across Cambridgeshire came together to explore how businesses and charities can engage better to impact communities. Sharon Livermore from Kameo Recruitment and Sue Rowley from PwC Cambridge joined Kevin Appleton to facilitate discussion groups exploring key themes. *Interest from the charitable sector far exceeded the number of places available.*

The workshop aimed to bridge the divide of language and increase ways of working between business and the charitable sector. We need to move beyond the idea of approaching businesses for funds and to explore and enter into dialogue with receptive businesses to develop stronger, meaningful and more sustainable partnerships.

The day saw both sides eager to develop better

and stronger relationships whilst learning from each other about the issues each faced. By understanding each other's positions, needs and intentions better, the workshop was able to break down many of the barriers for both, and boost the confidence of charities to approach businesses.

Charities and businesses ended the event wanting to see more opportunities for dialogue and engagement between each other, something that the organisers intend to follow through. Ideas that came from the workshop day include a space for Dragons' Den style pitching to businesses by charities, informal network gatherings, more dialogue sessions to help each side continue to understand the language used, the pressure each side is under and the mutual benefits of partnership.



⑥ Theory and Practice

The Cambridge Cycling Campaign (CamCycle) is a charity with 1280 members run by volunteers and 2 part time staff, a Communication and Community Officer and a Cycling Campaign Officer. Founded in 1995, their aim is safer, better and more cycling in the Cambridge area, where about half of the local population uses a bike at least once a month. Many of the cycle facilities such as paths, lanes, traffic signals, bridges and cycle parks would not exist without the work delivered by CamCycle members.

The Cycling Campaign Officer was initially motivated to attend the Cambridge CVS workshop *Measuring the difference you make: An Introduction to Social Impact* because she was aware of the emphasis funders put on Impact and she wanted to increase her knowledge of the subject area. She also wanted to explore the use of the Theory of Change (ToC) model to focus campaign efforts and to help move the organisation forward.

At this stage CamCycle had only recently employed her as their first paid member of staff and they were embarking on a new phase of growth and development.

The Workshop provided an opportunity for all those attending to spend time reflecting on what their organisation exists to achieve, and how they are currently working to deliver their aims. Those attending were able to share their ideas

and experiences and collaborate in group activities. The workshop helped participants to review some planning models including The Theory of Change, and rather than just viewing impact measurement as a funder requirement, CamCycle realised the benefits of using it to guide how they could prioritise and consolidate their activities.

Following the workshop CamCycle developed their own Theory of Change model (which features in their annual report) enabling them to create clarity on how the organisation needs to move forward. CamCycle see their Theory of Change as a living model which can be adapted as new factors are brought in to play.

The workshop provoked an important change in the way CamCycle look at project planning. Taking a Theory of Change approach they now look at what needs to happen to achieve the desired impact and develop activities that will deliver defined outcomes. They intend to produce an impact model for each new project they embark on in order to give it the chance to have the greatest impact.

Roxanne De Beaux their Cycling Campaign Officer stated:

"The workshop was a great starting point and created a shift in my mindset helping guide my thinking on how we could plan change."



⑦ Information and Advice

Safe Soulmate is a not-for-profit organisation committed to helping adults 18+ build a positive social life, with trusted friendships within their local community. If there is romantic connection they support this development in a safe and positive way. This service is always delivered face-to-face (with no risk). They hope that by offering opportunities, support and advice on building good relationships, it will impact positively in all areas of a young person's life. Their dream is for everyone to safely experience the joys of social inclusion, great friends and love. They specialise in supporting adults who are diversely able (for example those with autism, physical and learning disabilities and other conditions).

Although the founders Vicky and Christine are hugely experienced in working with people with

disabilities, autism or anxiety they were new to setting up a charitable enterprise and turned to Support Cambridgeshire partner Cambridge CVS for training and support.

Vicky and Christine have attended a range of free training. They have also accessed one to one support on funding using the critical friend service. Help has been given in many areas including governance, policy formulation, procedures and fundraising. They have also been able to meet other organisations who have been able to refer people to them.

The impact of all of this support has been that Cambridgeshire now has a successful and vibrant new organisation offering much needed services to diversely able adults. Safe Soulmate have organised a series of events and have been able to build links with a number of other local charities and organisations. In particular the volunteers that run Safe Soulmate have developed confidence to build on their ideas. By accessing training and 1-2-1 support they have been able to ensure they are putting the correct policies in place to grow a successful organisation. They have also gained access to an invaluable bank of resources, making use of templates and tools which assist their journey. They have extended their network which may lead to future collaborations with other organisations. The networks and learning that other organisations can offer are essential to any organisation old or new.

See Christine and Vicky in our short video which can be viewed [here](#):



⑧ The Community Plan

Wilburton is a small village in East Cambridgeshire which comprises 550 houses (and over 1,000 inhabitants), sitting 6 miles south west of Ely.

While nominally an agricultural village, many of the residents work in Cambridge, Ely, London or the surrounding areas due to excellent rail networks.

Wilburton is a parish of around 4200 acres lying on the important medieval route from Earith to Stretham, and extending south to the River Great Ouse. As much of the land in the region is fenland, the village's position on the ridge between Stretham and Haddenham at the southern end of the Isle of Ely was important in its growth and success.

The village is well known for its fundraising events (The Wilburton Beer Festival and the Wilburton Fireworks Night being prime examples) and has an active Parish Council.

The Parish Council adopted its original local Community Led Plan in March 2016. An extract can be viewed [here](#):

Being a Parish Council, Wilburton naturally looked towards Support Cambridgeshire partner Cambridgeshire ACRE for support and advice in refreshing their plan and making it even more fit for purpose.

Cambridgeshire ACRE were happy to help, providing a Good Practice Guidance Document which allowed Wilburton Parish Council to take a staged approach to reviewing their plan. Cambridgeshire ACRE also commented on the draft community survey, with suggestions on how it could be improved. Armed with this, the Council feel they are in an excellent position to obtain better survey *data sets* and review their plan moving forward.

And this is what people are saying about us:

"Wow, what a ride. I love these Support Cambridgeshire sessions."

Care Network

"This was really powerful. If this is the full force of the voluntary sector then the future looks bright"

Huntingdonshire District Council

"I recently attended the Support Cambridgeshire Duties of Trustees session in June 2019. The information was valuable and the session worthwhile."

Soham Sounds

Your help and advice are exemplary and it's easy to access.

Linton Village Hall

"I recently attended the Financial Reporting for Small Charities session delivered by Support Cambridgeshire. It was brilliant. It was pitched at all levels, for all different types of organisations and I found it invaluable."

Steel Bones

"On the few occasions we have been in touch to ask a question about village hall policies we've always received a quick, friendly and helpful response. Thank you!"

Great & Little Chishill Village Hall

"It is clear that they have the authority and knowledge to represent the sector, and that they have sought advice and opinion from others to inform their input."

Cambridgeshire County Council

Your Partnership Team

Julie Farrow – Voice and Representation

Mark Freeman – Information and Advice

Kirsten Bennett – Local Council Development

Lisa Chambers – Community Facilities

Keith Johnson – Volunteering and Social Action

Alison Brown – Local Council Development

Christine Treverrow – Information and Advice

Alan Turner – Information and Advice

Russell Rolph – Volunteering and Social Action



comms@supportcambridgeshire.org.uk

www.supportcambridgeshire.org.uk

01480 420601

The Maple Centre

6 Oak Drive

Huntingdon

PE29 7HN