Improving the reach and sustainability of your community building

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Generating community wealth for social change

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Who is the guide for?

This guide is aimed at staff, volunteers and governing body members who manage community buildings, and anyone who wants to further their knowledge of this area. It is not a comprehensive guide to all aspects of the management of community buildings – there are a range of publications available to assist with this. This publication is intended as a self-help guide which will help the reader find additional information concerning the wide range of issues involved.

What's in the guide?

This guide is organised into five sections:

1 **Ways to raise money to enable community buildings to be sustainable**

2 **Ways to reduce costs and improve efficiency**

3 **Who is the building for and who gets involved?**

4 **Who works here and supports us, and what do they do?**

5 **How do we let the local community know what we provide?**

Each section provides the following:

● Examples of good practice and how it has evolved.

● A checklist to assist with your planning and implementation.

● Online information concerning signposting and additional information.

● Contact details of key organisations that may be able to help.

We hope that the information and case studies in this guide will help you to continue to develop the reach and sustainability of your community building.

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this guide, however Aston-Mansfield accept no responsibility for any errors or issues that might arise from use of the information provided. The information provided in this publication is for information only and is not a definitive source of legal information.

Contents

Introduction

This good practice guide is a resource aimed at organisations in the voluntary and community sector which are running community buildings. This includes organisations such as settlements and community associations.

This guide was commissioned by the London Premises Sub-group which was created in 2006 and consists of a range of first and second tier organisations. One aim of the group is to raise funds to support the voluntary sector in the challenges of property management. The group were successful in securing Lottery funding through the Basis programme as there was an identified need in the sector for more support to be provided to managers of voluntary sector community centres. Particular areas for support include networking, training and capacity building.

The key elements of this programme funding are:

● Production of a good practice guide to improve the reach and sustainability of community centres.

● Training workshops to enable colleagues to share good practice and to network.

● Mentoring opportunities for managers and governing body members.

1 Ways to raise money to enable community buildings to be sustainable

This section is concerned with ways to raise money to enable community buildings to be sustainable. Organisations use a range of approaches to generate income from their building, increasingly recognising that they cannot rely on a single source of funding for core costs to operate the building. Currently the average running cost of a community building can start from £60,000 and can increase depending on the size of the building. Some local authorities contribute to running costs via grant aid, often to cover rental and specific staffing costs, whilst other costs such as utilities, rates, maintenance and decoration are the responsibility of the organisation. Organisations that own their buildings are presented with similar challenges as the current economic climate has impacted on the value of reserves for those charities which contribute to the upkeep of their buildings.

There is a range of good practice concerning raising income that includes:

● **raising income from renting out space**

● **maximising building space**

● **fundraising**

● **donations**

● **'friends of' schemes**

Raising income from renting out space

Licences and leases

If you rent space to a variety of outside organisations it is important to have a comprehensive rental policy and a hire agreement as this ensures that all involved are aware of their responsibilities. This should be checked legally to confirm it is in line with your own lease or similar tenure. The difference between a licence and a lease is as follows:

'A lease provides not just the legal right to occupy a building but can also give rights under the 1954 landlord and tenant act, such as being able to remain in the premises when the lease ends and to seek a new tenancy although landlords can oppose renewal on limited specific grounds ...' (Premises Fact Finder, leases and licences section). Leases often have more liabilities and obligations which for the lessee could require financial investment such as a full repairing lease.

A licence provides a short term agreement and enables the landlord to move the tenants around rather than just occupy one specific space, and it does not always have the same rights under the landlord and tenant act. A model licence agreement can be found at **www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/docs/premises/CVA-licence.doc**.

Ealing Community Resource Centre: benefits of a license approach when letting out office space in a centre

The license provides a flexible agreement that works to the advantage of ECRC as a landlord. ECRC provides open plan desk space and permits reconfiguration of the desk space by negotiation. The licences are rolled over annually (providing the terms of the license have been met), which provides flexibility to resident groups. The resource centre has a 25-year lease which provides groups with long-term stability, while giving flexibility should they want to leave. **www.ecrc.org.uk**

Rental policy and pricing structure

The pricing structure of the letting of the building is important in order to be able to project financial income on an annual basis. Many centres incorporate a three tier pricing structure to letting their buildings:

● Permanent use of a space (such as office space on an annual contract).

● Regular sessional use (eg every Tuesday morning).

● One-off bookings for special meetings or events.

Caxton House: lettings policy and practice

● The centre has its own in-house projects which deliver a wide range of services to the local community. Each of these projects is in receipt of funding from a wide range of sources, a proportion of which is used to cover the running costs of the centre.

● The centre hires out permanent office and meeting space to a wide range of organisations, community groups and charities. Selling points include access to free car parking and flexible opening hours.

● The centre hires out space in its café and main hall, on both a one-off and a long-term basis, for activities including conferences, social events, sports activities, theatre rehearsals and community meetings.

Paul Furze, the Centre Manager, identified that for this approach to work you need a transparent lettings policy so that all involved are aware of their roles and responsibilities when using the building.

See **www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/docs/ premises/Caxton-House-Booking-Form.doc**.

www.caxtonhouse.org

When establishing rental charges a comprehensive pricing structure needs to be applied so that the income can be projected against the running costs required and any loss can be identified and managed. It is a good idea to conduct such a planning exercise on a year by year basis to keep up with inflation and the fact that the range of lettings in the building may change.

Harold Road Community Centre: pricing structure

Alan Partridge, Centre Co-ordinator, identified the following pricing structure based on a conference he attended concerning the financial risks associated with various lettings strategies.

There is considerable difference as to the price that could be charged for the type of lets within the building. A ratio of 3:1 between the hourly rates of the different tenures is what he has applied at Harold Road. For him, setting charges is based on the following: a space which can be rented for regular weekly sessions at £15 per hour might only generate £5 per hour if rented full time to a single user, or £45 per hour when being used for one-off events. Therefore his rents are set on the basis of the type of let such as permanent office space, one-off user or regular sessions.

The benefits of this approach are:

● Maximises the range of underused space such as letting regular office space.

● Enables the centre to keep within the ethos of meeting local need for regular sessional use by user groups.

● Creates flexibility for new groups when they are being established. A lower rent can be charged but then they will move to the appropriate rent after a specified time, thereby giving them time to access the capacity building services of local infrastructure organisations.

Maximising building space

Combined with this rental policy approach, there is a range of good practice across the sector concerned with the refurbishing, modernisation and extension of community buildings. This has been assisted by access to grants such as the Community Builders Fund. This approach recognises that an investment in the upgrade of the building will yield more income and improve the benefits for the local community.

Two examples of redesigning church buildings which had fallen into disrepair are St Paul's at Bow and St Luke's in Canning Town (Custom House and Canning Town Community Renewal Project).

St Paul's at Bow: maximising building space

St Paul's at Bow raised £3.7 million in 2003 from a variety of grant applications including the Church Urban Fund, the New Opportunities Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund. This enabled them to place a steel structure – 'pod on stilts' – inside the building, creating more floor space and providing three floors with rooms for commercial and community use including:

● Space for an education charity.

● Gym facility run by the charity Ability Bow.

● On the ground floor, at the east end, they have retained a significant dedicated place of worship, while the west end has been opened up to provide a small community hall, a crèche, a café and kitchen, and a reception office.

The development enabled the church to develop its community use, and two floors are now rented out to local charities to raise revenue for the upkeep of the building.
www.saintpaulschurch.co.uk

St Luke's at Canning Town: redesigning space

The manager, John McNeil, described a unique set of circumstances that enabled the church to be purchased for £1 by a local community group. This coincided with the launch of the Heritage Fund and the property being located in a European Regional Development zone. For John the building is the major asset: 'you need to make sure that you are maximising the space and be careful about the amount of unused space'. This was the vision he had when discussing the refurbishment with the architect. All accessible space was developed to provide income.

The development included the following key points:

● Making use of underused space – one issue was the space that ran the length of the nave under the rafters. It was decided to use this as a business incubation scheme with a rent-a-desk scheme with free internet access which costs £120 per month. This has enabled a number of small businesses to develop in the area creating local employment opportunities.

● The second and third floors are rented out as office spaces and training facilities. The 5,000 sq ft of lettable space provides enough rent to sustain and maintain the building. Small enterprises sustain themselves and bring employment to the area for local people.

● This guaranteed income enables local community groups to benefit from the large community hall, which they can rent at a reduced cost.

Position of the community building

It is important to assess the needs of the local area where the community building is situated. For instance, a yearly community audit will identify changes in the area such as demographics and the arrival of new businesses or charities. The community building manager can reflect on how to develop the centre and capitalise on any changes in the area.

An example of this on a large scale can be seen at the Abbey Centre.

Abbey Centre: making the most of the location of the centre

Mark Lineham at Abbey Centre assessed what opportunities existed in the immediate area. Mark was faced with the dilemma that he could not access any grants to cover maintenance costs as it is an old building. He was able to capitalise on the building's location by investing in a number of dual-use rooms in order to develop a training suite for a range of commercial and large government organisations which need local, affordable conference facilities. The centre is marketed by explaining that hiring a particular space will subsidise community access, eg hiring the Booth Room subsidises 18 spaces for Tai Chi for older people. This approach makes over £300,000 in rental per year for the centre and there is a sliding scale of charges based on the nature of the organisation:

● Commercial use by large government and business organisations.

● Charity use by regional organisations such as Water Aid.

● Community groups which operate on non-profit income made on the door.

● Space available to community groups such as the Jubilee fitness club.

● Saturday schools fee charged to cover overheads.

www.theabbeycentre.org.uk

Peel Institute: smaller scale use of location

On a smaller scale Rob Hamilton, CEO at the Peel Centre, assessed the local area by means of a community profile. This identified that a local university was looking for sports facilities for its students on Sundays. He rented out the sports hall on Sundays with minimal staff outlay to increase his revenue funds. **www.peelinstitute.org.uk**

Fundraising methods

Community buildings should not rely on a single income stream such as local authority grants. There are strategies that have been developed to raise income to cover the costs of upkeep of a community building. Such costs include:

● Revenue or core costs, including the costs needed to improve the community access to a building, staffing for a particular project or running costs such as utilities, rates and supplies.

● Capital one-off costs cover improvements such as building refurbishments and extensions and can include grants for capital build projects from regeneration budgets.

Different fundraising possibilities include the following:

● establishing a trading aspect of the organisation
● adopting a charity/corporate responsibility agenda
● donations
● capital grants
● 'friends of' schemes

Establishing a trading aspect of the organisation

This is often referred to as a trading arm, where a separate entity of the charity is established to increase income through trading activities. Sometimes this has been established where a charity has a portfolio of buildings, and/or investments, which yield funds that can be reinvested into the fabric and running of the building. It is important when embarking on such a strategy that legal advice is sought to make sure that the organisation is compliant with the charities commission. Examples of this approach include Aston-Mansfield and Harrow Club W10.

Harrow Club W10: establishing a trading arm

Harrow Club W10 is a youth and community centre for young people in north Kensington. In 1995 the trustees split the charity into the Harrow Club and the Harrow Mission. This strategy ensured the long term future of the facilities, as the Mission has developed a property and investments portfolio from which the rents and income contribute 25% of the running costs of the Harrow Club. The benefit for Lisa Moor, Director, is that it has created a mixed economy so that the Harrow Club is not too dependent on one income stream such as the local authority.
www.harrowclubw10.org

Aston-Mansfield: trading activities

At the Durning Hall charity shop goods are donated and sold to provide valuable income which supports Aston-Mansfield's programmes and other running costs.

Their pricing philosophy means that for items which people need, such as toddler clothes, prices are kept low, so the shop itself is providing a valuable source of good clothes for people who need them. The things which people like but are not essential, such as ornaments, bric-a-brac or pictures, are priced higher. This yields £37,000 profit for Aston-Mansfield each year.
www.aston-mansfield.org.uk

The benefit of the trading approach is that it guarantees a set amount of income that can be reinvested into the building on a regular basis, enabling the charity to have a planned maintenance programme.

Adopting a charity

This approach is part of the corporate responsibility agenda where businesses adopt a charity. There are a number of examples of good practice which suit smaller or larger organisations. The benefits are twofold for the charity and the business:

'As a business, adopting us as your charity can raise your company's profile by showing your customers that your business is committed to making a positive impact in children's lives, by raising much needed money. For your business, it will bring employees together. Employee fundraising is a powerful way to build motivation and team work, bring your corporate values to life and have fun on the way.'
(quoted from the Cairn Trust website)

Examples that suit small to medium size organisations are identified below:

Castlehaven Community Association: adopting a charity

Some businesses choose to support a local charity, or sponsor a local event. Castlehaven Community Association was adopted by Zenith Optium who had been looking for a local charity in the Camden area. They offered a combination of direct unrestricted funding and support including the redesign of the Castlehaven website which has been very helpful with the marketing of the centre.
www.castlehaven.org.uk

Abbey Centre: development with a local company

Wates Construction wanted a local project to adopt and approached Mark Lineham, CEO at the Abbey Centre. The café area needed redecorating which would produce benefits for all involved. It was an ideal opportunity for a team building exercise for the Wates staff taking two days to complete with limited disruption and a minimal loss of takings.
www.theabbeycentre.org.uk

A larger organisation, such as Cambridge House, has a higher percentage of time and funds provided for by the corporate sector due to the infrastructure they have put in place to manage such a process.

Cambridge House: business development

A few years ago it was decided to develop a specific business development job role in the organisation; one aspect was the corporate responsibility agenda. They contacted Heart of the City and hosted a Seeing is Believing tour which brokers a relationship between corporate organisations and local charities within the City's radius. One of the corporate organisations present was Broadgate Estates, a property management company, which wanted to develop a relationship in the area. This relationship was formed and Cambridge House has benefitted from their extensive knowledge of building management.

For Claire Gilhooly (CEO) the learning has been:

- The need to manage the relationship and ensure that all expectations are clear and can be met for all parties.

- The need to have ownership of the corporate support across the organisation, an area that is currently being developed.

- For corporate relationship building to be part of a job role within the organisation rather than a bolt on to an existing role.

www.ch1889.org

Two organisations that can assist the sector with the corporate responsibility agenda are:

- City Action, **www.city-action.org**, which links the needs of community-based organisations on the fringe of the City with the volunteer aspirations of staff from City companies.

- The Heart of the City, **www.theheartofthecity.com**, assists businesses in the City to develop voluntary and socially responsible programmes in the community.

Donations

Often community organisations access donations to assist with the upkeep of their building. Companies that can assist include Virgin Money, which manages the 999 Club website, supporting excluded vulnerable adults. Castlehaven have an online donation scheme organised by JustGiving:

'When we created the company in 1999, our dream was to enable any charity, however small, to use the web to raise money at very low cost. Almost no one believed it could be done. Nearly ten years later, we are proud to have become the leading online platform for charity giving, helping over 8,000 member charities raise more than £450 million.' (from the website **www.justgiving.com**)

The scheme operates in the following way:

- When someone donates £10 on the JustGiving site they send 100% to the identified charity by the end of the week.

- JustGiving reclaim Gift Aid from the government, which takes about a month, adding £2.82 to a £10 donation.

- It's only when JustGiving receive that Gift Aid that they deduct a 5% fee, along with a credit/debit card/PayPal charge.
www.justgiving.com

Other centres have set up their own donation facilities online, such as Aston-Mansfield. Both approaches are beneficial as they require limited resources to manage and can yield a variety of one-off donations.

'Friends of' schemes

This method is often used when trying to raise money for capital projects such as at Parchmore Methodist Church Youth and Community Centre. One model is based on an independent organisation being established with its own charitable status, constitution, officers and funds which exists to help to maintain the church building and raises funds for that purpose; in return the friends will receive specific benefits.

Parchmore Methodist Church Youth and Community Centre: 'Friends of' schemes

On joining the scheme you receive a copy of the annual report, regular newsletters, invitation to special events. This method raises a percentage towards the upkeep of the building. When establishing such a process it is important not to underestimate how much work is involved in running the scheme, be clear about what the funds will be used for and seek connected and influential patrons.
www.parchmore.org

Other schemes include collecting boxes on site such as at the Froud Centre (Aston-Mansfield). It is important that you check the necessary regulations for this to happen especially if you decide to have street collections as a permit from the local authority is required. Other methods are legacies, where community members leave a donation to a charity in their Will; some charity websites assist with this process.

Capital grants

Recognising the importance of the community building as an asset, there are capital grants available concerned with the renovations of buildings. Below are some funders that provide grants for community buildings:

- The City Bridge Trust Accessible Buildings Fund has been established to improve disability provision to make services more accessible. At the Cardinal Heenan Centre in Ilford a £50,000 grant enabled them to install a lift to improve access.
www.citybridgetrust.org.uk

- The Biffa award scheme states that 'we look to award grants to projects that provide or improve community spaces, cultural facilities and places for outdoor recreation. In a nutshell, we want to make sure that everyone has access to high quality local community facilities'. **www.biffaward.org**

- Veolia are committed to supporting community and environmental projects across the UK. These include improving community halls, creating new play areas and skate parks, and restoring green spaces. A project needs to be within five miles of a qualifying facility operated by Veolia Environmental Services (UK) plc. **www.veoliaenvironmentalservices.co.uk**

- **www.communitybuildersfund.org** is a fund that can assist with the cost of feasibility studies for refurbishment and then a loan scheme for building development.

Cambridge House: capital development scheme

Cambridge House applied to the Community Builders Fund for the redevelopment of their building which is due to be completed in March 2011. Key learning issues that emerged for the organisation were the need for:

- A clear vision of the purpose of the building and its sustainability.
- Access to cash flow as grants are not paid in advance.
- Access to pro bono legal support given the specialist requirements such as legal and building compliance.
- A strong business plan which includes projected income from the building based on rental income over a number of years.
- A strong relationship with key stakeholders outside the local organisation to ensure the vision becomes a reality.

www.ch1889.org

Checklist of questions to help you

Below are questions to assist you in developing your strategy in this area and useful websites which have more detailed information on these approaches.

1 Rental policy

Have you a manageable rental/lettings policy and a transparent charging policy where all involved are aware of their responsibilities?

Have you checked the rental/lettings policy concerning any legal requirements?

Have you spoken to other similar organisations in the area about their charging policy?

Have you developed a budget forecast of operating costs for running a building offset against actual income?

2 Maximising building space

Do you have a vision of how you can develop your building so as to utilise underused space and generate more income?

Are there any redevelopment or regeneration opportunities in the area ie housing associations, local authorities, and local business?

Have you checked your lease regarding any planning development requirements?

Would it be useful to apply for a grant for a feasibility study (eg community builders)?

Have you assessed the immediate area to identify needs that your community building could help to meet?

3 Fundraising opportunities

Have you established a target amount you would wish to raise for a specific project such as a refurbishment?

Have you considered different ways to raise money and do you have the time and resources to support these activities?

Are there local businesses in the area who have signed up to the corporate responsibility agenda that could support you?

Have you explored the range of grants available for capital and revenue projects and whether you meet the necessary criteria?

Useful websites

www.communitymatters.org.uk
Community Matters provides a range of fact sheets and publications including managing your building effectively, asset management budgeting and disability access.

www.can-online.org.uk
CAN provides a range of support concerned with the development of social enterprises such as affordable office space and asset management.

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
NCVO provides a range of good practice guides, training courses and publications concerned with fundraising and financial management.

www.dsc.org.uk
Directory of Social Change (DSC) provides a source of information, publications and training for the voluntary and community sector concerned with fundraising.

www.companygiving.org.uk
This website provides a detailed directory of company giving contacts.

www.fundingcentral.org.uk
This website identifies a directory of funding available including trusts and grants.

www.ethicalproperty.org.uk
Ethical Property Foundation is a property advice service that offers independent, ethical advice and training, helping almost 600 organisations to rent, buy, let or manage property.

www.londonfunders.org.uk
London Funders is the membership organisation of funders and investors in London's voluntary and community sector (VCS). Its mission is to strengthen and support funders to better meet the needs of Londoners by providing information on grant giving and lobbying.

www.trustfunding.org.uk
This website provides a range of information on trusts and training on fundraising.

www.grantnet.com
Grant Net was established in 1985 and provides a database on a range of grants.

www.theglasshouse.org.uk
The Glasshouse is a registered charity that supports and encourages better working partnerships between communities and professionals who are working together to improve the quality of a neighbourhood. Offers design, advice and training support to projects including the development of community buildings.

2 Ways to reduce costs and improve efficiency

This section is focused on ways to reduce running costs and improve the efficiency of community buildings. For many organisations it is common practice to scrutinise running costs regularly to make sure that wastage is reduced and efficiency increased. Managers have to be creative as grant applications for core costs only ever meet around 10% of running costs and these costs are continuing to rise.

Donna Liburd, Centre Director at Kingsgate Centre, stated: 'it is similar to running a small business as running costs have to be kept to a minimum and scrutinised on a regular basis, especially as some of the services provided are not at the forefront of government policy so there are minimal grants available'.

Aspects of good practice concerning reducing costs and improving efficiency include:

- **environmental sustainability**
- **room booking systems**
- **outsourcing**
- **pro bono services**

Environmental sustainability

The environmental sustainability agenda is about climate change and the need for renewable resources to make sure that the requirements of the present generation can be met without impacting on future generations. This has led to a number of initiatives and practices which have a positive impact on efficiency savings for running buildings. One of the largest running costs for buildings are utility costs and these continue to rise. Across the sector there are good examples of managers tapping into local networks to access advice, practical tips and grants to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and utility costs.

North Downham Training Project: energy saving practices

The North Downham Training Project provides training and prepares local residents for employment opportunities. They gained the Achievement of Lewisham BEE (Business Environmental Excellence) Award through the development of their Environmental Policy in 2007 (**www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/docs/premises/North-Downham-Training-Environmental-Policy.doc**). Practices such as regular monitoring of utility meters, installation of sensory lights and yearly review of utility contracts have meant that energy consumption has been reduced. This has been very beneficial to the project as it has seen a year on year reduction of its utility bills. www.northdownhamtraining.co.uk

Another example of useful guidance on energy saving is the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).This has been a legal requirement since 2008 for all commercial and public buildings that are sold, built or rented. This scheme identifies how energy efficient a building is on a rating of A–G, A being very efficient and G being the least efficient. An EPC is accompanied by a report which provides suggestions on how to improve the building's energy performance. Some centre managers, such as at Cardinal Heenan Centre, have contacted energy advisors who produce the report for the EPC. However please note there is a charge for this service which can be in excess of £1,000 depending on the size of the building.

The range of practical tips gathered across the sector include:

Low cost changes

- All users encouraged to turn off power when appliances not in use, eg photocopiers, lights and computers.
- Install energy saving light bulbs and stock up on low energy light bulbs.
- Replace T12 fluorescent tubes with T8 tubes.
- Install thermostats and timers on heating systems and turn hot water thermostats down to a comfortable temperature.
- Install a water meter and water saving devices.

Medium cost changes

- Convert light switches to sensitivity switches to detect movement.
- Install a more efficient water heater.
- Fit secondary glazing.
- Insulate cavity walls.

High cost changes

- Install solar panels for renewable energy.
- Choose A+ energy rated appliances when replacing old appliances.

Examples of the benefits of such changes to the building's energy consumption are identified below:

Parchmore Methodist Church Youth and Community Centre: renewable grants programme

Parchmore Youth and Community Centre, based in Croydon, developed a partnership with Creative Environment Networks (**www.cen.org.uk**) and accessed the Clear Skies Energy Renewable Grants Programme. This enabled them to install a solar thermal system to produce hot water and lower their fuel bills which reduced their overall running costs.
www.parchmore.org

Peel Institute: reducing carbon dioxide emissions

The Peel Centre's trustees undertook a review of their environmental impact in 2007 and joined the Islington Climate Change Partnership. They had a target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 15%. The first stage was to undertake an eco-audit which identified a number of ways to improve efficiency in the building. They then applied to the Low Carbon Buildings Fund and Climate Change Fund to install solar panels, making a saving of £5,000 a year on their energy bills. This policy has then been regularly reviewed and monitored.
www.peelinstitute.org.uk

Mardyke Community Association: a regeneration opportunity

Being aware of local regeneration opportunities has enabled Mardyke Community Association, based in Rainham Essex, to capitalise on the local estate development led by Old Ford, part of Circle Anglia. On the redeveloped site an energy centre is being built which will supply energy to the local area at more efficient costs including heating and hot water and some electricity, thus reducing the cost to the centre.
www.mardykecommunitycentre.co.uk

The benefits of investing time in making changes to reduce the energy usage in your community building will save money and contribute to the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. There are a number of grant opportunities and tips to assist the process provided by a range of organisations. For instance, as part of their mission statement, power companies have a responsibility to create a low carbon society by helping customers reduce their energy consumption.

Room booking systems

The booking system is an important feature of the community building as many hire out space to increase income. There are both computerised and manual systems in use. The benefit of a computerised system is that it can be linked to the invoicing system which makes the payment process easier and there is also an immediate audit trail. The organisation can monitor the usage of the building through reports on who is accessing the centre and room usage. However a manual system suits some organisations, depending on the size of the building and IT skills of those involved in making the room bookings.

Below are several examples of computerised systems which assist with the room booking process.

Croydon Voluntary Action: electronic room booking system

The Avalon Electronic system has been purchased by Croydon Voluntary Action for a number of centres (**www.avalonsoftware.co.uk**). It has improved the efficiency of booking as groups can book relevant meeting slots – morning, afternoon and evening. It produces invoices related to the booking so that an effective financial process is also evident. Karen Chillman, Head of Volunteering at Croydon Voluntary Action, described it as 'a straightforward system with the aim to link online so groups can book via the website'. **www.cvalive.org.uk**

Ealing Community Resource Centre: software design

The Ealing Resource Centre has designed its own software for a computerised booking system. During the first year of opening the manual system presented a number of challenges so the centre invested in a computer package, but the company went out of business. The centre then created its own system which was designed by a volunteer and was launched last year. Now all groups can access the system online and this reduces issues concerned with sharing of space – it has been very beneficial to all parties involved. **www.ecrc.org.uk**

Forum at Greenwich IT systems

Forum at Greenwich uses the package Meetings Rooms Manager which can be supplied by a variety of IT companies. This provides an effective system to manage your room bookings, enabling reports to be produced so that usage can be monitored. The system can also raise invoices once a booking has been made to assist with the audit trail of bookings. **www.forumatgreenwich.org**

However not all centres use a computerised system and there are a number of manual systems available.

The Froud Centre: manual based systems

At the Froud Centre they use a manual system – a request for a room booking is logged, passed to the bookings co-ordinator who records the booking and produces an invoice number. For Jenny Rogers, Centre Manager, the manual system works well. It is easy to manage as it involves only a few people to administer the system and can track the number of bookings made. Previously there was a computerised system but too many mistakes were made which impacted on the bookings and caused difficulties, so the decision was taken to use a simplified manual system. **www.aston-mansfield.org.uk**

The key to an effective booking system, whether manual or computerised, is that it needs to be a simple system that is cost effective and accessible to those who use it. As many centres rely on nearly full occupancy they cannot afford to have a system that is too complicated and leads to incorrect bookings.

Outsourcing

As running costs have risen it is sometimes more efficient and effective to outsource elements of the operation of the building which in the long term can save the organisation money. Such decisions are dependent on economies of scale and the situation facing the individual organisation. It may be appropriate to outsource elements one at a time to enable each contract to be bedded down and reviewed. However before you outsource it is important to consider the following:

- Clearly define the scope and schedule of what you want to outsource by drawing up a specification.
- Evaluate a service provider by creating a tendering process with a specification similar to the way you would appoint staff.
- Engage a provider which has specific experience of the sector and the issues that are likely to be encountered.
- Don't choose a provider based solely on price – look at other variables such as experience, track record and ability to deliver.
- Ensure you have a monitoring process built into the contract that is reviewed regularly so that the quality can be discussed and any recurring issues dealt with.

The most common elements within community buildings that are outsourced are:

- finance, including payroll
- human resources
- IT
- security issues, including CCTV and one-off lettings management
- cleaning
- premises management

Oxford House: saving through outsourcing

Oxford House was facing a turbulent time and had to reduce its running and staffing costs dramatically to survive, so outsourced all the elements listed. This contributed to a saving for the organisation of around 20% of operation costs. For John Ryan, CEO of Oxford House, key issues to consider when selecting providers were:

- Understanding the capability and capacity of the new service providers.
- Accessing providers with a good track record.

www.oxfordhouse.org.uk

Harrow Club W10: outsourcing IT functions

At the Harrow club the decision was taken to outsource IT functions which covered not only administration and organisational functions but the support functions of a digital media and music studio. For Lisa Moor, Director, the benefits have meant:

- IT problems are dealt with more efficiently as the supporting company has a greater body of knowledge than one employee.
- Software programmes and packages are chosen to suit the needs of the organisation so that appropriate spreadsheets and reports can be produced.
- The network is more effective.
- A saving has been made for the organisation.

www.harrowclubw10.org

Kingsgate Community Centre: human resources guidance

Rather than create a post or incorporate human resource responsibilities within their current staffing structure, the Kingsgate Community Centre subscribed to Peninsular Businesses Services Ltd (**www.peninsula-uk.com**). This company offers employment law and human resources guidance which has been very useful and provides the board with legal protection when decisions are made. The cost for the service is dependent on the number of employees and turnover of the organisation.
www.kingsgatecommunitycentre.org.uk

Across the sector outsourcing is a common approach to save money and improve efficiency, as fewer staff are employed directly by the centre, thus reducing the overheads of the staffing budget. For some centres the savings have been around 10–20% and there has been an impact on savings in other aspects of the budget such as building maintenance. It is important to have a named person in the company to oversee the contract and build in regular reviews so that the quality of the service can be maintained.

Pro bono services

Pro bono can be defined as 'for the public good'. The term is generally used to describe professional work undertaken voluntarily and without payment as a public service. It is a common approach in the voluntary sector when accessing the legal profession for advice and legal guidance services. The voluntary sector can also need the services of marketing, technology and strategic consultancy firms. Often these services are not affordable by the sector so it can be very beneficial to an organisation to receive them as pro bono.

The pro bono support that Cambridge House received when starting their refurbishment was invaluable. If the normal rate for these services had been paid it would have reduced the overall refurbishment budget available.

Pro bono services, unlike traditional volunteering, use the specific skills of professionals to provide services to those who are unable to afford them.

Pro bono normally relates to project running costs such as the skills of a lawyer for an advice project. It is often larger organisations who are able to offer pro bono services.

Pro bono organisations can also recommend trustees with particular sector skills experience such as company lawyers, accountants and surveyors.

There are a number of organisations that can direct charities to a range of pro-bono services such as **www.barprobono.org.uk**.

St Hilda's Community Centre: provision of legal advice

St Hilda's Community Centre in the north west of Tower Hamlets provides a wide range of services to all members of its community. A need was identified for legal guidance and support by the local community. Contact was made with the company Law Works (**www.lawworks.org.uk**) based at 48 Chancery Lane, London WC2. This organisation provides pro bono lawyers to community organisations. This has led to legal advice evening drop-in sessions on a pro bono basis by volunteers from two national law firms – DLA Piper and Berwin Leighton Paisner which works out as £200,000 worth of free legal advice. The areas of advice are mainly debt issues, housing issues and employment law. The service is well used by the local community.

A further spin-off occurred when funds were raised by these law firms through their annual sponsored walk and donated to the community centre.
www.sthildas.org.uk

Ealing Community Resource Centre: saving on legal fees

During their establishment the Ealing Resource Centre was fortunate to receive pro bono legal advice from a City firm of solicitors called Eversheds. All contracts had to be checked for legal compliance and the licensing agreements scrutinised which was very beneficial to the organisation and the community groups who accessed the space so that all involved were aware of their legal responsibilities.
www.ecrc.org.uk

Though companies do put themselves forward and offer pro bono services, they may struggle to recruit volunteers which can impact on the project delivery. One organisation had this experience and had to delay the start of their project. You need to be mindful that such volunteers will only have a limited amount of time available to assist a charity, so ensure you are aware of what skills and time are being offered. However those organisations which have accessed pro bono support have said that such a facility has been very beneficial as it:

● Provided a supplementary service which is beneficial to the local community.

● Identified further areas of work that were required to meet the needs of the community.

There are a range of approaches that can help your organisation to reduce costs and improve efficiency to ensure the sustainability of community buildings. Below are questions to assist you in developing your strategy and useful websites with further information.

Checklist of questions to help you

1 Environmental sustainability

Have you explored the range of websites that can offer you guidance concerned with reducing utility costs?

Have you reviewed your annual usage of utilities and explored ways to make savings?

Have you spoken to other utility providers for a more cost-effective deal for annual contracts or asked if your utility provider can give you a better deal?

Have you carried out an eco-audit to identify what steps can be taken to reduce carbon dioxide emissions?

Can you apply for capital grants to install renewable energy sources?

2 Room booking systems

Does your room booking system meet the needs of your organisation?

Would you benefit from a computerised system?

Have you audited your room usage, is it at full capacity, are there times when bookings are low?

How have you used your findings from the audit of rooms, are there gaps in services that you could develop?

3 Outsourcing

Have you undertaken an audit based on Value for Money concerning the functions in your organisation?

Could savings be made by outsourcing elements of the organisation?

Are there other centres in the area where you could share services such as cleaning, security and backroom support?

4 Pro bono services

In your organisation are there services that you could provide by accessing pro bono support such as legal advice?

Have you carried out a skills audit of your trustees and is there a skill shortage that could be filled by pro bono support?

Are you aware of organisations that provide pro bono guidance and support?

Useful websites

www.carbontrust.co.uk
The Carbon Trust is a not-for-profit company with the mission to accelerate the move to a low carbon economy. It provides specialist support to help business and the public sector cut carbon emissions, save energy and promote low carbon technologies. It provides businesses with advice and guidance on reducing their carbon footprint.

www.cse.org.uk
The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) helps people and organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors meet the twin challenges of rising energy costs and climate change. It provides advice to community groups, local authorities and policy makers, from energy efficiency to renewables.

www.est.org.uk
The Energy Saving Trust provides a range of resources to help organisations reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
NCVO provides a range of good checklists and documents concerned with outsourcing.

www.barprobono.org.uk
The unit works closely in partnership with the voluntary sector and with other pro bono providers, and is involved in a variety of projects and activities.

www.ethicalproperty.org.uk
This organisation is a property advice service that offers practical advice on property issues such as maintenance checklists and a register of property professionals for charities and local communities.

3

Who is the centre for and who gets involved?

In the UK there is a long tradition of settlements, community associations and community centres that continue to evolve in order to meet the needs of their local area by developing their buildings for community use. Often the model applied is based on community development: 'it starts from the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which if used in creative ways can achieve the community's desired goals' (Wikipedia).

This section helps you explore who your centre is for and how you can ensure that the needs of the local community are met. The section covers the following areas:

- **mission statements**
- **assessing local need**
- **measuring impact**
- **quality assurance**
- **partnership and collaborative approaches**
- **social enterprise and small business development**

Mission statements

A mission statement refers to the process where an organisation outlines succinctly what their centre offers by stating who it is for and who gets involved. It is usually compiled when an organisation is created to clarify its aims, purposes and its reason for being. It is a statement of difference within the area in which the organisation operates. The organisation can then reflect regularly on the achievement of its mission statement and adapt accordingly.

Some examples of mission statements:

Bromley by Bow Centre: mission statement

Create a cohesive, healthy and vibrant community and to remove the label 'deprived' from Bromley by Bow. **www.bbbc.org.uk**

Kingsgate Community Centre: mission statement

The aim of the association is to promote benefits within the Kilburn ward of Camden, by linking with local and voluntary organisations and members of the community in a common effort to provide a wide range of social, educational, welfare and leisure activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the local community. We value all individuals, challenge discrimination and promote positive attitudes to equality to benefit all. **www.kingsgatecommunitycentre.org.uk**

Eversfield Centre Mill Hill: mission statement

The principal objective of the Eversfield Centre is to serve our local community. So we will always give priority to other charities and community organisations that share that objective and want to work with us to achieve it. **www.eversfield.org.uk**

The benefit of a succinct mission statement is that it helps the organisation to clarify the areas of work that it is involved in, developing its strategic plan, shaping the policies and practices of the centre and identifying the range of activities. For instance, when renting space to specific groups the aims of the group may need to be aligned to the mission statement of the community building.

Assessing local need

Many successful community buildings are located in areas which have an element of their population that is changing – for example, due to migration or employment opportunities. They are often located in areas where there are concerns such as health, well being, deprivation, lack of employment opportunities and training issues. It is important that systems are in place that assess need in a local area regularly so the organisations can respond to any change. This is sometimes referred to as market research as it can gauge local needs and how the community may respond to a new service. At a time when servicves are being threatened it is important to establish a regular pattern of assessment, which will enable the organisation to build evidence about why services are in place and why they are important. This will ensure that the centre is having an impact on its community by making a difference and meeting local needs. In order to assess local need managers use a variety of tools which are either quantitative or qualitative:

- questionnaires
- annual surveys
- suggestion boxes
- workshops and focus groups
- interviews
- analysis of local data: census data, local reports, community profile
- gathering of local information
- anecdotal evidence
- community mapping
- focus groups
- networking, attending key strategic meetings, ie local area partnership meetings, local community forums
- piloting new groups
- outreach work

Abbey Centre: needs assessment

Needs assessment is via local intelligence such as anecdotal evidence from the community gathered through outreach work, often backed by data from sources such as the Local Area Partnership. Such an approach ensures the centre develops its programmes according to an identified need, such as the need for intergenerational work. This approach led to a programme to produce a cook book by the younger and older members of the community which improved the understanding of all those involved.
www.theabbeycentre.org.uk

Such an approach will enable the organisation to reflect on whether they can either undertake a new activity or let their user groups know the current situation so that they can develop an activity themselves. Alternatively, a centre can give the information gained to another relevant organisation. This process would need to occur in conjunction with reviewing the centre's resources, the energy and commitment of those involved and with an awareness of any external factors such as legal constraints. It is important that information gathered through consultation is acted upon otherwise it will be viewed as a meaningless task by the community.

Measuring impact

Once the need, resources, outcomes and activity/provision have been identified it is also important to have a system in place to measure the impact for the individuals, local communities, staff, trustees and funders involved. There are a number of models available that measure impact via the evaluation of the project. These include the Outcomes Based Accountability Model and the Logic Model Evaluation Framework. These explore both quantitative (hard) and qualitative (soft) outcomes to see if a difference or impact has occurred by having the provision in place.

Ackroyd Community Centre: measuring impact

The centre is aiming to develop a comprehensive Customer Relations Management database, which will unify the data relating to those using the community centre. There are a number of open-source software CRM databases available, but the front-end user interface needs to be tailored to meet the needs of the organisation that will operate it. Ackroyd is working with an organisation called IT4Communities which is recruiting a volunteer with the necessary skills to put the package in place. Embedding this system will be a lengthy process as it will need the buy-in of all stakeholders. There will also need to be strict adherence to the Ackroyd Community Association's data protection and ICT policies. This means that some organisations may need support in ensuring their capacity to ensure best practice in this area.
www.ackroydcentre.co.uk

The benefits for the Ackroyd Community Association approach are:

● Keeping all the information it holds on its users in one system.

● The quality and fields of information gathered about individuals becomes uniform, which is particularly helpful when conducting such activities as an annual diversity survey.

● The system can track a person's journey with the organisation from their initial enquiry so that it can see the nature of an enquiry and whether the organisation was able to meet the client's needs, either in-house or by referring them to another local agency. The system enables the organisation to identify gaps in provision so that it can help both the community centre and the local area, thereby creating opportunities for future partnership working.

It is important to build in a process of measuring impact, which should be carried out on a regular basis, so that benefits and impact can be assessed.

Quality assurance

This is an important process to strengthen the quality of provision delivered by the organisation. It refers to the process of agreeing quality standards and targets, implementing procedures to reach those targets and monitoring the results and comparing them against the standards and targets. This guarantees the quality of work that will be provided. The Charity Evaluation Service has identified a number of stages that organisations implementing a quality assurance system should follow:

● **Agree on standards:** these concern the performance that staff, trustees and users expect from the organisation.

● **Carry out a self-assessment**: this means that you compare how well you are doing against these expectations.

● **Draw up an action plan:** this will include what needs to be done, who will do it, how it will be done, and when.

● **Implement**: carry out the work.

● **Review**: at this stage, you check what changes have been made and whether they have made the difference you were hoping to achieve.

(from **www.ces-vol.org.uk**)

There are a number of externally validated quality assurance frameworks that exist to help develop your quality assurance system.

Investors in People mainly covers staff development, including the learning, developments and people management strategy.

The London Youth Quality Mark focuses on the quality of work for young people and is assessed by City and Guilds.

Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work. The standard enables organisations to review their volunteer management comprehensively and publicly demonstrates their commitment to volunteering.

PQASSO, from the Charity Evaluation Service, is a user-friendly general quality assurance system for small to medium organisations intended to help run an organisation more effectively and efficiently. It has an underpinning ethos based on the following:

● It has a flexible approach to quality which allows your organisation to work at its own pace.

● It takes a systematic look at what you do within the organisation.

● It identifies areas where you are doing well and not so well, and helps you decide exactly where improvements are needed by producing an action plan.

● It helps you to plan, budget and allocate the resources for making these improvements over a realistic time period.

(from **www.ces-vol.org.uk**)

VISIBLE Communities ™ is based around a set of seven core principles that underpin strong sustainable community organisations. The programme offers a choice of two tools to help implement these principles.

The VISIBLE Standards are the nationally accredited quality standards for community organisations. These standards are aimed at medium to large community organisations, often referred to as community anchors.

The preVISIBLE Review is simpler and cheaper, concentrating on the management systems and policies that a community organisation has in place via a series of online questions and guidance notes. Suitable for community organisations of any size, it is not however an accredited standard. (from **www.communitymatters.org.uk**)

Ackroyd Community Centre: quality assurance framework

Dominic Ellison, Senior Association Manager at the Ackroyd Community Centre, says that the key benefit of VISIBLE is that 'it provides us with a practical framework in which we can benchmark our operational practices and policies in a self-assessment and improvement process which allows the whole team to examine our work in a transparent way'. **www.ackroydcentre.co.uk**

The benefit of a quality assurance framework is that it provides an effective tool for planning and staff development, and an evaluation framework which ensures a high quality provision. There are a range of quality systems on the market which suit various functions within the organisation, they range in cost and are often recognised by funders. They also involve all members of the organisation and provide a structure for continuous improvement.

Partnership and collaborative approaches

These approaches can widen access to resources for the benefit of the local community and beyond. Many organisations establish partnerships creating a range of collaborative working agreements to lever in more resources. In some cases this could lead to consortiums being created. The Bromley by Bow Centre states: 'we believe in partnership – working together helps us to achieve more, it also opens new doors and creates new opportunities that would otherwise not exist' (page 17, information pack, Bromley by Bow Centre).

Partnerships can be informal, including networking and sharing of good practice, or more formal where terms of reference may be established with defined roles and responsibilities. Other possibilities include:

● Establishing a consortium for tendering – as either lead or partner organisation.

● Co-location of projects in specific organisations.

● Joint delivery of projects.

● Merger of organisations.

Areas that are often covered by partnership or collaborative working methods are concerned with shared resources. For example, maintenance contracts, the sharing of back office support so that costs can be reduced and transport such as the shared purchase of minibuses. Joint working in any capacity takes time to develop and constant effort is required to maintain productive working relationships.

The following aspects need to be explored before you embark on a collaboration:

● Identifying whether your organisation is prepared to collaborate.

● Gaining staff acceptance and agreement to the proposals.

● Organisational buy-in to such an approach, including trustees.

● Deciding who to work with.

● Clarity of vision and values amongst all those involved.

● Agreeing leadership and management mechanisms.

● Establishing good communication systems.

All organisations involved should be aware of the status of the collaboration, their roles and responsibilities and the legal implications. There should be a formal agreement in case anything goes wrong.

Peel Institute: collaborative work

This has been vital for sustainable community development linked to the community building. The centre had a dedicated community development worker but the need to save money meant the post was deleted. A collaborative approach was then used to develop the range of services on offer in the local area. For Rob Hamilton, CEO, the benefits of such an approach have been:

● Recognising that they could not gain access to some service delivery contracts without working in partnership.

● Helping to ensure the support of other community groups continues.

● Identifying and gaining access to isolated communities in the area.

● Approaches from a range of partners to develop collaboration due to their expertise.

www.peelinstitute.org.uk

Out of collaborative working processes consortiums may be formed. A consortium is an association of two or more organisations with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources for achieving greater impact in an area. Below are two examples of current practice that have had positive impact in a local area.

Real Resources: consortiums

Real Resources is a charity owned by the three community centres in the Camden area: Kingsgate, Sidings and Abbey. The aim is to provide shared resources and community development opportunities for the area. Real Resources supports neighbourhood renewal and regeneration initiatives and has provided human resources infrastructure, financial and management support. Donna Liburd, Centre Director, stated 'it has accessed small grants which help with our collective work in the area and can be used in very flexible and creative ways. This fosters cooperation between the centres with peer learning and support'. **www.kingsgatecommunitycentre.org.uk**

The Octopus Community Network: consortium

Octopus is a network of community centres in Islington. The Octopus Community Network is comprised of eight not-for-profit community organisations of varying sizes. It seeks to exchange and foster community resources more effectively and sustainably across the different communities in its remit. Its services include developing and supporting volunteering, and working together to gain further resources such as project delivery for its members. It has been very beneficial for the development of specific projects such as employability for 18–24 year olds and governance issues. **www.octopusnetwork.org.uk**

Finally mergers may occur which will benefit the organisations and allow them to develop, especially at a time when resources are limited.

Rugby Portobello Trust and P3: merger of organisations

In July 2009 the Rugby Portobello Trust (RPT) merged with P3 (People, Potential, Possibilities). This merger brought some exciting changes to RPT, but P3 is clear that RPT is a local charity for local people supported by the local community. An early benefit of the merger is that costs have been cut significantly and the service has already improved with P3 in Derbyshire providing a much greater level of back office support. This includes administration, payroll, accounts and staff training, refurbishment and maintenance of the hostels. The youth service has been expanded, now running six days per week, and the newly refurbished Rugby House is already offering accommodation for more young people.

As the office costs have been taken on by P3 this has meant that other areas in RPT can be attended to such as paperwork, quality assurance, improved opportunities for training, induction and sharing good practice, sharing of resources and signposting. Managing the change has been an important part of the process and staff are core to the process, examples include staff involvement in team building, contribution to the Christmas conference and the big day out. **www.rugbyportobello.org.uk**

Social enterprise and small business development

Across the sector a number of social enterprises or similar approaches have been put in place providing services such as community cafés. There are no grants available for funding such projects so social enterprises are a useful way of enhancing the reach of a community building by increasing throughput.

Such an approach enables the development of sustainable business, creating a spirit of enterprise within the community and generating profits which are invested back into the centre.

Riverside Centre: business development

At the Riverside Centre in Sutton, Dave Lunn, the Community Development worker, reopened the centre café as a social enterprise after the initial funding had come to an end. The café provides a valuable service to the local community and the challenge is how to keep it operating. It is currently run by volunteers with start up money and a vision that it will become self sustainable. **www.riversidecentre.org**

Characteristics of a social enterprise model, as defined by Social Enterprise London, include:

● **Enterprise orientation**: they are directly involved in producing goods or providing services to a market. They seek to be viable trading organisations, with an operating surplus.

● **Social aims**: they have explicit social aims such as job creation, training or the provision of local services. They have ethical values including a commitment to local capacity building, and they are accountable to their members and the wider community for their social, environmental and economic impact.

● **Social ownership**: they are autonomous organisations with governance and ownership structures based on participation by stakeholder groups (users or clients, local community groups etc) or by trustees. Profits are distributed as profit sharing to stakeholders or used for the benefit of the community. (from **www.sel.org.uk**)

There are a number of examples of social enterprises across the sector which have had a positive impact on the local community, creating employment opportunities which are sustainable and reinvesting profits in the community. An example of a large scale social enterprise is Bromley by Bow Centre, below.

Bromley by Bow Centre: social enterprise

This centre has a history of social enterprise development which reinforces their vision that anything is possible. It raises aspirations by the expansion of an enterprise culture that encourages the growth of social businesses.

A range of businesses have been established including Social Enterprise Hub which has four social enterprise businesses including Signs of Life, a public arts enterprise, and Beyond the Barn, which incubates new social enterprises and provides hands-on practical support to ensure their success in the early years of trading. This aspect is supported by Tower Hamlets Partnership. In 2008 the centre generated around £1 million from social enterprise and trading which has been reinvested in the centre and also created jobs and wealth for the local community. **www.bbbc.org.uk**

A smaller scale approach was taken at Trinity Centre, Newham.

Trinity Centre: business development

The nursery needed to be run on a business model rather than remain reliant on contracts and grants. The nursery provides full and part time child care for children from six months to five years. It operates year round, except public holidays, from 8am to 6pm. It is Ofsted registered and well established with reasonably healthy registrations. Parents and carers have good relationships with staff and are supportive of the Nursery's development. Key learning points for Isky Osman, the Chief Executive, are:

- Appreciating that the nursery is actually a business and needs to be run accordingly.

- Managing expectations of nursery staff who had previously worked within grant-funded childcare and now needed to adapt to a different working culture.

- Managing expectations of parents and carers who had been used to a more flexible approach in child care.

- Recognising it took longer to develop and generate income than had been expected, due to the time needed to establish a new business, and long term support was needed.

www.thetrinitycentre.org

There are a range of approaches that can assist your organisation to focus on who the centre is for and who gets involved, all of which contribute to improving the sustainability and reach of community buildings. On pages **28–29** there are questions to assist you in developing your strategy in this area and useful websites which have more information on these approaches.

Checklist of questions to help you

Mission statements

Is your mission statement fit for purpose?

Is it easy to understand and does it make a difference in the area?

Where do you display your mission statement?

Do all those involved in the centre know about the mission statement and do they have a say in how it is developed?

Assessing local need

How often do you review the needs in the local area?

What approach do you use to assess local need?

Does the information gathered from the needs assessment form part of the annual business planning process?

How else do you use the information to shape the delivery of your provision?

Measuring impact

How do you know that your community building is having an impact on the development of the local community?

How do you gather evidence to show that the building is integral in the community fabric?

How do you use this information to reshape existing provision?

Quality assurance

What quality control mechanisms have you in place?

Are all the staff, volunteers and trustees aware of the quality assurance methods?

Have you designed your own system or do you use a quality assurance package with external verification?

How have you applied such a quality system to develop the organisation?

Partnership working/consortiums

Is your organisation ready to be involved in partnership work?

Do you have support from staff, trustees, and stakeholders concerning collaborative projects?

Have you explored the possible partnerships in the local area which could be about service delivery, backroom office support and capacity building?

Is there the possibility of establishing a consortium in your area to assist with capacity building and fundraising?

Social enterprises/business development

Are there any restrictions in your governing document prohibiting or restricting your ability to carry out trading activities?

Are there aspects of your service delivery that could be developed into a business model?

Have you spoken to other colleagues using the possibilities for development concerning such an approach?

Have you planned anticipated income and expenditure from your trading subsidiary realistically?

Do you need to take advice from the Charity Commission or a professional advisor regarding setting up a trading subsidiary?

Are you complying with the necessary tax rules associated with charitable and non-charitable trading?

Have you developed a realistic time frame for the rollout of such a business development?

Useful websites

www.communitymatters.org.uk
Community Matters provide a range of fact sheets and publications concerning managing your building effectively such as measuring impact, quality assurance, and vision and mission statements.

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
This organisation provides a range of good checklists concerned with quality assurance, assessing need and the development of trading arms.

www.charitycommission.gov.uk
The Charity Commission would be able to provide information to charities concerning trading and collaborative work and mergers.

www.sel.org.uk
This organisation provides networking and support to those who wish to establish a social enterprise company.

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk
Provides a checklist for partnership working and other relevant documents.

www.ces-vol.org.uk
Charity evaluation services provides a range of resources concerned with quality assurance including evaluation models.

www.bassac.org.uk
Bassac provides a range of resources regarding collaboration and social enterprise development including the latest publication *Collaboration for Communities*.

www.investorsinpeople.co.uk
Provides specific information relating to Investors in People quality Framework.

www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk
Provides information concerning a quality standard for volunteering which enables organisations to comprehensively review their volunteer management, and also publicly demonstrates their commitment to volunteering.

www.evaluationtrust.org/tools
This organisation is a community development agency, working at regional, national and international levels to disseminate skills and good practice in participatory evaluation.

www.dta.org.uk
The Development Trusts Association is the leading network of community enterprise practitioners dedicated to helping people set up development trusts and helping existing development trusts learn from each other and work effectively. Their work includes good practice regarding collaborative practice and the establishment of a social enterprise approach within community work.

4 Who works here and supports us, and what do they do?

Good management is necessary for the smooth and effective running of community buildings. This involves the co-ordination of the trustees (management committee) and staff, including managers, workers and volunteers. It is vital that there are workable policies and procedures that are implemented and reviewed regularly so that all those involved are aware of their roles and responsibilities. This ensures that staff and volunteers have the necessary support to carry out their duties effectively, contributing to the overall aims of the organisation. The time and energy invested in trustees, staff and volunteers creates a healthy environment where they can develop and enhance the use of the community building in order to meet the needs of the local community. It is also important to know what roles and responsibilities are required to run an effective building, especially at a time of limited resources. Across the sector there is a range of information on volunteering, employing staff and governance. This section is a snapshot of good practice that exists in these areas:

- **volunteering**
- **staffing**
- **governance**

Volunteering

All the community buildings visited as part of this research project use the support of volunteers at a number of different levels. Volunteers fulfil a range of roles from general administration and reception duties, to contributing to the running of the community building. Volunteers also support service delivery including work with young or elderly people, or as part of a specific project, such as community led projects, or as a professional advisor or trustee. Whatever aspect is chosen volunteers give commitment over a short or long period of time.

Volunteering has a number of benefits for all those involved:

- The volunteer gains practical experience by being part of a team. This experience helps them to update their existing skills and develop new skills which are of benefit to themselves and the organisation.

- Volunteering is linked to training opportunities. This can help build the future workforce or equip volunteers to join the employment market.

- The role provides the volunteer with new experiences which develop their confidence and self worth.

- The organisation benefits by gaining the skills and experience of the volunteer to invest in the development of the centre.

- It helps to create a future workforce with a local perspective which benefits the organisation.

- It provides the organisation with a range of skills to enhance the running of the centre.

Many Centres have an underpinning commitment to volunteers outlined in their Volunteer Policy or charter such as North Downham Volunteering (**www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/docs/premises/ North-Downham-Training-Project-Voluntary-Pack.doc**).

North Downham Training Project: volunteering principles

At the North Downham Training Project the following principles exist for volunteering:

- A commitment to make the volunteering experience a positive and rewarding one.
- Ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the project's structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the North Downham Training Project.
- Volunteers are not to be used to replace paid staff.
- Expect that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- Recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development.
- Seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work efficiently.
- To provide training which could include health and safety, basic food hygiene, first aid, deaf awareness, disability awareness, sign language and computing.

www.northdownhamtraining.co.uk

A frequently applied model for recruiting volunteers is as follows:

- An informal interview covering skills, experience and why they want to volunteer.
- Volunteer enrolment/registration form.
- CRB checks and references.
- Volunteer agreement.
- Induction.
- Regular meetings and support, eg mentoring.
- Regular training to assist with skills development.

Volunteers can be recruited from a variety of sources such as the local CVA, Volunteer Bureau, local recruitment days, website, word of mouth and speaking to interested audiences. All such approaches outline the benefits and the support provided for the volunteers.

Cricklewood Homeless Concern: the range of support for its volunteers

Cricklewood Homeless Concern outlines the range of support for its volunteers who are an essential part of the organisation:

- You will receive support and guidance from the staff member managing the project you are volunteering on, with additional support from the volunteer co-ordinator.
- You will have one-to-ones with your manager, the frequency of which will depend on the number of days you are volunteering, to discuss your professional and personal development.
- The volunteer co-ordinator is available five days a week for all volunteers if needed.
- Volunteer meetings are held regularly for the whole volunteer team.
- CHC will provide training that is appropriate to your role as a volunteer.
- You will have the opportunity to undertake external training as appropriate.
- At induction you will be given details of CHC policies and procedures, including health and safety.

If there is a particular training that you would like to undertake, you can discuss it with your line manager during support and supervision. **www.chc.org.uk**

Internships are another type of volunteering: an intern is someone who works in a temporary position with an emphasis on on-the-job training rather than employment. Internships are usually accessed by university students both during their college years and after. They have become more commonplace in the United Kingdom with the rise in the number of graduates available for volunteering, wanting to gain experience in the work place. Internships in the voluntary sector are often unpaid volunteer positions with only expenses being paid. Internships may be part-time or full-time and typically last 6–12 weeks. Other types of placements exist where college students work for an organisation as part of work experience which may be related to a specific project such as childcare development.

Oxford House: internships

John Ryan, CEO at Oxford House, signed up to the organisation www.graduatetalentpool.directgov.uk to advertise 12-week internships. He recruited four graduates who worked on property management, gallery co-ordination, strategic planning and research. Over the last 12 months, a total of 16 internships have been completed including current interns providing graphic design and arts development. To date all these internships have been very successful. **www.oxfordhouse.org.uk**

Professional volunteers

This has partially been explored in **Section 2**; many professional associations such as the Law Society and Institute of Chartered Accountants encourage their members to give their free time to become actively involved in charity organisations. Other examples of good practice are where organisations ask their trustees to network and identify volunteers within their own companies. For instance at the Peel Centre one of the trustees is a crown estate solicitor and was able to identify an employee who was able to write a data protection policy for the organisation.

Staffing

It is important to be aware of the number of functions involved in running a community building and the number of staff required, who can be supported by volunteers. Consideration is also needed for what is involved in managing staff and volunteers such as motivation, levels of responsibility and workload.

'The positive attitude of the staff is paramount to extend the reach and sustainability by listening to the users and responding to their issues.' Kingsgate Community Centre Director

A number of factors affect how many staff will be involved in running a community building: the size of the building, the range of services provided, how often the building is open and the ability to generate income. Some community associations have very few paid staff whilst other centres can have a large number. Often roles double up, for example a community worker is often also the centre manager and the roles become intertwined. An audit of the organisation will determine the staffing levels required. The key issue with staffing is to know how many staff you need for the building given the variety of roles and responsibilities involved.

As a minimum you should ensure staff have an appropriate job description which outlines areas of work within the context of an appropriate staff development framework including induction, supervision, team building and appraisals. This encourages the philosophy that all staff contribute to the development of the centre. There are many publications and organisations that can assist you with staff management, such as *Just about Managing: effective management for voluntary organisations and community groups*, Sandy Adirondack and Steve Simpson (2006), *101 ways to develop your people without trying: a manager's guide to work based learning*, Peter Honey and Alan Hurst (2003).

Castlehaven Community Association: staff development

At Castlehaven Community Association Eleanor Botwright, Director, explained that the retention of staff is very high as they are all treated with respect and contribute to the development of the centre. All staff have regular supervision, regular staff meetings and staff team building events twice a year. All of these processes ensure that staff are valued as there is an opportunity for them to reflect on their practice and contribute to the development of the centre.
www.castlehaven.org.uk

Across the sector, due to the reduction in funding and charitable reserves, there has been the need for many organisations to review the number of staff needed to run a community building and some organisations have explored outsourcing (see **Section 3**). Others have had to rationalise the number of staff and put into place various systems to ensure they continue to run effectively, providing essential services. If the number of staff is to be reduced it is important that the appropriate redundancy legislation is followed.
(See **www.acas.org.uk** for further details.)

Kingsgate Community Centre: staff development

A similar approach takes place at Kingsgate Community Centre. When staff are appointed there is an induction procedure which includes time allocated to get to know the area, and liaison with other staff to find out what they do. Staff meetings are scheduled after the board meeting so any strategic decisions can be fed back. There is regular supervision focusing on work and personal development. Weekly briefings take place to ensure staff are on track and any difficulties are highlighted so that they can be managed appropriately. **www.kingsgatecommunitycentre.org.uk**

Peel Institute: systems to improve efficiency

Rob Hamilton, CEO, explained that at the Peel Institute there was originally a centre manager post. However, the fall in value of their reserves meant savings had to be made. When the post became vacant it was deleted so effective systems, such as maintenance reporting, which is managed between the caretaker and administrations staff, became very important. Maintenance faults have to be reported and recorded and then they are followed up on a regular basis so that repair jobs are carried out in a block repair rather than one job at a time. Similar systems are also used to ensure compliance with health and safety inspections.

Another system put into place is the annual staff training plan. Again the centre manager would have organised this process, so now all the project managers undertake their annual plan, including training needs, and this is submitted to form the basis of the organisational plan. The necessary training is then arranged which is booked across the projects so that there is no duplication and it is managed effectively. For Rob the benefit of putting the systems in place is that it has enabled a shared responsibility and ensured that specific functions of the building are attended to.
www.peelinstitute.org.uk

Hanley Crouch Community Association: staff restructuring

Another example was at Hanley Crouch Community Association where there was a budget deficit which was no longer sustainable. As its major costs were staffing a restructure of the staffing had to take place to enable the centre to be financially viable. All the full time posts (apart from the Youth Services Project Manager) became part time so that projects with funding could continue. Other posts were made redundant as some projects came to an end. At the same time the area of maximising the building as an asset was explored for income generation and, as a result, they have rented out office space to two other local charities.

'We have also worked collaboratively with other local centres to reduce costs in terms of sharing administration and finance resources which has led to a reduction in our overall costs. We have improved our infrastructure systems and continue to look at reducing our costs at every possible point whilst continuing to offer our community a comprehensive and effective service.'
Colin Adams MBE, Centre Manager

It is important to remember that in the event of dramatic changes, such as budget reductions, key staff moving on or possible mergers, a strategy for managing change is key to help staff accept the change rather than create a climate of uncertainty. A planned approach and good communication is therefore vital and should aim to involve the consensus of all those affected. A range of possible options should be presented for discussion and negotiated to enable staff and volunteers to be part of the change process. It is important to recognise that change produces a range of emotions, both positive and negative, and these need to be managed accordingly. For instance, in the worst case scenarios, such as redundancy or closure of projects, it is important that staff are given appropriate support to deal with the situation

The three Rs of emotional literacy provide a mental checklist when working with staff responding to change:

- register that there are feelings at play
- recognise what those feelings are
- respond appropriately

(*Towards Emotional Literacy*, S Orbach, London Virago, 1999)

Change should be viewed as a journey with a number of external and internal pressures and staff should be empowered to embrace the change. To assist with this process there are a range of publications including *The Change Management Toolkit*, Colin Carnall (2003) and *A Force for Change*, JP Kotter (1990).

Governance

Any voluntary organisation which manages a community building has a governing body known as trustees, directors or management committee. These people have the legal duty to ensure that the organisation is being run properly and is meeting its mission statement. They are responsible for resources, the strategic direction of an organisation, ensuring legal compliance and monitoring the work of the organisation. Good trustees and effective governance are essential to improving the reach and sustainability of a community building.

Ackroyd Community Centre: directors' induction

Dominic Ellison, Senior Association Manager at the Ackroyd Community Centre, compiled a directors' induction pack which outlines roles and responsibilities, including:

- Concentrating on the organisation's overall direction, strategy and plans.
- Ensuring the organisation complies with the law and procedures.
- Being accountable to service users and the wider public.
- Protecting finances and property.
- Supporting people who work in the organisation, staff and volunteers.

www.ackroydcentre.co.uk

There are many resources, such as publications and toolkits, that can assist with the development and effectiveness of governance. For instance, as part of the ChangeUp strategy, the governance hub was created in 2006 and although this project ended in 2008, a range of resources were developed to assist the voluntary sector with effective governance. These are available from the NCVO governance and leadership sections of their website:

- good governance: code for the voluntary and community sector
- trustee recruitment toolkit
- trustee and management committee members occupational standards toolkit

Effective governance is vital for a charity of any size and it is important that the trustees understand their roles and responsibilities and know what skills are required to carry out their role efficiently, so that the necessary support and training mechanisms can be provided. Your local CVS or other organisations such as Pilotlight will be able to assist you with training and support.

Ackroyd Community Centre: embedding governance

Dominic Ellison has developed the governance of the centre which includes:

- An audit of the skills of the directors.
- Ensuring that the directors are aware of any free training concerning their roles and responsibility. (Lewisham provides good borough support and the volunteers centre in Lewisham is very proactive.)
- Developing a directors' induction pack to up-skill new members.
- Reviewing of policies which are sent out before meetings so that an effective discussion can take place and everyone is aware of the organisational development.
- Financial governance – looking at projected spend as well as actual spend.
- Expanding the committee structure to reflect the diversity of the community and involving the directors in the recruitment process.

The benefits have been the continuing development of a pro-active board of directors reflecting the diversity and skills of the local community.
www.ackroydcentre.co.uk

It is also important that you have the appropriate structures to ensure that the organisation is being run effectively.

Peel Institute: reviewing governance

At the Peel Centre Rob Hamilton accessed a grant from the Charities Audit to carry out a health check. The trustees met four times a year to set the strategic delivery of the centre. The management committee responsible for the operations consisted of local representatives who met every six to eight weeks. The health check produced a series of recommendations to make the governance process more accountable and manageable.

The trustees continue to meet four times a year and widen the membership of the management committee.

Three separate committees were established including the impact committee, which meets on an eight-weekly basis to measure the impact of the projects and makes recommendations to the trustees. The Finance and Fundraising committee sets the budget for the year and monitors the expenditure on a regular basis. The Staffing subcommittee deals with all the personnel issues.

This structure has created better clarity and focus for the sub committees as the meetings are more effective. They can focus on key agendas and can develop policy more efficiently and complete their discussions. There are more control measures in place which are concerned with compliance and transparency. The structure also provides support to the workforce when assessing the impact of the work as more time is available to discuss individual projects. **www.peelinstitute.org.uk**

Other organisations have also reviewed their governance structures to provide more stability by engaging capacity building organisations such as Pilotlight. This was established 'to enable small, ambitious charities working to alleviate disadvantage to help a greater number of people more effectively'. (**www.pilotlight.org.uk**)

The 999 Club: governance

The 999 Club in Lewisham needed assistance to develop their governance capacity by identifying the need for the development of long term strategy based on analysis of the function and capacity of the organisation. As this was an organisation that was eating into its reserves and the trustees were aware of their liabilities they engaged Pilotlight to help them embark on a change programme which included the board treasurer engaging more deeply with the financial needs of the organisation and developing a clear financial strategy. Such a process also enabled the rest of the board to contribute to the development of the organisation, strengthening the overall governance and ensuring the sustainability of the organisation. **www.999club.org**

There are a range of resources and organisations that can assist your organisation to ensure good management of community buildings. On page **37** there are questions to assist you in developing your actions in this area and useful websites with more information.

Checklist of questions to help you

1 Volunteering

Are there opportunities for volunteering within your organisation?

What type of volunteers are you looking for?

Do you have an effective policy for volunteers that includes access to accredited training?

Have you explored the range of opportunities that exist to recruit volunteers?

Do you have regular reviews with your volunteers?

2 Staff

Have you undertaken an audit of the functions of the organisation to enable the community building to be effectively run?

How do you involve staff in the development of the vision of the community building?

Have you undertaken a skills audit of the staff who work in the building?

Do you have an appropriate framework for staff development to enable the staff skill base to develop?

Is there a regular review of policies and procedures that involves consultation with the staff?

3 Governance

When is the last time you completed a health check of your governance structures?

Are the trustees aware of their legal and financial responsibilities?

Have you an effective induction policy for new trustees so that they understand the organisation's value and purpose?

How often do you undertake a skills audit of the trustees?

When is the last time you had a visioning day for all those involved in the organisation to ensure effective links between the staff and trustees?

Useful websites

www.lvsc.org.uk
Information on a range of staffing and governance issues and provides personnel employment advice and conciliation services.

www.volunteering.org.uk
Provides a range of resources on volunteering.

www.jrf.org.uk
Provides a voluntary sector code of practice

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/workforce-development
Has a range of information on HR issues, employment and governance.

www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk
A range of information concerning National Occupational standards and training needs analysis.

www.cipd.co.uk
Provides access to a range of resources concerned with managing people including managing change.

www.acas.org.uk
Provides a range of advice and support on employment related issues.

www.trusteenetworks.org.uk
Aims to improve the governance of the charity sector by enabling trustees to share knowledge and experience with each other.

www.charitycommission.gov.uk
Provides a range of information concerning the legal requirements of trustees.

www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities
Provides information and forms relevant to charities and taxation.

5

How do we let the local community know what we provide?

This final section focuses on how to market a community building to make sure that the local community is aware of its existence and the services and facilities it offers. Key stakeholders, such as other voluntary and statutory organisations, local and national politicians and faith groups, also need to be aware of the purpose of the community building as this is important for signposting and community development.

This section looks at:

● **what is marketing and branding**

● **how to market your building**

● **promotion and public relations**

The marketing process

market research	identify needs establish unique selling point (USP) develop marketing strategy
define brand	name mission statement/strapline style of publications, premises etc quality of staff
design/produce	logo website signage print
public relations	advertising press releases media events

What is marketing and branding

Marketing has been defined by the Chartered Institute of Management as 'the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements effectively'. Successful marketing has a number of benefits for the organisation:

● it promotes the work of the organisation
● it helps with fundraising initiatives
● it matches services with the community's needs
● it assists in successful campaigning on important issues

Marketing is not just about publicising what you have on offer in the community building, it is about ensuring that you have identified the community's needs. This helps to plan new activities alongside recognising the importance of existing services. This enables your organisation to clarify the unique selling points in relation to donors, volunteers and service users. Marketing expert Ian Bruce identifies each of the following components below as important in developing a successful new service or reviewing an existing service:

● product
● price
● placement
● promotion
● people
● physical evidence
● process
● philosophy

This can form a good framework to help you write a marketing strategy, which should be reviewed regularly to strengthen the position of the organisation in the local community.

There are a variety of publications and websites that can assist you in your strategy in this matter such as *The DIY Guide to Marketing*, Moi Ali (1997), *Charity Marketing: meeting need through customer focus*, Ian Bruce (2005) and *Marketing Management for Nonprofit Organisations*, Adrian Sargeant (2009).

Branding

Branding is an important part of a marketing strategy as it can provide a recognisable visual identity which reflects the quality of service that the organisation provides. The brand components consist of the name, strap lines, logos, publications, buildings and the quality of staff. All of these brand components require regular attention and need to be underpinned by the organisation's purpose.

Ackroyd Community Centre: branding policy

At the Ackroyd Community Centre the key aspects of a strong branding policy are as follows:

- Clearly express your values and vision.
- Ensure your brand appeals to your target audience.
- Ensure consistent messages about your organisation.
- Carry the brand through all your internal and external communications.

The benefits of the strong branding have improved the profile in the local community and ensure that the site is operating at full capacity.
www.ackroydcentre.co.uk

Forum at Greenwich: branding strategy

At Forum at Greenwich the director developed a branding strategy to maximise the usage of the building and develop the local profile. An identity for the organisation has been created which includes a website, logo, flags, signage, and publications such as a membership application form, focusing on the building as the unique selling point of the organisation.
www.forumatgreenwich.org

Marketing your building

Word of mouth and historic awareness of the community building are still essential methods to promote centres. An evolving area for the sector has been the development of websites linked to the branding as part of a marketing strategy. Websites are useful because:

- They are often the first place that people look to find out more about your centre.
- They are a means to communicate with those who use the centre and the wider community.
- They are a tool that enables you to publicise your programme and other services such as hall lettings to the wider community.
- They can provide information about the organisation for funders and other interested stakeholders.

Furthermore a website can provide a range of functions which include:

- Information regarding the community building.
- Newsletters concerned with ongoing developments, other local news, job vacancies and hyperlinks to relevant organisations.
- Timetables of weekly or monthly programmes.
- The ability to book meeting rooms or other spaces online.
- The ability to download booking forms, job application forms and other relevant forms.
- An opportunity for social networking.
- Fundraising (see **Section 1**).

Across the sector there are many examples of different website designs; the set-up and maintenance costs can vary enormously.

Cardinal Heenan Centre: website registration

At Cardinal Heenan the centre manager has created a website using the Microsoft Office Live package. The package is free to use, although there is an annual subscription required to keep the domain name. Although the functionality is limited, it is simple to import text and photos and therefore it is easy to update and keep current, which is often one of the difficulties when managing a website.
www.cardinalheenancentre.com

To get your website noticed it is useful to think of the following in the design phase:

- Make sure that information is easy to find – ideally, a visitor to your website should be able to find what they need within three clicks.

- Make sure you have a plan to ensure that your website is kept updated.

- Register with search engines such as Google so that your site will be accessed more frequently.

- Use keywords that people can search for to ensure more hits for your site.

- Use page titles with text rather than pictures.

- Link to other sites to improve your search engine ranking and provide a service to your users.

Setting up and maintaining a website can involve additional costs, both financial and in staff time. There are options that minimise costs and provide a relatively simple means of updating your website, such as basing your site around a 'blog' format using one of the common blogging platforms such as Wordpress. However, this still requires technical knowledge to set up in a way that meets your needs and may require investment in time or money.

Abbey Centre: website development

The Abbey Centre employed a marketing person for one day a week because they recognised that investment was essential as they were at a crucial stage in their marketing strategy. One area they wanted to concentrate on was the revamp of their website to meet the different needs within the community and promote their unique selling points.

One outcome has been that the centre has created two websites within one to ensure that their conference suites can be marketed to the appropriate clients and that the community can access the community website which has information on the current programme. This strategy has helped increase the revenue from lettings, which make an important contribution to the operational costs of the building.
www.theabbeycentre.org.uk

Ackroyd Community Centre: website design

Dominic Ellison, Senior Association Manager, recognises the importance of a good website. With limited resources he decided to sell advertising space to help with the upkeep of the site and pay for the staff hours required to ensure the website was current.

When designing the website he identified the following points:

- Set clear objectives for the website.

- Identify the target audience.

- Clarify the message you want to convey.

- Decide on the tools you want on the site, such as other organisations and social networking sites.

- Establish the timescale for the design and launch of the site.

- Consider how you will monitor the impact of the site.

www.ackroydcentre.co.uk

Promotion and public relations

Promotion is another aspect of the marketing mix and this can take place through a variety of mediums including:

- advertising via radio, TV and the press
- promotional leaflets
- newsletters
- publications, such as the annual report and good practice guides
- open days
- festivals
- exhibitions
- email marketing
- social networking
- websites

Whatever medium is chosen it is important to be aware of the resources available for promotion, what budget is available and whether there are any hidden costs, such as design fees. Again it is important to know what your objectives are, who the target audience is and the key messages you are trying to put across to the wider community. These messages can vary to suit different audiences, such as young people and people with English as a second language.

North Downham Training Project: public relations

North Downham Training Project takes part in the annual festival which is organised by the local community centre. The festival provides the opportunity for the project to provide assessments in numeracy and literacy for the local community. They can then recruit people to the variety of courses that are offered at the Training Project, the main aim of which is to provide training and prepare local residents for employment opportunities. It also presents an opportunity for the organisation to publish its achievements for the past year.
www.northdownhamtraining.co.uk

The Harrow Club W10: promotion strategy

The Harrow Club's promotion strategy included the production of a publication, *Harrow Club Tales*, and a journalist was employed to interview young people, asking them why they attend the Harrow Club and what the benefits have been for them. This has been a useful promotional tool for funders as it provides more information than an annual report in relation to the impact of the youth work and has helped the fundraising strategy of the centre.
www.harrowclubw10.org

Further information on public relations, market research, press releases and developing a competitive edge can be found on the websites on page **42**.

Checklist of questions to help you

Have you developed a marketing strategy that involves the organisation, users and stakeholders?

Are you aware of your unique selling points (USP) that will be the foundation of your marketing strategy?

Is there a budget available to develop your marketing strategy?

Have you decided how you will set up your website and do you have the resources to keep it up to date?

Is the website design accessible to the community, have you carried out market research and tested the website?

Have you reviewed the branding of your organisation, does it effectively convey your USP by expressing your values and vision?

Have you reviewed the range of opportunities that are available to promote your organisation, such as the local radio station, press releases and festivals?

Do you involve your users in the marketing of the organisation?

Useful websites

www.cim.co.uk
The Chartered Institute of Marketing plays a key role in training, developing and representing the marketing profession and provide resources concerned with training, publications and updates.

www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk
The Institute of Fundraising is the professional membership body for UK fundraising. Its mission is to support fundraisers, through leadership, representation, standards-setting and education, and it champions and promotes fundraising as a career choice.

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
This organisation provides a range of good practice guides, training courses, blogs and publications concerned with marketing.

www.mediatrust.org
This organisation works with media organisations and charities to enhance their communications and enable communities to find their voice and make it heard. It provides a range of support, guidance ant training.

www.knowhownonprofit.org
This organisation was established to share information and training for people in nonprofit organisations.

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www.harperandcole.co.uk