

Organisation or lead organisation	Sports Partnership Herefordshire & Worcestershire	Project name	Creative & Active Communities
Partners (if applicable)	Ignite	Beneficiary area	Herefordshire & Worcestershire
Total requested	£370,987	Funding officer	XXXXXXXXXX
Total project cost	£370,987	Project ID	

1. Proposal Summary

This is a new 4 year project from Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire (SPHW), working in partnership with Ignite CIC. Based on pilot activities, this project will engage with 56 communities across Herefordshire and Worcestershire to establish and enhance both physical and creative activities in local areas that will bring people together, improve community cohesion, reduce isolation and enhance wellbeing, reducing the risk of future physical and mental health issues. SPHW and Ignite will work with communities to help them define which activities are important to them with the potential for these to become sustainable.

With non-statutory services greatly reducing in rural communities, there is a significant impact on community cohesion and feelings of isolation. This project does not replace those services but brings people together and empowers them to build resilience. It essentially works with local communities who are suffering from isolation, loneliness and inactivity to design and develop local activities to help improve both physical and mental health. SPHW and Ignite then subsidise the activities for a 12 week period, during which they support the community with a longer term vision of sustaining and developing these activities themselves. Volunteer recruitment and development is also a key part of this initial 12 week support period. After 12 weeks, the local community decides whether it wants to continue the activities and run them themselves.

The Partnership

SPHW is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in 2013, who have been in existence since 2000, with the purpose of creating more active and healthier communities across both Herefordshire and Worcestershire by enabling a thriving, sustainable environment of physical activity and sport. They have been involved in local communities since 2012 using the legacy of the Olympics to develop local mini Olympics events, providing the initial kit including equipment, certificates and banners with communities then deciding if they wanted to run the events themselves. They have delivered a number of lottery and externally grant funded projects with learning from these used to create a strong delivery plan for this project. They have a number of key themes running through their 3 year strategy which this project will make a significant contribution to, these being promoting independence, reducing social isolation and positively impacting on mental health.

Ignite are a Community Interest Company working across Herefordshire since 2017. They work with local individuals, groups and organisations using creative and physical activities as a vehicle to bring people together and enhance wellbeing. They work with communities to empower people to become physically and mentally healthier through creative and healthy leisure activities and projects. Their vision is for people to build and benefit from sustainable creative and physical activities, through individual endeavours or as community groups in order to sustain a healthy lifestyle.

SPHW are the lead organisation and will work primarily within Worcestershire, whilst Ignite will take the lead in Herefordshire. There will be individually structured delivery plans for each county that will be joined together by a clear partnership agreement and aligned strategy managed by a strategic project management group. The strength of this approach is shown through the local connections, networks and partnerships each organisation has within the geographic space they will lead on. There will be project and community focus groups in each county to ensure the needs of the local communities are integral to

delivery, and that local people and communities take the lead and tailor the model to their area. It is believed that this joint bid will strengthen the success and quality of the project through sharing and rolling out tested successful models, increasing reach to communities in rural areas, access to a larger pool of quality assured, professional practitioners and therefore choice of activities, and wider promotional and messaging opportunities.

Background

SPHW and Ignite have evaluation findings and experience from two successful pilots, developed with ten rural communities in Herefordshire, which forms the basis of the Creative and Active Communities project. Ignite met with communities and interested parties across Herefordshire to understand what was happening locally (and what wasn't), together with local strengths and priorities, and then designed taster days with different activities taking place. Feedback was collated and 12 week subsidised programmes developed, throughout which consultation continued. At the end of these 12 weeks, communities decided whether it was viable to continue these themselves.

Headline evaluation from the two pilots showed that of 26 different activities trialled, 14 were taken forward as subsidised 12 week events, with 9 of these then taken forward by local communities themselves.

It is this learning and the realisation that working together increases impact that has driven this bid. There are many similarities across the two counties which enables the refined pilot model to be used in both. By working together as a partnership, and utilising their local connections, experience, skills and resources, the project hopes to expand their reach across Herefordshire whilst also moving into Worcestershire. The initial phase of delivery in Herefordshire will respond to communities who have already expressed an interest in being part of future projects, whilst other communities will be proactively encouraged to become involved. In Worcestershire, interest and insight from local Parish and Neighbourhood Plans will be used to develop work with communities. Future phases will be delivered with communities who come forward off the back of project momentum, public promotion and sharing of success.

Project Summary

Through the Creative & Active Communities project, SPHW and Ignite will work with communities in rural settings across Herefordshire and Worcestershire with the beneficiaries and activities being defined by the people themselves. These communities are self-defined and can be very different in nature, ranging from a parish, to a housing estate, to just a few streets getting together. The flexibility of the delivery model helps to design and deliver this. The approach starts with desk based research and then by making contact with someone or something that's established in the area, i.e. a Parish Council, using local partners who are already delivering something to open pathways and opportunities for conversations.

They will build a relationship with proactive volunteers from the community and an understanding of local need. Open social fun days are then delivered with a programme of creative and physical activity taster sessions delivered by local practitioners, as well as promoting existing provision. The taster day gives the whole community a chance to try and consider new activities and share their vision for what they would like to see in their community long-term. Feedback from the taster day then helps decide which activities to take forward, looking at their potential to become sustainable. These are then subsidised for a 12-week period, within which time the community actively supports the development of activities in order for these to become viable for practitioners and community members to take on independently.

The project has strong elements of People in the Lead, with the driver for this project based on local experience, evaluation and consultation. The whole approach of working with communities to try different activities based on their input sees both SPHW and Ignite work locally to support the implementation of these activities, with many going on to be owned and driven forwards by the communities themselves. It links to all three of our England funding priorities, particularly with 'stronger relationships'.

2. The money is for

The total project cost is £370,987, all of which is requested from The National Lottery Community Fund.

The grant will pay for staff costs, including one full time co-ordinator (£107,464 @ £26,866 per year), initial set-up, management and project co-ordination costs for each community engaged with (£82,388 @ £20,597 per year), the initial 12 week subsidy of direct project delivery costs (£117,600 @ £29,400 per year), consultancy, advice and evaluation (£33,726) and overheads (£29,809).

3. Aims of the proposal, the impact it will make and how impact will be measured

The overall aim of the project is to increase activity levels of people living in rural areas through the provision of sport, physical activities and creative opportunities defined by themselves. This will reduce loneliness and social isolation, reduce the risk of future physical and mental health issues, promote independence and empower individuals and communities to continue and sustain activities moving forwards.

The target is to engage with 56 predominantly rural communities across the two counties although this is an estimate as each area will be different and at different starting points. This number is based on experience from the pilot schemes where 7 communities were engaged with throughout the year. It is also based on the level of genuine consultation and development required from the pilot areas to establish and enhance activities on their doorstep that will bring people together, enhance wellbeing and become sustainable. The exact locations for delivery will be determined and defined by the communities themselves and the partnership will work closely with them to develop opportunities based on local need. It is anticipated that over the lifetime of the project, more than 1,500 individuals will be engaged with.

Specific project outcomes are;

Increased community connectivity and relationships.

Established sustainable creative and physical activities within local communities.

Increased wellbeing.

Reduced feelings of isolation.

Measurement of impact is covered under 'Learning and Evaluation' in the judgement section below.

4. Judgement

People in the Lead

The Creative & Active Communities Pathway is a model which has been refined based on the outcomes from previous pilot projects. Each part of the pathway is developed with the community, with volunteer development and evaluation running throughout. The sustained activity is subsidised initially but needs to be able to generate enough interest to continue the activity on a self-sufficient basis. The model is as follows;

1. Expression of interest; wide public promotion with the opportunity for community members to discuss their priorities.
2. Community networking; knowledge sharing and ideas take place with a range of local organisations, looking to establish a core of volunteers and key contacts.
3. Planning event; core volunteers are decision makers for the style of the taster days. They are also involved in project messaging and promotion to the wider community.
4. Activity taster days and information gathering; the wider community participate in free activities and feedback. Volunteers enable consultation, reinforce project messaging and rally active support from the community.
5. Future planning event; a collaborative debrief of views and decisions for future subsidised activities.

6. 12 week subsidised activities; the wider community participate in subsidised activities and pay a contribution. Volunteers and/or participants become group leaders and facilitators, responsible for venue arrangements, practitioner support and encouraging participants to take ownership of activities.
7. Volunteer development; volunteers receive training to upskill themselves as activity facilitators or leaders.
8. Sustained activity; ongoing activities are led independently by practitioners and/or the community, made sustainable by participant fees. If appropriate, volunteers are supported to source other funding, constitute activities and work with local organisations.
9. Evaluation; encouraging and collecting feedback and communicating this to the wider community.

People are involved throughout the whole lifecycle of the project and whilst there is a risk that activities will not continue after the initial 12 week period, this does also mean that any activities taken forward will be truly community led and valued. The evaluation of the two pilots showed that of 26 activities trialled, 14 were taken forward as subsidised 12 week events, with 9 of these then taken forward by the local community themselves, an overall adoption percentage of 35%.

Alignment to England funding priorities

There are good links to all three England funding priorities.

Stronger Relationships: This project creates an opportunity for everyone in the community to contribute their ideas and aspirations for possible activities. There are various ways for people to do this but the main one is through social fun days, activity taster days and information gathering sessions. These events alone bring people together through chatting to others, taking part in activities, contributing to consultation sessions and where possible, becoming volunteers. Taster activities give people an opportunity to share experiences and try things out before commenting and committing to new activity. The agreed sessions then provide a regular opportunity for the local community to come together and engage socially, as well as enjoying and benefiting from the activities themselves.

Early Action: A key finding from the pilot projects was around the decrease in loneliness with people reporting that they felt more closely connected with others. Supporting positive activities, either mentally or physically stimulating, has demonstrated that participants find an increased level of confidence in going about daily activities and have gone on to continue to participate in other physical activity sessions. Reducing isolation and loneliness has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of future mental health problems, particularly amongst older people.

Improved Places and Spaces: Agreed activities will make use of suitable local buildings, facilities and outdoor spaces as recommended by the community. The hire of these will feed into the local economy and has the potential to improve the spaces used. Where possible, local practitioners will be used, supporting local employment and increasing the likelihood of sustainable activity, reducing travel time and costs.

Organisational networks

Both SPHW and Ignite have relationships with many local stakeholders across both counties including Local Authorities, Public Health, CCG's, GP's, local clubs and voluntary sector organisations. Throughout this project, additional relationships will be sought with social prescribers, community wardens and connectors, the local Police and PCSO's, together with any other stakeholders who are able to support and promote the project. Networks increase in line with the number of communities engaged with.

SPHW have a strong reputation within local networks which will support and contribute to the successful delivery of projects across the two counties. Ignite work with an extensive range of practitioners, enabling them to offer a wide and impartial choice of activities. They are active participants with local strategic networks, and have experience of working in both the private and public sector.

To keep track of how SPHW and Ignite are connecting with local partners and stakeholders, a CRM system will be used to monitor engagement. This will help to establish relationships and highlight local advocates to help identify local need and communities who could benefit from this project. Levels of stakeholder satisfaction will be monitored through an annual survey.

Impact

The Creative and Active Communities project provides an opportunity for communities to really take the lead in terms of identifying what activities they want to run, what challenges they want to address, and what strengths they want to harness. The SPHW and Ignite partnership will help communities to continue these activities after the initial 12 week period through the development of volunteers, activists and community ownership.

This will ensure improved community cohesion and integration, bringing together people from different generations and backgrounds, reducing loneliness and isolation, and taking a preventative approach to possible future issues with both physical and mental health.

Learning and evaluation

Each project will monitor both outputs and outcomes which will be developed through the SPHW logic model and evaluation framework. An independent evaluation team will be appointed to advise and carry out evaluation, evidence collecting and reporting. A key element will be to ensure that SPHW, Ignite and the communities they are working with are meeting agreed outcomes. The evaluation process will be continuous and focus on both what did and didn't work, outcomes for individuals in terms of wellbeing, and also for the community as a whole. Once each evaluation has been completed, this will be shared with the local community and stakeholders. This will showcase the impact of each community project as well as using the evidence to inform and encourage future delivery. 12 month impact reports will be produced to showcase the programme and approach as a whole.

Organisational experience, ethos and capacity

SPHW are an experienced organisation, having been in operation since 2000, and have been a company limited by guarantee since 2013. Their ethos is to improve the lives of people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire through the power of physical activity and sport, and are part of a national network of 'Active Partnerships' which co-ordinate the effective delivery of community sport and physical activity in partnership with stakeholders. They have 8 board members with a variety of experience including community development, local government, public health, working with children and young people, law, marketing, finance and communications. The delivery team also have various levels of experience in different fields.

Ignite CIC are a relatively new organisation, having been in operation since 2017. Their ethos is to bring communities together and to empower people to be creative and healthy through community activities and projects. Run by two people who have worked together since 2012, they have extensive experience of working with communities and good links with volunteers, co-ordinators, pathfinders and project staff who deliver projects and activities on behalf of the organisation. They have experience in teaching, youth services, Local Authorities, the private sector, performance management and event co-ordination.

SPHW are by far the bigger of the two organisations, and it makes sense for them to be the lead partner in this project. They have the experience, skills and capacity to deliver a successful project. Whilst only a small organisation in operation for a short while, Ignite have already been involved in numerous successful projects, including 'ActiveHERE', a Herefordshire Public Health funded project designed to support inactive people into physical activity, the Hereford School Games, and the Creative and Active Communities pilot project, which fed into the development of this project.

In terms of this project, the whole approach is designed to ensure sustainability in communities. The 12 week subsidised period will provide the initial impetus and support to enable communities to continue activities and develop them themselves afterwards. This will be supported through the development of local volunteers and activators, working alongside local practitioners, instructors and coaches to try to ensure that activities continue after the initial 12 week period. Participants will be charged a subsidised rate for the activities which will be collected and used to help sustain the group, extending the subsidised time if the group is not yet established or used towards training for local volunteers to support the activity. Things will not always go according to plan so the role of the project is to provide space, time, resources and listening to re-assess with the community and move forwards.

Local fit

There are many small and isolated communities across both Herefordshire and Worcestershire where very little happens in terms of community interaction and engagement, which can lead to high levels of

loneliness and isolation, often leading to later problems with both physical and mental health. What these communities often lack is a community activist or leader, who has the skills, time and willing to bring people together. This project looks to be that activist, providing the initial push that communities need. A platform is laid with support and tools given to then enable that community to take ownership of these activities moving forwards.

The project links to local priorities in Herefordshire of;

- The Health and Wellbeing Board's priority of supporting the development of resilient communities, where people help each other to remain independent and to be in control of their lives.
- The Council's aim of enabling local communities, using a strengths based approach, as outlined in the Adults and Communities blueprint which highlights the importance of community in resident's lives.
- The CCG's values of enabling patients and the public to take responsibility for themselves.

and local priorities in Worcestershire of;

- Public Health priorities of good mental health and wellbeing throughout life, and being active at every age.
- One of the six Public Health key priorities of empowering individuals and families to take responsibility and improve their own health and wellbeing, ensuring that targeted support is available where necessary, to increase individual, family and community resilience and self-reliance.

It is difficult to say whether this will duplicate other provision as the very nature of the project means that community activities are yet to be defined. However, it is relatively safe to say that communities would not identify local activities to engage in if other local provision was available. This is the only project across both counties that takes this approach.

Physical inactivity levels across Herefordshire and Worcestershire are at 24.8%, which is above the national average and represents almost a quarter of the 16+ population doing less than 30 minutes of recommended exercise per week. Data also shows that activity levels significantly reduce between the ages of 55 to 75, with over 18% more people inactive over the age of 75. This is an increasing problem in these two counties which have an older demographic. It is often difficult for people living in rural areas to access suitable physical and creative activities so this project aims to take these opportunities to their doorstep.

Apart from a possible project addressing homelessness in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, which is a much longer-term vision and will take time to develop, this is the only current Partnership project in the pipeline for The Shires. This has been discussed at patch level and is supported.

5. Risk

This project is standard risk. Whilst Ignite are a new and small organisation, SPHW have the necessary experience and skills to act as the lead partner and ensure this project is a success. Working together will expand their reach, and maximise the benefit of their respective networks. Whilst the whole nature of the project is a risk, with some activities not continued after the 12 week subsidised period, this decision is taken by the local community and allows a flexible approach. Some will continue and evolve whilst some will end. However, this mitigates against the risk of activities continuing despite the appetite not being there, which can happen with some projects.

6. Additional Terms and Conditions

Additional Bank Account and Partnership Agreement.

7. Recommendation



Grant amount requested from National Lottery Community Fund						
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Revenue	£92,241	£92,575	£92,914	£93,257		£370,987
Capital						£0
Total from TNLCF	£92,241	£92,575	£92,914	£93,257	£0	£370,987
Other Funding						£0
Total Project Cost	£92,241	£92,575	£92,914	£93,257	£0	£370,987