

Creative and Active Communities – Herefordshire & Worcestershire

Our partnership

Sports Partnership Herefordshire & Worcestershire (SPHW) and ignite cic have worked together in partnership for over 7 years across of arrange of projects and programmes. We have a strong track record of delivery during that time through the development of projects in rural communities aiming to get more people engaged in physical activity. Projects have included Community Games – a 2012 legacy project bringing the ethos of the Olympic and Paralympic games to engage communities in to cultural and sporting opportunities through local events; and simply run and simply bowls which provided doorstep opportunities for individuals to get engaged in running and indoor and outdoor bowls. All of these projects aimed to address community issues including inactivity, rural and social isolation, community well-being and empowerment.

SPHW is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in 2013, however has been in existence since 2000 as a lottery funded Active Partnership delivering a wide variety of projects and programmes across the counties of Herefordshire & Worcestershire. SPHW have a strong track record of delivering both lottery and externally grant funded projects including Postural Stability on behalf of Worcestershire Public health – a programme supporting individuals who have or are at risk of falling to improve their strength and balance, Move More Worcestershire – a Macmillan funded programme supporting those living with and beyond cancer to get more active and a Youth Engagement Project funded by the Police & Crime commissioner supporting young people at risk of offending in to diversionary activities. The learnings from all of these projects will be used to create a strong delivery plan for this creative & active communities project. SPHW have a strong reputation within local networks which supports and contributes to the successful delivery of projects across the two counties. SPHW has a number of key themes running through its 3 year strategy which this project will make a significant contribution to. The main themes being promoting independence, reducing social isolation and positively impacting on mental health. An overarching workforce development plan for the two counties will also support.

ignite cic is a community interest company delivering across Herefordshire since 2017. Working with local individuals, groups and organisations using creative and physical activities as a vehicle to bring people together and enhance wellbeing. ignite cic work with an extensive range of practitioners, enabling them to offer a wide and impartial choice of activities to suit community's needs. Examples of projects include delivery of Get Healthy Get Active Sport England and Public Health funded project, ActiveHERE; Youth and Early Years work with the M.O.D; Walking Programmes for Local Authority Active Transport team; and Multidiscipline Creative Activities for public events and organisations including HBID's The Big Arts Tent. ignite have also developed two pilot projects for this work, one working with communities across Herefordshire and the second more targeted work around the outlying villages around the market town of Leominster. ignite are active participants with local strategic networks, and have a wealth of experience having worked both in the private and public sector. ignites' 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 will be the lead applicant however this project will be delivered in complete partnership between the two organisations with SPHW taking the lead within Worcestershire and ignite cic taking 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 the delivery and that local people and communities take the lead and tailor the model to their area. It is believed that this joint bid would 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 to reach the communities. The project will also look at alternative ways of delivering training to local volunteers through development of e-learning tools and webinar-based opportunities.

The Evaluation Framework and Logic Model, which have been based on successful pilot projects, will be used to provide feedback on the outcomes of the project and will be the measure of what we have set out to achieve and how much we have achieved.

In all pilots, a range of information was collected including: age group; numbers involved; information about how they heard about the project; what new activities they would like to see and collecting ongoing data on the sustainability of the activities chosen to continue. We proposed that the sustainability is also measured at 6 months post project to see if the activities with community support have been able to be sustained.

In the original pilot project 'Active Parishes' (Project Evaluation attached) there was a focus on sport and physical activity but led by some of the feedback where local people had indicated a desire for some more creative opportunities. This was incorporated into the second pilot and the programme developed and activities included: Yoga; Clay workshop; Tai Chi, Outfit, Bridge, Wild Play, Dancercise and Nordic Walking. The model for the delivery of creative opportunities is more difficult to develop due to the cost and length of the sessions needed to fully explore creative practice but a model of 'master classes' for ongoing support could be used.

With other agencies involvement in the project, this would mean that new routes to social and well being activities could also be developed in more localised areas. An example of this would include Talk Hubs being facilitated by local Community Brokers, which could operate in the village locations to provide social networks.

The whole project will be underpinned by effective safeguarding, equality and data protection practises to ensure that all participants are protected throughout.

The funding

Creative & Active Communities will aim to engage with 56 predominately rural communities across Herefordshire and Worcestershire over the next 4 years but this is a target number and not fully set as every area will be different and be at a very different starting point.

The number has been based on the experience of pilots where 7 communities were engaged throughout each year. It was also based on the level of genuine consultation and development required from the pilot areas to establish and enhance physical and or creative activity 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 we will work closely with them to develop opportunities based on local need.

In Herefordshire as a result of the pilot work carried out in 2017/18 a number of local communities have already expressed an interest in being involved including Much Marcle, where the parish council has a focus on health and wellbeing and has already been involved in another local project call ActiveHERE. Other areas include Garway and Peterchurch in the Golden Valley, Edwyn Ralph, Kimbolton and Bosbury all who have identified the need to develop some wellbeing opportunities for local residents.

Communities would also be encouraged to look ahead to identify when this development could fit within their own neighbourhood planning cycles.

In Worcestershire the initial priority will be to work within the district of Wychavon and a number of local parishes have already an interested in developing a project with SPHW including Hampton Lovett. Through Wychavon District Council's most recent strategy their priorities include helping people to be happy, active and supported and supporting and engaging with communities so this project could look to support against these priorities.

The funding will provide coordination roles, extensive community consultation and development work and help support taster days using local practitioners and instructors. The agreed ongoing activities will then be subsidised for 12 weeks enabling them to become sustainable with local deliverers. Funding will also be sort locally, with the communities, to support ongoing development and activity. The project would aim to start in September 2019 however this will be determined by the outcome of this funding bid.

Fit with funding priorities

This project will address all three of the Reaching Communities funding priorities but the predominant outcome will focus on **bringing people together and building strong relationships in and across their own community.**

Creative & Active Communities creates an opportunity for whole communities to be heard regarding their ideas and aspirations for doorstep activity. The project offers flexible levels of participation, from lead voluntary roles to participation in activity alone-all of which contribute towards the project being tailored to each community. Through an open process, shared awareness and experiences and ownership are integral to the development of the project. Developing opportunities that make people feel more connected with their community.

- **bringing people together and building strong relationships in and across their own community**

Providing Opportunity to Be Heard: The whole community are invited be part of the development of the project and share their ideas and aspirations for local activity, they're invited via open invitations in; parish newsletters; local social media pages; organisations i.e. schools, parish councils, pubs; targeted; and through door to door distribution and public advertisement of promotional material.

Ensuring Volunteer Input: Those who are able to offer more time to volunteer for the project will be key in sharing knowledge and insight, dictating pace and priorities as well as style and logistics of delivery. They will play key roles attending meetings, advocating the project and liaising with fellow community members and local organisations, promoting events and activities and being front facing at the Social Fun Day and future activities.

Ensuring Wider Community Input: Community input is as vital, and can be as simple as attending the Social Fun Day; chatting to project leads; taking part in an activity; or completing consultation questions. Any of these levels of engagement help to create the pathway forward, tailoring the project to deliver the type of activity wanted, and therefore with the best chance of becoming sustainable.

Providing Participation Opportunities: The Social Fun Day will provide a diverse range of complimentary taster activities (informed by local knowledge) for the community to try. The taster activities will bring people together, give them an opportunity to share an experience and try things out before commenting & committing to new activity. Participants feedback from the taster activities will be vital in informing the sustained activity, which, when in place, will provide a *regular* opportunity for the local community to come together and engage in the social aspect that envelopes structured activity, as well as the health benefits of the activity itself.

Active Upskilling: Through working with volunteers from the beginning to the end of the project. By providing them with opportunities to develop or enhance their skills, giving them the confidence to take control and ownership of developing opportunities beyond the initial support phase.

- **Improve the places and spaces that matter to communities**

The project will make use of local buildings, facilities and outdoor spaces as recommended by the community and suitable for activities. The hire of such will feed into the local economy, not only for the length of the project in each area but on an ongoing basis once activity becomes sustainable.

Where possible local practitioners will be used, supporting employment as well as increasing the likelihood for sustainable activity, by means of reducing travel time and costs.

- **Enable more people to fulfil their potential by working to address issues at the earliest possible stage**

This aim was captured within the pilot projects with some clear feedback around the decrease in loneliness from being involved and people reporting that *“they felt closer connected to other people in the parish”* (Active Parish Evaluation Report)

Supporting positive activities, either mentally or physically stimulating, where participation contributes to early action and prevention, i.e. evidence from the 4 year strength & balance programme SPHW have been delivering has demonstrated that participants who have successfully completed a course feeling significantly less unsteady of their feet and also have developed a decreased fear of falling due to the exercises they have adopted. Many participants also find an increased level of confidence in going about daily activities and have gone on to continue to participate in other physical activity sessions.

Links with social prescribing, community brokers, Active HERE, and other local programmes enables services to signpost to a range of locally based creative and active opportunities. This will also help increase engagement with isolated rural communities.

The primary demographic for the project will be older adults over 55 however we anticipate that the demographics of the communities we will be working with will be quite diverse and as such everyone will be welcome to join in with local opportunities. From the 10 rural communities engaged in the pilots the participants included 69 young people, 139 adults under 55 and 179 older adults. Out of the 14 different activities engaged with during the pilot projects 9 of these have become sustained activities within the local communities.

Community Involvement

The Creative & Active Communities Pathway is a model which has been refined based on the outcomes from the previous pilot project undertaken in Herefordshire. 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



1. **Expression of Interest** - Wide public promotion, digital and print, offers community members of any standing the opportunity to talk to us regarding their priorities, pace and possibilities for receiving the project.
2. **Community Networking** – Knowledge sharing and ideas will take place with a range of local organisations and a community core of volunteers and key contacts will be established through this process.
3. **Planning Event** – Core volunteers, with support, will be decision makers for the style of the taster days, including date, time, venue, activity types. They will also be involved in project messaging to wider community and distribution of promotional material. Former (pilot) volunteers can contribute as advisors.
4. **Activity Taster Days + Info Gathering** – Wider community participate in a range of free activities and feedback. Core volunteers will provide the local face of the event, taking ownership of the informal social aspects, encouraging people to stay, enabling consultation, reinforcing the project messages and rallying active support from the community.
5. **Future Planning Event** – Collaborative debrief of views and decisions for future subsidised activity made by core volunteers, with support. Tasks then replicated as per ‘Planning Event’.
6. **12-week Subsidised activity** – Wider community participate in subsidised activities and will pay a contribution. Core volunteers or participant become group leaders/facilitators, responsible for venue arrangements, practitioner support and encouraging participants to take ownership of the activities.
7. **Volunteer Development** – Core volunteers or participants in receipt of training to upskill themselves as activity facilitators or even leaders.
8. **Sustained Activity** – Ongoing activity led independently by practitioners/community, made sustainable by participant fees. If appropriate volunteers supported to source and write funding applications, constitute activities and work with local parish councils etc.
9. **Evaluation** – Encouraging and collecting feedback for initiated activity, and also any existing provision that’s benefited from the project. Communicating feedback to the community.

* see the Pathway Timeline

People from the community are involved all of the way through the pathway. The roles undertaken in the pilots included;

- motivator – encouraging others to come along and join in
- promotor – helping to identify the best source of publicising the activity and delivering it

- skills identifiers – helping to identify those who have individual skills to contribute (refreshments/transport sharing)

An example from one of the pilots was the request for a Bridge session. We were put in touch with someone from another village who leads a group there and he agreed to come along. The outcome was that one of the members joined some online training and now carries on supporting the group.

Aims of our proposal and the difference it will make

The aims of the project are set out in the Logic Model and Evaluation Framework but is to ultimately make opportunities more easily accessible in particularly rural areas of the two counties.

What we do know is that physical inactivity levels across Herefordshire & Worcestershire are at 24.8% , not only is this below the national average it also represents almost a quarter of our 16+ population is doing less than 30 minutes of recommended exercise per week. We also know that age and gender play a part in the inactivity levels with females more inactive than males. Data also shows that activity levels significantly drop off between the ages of 55 – 75 with over 18% more people inactive after the age of 75+. This project will also aim to address some of these inequalities where relevant to the local communities that we work with.

For those living in rural areas access to suitable physical and creative activities can be difficult and this project is aiming to address those issues by taking the creative and active opportunities to their doorstep. Data shows that those living in rural areas can experience greater social isolation and loneliness which can have a significant impact on an individual's physical and mental health so through this project we are aiming to provide doorstep opportunities that can have an impact on these in a positive way.

We anticipate over the 4 years of the project to engage in excess of 1500 individuals.

This is an opportunity for both organisations to share good practice and build on what works for local communities, taken from the pilots. Through a shared brand and identity, we are aiming to create a network of opportunities across the two counties that share the same values, identity and brand to increase awareness and uptake of local programmes by creating a sense of belonging to something bigger. Also by working across the areas we know best (Ignite & Herefordshire, SPHW & Worcestershire) this will help to raise the profile of both organisations, there will be a greater sense of partnership working as we will both be following the same delivery plan and collectively we will develop a better understanding of local areas, needs, challenges and opportunities that we will be used to develop and delivery high quality opportunities for local people.

Learning, sharing and networking

We anticipate that the programme will appeal to all members of the local community as each individual project will be developed in conjunction with local people and based on local need. We anticipate it appealing to a high proportion of older people as both Herefordshire and Worcestershire have a higher than average percentage of people over the age of 65, we also know that certainly in Herefordshire over 60% of this age group live in rural areas. Age UK data indicates that both Herefordshire & Worcestershire have significant 'hot spots' relating to levels of loneliness and we hope that by engaging in this project older people will get involved in activities that can help address these issues.

We will work with existing networks including local town and parish councils to promote the programme into local communities. From there we will call for expressions of interest from local groups and work with them to develop bespoke delivery plans that are based on the needs of their

local people and across all age groups. This may come from local focus group discussions or via previously discussed gaps in provision via local stakeholders.

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. Through this project we will also look to develop additional relationships with social prescribers, community wardens/connectors, local police/PCSO's as well as any other stakeholders who can support and promote this project.

To keep track on how we are connecting with partners locally we would use a CRM system to track engagement. Through these relationships we will identify local need and use local insight to better understand of the issues facing the local communities as well as identifying advocates to help identify communities that will benefit from being involved in this project.

Each project will monitor both outputs and outcomes and these will be developed using the SPHW logic model and evaluation framework. We will also track stakeholder engagement through a CRM system and monitor levels of stakeholder satisfaction through an annual survey.

We will appoint an independent evaluation team to advise and carry out relevant evaluation, evidence collection and reporting.

A key element will be to ensure that we, together with the communities we are working with, are meeting the agreed outcomes. The evaluation process will be continuous and focus not just on what worked but on outcomes for the individuals in terms of wellbeing and for the community as a whole throughout the whole project. Once each evaluation has been complete this will be share with the community involved as well as with local stakeholders who have been engaged in the project to showcase the impact each community programme has achieved as well as using the evidence gather to continue delivery. 12 month impact reports will also be produced to showcase the programme as a whole and shared locally with stakeholders, partners, local networks and engaged communities.

* See the Stakeholder Engagement Plan & SPHW Logic Model and Evaluation Framework

Equalities

Both organisations recognise that inequalities exist within our communities and are committed to addressing these inequalities. We will aim to ensure all activities delivered through this project are accessible to all individuals and groups within the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, where possible.

We will endeavour to remove existing financial, physical, political, psychological and social barriers to participation in creative, sport and physical activity opportunities. We are both fully committed to the principals of equal opportunities and will work towards eliminating discrimination on the grounds of the following characteristics:

- Age
- Race
- Religion/Belief
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy & Maternity

- Marriage & Civil partnership

We recognise the diverse make-up of the two counties and accepts that a pro-active approach must be adopted and additional resources allocated towards project & programmes that target those individuals who do not traditionally access services.

SPHW has been awarded the foundation level of the equality standard for sport which is a national award recognising our commitment to equality in sport and both organisations have an Equality Policies.

Environment

Where feasible we will endeavour to reduce the environmental impact of this project by looking at innovative ways of delivery training to volunteers through an increased use of digital and online training. By providing 'doorstep' opportunities with local deliverers and practitioners in local facilities this will allow participants to walk to venues therefore reducing the need to drive or use public transport.

Sustainability

It is not just about empowering communities to develop opportunities but to ensure the activities and the future of those activities become sustainable through the development of local volunteers and activators. By providing local people with opportunities to develop or enhance their skills and by giving them the confidence to take control and ownership of developing the opportunities beyond the initial support phase, we can help create a real power to decide how things go forward.

Following the initial consultation with the communities, local practitioners, instructors/coaches will be involved to try to ensure the potential to carry the activities on 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, which could be through a number of routes. This could help to pay for hall hire for a further period, extend the subsidised time if the group hasn't yet got established or be used towards some training for local volunteers who would like to support the activity.

Working with the community through this time, they might identify specific needs for which we would be able to help signpost volunteers locally to access. An example might be to the Herefordshire Council funding team to support a funding application for equipment or venue improvement.

Evidence, has shown that bringing together a range of 'health assets' along with early action can have a significant effect on prevention. Those 'health assets' as mainly local resources, facilities, skills and knowledge alongside friendships, good neighbours and local groups which can all contribute to the physical, environmental and economic wellbeing of an area or community.

A key will be to ensure that we spend time getting to know the people and community and to understand the existing connections and make-up of the area. Then together with the community, we can ensure we are meeting the jointly agreed outcomes.

Things will go wrong so the role of the project is to provide space, time, resources and listening to reassess with the community and move forward. Being honest about perceived and true outcomes.

There will be an increased usage of community buildings, and increased engagement with isolated communities. Social prescribing opportunities will increase through this model.

Creating the right environment for activity to have an impact on the community. It is not just about recording the impact but about the process that leads to the impact.

Resources

The key resource for this project is the coordination roles in both areas. These will be front line for the identifying, consulting and delivery of the whole project. The other resources will include the direct project costs; practitioner fees, promotional material and training for volunteers and potential new practitioners.