

Follow-up Evaluation

Communities Together Project:

Fishguard and Goodwick

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Participation Cymru

July 2018

**Alcohol
Concern**
Hybu iechyd;
Gwella bywydau

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Table of Contents

FOREWORD BY ALCOHOL CONCERN	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
METHODOLOGY	6
FINDINGS	6
1.0. INTRODUCTION	8
1.1. THIS EVALUATION	8
1.2. RATIONALE	8
1.3. METHODOLOGY	8
1.4. THIS REPORT	9
2.0. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE PROJECT ENDING?	10
3.0. THE COMMUNITIES TOGETHER PROJECT FINISHED ONE YEAR AGO, WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS IT MADE?	13
3.1. COMMUNITY CO-ORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION	13
3.2. THE CATALYST ROLE – ENDURING PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES	15
POINT ACROSS COMMUNITIES INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT.	15
ICT INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT	16
THE SOUND OF THE YOUTH (SOTY)	16
DRY JANUARY	17
LIGHT NIGHT	17
MEL'S MOCKTAILS	17
LOTA PARK PLAY GROUP	18
THE LIBRARY	18
TEA DANCES	18
MEN'S SHEDS	19
TIMEBANKING	19
OTHER PROJECTS	19
3.3. LEARNING	19
3.4. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	22
3.5. ATTITUDES TOWARDS ALCOHOL	22
4.0. ONE YEAR ON, WHAT DIFFERENCE, IF ANY, HAS THE PROJECT MADE TO THE WAY PEOPLE THINK ABOUT DRINKING?	24
4.1. DO YOU THINK THE PROJECT HAS CREATED ANY LONG-LASTING ALCOHOL-FREE EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES THAT BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER IN FISHGUARD AND GOODWICK?	24
4.2. DO YOU THINK THE PROJECT HAS CREATED ANY LASTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER AND YOUNGER PEOPLE TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER IN FISHGUARD AND GOODWICK?	26
4.3. ONE YEAR ON, HAS THE PROJECT MADE IT EASIER FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT TO GET ADVICE ABOUT ALCOHOL USE?	28

4.4. DO YOU HAVE A SENSE OF WHETHER THE PROJECT HAS INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL USE AMONG THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE ONE YEAR AFTER IT ENDED?	29
4.5. HAS PROJECT INCREASED YOUR OWN AWARENESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL USE?	30
4.6. DO YOU THINK THE PROJECT HAS HELPED PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN TO TALK TOGETHER ABOUT WHAT A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH ALCOHOL LOOKS LIKE?	31
<u>5.0. IMAGINE SOMEONE WAS SETTING UP A SIMILAR PROJECT TO COMMUNITIES TOGETHER AND THEY CAME TO YOU FOR ADVICE? WHAT THREE PIECES OF ADVICE (“DO’S” OR “DON’TS”) WOULD YOU GIVE THEM?</u>	<u>32</u>
TABLE 1: KEY LESSONS FOR FUTURE SIMILAR PROJECTS	32
<u>6.0. CONCLUSIONS</u>	<u>36</u>
6.1. THE RESPONSE TO THE PROJECT ENDING	36
6.2. THE DIFFERENCE MADE BY THE PROJECT – THE CATALYST ROLE	36
TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE SUSTAINED ONE YEAR AFTER THE END OF COMMUNITIES TOGETHER.	37
6.3. ALCOHOL RELATED IMPACT	39
6.4. KEY LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE	40
<u>REFERENCES AND SOURCES</u>	<u>41</u>
<u>APPENDIX ONE: TOPIC GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS.</u>	<u>42</u>

Acknowledgements

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Foreword by Alcohol Concern

From 2014 to 2017, Alcohol Concern supported a three-year community alcohol project, funded by the Big Lottery, in the twin towns of Fishguard and Goodwick on the north Pembrokeshire coast. What made Communities Together different was that it was an alcohol project that wasn't really about alcohol itself. It was about all the things in our lives that are somehow intertwined with alcohol: our pleasures, aspirations and frustrations; relationships, worries and stresses; all the ways we see ourselves in the world; and all our explanations and excuses for drinking.

It was new a kind of project for Alcohol Concern, but it really shouldn't have been. Anyone who has worked at the coalface of health promotion will know that the long-standing emphasis on educating individuals to "know their units" or "drink responsibly" doesn't work most of the time. So, this time, we decided to put our leaflets and our unit measuring cups and good advice to one side. Instead, we sat down with people to listen to them and let them work out their own drinking solutions. We applied the empowering principles of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), looking for "what's strong, not what's wrong", and resisted the urge to put own stamp on the project. The resultant activities included intergenerational IT sessions, tea dances, and music and poetry evenings. Out of these, naturally and unforced, came conversations about alcohol.

Like many other projects, ours was time-limited: it was funded for three years and no more. We hoped that our ABCD approach - drawing on local talent rather than creating new clients - would help ensure sustainability. One year after the project ended, we commissioned the independent evaluators from Participation Cymru to go back and see just how sustainable our project was. Did it have a lasting impact, or had it dissipated like some many other short-term initiatives? This report sets out what they found.

Andrew Misell
Director, Alcohol Concern Cymru
July 2018

Executive Summary

This evaluation of the longer-term impact of the Alcohol Concern Cymru, Communities Together, Fishguard and Goodwick Project, aims to understand its legacy, 12 months after it ended, in terms of attitudes to alcohol, drinking behaviours and broader community development.

Methodology

13 in-depth, part structured interviews were conducted in April and May 2018, with key informants from a range of backgrounds. Five of the interviewees also took part in a focus group discussion about the draft conclusions of the evaluation.

The contributions from participants were broadly convergent and when this was the case it was possible to draw quite clear findings. Where views diverged or when information was not readily available the conclusions are more tentative.

Findings

The project, secured an extension of several months to its planned three-year lifespan and most people felt the exit strategy was very well managed. However, some people experienced the end of the project as a sudden loss.

The project manager's role and personal qualities led people to feel supported and provided a constant stimulus to community activity throughout the life of the project.

The project demonstrated the importance of a role which brings people together, supports potential community activists, and stimulates community activity. An unexpected impact, partly attributable to the project, is that some individuals and organisations are now speaking of the need for a "Town Manager" for Fishguard and Goodwick. Such a role would probably need to be, at least partly, funded by a local institution.

Community activity appears to be higher today than before the project started, and it is likely that the project has left a substantial legacy in terms of improved communication, higher levels of volunteering and more positive relationships between people who are active in the community.

Communities Together initiated or gave substantial support to a number of projects and activities which are sustained one year after its end. This is an important legacy of its role as a catalyst for community development.

Communities Together, working with partners, initiated the Sound Of The Youth (SOTY), Tea Dances, Men's Sheds, and the Lota Park Play Project. These are sustained or have a lasting impact. The project also initiated the Intergenerational ICT project which lay the foundations for the larger scale POINT Across Communities project. Communities Together also substantially boosted participation in Dry January and the annual Light Night event and helped develop the community enterprise "Mel's Mocktails".

Three of these projects contribute specifically to increasing alcohol awareness. The Tea Dances, the Sound Of The Youth, and Mel's Mocktails continue to promote the message

that it is acceptable to organise social events that do not include alcohol, and that it is possible to have fun without drinking.

These projects and activities are likely to be sustainable for some time. They serve different functions but between them contribute significantly to: community cohesion, reducing isolation, personal development and alcohol awareness.

The project may have achieved lasting impact in terms of helping people obtain advice about alcohol and may also have led to more people being aware of the consequences of alcohol use. However, the sensitive nature of these interventions makes it difficult to evidence this impact.

The project has stimulated a change in behaviour, and in the drinking culture, particularly at the sports clubs, leading to some people in the community drinking less. This is a notable achievement.

The evaluation identified three key lessons for any future similar projects:

1. Be creative, make it fun, and involve people.
2. Involve the community from the start, build on what people want, and join with networks and organisations that are already in place.
3. Don't label the project as being about alcohol.

The project has demonstrated a radical new way of conveying messages about alcohol. The handbook based upon the project: "It's not about the alcohol, a handbook for addressing alcohol issues in their community context", is a very clear "how to" guide which deserves wide dissemination to stimulate and inform the development of similar projects.

1.0. Introduction

1.1. This Evaluation

This is an evaluation of the longer-term impact of the Alcohol Concern Cymru Communities Together: Fishguard and Goodwick Project, 12 months after the project ended.

The aim is to understand what the project's legacy in terms of attitudes to alcohol and drinking behaviours, and broader community development.

1.2. Rationale

The rationale for our approach is that the main legacy of Communities Together is likely to manifest through the groups the project supported, and the events, activities and active volunteers the project created.

It is these groups, activities, and individuals who, we may hope, will be continuing to some extent, to achieve the processes and outcomes of the project such as:

- promoting community cohesion,
- creating opportunities for people to socialise and learn together,
- increasing awareness of alcohol use and
- making it easier for people to get advice about alcohol use.

1.3. Methodology

Our overall approach has been to speak with as wide a range of individuals as possible who are likely to have a good insight into the legacy of Communities Together. These people are actively involved in various ways in the community of Fishguard and Goodwick and are therefore likely to have a good insight into that community.

We need to acknowledge the lack of hard data about the difference the project has made; for example, there is no information about any changes in the number of referrals to services. It is also possible that some impact has not yet manifested because some of the changes the project aimed to achieve may have needed more than three-years to come about. These reservations need to be taken into account when drawing conclusions about the impact of the project.

However, there is evidence in the form of observations and insights from individuals who are in a good position to see changes in the community. In some cases, these observations are facts, for example, that a particular activity which was started by the project is still active. These are the closest to hard data which is available to this evaluation. In other cases, the observations involve an element of judgement, for example about the extent to which Communities Together may have been the catalyst for a project or activity. While not objective fact, the latter type of evidence is still useful, especially when several key informants concur.

We conducted 13 in-depth part structured interviews in late April and early May 2018 (the topic guide is attached as appendix one). Seven of the interviews were face to face and six by telephone. Two more people responded to the topic guide by email.

We took various precautions to ensure the validity of our findings. We spoke to individuals who have different perspectives and insights and who may hold different views about the lasting impact of Communities Together in order to achieve some triangulation of source. One interview was carried out by a researcher not closely associated with previous evaluation activities and therefore not known to the interviewees, to achieve some triangulation of researcher.

The interviewee who spoke to a researcher they did not know was no less positive about the impact of the project than other interviewees.

Interviewees contributed different insights. For example, one person might be aware of the impact on attitudes to alcohol within a particular group they were involved in, while another had insights into the project's impact on relations between generations. These differences are therefore a consequence of people's different perspectives, and do not weaken the findings of the evaluation.

Sometimes, interviewees had different views about the sustainability or impact of the project. The evaluation takes this into account when drawing conclusions.

A focus group was also held at draft report stage. Five people who had previously been interviewed discussed the draft conclusions of the evaluation and suggested amendments. The focus group broadly endorsed the conclusions of the report, adding detail and emphasis in many cases, and suggesting a more tentative conclusion in one instance. The final report has incorporated the views of the focus group

The triangulation of source and researcher and the convergent nature of the findings about the impact of the project, together with the opportunity to check the conclusions of the evaluation at the draft report stage gives a good level of confidence that the evaluation findings will be valid.

1.4. This report

The rest of this report is structured by the questions used in interviews and explores in turn:

- Peoples' feelings about the project ending (section two);
- what difference the project has made overall (section three);
- what difference the project has made, more specifically, to the way people think about drinking (section four);
- what advice interviewees would give to someone setting up a similar project in another community (section five).

A final section (six) draws together the main conclusions of the evaluation.

2.0. How do you feel about the project ending?

Almost all interviewees said they felt sad about the project ending. Some people used words like “devastated” and “bereft”.

There was a counter-current within this dominant view, expressed by some interviewees, who added that the project necessarily had a limited lifespan.

Two other interviewees who felt sad about the project ending qualified this by saying they felt it had achieved its objectives.

“It’s always sad when a project ends, yet with this one, there was feeling it had achieved what it set out to do”.

Five interviewees linked their feelings of sadness directly to the loss of the project manager and spoke the importance of his role and his personal qualities.

“Personally, devastated, Marc was a support network for the community, he was a ‘go to’ person and helped provide financial support for projects.”

“Sad, because it was obviously doing a hell of a lot of good, but I think Marc was very much the enabler.”

Participants in the draft report focus group discussed the kinds of activities and qualities needed to keep community projects alive.

“People need energy to push things on.... They sometimes stagnatewe need ‘bing’ moments to sustain projects”.

One participant in the focus group acknowledged that one or two people in the community had hoped the project manager would take more of a leadership role, and “*sort things out*” and that these people may have felt some frustration because he did not do this. All the focus group participants agreed this was not the project manager’s role, nor was this congruent with his skill set and qualities.

The focus group participants discussed how key individuals could create the momentum needed for community activism, and the need for different personalities in a community development process. The project manager’s particular skills were considered by the group to be listening to everyone without judgement, identifying potential community catalysts, taking care of people, and enabling them to take action. They called this a “nurturing” role. The group felt the function of identifying and nurturing potential community activists was an essential and often under-rated role in community development.

“Marc’s skill was that he connected people. While Marc was here there were lots of ‘bings’ but he has also inspired others to take over”.

“Marc really focused on pulling people together he had a roving role. He was the glue”.

Three interviewees expressed regret that the project had not been given more time. Two said they felt that a five or six-year time-span would have been necessary to achieve the kind of changes the project was aiming for.

“I think to really embed the spirit of citizen led community development we could have done with two more years”.

The third agreed more time was needed but felt a period of tapering funding would have resulted in a less abrupt withdrawal and allowed the community to adjust.

Participants in the focus group which discussed the draft conclusions disagreed with this view. They said that it was inevitable that the project would end and that the phasing out process was handled very well. One said they were:

“... full of admiration for how it was handled”. Another said:

“... it was nice to have a tapering off, but(the project) was always going to end. Marc was planning for the end as soon as it started”.

Two people said the project, and the project manager, had demonstrated the need for a post to co-ordinate and develop activities,

“We need one full-time member of staff to make things happen and co-ordinate all the super, sundry voluntary activities”.

One participant in the focus group suggested that potential future funding for this post could come from the Town Council.

The draft report focus group also noted that the Community Forum had an important role going forwards in supporting community initiatives. They felt that people still needed to be brought together to promote cohesion and communication.

Several people referred in different ways to the context of austerity and the pressures on all services which made the end of the Communities Together Project an even more significant loss to the community.

In summary, the overwhelming view is that people are very sad that the project has ended and the supportive role and the personal qualities of the project manager are clearly missed. Supporting and connecting people within the community were key elements of the role and essential to the process of community development.

The project has helped demonstrate the value of a paid community development worker. However, in the context of austerity, it is likely that the resources to fund such a post will have to be, at least partly, locally generated.

There were different views about whether the project would have benefited from a longer time-span or phasing out period. Some people felt it would have but others believed that the phasing out process was handled very well.

3.0. The Communities Together project finished one year ago, what difference has it made?

Most of the responses to this question referred to the project's legacy in terms of community co-ordination and communication, and the project's catalyst role in starting and supporting lasting projects and activities. Some also mentioned learning, personal development and changes in attitudes towards alcohol.

3.1. Community co-ordination and communication

This impact generated many comments. However, there was not complete unanimity about what the project had achieved.

One interviewee suggested the project may have led to a degree of dependency. They said that it was clear that the project manager had succeeded in getting groups to work together better and had stimulated new activity in the community. However, he felt that the project manager was central to these processes and wondered whether they had continued after the end of the project. He gave the example of one group where the project manager had taken on an organising role, that was now struggling.

However, the same person also suggested the project may have helped the Community Forum become more inclusive.

"They have started to invite smaller groups to come and use the Forum's constitution and bank account to apply for funding. This is possibly because of Communities Together".

Another interviewee was unsure whether the impact of the project had been fully sustained. They believed the project had addressed successfully issues of territoriality between groups when it was in existence but did not know whether this impact had been sustained.

"I don't know because I'm out of it now".

They felt that, although there was still a lot of community activity, something had been lost once the project ended.

"Everybody knew Marc and liked him. He was just there. If you needed something you could just give him a ring. The same events happen, but it's just not the same. The same spirit, it's not there".

They also believed that communication was not as good now the project had ended.

"If anything was happening you'd get an email. I don't know what's happening now".

The experience of the loss of the project and the project manager led both the interviewees cited above, plus a third, to express the need for a Town Manager type role for Fishguard and Goodwick.

“It has shown more clearly there is a hole in the middle of Fishguard and Goodwick... Marc was a brilliant pivot, a communicator and a doer and that is the vacuum”.

“What the project has done, is that it has given people the idea that a Town Manager would be the answer to all the problems; someone like Marc running around pulling people together It’s getting someone of the right calibre”.

However, the weight of opinion held that the impact of the project in terms of promoting better co-operation between groups, improving communication and generating new activity had been substantially sustained. Eight interviewees made comments supporting this view, with most providing specific examples. The following selected quotes from different individuals illustrate the majority view of interviewees:

“The Communities Together project has meant there is more sharing of resources, an appetite for intergenerational work and working in partnership. The project has helped connect the community and make it more cohesive”.

“It also stimulated relationships between grass roots organisations, there are better links between organisations now. We are still surfing a bit of a wave after the project.... It’s so much easier to pick up the ‘phone because you know who you are talking to”.

“Another area is community cohesion and creating opportunities for people to get to know each other through events e.g. poem events, Friendship Circle. The Library has set up a new project aimed at what older people can do”.

“The project has generated community engagement and I still receive lots of emails. One group has taken on the mailing list”.

“It (the project) has set something in train, for example the way Point, Rainbow Centre, and Transition Bro Gwaun are working, people are giving their time but not to further personal agendas. There are good networking opportunities”.

“I feel we are now a closer-knit community and we get behind each other and provide support. Personally, I have more links as a result of being involved with the project e.g. with the Town Councillors Youth Leaders, and professionals”.

Participants in the focus group about the draft report also said that people who had been involved in Communities Together were still “community active”, and certainly not lost to community action.

In summary, the final project evaluation acknowledged the important role the project manager had played and how his skills and personal qualities had contributed greatly to

the success of the project. It is therefore not surprising that some interviewees said that his departure at the end of the project had a detrimental effect on community cohesion and on communications. This step backwards, experienced by some, has also helped demonstrate the value of having a person in a central role to co-ordinate and stimulate activity in the community. Should this awareness translate into the creation of a “Town Manager” type role then the project should claim some responsibility for this.

However, most interviewees agree that the project has left a substantial legacy in terms of community cohesion and communication. It has helped: bring the community together, motivate new community activists, create new more positive relationships between people who are active in the community, stimulate community activity and improve communication. These impacts are still being experienced one year after the end of the project.

One interviewee described this as:

“There is a bit of a feel-good hangover after the project”.

3.2. The catalyst role – enduring projects and activities

Many comments were made about the role of the project as a catalyst, inspiring and supporting projects and activities in the community.

There is strong evidence of impact in relation to this role. Interviewees were able to identify numerous projects and activities which Communities Together had initiated or supported in some way and which were still operating in Fishguard and Goodwick one year after the project’s end.

What is less clear in some cases is the extent to which the project enabled these activities. Nevertheless, in the case of all the projects and activities documented in this section, the project will have provided significant support and they should be considered to be part of its legacy.

POINT Across Communities Intergenerational Project.

Four interviewees said POINT Youth Club’s Big Lottery Funded Intergenerational Project, “POINT Across Communities” should be considered part of the Communities Together legacy.

The POINT Across Communities project, which began in July 2017, aims to connect young people to older people to allow them to share skills. For example, older people can be mentors and support young people in life skills around employability and provide help with hobbies. There is also an acknowledgement that younger people can help older people understand what it is like being a young person today.

Another aim of sharing skills and experiences in this way is to help combat isolation among older and younger people.

As part of the bid, there is also a dementia awareness project, working in partnership with Theatr Gwaun. There will be four dementia friendly screenings to provide a real cinema

experience and carers will be supported and able to attend. Young people will provide support by being “Dementia Friends”.

There was general agreement among those commenting that Communities Together prepared the ground for POINT Across Communities. It did this through the Communities Together ICT intergenerational project, which raised awareness about the importance of intergenerational work. The Sound Of The Youth events, and the Tea Dances involving older and younger people, also helped to shape thinking, and the Communities Together project manager provided quite a lot of input to the funding bid.

ICT Intergenerational Project

As well as this new major intergenerational project, POINT is keeping the original ICT intergenerational work going. Training sessions are now taking place to equip young people to act as ICT champions to support other members of the community.

The Sound Of The Youth (SOTY)

Several interviewees mentioned that SOTY events were still running. The original SOTY was developed with the support of Communities Together, in Fishguard and Goodwick between March 2014 and June 2015. The project responded to a desire to provide musical events for young people in the community.

The SOTY was planned and run by young people supported by adult volunteers and local organisations, including: Communities Together, Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council, Pembrokeshire County Council Youth Service and POINT. These formed a planning group to organise the events.

The young people who performed at the events were all local and the acts included solo artists, bands and DJ's. Young people were also involved in organising and carrying out tasks at the events.

A previous evaluation report (Report of an evaluation of the Sound Of The Youth Project, supported by Communities Together, Participation Cymru, March 2016), together with information provided by interviewees indicate that the SOTY organised seven events while the Communities Together project was still running and that two events have been organised since by Pembrokeshire County Council Youth Service.

The earlier evaluation found that young people gained new skills and confidence through SOTY and developed their abilities to work effectively as part of a team and as part of a broader partnership of various organisations. Taking part in the SOTY also built their confidence and self-esteem. The events portrayed young people in a positive way in the community and encouraged young people to feel part of the community as a whole thereby promoting community cohesion.

Dry January

Communities Together promoted Dry January. It succeeded in raising the profile of the annual event in the community and in persuading more people to abstain from alcohol during the month.

One interviewee who is involved in the Football Club noted that club members, who started taking part because of Communities Together are still doing so, even though the project has ended.

He said that the campaign created a space for members of the football club to have conversations about alcohol use and health and wellbeing, and that the campaign raised awareness of the benefits of reducing alcohol consumption. The Football club has now taken part in three Dry Januarys with participants estimated at between 10 and 15 per year over the last two years.

“This still goes on, it doesn’t have to be pushed players and coaches take part Dry January is now a feature of the club”.

Light Night

The Final evaluation report of Communities Together recorded that “Light Night” was instigated by a local young woman, who wanted to make a bigger event around the switching on of the Christmas lights. With the project manager’s support, she was able to make it work and it was extremely well attended. It was also a success from a business point of view; there was a waiting list for stalls and the event attracted people into local businesses which stayed open late. A local landlady reported seeing customers in her pub that she did not normally see and seeing families out in the town. She said: *“everyone benefited. It was win, win, win”.*

The young woman who instigated Light Night has now withdrawn from her organising role but successfully handed over responsibility for the event to the Town Council.

Mel’s Mocktails

Mel’s Mocktails is a social enterprise involving young people supported by POINT. Several interviewees mentioned that Mel’s Mocktails was still operating. Communities Together did not initiate Mel’s Mocktails. However, it provided many commercial and promotional opportunities for the business, raising its profile in the community and contributing to its sustainability. For example, the final evaluation report of Communities Together says that the project ran various alcohol-free events including: the Sound of Youth musical performances, a party for local youth organisations to encourage youth involvement in the Youth Town Council, the performance of “It’s the Drink Talking”, events associated with the Ysgol Bro Gwaun project, and several “poetry and pancakes” events at a local café-bar, Ffwrn. At most of these events, non-alcoholic “mocktails” were served to provide an interesting alternative to alcoholic drinks.

Mel’s mocktails in turn helped to communicate the message that it is acceptable to run events which do not include alcohol, and possible to have fun without drinking.

Lota Park Play Group

Communities Together facilitated the first meetings for a group of young women who wanted to obtain new play equipment for the Lota Park play area.

One of the women involved described Communities Together's support as follows in an evaluation report of the process of Communities Together:

"I said I wanted to get involved in some local fundraising. My friend and I wanted to organise events to get to know people. I saw a playground (that needed play equipment). I mentioned it to Marc, that was like a red rag to a bull, the whole campaign started and we had play equipment within three months".

The successful provision of new play equipment is a tangible legacy of the project.

The Library

Several interviewees referred to changes brought about in the town library by the librarian, with the support of Communities Together as a possible impact of the project.

An interviewee cited in the final evaluation of the project said:

"I was looking for a way to make the library a hub for the community and wanted to make it accessible. The Communities Together Project provided an opportunity to make the library the 'living room of the community'. I was looking for something like the Communities Together Project and it enabled me to link with other groups".

This evaluation was not able to obtain any further information about the nature of the impact of Communities Together at the Library but it is clear that some changes have taken place.

Tea Dances

The project initiated Tea Dances at the Fishguard Bay Hotel to bring older people together. Some of the Tea Dances also involved young people and promoted better understanding between the generations.

The project ensured that local people took ownership of the Tea Dances and they are still running successfully.

Men's Sheds

Communities Together worked with POINT to convene a meeting to discuss setting up a Men's Sheds project. A Letterston resident attended the meeting and offered to host the project on his premises. The resultant group is not within the communities of Fishguard and Goodwick but the group is based in a nearby village and has grown substantially.

Participants in the focus group about the draft evaluation conclusions discussed Men's Sheds as an example of a community project that is continuing to operate independently and self-sufficiently despite the project manager no longer being in post. Participants spoke positively about the impact Men's Sheds has had on reducing isolation and encouraging people to interact and do things together. One said it gave people:

"something to look forward to, to meet people, to learn".

They said the project manager had instigated others to take ownership of Men's Sheds which was now developing into a sustainable and active community resource involving women as well as men.

Timebanking

Communities Together supported Timebanking and worked with other partners including Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS) to develop the idea. PAVS has now carried out a scoping exercise and Timebanking is currently being implemented in three Pembrokeshire communities, one of which is Fishguard and Goodwick.

Other projects

Two interviewees mentioned the **poetry evenings** initiated by Communities Together but they were not sure whether these were still running. One interviewee remembered the project setting up a **litter picking group** and a **gardening group**. They thought these were still running but had no further information.

In summary, the evaluation found clear evidence of the impact of the catalyst role of the project in the form of a number of ongoing projects and activities, some of the substantial, which were initiated by or received significant support from the project. It is likely that these projects will achieve further considerable impact.

3.3. Learning

Three interviewees referred to different kinds of learning which had resulted from the project.

One, who works for a statutory service provider, said the project had influenced his team and they were now aiming to engage more with the community, and to take more of an asset-based approach. They said the project had helped explain why some of the approaches they had used in the past had not always been sustainable in community settings.

"... It has made us think differently about how we do things as a team".

Historically, they said that their service had tended to take a problem focused approach, to go in and do things to people and then leave. However, now there was more of an interest in the long-term sustainability of health for communities, building health and not just dealing with health problems. They believed the project's approach was in line with this new way of thinking, which involved taking an assets-based approach and working more closely with community groups. This approach could be found across service providers including the local health board and Pembrokeshire County Council.

“... It's challenged us to look at a more co-productive approach as opposed to doing things to people”.

The project generated several published documents.

The evaluation reports produced during the project, the final evaluation, and indeed this report, may assist others wishing to implement similar projects in future.

Alcohol Concern Cymru has also produced a “how to” guide based on the project which the project manager describes as being very accessible and helpful (“It's not about the alcohol - a handbook for addressing alcohol issues in their community context”).

The project manager believes that this guide would be useful to other communities:

“I really think, through being immersed in the project for three-years that there is a hunger to talk about alcohol and how significant it is in many people's lives. We found a way to have these conversations. They weren't about telling people what they should and shouldn't do, but what they could do about this drug which is within our communities. I think we have found a mechanism for that”.

The project also proved a catalyst for an academic study, looking at alcohol use among young people in Fishguard and Goodwick, for a Bachelor of Social Work qualification (Make a Point, alcohol and under 18's in Fishguard and Goodwick, February 2017). This was written by an overseas student resident in the area and addresses the research question “How can POINT help in preventing young people aged between 11 to 18 (in the rural communities of Fishguard and Goodwick), from starting with the consumption of alcohol.

In the preface to the study, the author credits the Communities Together project with inspiring and facilitating her study.

“Three winters ago, our small local cinema Theatr Gwaun showed 'A Royal Hangover'; an impressive documentary about the British alcohol culture. I was touched by what I saw and fascinated by the British attitude to alcohol consumption. At the end of this documentary, I had a chat with the project manager of 'Communities Together', a three-year project aimed at empowering the community with a significant emphasis on the prevention of alcohol abuse among the local population.

“My own observations and watching this documentary caused me to develop a fascination for the drinking culture in Britain....

“I have volunteered a short period for youth club “POINT”. I have also been involved as a volunteer with the previously mentioned ‘Communities Together’ project. In this role, and in this context, I have been given the opportunity to investigate drinking behaviour among the under 18’s in the town where I currently live”.

Participants in the focus group which discussed the draft evaluation conclusions felt that the addition of an academic research project added value to the community intervention. One called it *“a fantastic bonus”*.

They said that attaching an academic study to other community projects like Communities Together would also add value to them. They suggested it might be useful for similar projects to make contact with local colleges or Higher Education institutions in the planning stages, to see if a student might be interested in attaching themselves to the project.

In summary, the project has left a useful legacy in the form of new ideas and learning.

It has led to the production of several publications which should be useful to others who may wish to develop a similar project using the same approach in future, notably the Alcohol Concern Cymru “How To” guide.

The project influenced the thinking of one public sector service delivery team towards taking a more co-productive approach and it may therefore have had a similar effect on other teams with which it was in contact. The project’s approach may also hold valuable lessons for other organisations which are developing a more assets-based and community focused approach which involved working with people rather than doing things to them.

It inspired and facilitated the production of an academic study about under-age drinking and how to prevent it.

All of these impacts may lead to further outcomes in the future.

3.4. Personal development

Limited, but compelling evidence was provided about the project's impact on personal development. Two interviewees mentioned this. One said that the project had given them more confidence to work with other partners and had helped their personal development.

One interviewee who worked with people with disabilities, speech or language issues and dementia, as well as with very isolated and economically excluded individuals said that many of those who had been involved with the project were more confident and better able to speak out.

“The big thing we are noticing is greater confidence to speak out on the part of people who have taken part in events and activities. There are more people out there who are prepared to speak out. They know who to come to. They have more confidence to say things like ‘this is really going to affect me, could you do something about it’. We regularly talk to our users and some that we have taken to meetings are now telling us what they want to change about our service”.

This interviewee provided a rationale for the changes they had noticed. She said that people who had been connected to others and taken part in activities had got used to participating and speaking out and were therefore more likely to do so in future. She noted that this would also have a positive impact on their mental health.

This individual is in close contact with the people concerned, she has observed these changes herself and attributes them to participation in activities some of which at least, the project initiated or supported. This provides quite a strong indication of the likely impact of the project on these individuals. The continuation of such impact will depend upon the activities being sustained and, as described earlier, a considerable number of these are still running.

3.5. Attitudes towards alcohol

Three interviewees mentioned changes in attitudes towards alcohol in response to this question.

Two referred to the potential legacy of the project's work with young people through the school. They felt this had helped to change attitudes of the young people involved and had the potential, with the right support to continue to have an impact on attitudes.

Several interviewees were asked whether they had seen any reduction in the number of alcohol related anti-social behaviour incidents in the community. They said that it was difficult to identify an overall trend and that any changes might be caused by multiple factors including demographic changes, the effects of patrolling by police, and preventative work which has been happening in local schools. However, they agreed that there was no longer any drinking going on in a local park by young people, which was a concern previously raised by the community.

These were the only comments to alcohol-related impact in response to this question. However, participants had seen the questions they would be asked and knew that the next question addressed the issue. This probably helps explain why most of the comments were about community related impact.

4.0. One year on, what difference, if any, has the project made to the way people think about drinking?

This general question was broken down into six more specific questions that probed different aspects of how people thought about drinking, or about issues such as isolation, which may contribute to individuals having an unhealthy relationship with alcohol.

Many interviewees were not able to respond to all the probes because they did not have the necessary information. However, all were able to reply to some questions and provide useful insights, and in some cases concrete examples, of how the project had affected people's attitudes towards alcohol.

4.1. Do you think the project has created any long-lasting alcohol-free events or activities that bring people together in Fishguard and Goodwick?

Six interviewees said they did not know enough to answer this question and another two did not provide any answer.

Six other interviewees replied to the question and between them mentioned four alcohol-free events which were initiated by the project and still continue today. These are:

- The Sound Of The Youth music events
- Tea Dances
- Mel's Mocktails
- Dry January

Three people mentioned the Sound Of The Youth music events and these were also referenced in response to other questions in this evaluation. These events continue to be organised in the community

The project was also responsible for setting up the Tea Dances at the Fishguard Bay Hotel.

The Sound Of The Youth and the Tea Dances are therefore two examples of alcohol-free community activities, attributable to the project, which are sustained one year after the project ended.

Mel's Mocktails were mentioned twice. One interviewee said that this was a business and a POINT project. Mel's Mocktails received support from Communities Together who engaged the business to produce Mocktails at numerous events and helped it raise its profile and become established in the community. Another interviewee said that Mel's Mocktails were at the Community Forum Annual General Meeting for example. The project

has therefore helped Mel's Mocktails become more sustainable and have a lasting influence.

Dry January is another type of alcohol-free activity which was promoted by the project greatly boosting the numbers taking part. These efforts continue to have impact one year on. Two interviewees commented on this in response to this question. One said:

"In year 2 of Dry January, 70% of our members took part and some still took part in 2018. I don't think members would have taken part without the project raising awareness about the campaign".

Another said:

"More people are doing Dry January and have it on their agenda. For example, members of the POINT team have taken part, and the local football club. I also think some members of the Round Table have taken part".

Participants in the focus group about draft conclusions agreed that the project had increased the number of participants in Dry January. One said:

"There were huge numbers of people doing Dry January this year".

One interviewee also said they believed the project had led to a change of attitude in that it was now seen as more acceptable not to have alcohol at a social event, and that there was less pressure on individuals to drink alcohol. They attributed these changes to the project.

"People were already going out to have a coffee, but the project has (moved things on). People think 'you know what, it is actually OK to have a big community event without alcohol. Things like the Tea Dances and particularly the alcohol-free beer festival really caught people's imagination. People are still talking about it. It has led to a big psychological shift..."

However, another was not convinced the project had achieved a great deal of impact in terms of changing attitudes and felt these were quite deep rooted, particularly among older people, and more time would be needed to challenge effectively such attitudes.

"Alcohol seems to play an incredibly big role where the pub is the centre of the community. There is nothing wrong with that but there is something wrong if pressure is put on you when you order a non-alcoholic drink, 'did you just order a lime and soda, what's wrong with you?'"

In summary, there is evidence that the project has achieved lasting impact through: establishing three regular alcohol-free activities which continue one year on; helping a business promoting alcohol-free activities become more sustainable and achieve a raised profile within the community; and, boosting the numbers taking part in Dry January.

Different views were expressed in response to this question about how much the project has helped change attitudes to drinking alcohol more widely.

4.2. Do you think the project has created any lasting opportunities for older and younger people to get to know each other in Fishguard and Goodwick?

Two people said they did not know enough to answer this question.

A further four said they felt the project had probably helped create lasting opportunities for older and younger people to get to know each other, and that it had probably helped promote better understanding between the generations, but they could not be sure and were unable to give examples. One said:

“(Before the start of the project), there was a lot of press about ‘wild young people’ in the town square, when they were just standing there not doing any harm. This kind of edge had been created between older and younger people. I think the project moved to close that gap and I can’t say hand on heart that fully continues but I haven’t seen any major issues about ‘young people’ that there were four or five years ago”.

A further seven interviewees said they believed the project had created long lasting activities which brought older and younger people together and they gave the following examples:

- POINT intergenerational work, including the intergenerational mentoring ICT project and the POINT Across Communities project described earlier.
- The Town Team Dementia Awareness Project.
- Transition Bro Gwaun working with young people from local schools and Point.
- Mocktail-making by young people for Community Forum events.

One interviewee gave an example which supports the feeling expressed by the previously cited interviewee that there was now better understanding between older people and younger people who just “stand around” in the town, not doing any harm. She said:

“Yes definitely, and I have an example. A lady (involved in our project). She used to be scared of a group of young people in hoodies. If she saw them on the street near her house she wouldn’t go out. She was connected up with local young people when they helped her use Skype. One of them was one of the lads with hoodies who hung out on her street. He connected her with her grandchildren who live on the other side of the world, Australia or New Zealand, so she can talk to them by Skype now. That has been an important new form of connection for her, she can actually see them now. Also if she sees the lads in hoodies now she goes to talk to them. Fair play, the young lad she met also speaks to her and now so do his friends. She has now got a connection with

young people who are the future of this town. This has made a significant difference to her well-being”.

This change was brought about as a direct result of the POINT intergenerational mentoring ICT project which was supported by the project.

Young people from POINT are also involved in the Town Team’s Dementia Awareness Project. The Town Team, Fishguard and Goodwick, was set up by Pembrokeshire County Council, and is a Partnership between the Community Forum, Chamber of Trade and Tourism and the Town Council. It is promoting dementia friendly practices. Members of the community are now being trained to be aware of dementia e.g. people who work in shops. Young people from POINT are also involved.

Participants in the focus group highlighted the importance of POINT in Fishguard and Goodwick. They felt POINT played a crucial role in the community through its work with young people and its intergenerational work. In relation to Communities Together POINT was an essential development partner to Communities Together for numerous activities.

The Transition Bro Gwaun Greening Group works with schools and young people from POINT. The evaluation heard from one person who became involved in Transition Bro Gwaun because of an event organised by Communities Together but did not gather any other information about how the project was involved with Transition Bro Gwaun.

Young people involved with Mel’s Mocktails are now regularly involved in serving non-alcoholic cocktails at Community Forum events attended mainly by adults including some older people.

In summary, several initiatives which the project has supported continue to run activities which bring older and younger people together. There is evidence that these have changed attitudes among some younger and older people at least so that they understand each other better and feel more of a connection to each other.

4.3. One year on, has the project made it easier for those who need it to get advice about alcohol use?

Five interviewees did not have enough information to answer this question. One of these said that they felt it was probably now harder for people to access advice about substance misuse because the service was so stretched due to resource constraints.

Two others said they felt the project had made it easier for those who need it to get advice about alcohol use but were not able to substantiate their views.

Another five also said they felt the project has achieved this. They provided a rationale to support their views. For example:

“Marc did things in different ways and used different formats and more people know where to get advice.... Word of mouth also worked. Marc got the information into the community and it is a trickle-down effect, people will mention it to someone else”.

“Yes, because far more people now know where to get advice. If 80% of the population know where to get advice then all you have to do is talk to someone and the chances are they can tell you where to go. Now you wouldn't have to go to the doctor.... the fewer the people you have to talk to and the less official they are the better”.

This interviewee gave the example of someone her project worked with who had an alcohol problem and lived in an illegal squat. They said this person would not, because of their circumstances, ask anyone in an official position for help but would now be more likely to obtain advice from people in the community.

Another interviewee said there were “shelves of information” available about this at the local library now.

Participants in the focus group suggested that the project manager had been successful in putting a few people ‘on the pathway’ to accessing help for their drinking behaviour. They said it was difficult to substantiate how many people had been helped, due to the imperative of assuring confidentiality.

The rationale that people are more likely to be able to obtain advice is convincing. However, it was difficult to provide concrete examples to support it, and one interviewee did say that there had not been an increase in referrals from the Fishguard and Goodwick area to a local substance abuse programme.

It is therefore likely that the project has made it easier for people who need it to access information about alcohol, but the sensitive nature of these interventions has made it impossible to provide evidence about the number of individuals involved, or the extent of the impact.

4.4. Do you have a sense of whether the project has increased awareness of the consequences of alcohol use among the community as a whole one year after it ended?

Three interviewees said they did not think the project had increased awareness of the consequences of alcohol use among the community as a whole.

“No, I don’t think so. I think that most people are already aware of the consequences but still choose to enjoy now and worry about the consequences later”.

Another three said they did not have enough information to answer the question.

Two said they thought it probably had increased awareness but did not provide local examples from their own experience.

Five interviewees provided examples of how they believed the project had increased awareness and changed behaviour.

Three people said they felt the project had had a particular impact on young people.

The Wave project which aimed to raise awareness of cliff jumping and of drinking alcohol at beach parties was felt to have had an effect.

“The Wave project raised awareness around alcohol and swimming and this will hopefully stay with young people, with the hope the message will be passed on to friends and family”.

The effect of the Sound Of The Youth was also mentioned by three interviewees:

“... perhaps they (young people) are more aware that you can have a good time without alcohol. There seems to be a bit of a decline in alcohol (use) and there doesn’t seem to be a massive problem among young people who come to POINT The Sound Of The Youth events may have got the message across”.

One person observed:

“Under-age drinking is not as prominent I don’t seem to be having the same conversations around alcohol with young people”.

Two interviewees described how the project had affected the drinking culture in both the Rugby and Football clubs which are important focal points in the local community.

One said:

“There is no longer pressure to drink after a game and it’s OK to miss a night out. This is on the back of Dry January, and the conversations it generated. There is a good culture and also you are not judged if you are not drinking”.

Another commented:

“They did an awful lot with the Football and Rugby Clubs, they are a massive part of the community because they do really well. Everybody supports one or the other”.

They continued:

“The project has had an effect on both the rugby and football clubs. They used to go out drinking after matches, it was what they did. I don’t see them doing that any more. They used to post on Facebook, I don’t see that now, those boys.... If they were still doing it they would be posting about it!”

The evaluation has therefore gathered convincing indications that the project has had some lasting impact which has affected attitudes towards alcohol positively, among young people and people involved with the Rugby and Football clubs which have an important role in the social life of the community. The impact of the project in changing the previously strong drinking culture in the local sports clubs is a particularly notable achievement.

4.5. Has project increased your own awareness of the consequences of alcohol use?

Six interviewees said they were already fully aware of the consequences of alcohol use so the project did not add to their awareness. One of these said that although the project had not added to their knowledge about the consequences of alcohol use, it had taught them a new way of conveying messages about this.

“... more about how you can weave that kind of topic into a broader based community development approach. I think that’s been the most interesting thing about the project.... The ways in which you can deliver a message in a radically different way that doesn’t involve alcohol-specific, highly badged initiatives”.

Two people said the project had probably increased their awareness. Both attributed any change to their conversations with the project manager.

“Yes, it probably has. I thought I was pretty aware before, but the conversations with Marc have revised my thinking”.

Six interviewees said that the project had increased their awareness, and four of these named specific behaviour changes, a reduction in alcohol consumption, which they attributed to the project.

“Personally, it makes me stop and think and I have two to three dry days a week”.

“The project has increased my own awareness and by taking part in Dry January I can see the health and well-being benefits for example sleeping and eating better”.

About half of the interviewees said the project has increased their awareness of the consequences of alcohol use. These were all individuals who had a close association with the project, so this kind of impact is not surprising. However, it does support the earlier suggestion that the project has created a larger group of more alcohol-aware people in the community who may contribute to a broader culture change and be in a position to disseminate information and guidance to others.

The comment about the project demonstrating a radical new way of conveying messages about alcohol chimes with other findings within this report.

4.6. Do you think the project has helped parents, teachers and children to talk together about what a healthy relationship with alcohol looks like?

Earlier evaluations had found it difficult to obtain evidence about this outcome. They concluded that this was because any evidence would only be apparent to parents, teachers and children who spoke to each other about alcohol and therefore difficult for outside evaluators to identify.

However, a participant in this evaluation noted that a conference about alcohol had taken place at the local secondary school, involving young people, parents, and school governors. They felt this provided definite evidence of this outcome.

5.0. Imagine someone was setting up a similar project to Communities Together and they came to you for advice? What three pieces of advice (“do’s” or “don’ts”) would you give them?

The three main lessons that participants want to pass on to other similar future projects are:

- 1. Be creative, make it fun, and involve people.**

- 2. Involve the community from the start, build on what people want, and join with networks and organisations that are already in place.**

- 3. Don’t label the project as being about alcohol.**

Table one summarises all the responses to this question that were mentioned more than once.

Table 1: Key lessons for future similar projects

Lesson	No’ of times suggested
1. Be creative, make it fun, and involve people.	9
2. Involve the community from the start, build on what people want, and join with networks and organisations that are already in place.	8
3. Don’t label the project as being about alcohol.	5
4. Work with schools and young people	3
5. Employ the right person	2
5. Ensure sustainability	2
5. Identify and engage with key people in the community	2
5. Use social media	2

Ideas suggested once only were:

- phase the project out and don't end abruptly,
- engage with people who sell alcohol and involve them in the project,
- link with programmes about isolation and mental health,
- be flexible,
- be realistic,
- gather hard data and share learning.

The most important lesson was about the style of the project. Interviewees felt it should be fun, something that people would want to take part in.

On a simple level it would be important to engage with people informally and organise social events that people would want to take part in because of their intrinsic appeal.

“Do it because it gets everybody together”.

“Make sure you have enough money to buy sandwiches”.

Organising successful social activities would then allow the project to communicate its key messages.

“Some of the best conversations I have had have been over food and drink, or over pizzas”

“Get the message across in a fun, informal and interactive way. With the Communities Together Project there were never lectures. Marc approached it in a clever way. For example, the Sound Of The Youth, as music events are usually associated with alcohol, and it gave a clear message that you can enjoy live music without alcohol.”

A sub-theme was about the importance of being creative. The way the Sound Of The Youth event enabled a key message about alcohol is an example of this, but some people went further. They suggested that the very unusualness of some of the activities, captured people's attention and made them memorable, thereby ensuring the messages they conveyed would be remembered.

“Be open to suggestions that seem off the wall because they work”.

“Be creative. Mocktails, alcohol-free beer and curry, who would have thought this would have worked. An alcohol-free beer festival would be the last thing you would think of organising for an alcohol project, but he did it, got people talking and it worked, and people are still talking about it”.

Participants in the focus group about the draft conclusions strongly agreed about the importance of being creative. They said that thinking creatively was an important aspect of dealing with social issues, social action should not just be about 'attending meetings'. However, one participant added that it was also important not to lose sight of the serious message that:

“... alcohol is a very serious chemical that causes a lot of damage to individuals and communities”.

They felt that the project had successfully maintained this focus by weaving it in to its creative activities.

The second most important lesson was about community engagement. The responses describe some important elements of a community-led project. For example: it is important to engage local people from the start, find out what the community wants and then build on it.

“Make sure what you focus on is what the community wants to do”.

It is equally important to identify what local organisations and networks are in place, to engage with these, and to work together in partnership.

“Use the networks that are there, don’t re-invent the wheel. Marc was really methodical in the way he identified all groups and went around them. I wouldn’t always have done that myself in the past, but I do now.”

Focus group participants agreed that the project did not re-invent the wheel, but built upon what was already in the community and that this was a positive attribute.

The third key lesson was about the branding of the project. Two different reasons were given for not labelling a project as being about alcohol.

One was to do with personal feelings; it was pointed out that people often resent being told to change their lifestyle and will resist what they perceive as intrusions into their privacy regarding their own consumption of alcohol.

“Be aware that when you are dealing with an activity around people’s health, you have got to probe in a way that isn’t intrusive or lecturing. People are very defensive about drink or cigarettes”.

The other reason was to do with the way a community may respond to a suggestion it should host an alcohol related project. When Alcohol Concern Cymru first suggested a project in Fishguard and Goodwick there was quite a strong feeling locally that this implied that the community had a particular problem with alcohol. The project had to convince people that this was not the case before gaining acceptance.

“If the project is about alcohol, tread very carefully because you could very easily put off the community if you pile in there and say ‘we are going to sort out your alcohol problems’”.

One focus group participant said that some prominent individuals were initially nervous about what an alcohol project would say about the town and that there was a need to 'badge it' in a different way. The group felt the project manager achieved this.

There was also a sense among focus group participants that the project took the right approach in attempting to deal with the causative factors of alcohol misuse which enabled "the alcohol to then fade away". This covert aspect to the alcohol aspect of the project enabled people to engage in the activities safely. One participant said that in this sense the project acted as a 'Trojan Horse'.

For both these reasons any future project would gain acceptance more rapidly if it was not labelled as focusing on alcohol.

This was a very open question which looked to draw out useful lessons for the future. It is striking that the three most important lessons to emerge reflect quite closely some of the key strengths identified by the previous evaluation of "The Process" of the project.

6.0. Conclusions

6.1. The response to the project ending

Everyone who took part in the evaluation was very sad to see the project end.

The end of the project, and of the active involvement of the project manager in the community has clearly left a gap. The role, the function, and personal qualities of the project manager helped bring people together, support potential community activists, and stimulate community activity, and they are clearly missed. These functions are crucial to the process of Community development and are often under-rated.

The project secured an extension of several months to its planned three-year lifespan. Although its eventual ending was experienced as a sudden step change by some people, the majority view seems to be that the ending was handled very well.

An unplanned legacy of the project is that it has helped demonstrate the value of having a person in a central role to co-ordinate and stimulate activity in the community. This was expressed by several interviewees who spoke of the recognition among some key individuals and organisations, of the need for what is being called a “Town Manager”, modelled on the role of the Communities Together Project manager.

However, there was also an acknowledgement that full external funding for such a post may not be easy to obtain and it is likely that one or more local institutions will need to at least part-fund the post if this aspect of the project’s legacy is to manifest.

6.2. The difference made by the project – the catalyst role

The overall impression gained from the interviews and the focus group is that community activity is now higher than before the project started, and that the project has left a substantial legacy in terms of community cohesion, improved communication, higher levels of volunteering and more positive relationships between people who are active in the community.

The end of project evaluation report referred to a process it called “a virtuous spiral” (Alan Fowler 2000). This “virtuous spiral” involves organising successful new activities in a community which create new volunteers and a feel-good factor. These newly enthused volunteers are then motivated to organise further activities, which in turn lead to the creation of more new volunteers and so on. The end of project evaluation report

suggested that Communities Together might have instigated this “virtuous spiral” which might then result in a sustained overall increase in community activity.

This evaluation identified a number of projects and activities which were initiated, or given substantial support by Communities Together, which are sustained one year after the end of the project. These projects and activities, which are a result of the project’s role as a catalyst for community development, continue to have a positive impact on the community and are likely to be sustainable for some time. It is therefore possible that the project may have set in train such a virtuous spiral.

The projects and activities identified through the evaluation are summarised in table two below.

Table 2: Summary of projects and activities which are sustained one year after the end of Communities Together.

Project/activity	Role of Communities Together	Type of impact
POINT Across Communities	Raising awareness of the importance of Intergenerational work. Piloting intergenerational work: ICT, Tea Dance, SOTY. Supporting POINT with the funding bid	Intergenerational work Personal development – skills and confidence Reducing isolation Community cohesion Dementia support
Intergenerational ICT	Initiated the project, working with POINT and other partners.	Intergenerational work Personal development – skills and confidence Reducing isolation Community cohesion
The Sound Of The Youth	Initiated the project, working with Theatr Gwaun, Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council, POINT and other partners	Promoting alcohol-free events Personal development, skills and confidence among young people Volunteering opportunities Community cohesion
Dry January	Raised awareness of Dry January and greatly increased sustainable participation	Promoting alcohol awareness Reducing alcohol consumption among participants
Light Night	Supported a local resident to regenerate and develop the event	Community cohesion Volunteering opportunities Additional income for local businesses
Mel's Mocktails	Provided opportunities for this social enterprise to raise its profile and conduct its business	Promoting alcohol-free events Personal development, skills and confidence among young people
Lota Park Play Group	Supported local young women campaigning for new play equipment	New play opportunities for local children
The Library	Worked with the Librarian to promote community use of the library	Greater community involvement with the Library???

Tea Dances	Initiated the project	Reducing isolation among older people Intergenerational work/community cohesion
Men's Sheds	Worked with POINT to initiate the project in an community close to Fishguard and Goodwick	Mutual support. Reducing isolation.
Timebanking	Worked with partners including PAVS to support early stages of developing Timebanking in Pembrokeshire	Still in development

The project has also left a legacy in the form of new ideas and learning.

The project has demonstrated a radical new way of conveying messages about alcohol. The experience of the project has been captured by evaluation reports and has provided the basis for the Alcohol Concern Cymru publication, "It's not about the alcohol, a handbook for addressing alcohol issues in their community context". This is a very clear "how to" guide which may help others develop similar projects to Communities Together.

The project has also led at least one public sector service delivery team towards taking a more co-productive approach.

An academic study "Make a Point, alcohol and under 18's in Fishguard and Goodwick, partly inspired by the project will contribute to a broader body of academic learning, and including similar studies in a planned way to future similar projects could help increase their impact.

It is too early to say what impact this learning will have. This will depend upon how far other organisations act upon the lessons learnt which in turn depends upon a range of factors including how the lessons are disseminated.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the project has created the potential for lessons, based upon its experience, to be implemented elsewhere, particularly through the Alcohol Concern Cymru's "How to" guide which should be disseminated as widely as possible to help other communities learn from the experience of Fishguard and Goodwick.

The project also has a lasting impact in the form of the personal development of individuals who were involved in its activities. Most of these individuals are still involved in community activities, and this impact should be sustained as long as the activities continue to run.

6.3. Alcohol related impact

The project established two and consolidated a third activity which continue to run alcohol-free events that bring people together in Fishguard and Goodwick. Because of the project The Tea Dances, the Sound Of The Youth, and Mel's Mocktails continue to promote the message that it is acceptable to organise social events that do not include alcohol, and that it is possible to have fun without drinking.

The project has helped to create several lasting opportunities for older and younger people to get to know each other in Fishguard and Goodwick. These contribute to combating isolation and promoting community cohesion through better understanding between the generations. The activities concerned are the intergenerational ICT project which paved the way for the POINT across communities' intergenerational project, and the Tea Dances. The evaluation found evidence that these activities help younger and older people understand each other better as well as creating opportunities for people to get together.

The evaluation sets out a fairly convincing rationale which suggests that, because of the project, people in Fishguard and Goodwick are more likely to be able to obtain advice about alcohol. However the sensitive nature of these interventions makes it difficult to evidence this impact.

The project increased awareness of the consequences of alcohol use among people who were closely involved with it and were not already informed about its effects. However, it is difficult to evidence the potential further impact. We can only tentatively suggest that the project has probably created a larger number of more alcohol-aware people in the community and it is possible that these may continue to contribute to a broader culture change and be in a position to disseminate information and guidance about alcohol to others.

There is clear evidence that the project has stimulated a change in behaviour, particularly at the sports clubs, leading to some people in the community drinking less, for example by taking part in Dry January. It is therefore also likely that the project has contributed to a change in the drinking culture in these groups. This is a notable achievement.

The evaluation was unable to find a great deal of evidence that the project helped parents, teachers and children to talk together about what a healthy relationship with alcohol looks like. However, the work it carried out through the local secondary school is likely to have led to some impact.

6.4. Key lessons for the future

The findings of this evaluation report suggest that the project has achieved a substantial amount of lasting impact through helping establish enduring projects and activities, which in turn have led to a sustainable, higher level of community activity, more volunteering, better relationships and communication, and changes in awareness and behaviour relating to alcohol.

It has also generated some important lessons for the future. Interviewees, for their part agreed on three key lessons, namely:

1. Be creative, make it fun, and involve people.
2. Involve the community from the start, build on what people want, and join with networks and organisations that are already in place.
3. Don't label the project as being about alcohol.

These three lessons reflect quite closely the approach taken by the project and some of its key strengths, as identified by previous evaluations.

This endorses the view, and what is perhaps the over-arching lesson, that the project has successfully demonstrated a radical new way of addressing alcohol related issues through a community development approach.

References and sources

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Report of an evaluation of the Sound Of The Youth Project supported by Communities Together. Siobhan Hayward and Alain Thomas, Participation Cymru, June 2015.

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Appendix One: topic guide for interviews.

Communities Together Fishguard and Goodwick

Follow up evaluation interview programme

Researcher's version

Introduction: introduce self, remind of the purpose of the interview, and assure the interviewee of anonymity.

Questions

- 1. What was your involvement with the Communities Together project?**
- 2. The Communities Together project finished 1 year ago, what difference has it made?**
- 3. How do you feel about the project ending?**
- 4. One year on, what difference, if any, has the project made to the way people think about drinking?**

Specific probes for question 4:

Ask all if time allows or select those deemed most relevant to the interviewee.

- a) One year on, has the project made it easier for those who need it to get advice about alcohol use?
- b) Do you have a sense of whether the project has increased awareness of the consequences of alcohol use among the community as a whole one year after it ended?
- c) Has project increased your own awareness of the consequences of alcohol use?
- d) Do you think the project has created any lasting opportunities for older and younger people to get to know each other in Fishguard and Goodwick?
- e) Do you think the project has created any long-lasting alcohol-free events or activities that bring people together in Fishguard and Goodwick?

Ask only parents of school-age children or school teachers:

- f) Do you think the project has helped parents, teachers and children to talk together about what a healthy relationship with alcohol looks like?

Use general probes after each specific probe:

Can you give me an example?

Please tell me some more about that?

5. Imagine someone was setting up a similar project to Communities Together and they came to you for advice? What three pieces of advice (“do’s” or “don’ts”) would you give them?

6. Is there anything else at all you would like to tell us about the Communities Together project?

Explain the next steps.

Ask if they would like an electronic version of the Follow-up evaluation report when it is ready. If yes get them to sign a form giving us permission to contact them.

Thank the interviewee for taking part in the discussion.