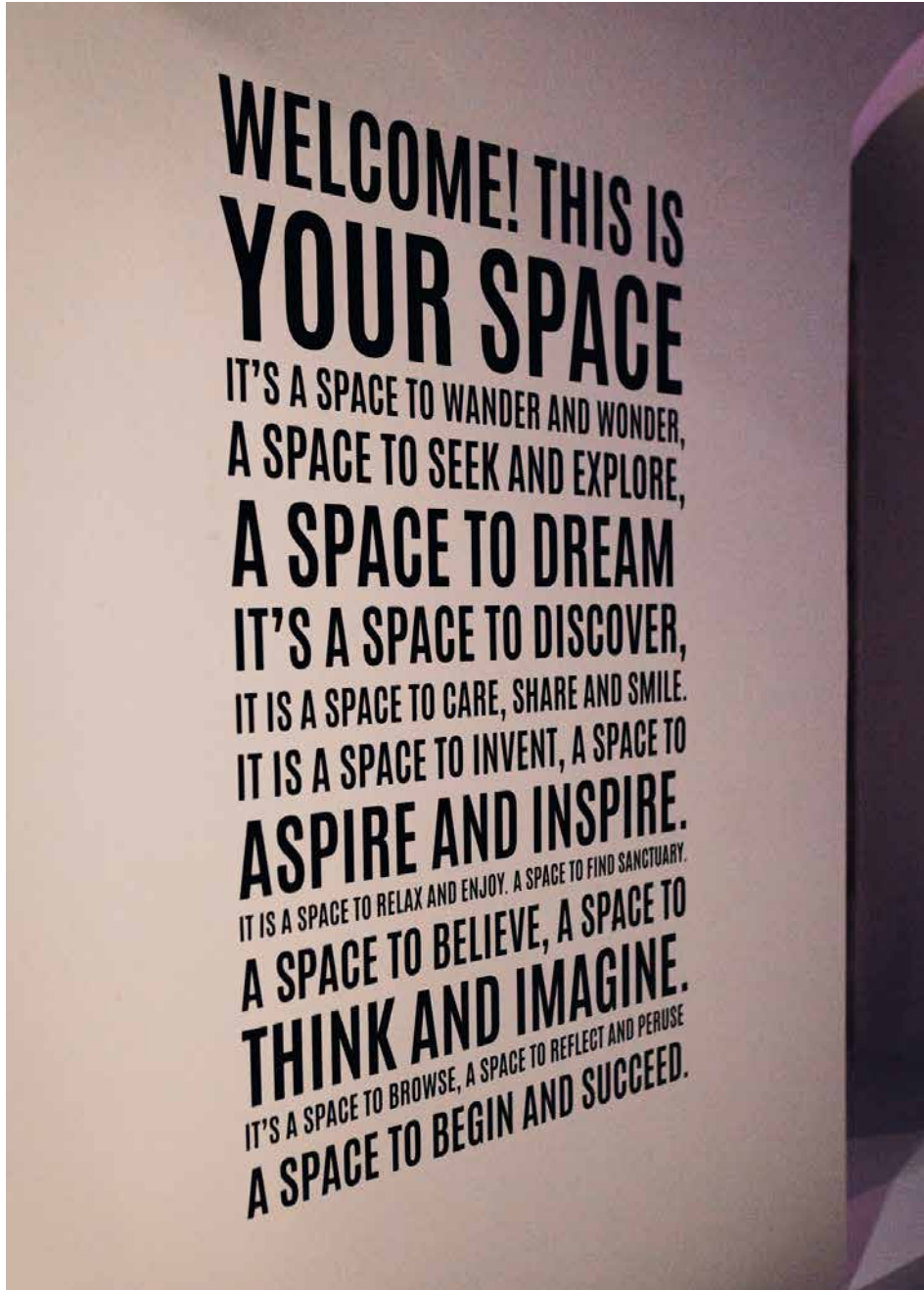




The Story of Chichester Community Development Trust (CCDT)

This story is being told to encourage others to engage, support, or replicate the CCDT model. We have reached the goals we set through collaboration, encouragement, and the guidance of many who have led before us. Some share stories of success, others of failure, but equally valuable and always undertaken with commitment and positivity. By sharing our experiences, both good and bad, we hope to inspire and empower others to deliver greater and broader community development.



OVERVIEW:

The Chichester Community Development Trust (CCDT) is an independent charity dedicated to creating vibrant, inclusive communities by developing and managing community spaces that create connection and bring people together. Established in 2009, CCDT focuses on safeguarding essential community buildings and lands, ensuring they remain accessible for future generations. With 14 assets currently under its stewardship, CCDT's work addresses the rapid pace of development in Chichester, builds cohesion among new residents in mixed-tenure developments, and tackles local challenges with innovative solutions that put residents at the heart. From historic sites, including Graylingwell Chapel, to purpose-built spaces for youth, mental and physical health, and enterprise, CCDT transforms buildings into dynamic hubs that reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire community, founded on consultation for need and built on sustainable social enterprise models. CCDT's impact extends beyond Chichester, as the organisation now shares its expertise with councils, charities, and community groups nationwide. This work is driven by a mission to promote opportunity, enable connection, and ensure every voice is heard. By creating economically viable spaces that support inclusivity, social enterprise, and environmental sustainability, CCDT not only builds community today but also ensures a brighter future.

Since 2011, we have raised £12 million in income and brought it into the Chichester District, building up a portfolio of £4.5 million in assets, including 29,484 square feet (2,740 sqm) of buildings and 8 hectares (20 acres) of land. To date, we have successfully transferred 14 assets into community ownership, with two more scheduled for 2025, bringing the total to 16 over 11 years. All members of our staff team live within the Chichester District, with an average commute of just 2.54 miles. Significantly, 74p of every pound we spend stays in the local economy — a sharp contrast to the private sector average of just 40p. This reflects our deep local commitment and the lasting impact of community-led development.

COLLABORATION IS KEY:

Collaboration is vital in owning and managing community assets, as the most successful projects and programmes emerge when diverse stakeholders come together. Whether it is working with developers, councils, funding bodies, community groups, service users, or resident groups, each plays a crucial role in shaping spaces and initiatives that genuinely meet the community's needs. Without inclusive collaboration, there is a risk of missing key aspects, be it logistics, engagement, financial sustainability, or social impact, which can hinder success. Assumptions about needs or solutions often prove inaccurate, but by partnering, sharing skills, ideas, and resources, we can create more robust and impactful outcomes. Although collaboration requires time and effort at the outset, the long-term benefits, greater community buy-in, smoother implementation, and stronger results are undeniable, making it a worthwhile investment.





LEAVE EGOS AT THE DOOR:

Recognising when something isn't working or needs redesign is essential to the success and sustainability of community assets. Initial assumptions can prove incorrect, and as needs and communities evolve, particularly in new developments where demographics shift rapidly, so too must the spaces and programmes that serve them. Markets are unpredictable, and what once thrived may falter or need refinement. Community spaces are dynamic, living entities; they respond to shifting circumstances, require time to address barriers or biases, and must adapt to diverse and changing expectations. They will never satisfy everyone entirely, and – just like all of us as we age, they may require additional support to remain relevant and practical. Remaining responsive, flexible, and open to iteration is crucial. Like any meaningful relationship, these spaces demand ongoing care, attention, and adaptability to thrive across their lifespan.



The Lodge

Graylingwell Park

2014-15

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

The Old Lodge. The first capital build project for CCDT – this wonky, much-loved and well-used small timber building was our very first community asset.

HISTORY:

Like most new developments, houses at Graylingwell Park were built and occupied long before any community spaces were provided. Developers are only required to deliver such facilities once specific 'triggers' are met. To ensure that early residents had a place to connect before this point (the first residents occupied properties in 2009), CCDT submitted a successful joint bid with Chichester City Council to Chichester District Council to fund a modular building. While searching for a suitable solution, the charity was offered a redundant sales and marketing suite by Linden Homes, initially located in Woking.



TRANSFORMATION:

The planning was submitted in August 2014, and contractors were appointed in October to relocate the building. By early December 2015, the groundworks were finished, and The Lodge was transported in four pieces and bolted back together in position. The next stage of the project was led by David Ellis, who headed the Construction Community Works Project. This social enterprise undertook local, small-scale building projects using teams of construction students from Chichester College and individuals on Back to Work schemes. David said,

"This project was a real challenge; it was the biggest build we've tackled so far, and we've had training plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and joiners in different groups working on every aspect of the build."

CCDT needed the community's help to complete the outstanding work. After we put out a call for help, a troupe of 33 residents and volunteers descended on The Lodge over two days with the challenge of getting it ready for the Ofsted inspection four days later, with a view to accommodating a local affordable nursery school on site! They hammered, drilled, painted, cleaned, put up signs and guttering, finished flooring, painted a raised bed, and shovelled gravel. It was a fantastic example of successful community action. Volunteers ranged from young children to retired residents.





CURRENT USE:

The Old Lodge has welcomed numerous hirers through its doors. Starting as an affordable nursery school for early residents in a pack-and-play setting, it expanded in the afternoons, evenings, and weekends to include a Saturday café for residents, Sunday school, a youth club, an internet café, a homework café, and yoga and Alpha courses. Years later, the then firmly established and successful nursery school moved to a purpose-built, new community asset on site, allowing the Old Lodge to become the site office for the £2m renovation of Graylingwell Chapel. Its final iteration is as a coffee roastery – a startup business supported by funding secured by CCDT that produces coffee for the local community cafés and further afield, as well as a bike store for the new Chichester Bike Project. This will be the last repurposing of the building before it is finally dismantled in preparation for the next phase of residential development in Graylingwell Park. We will be very sad to see it gone, but thankful for the many lives it has lived to serve the community from its earliest days.

COMMUNITY IMPACT:

The construction of this project provided work experience to 87 full-time students and 19 unemployed individuals over five weeks. Everyone had the opportunity to experience a real building site, and the students faced challenges they wouldn't encounter in the classroom. Crucially, it also provided the first communal space for early residents to meet in, use, and call their own.



HOW DID WE FUND IT?

Chichester District Council New Homes Bonus Scheme £25,000, support from Covers Builders Merchants.



LESSON LEARNED:

There were many lessons learned along the way. We had incredible support from "Bob," the longstanding groundworker from OHOB, who generously gave up his evenings and weekends to help. John Hayler from Chichester District Council's Building Control team was endlessly patient, guiding us through our very first build. We were also supported by Chichester College, the Residents' Association, and everyone at Little Learners, all of whom went above and beyond. Even the painters and decorators pitched in with enthusiasm. It truly was a collective effort.

Don't wait, just because your new development does not yet have an assigned community space, be resourceful. Find a place, borrow something, start something. Enable the new, young community to connect and bond around a space or project. Create a space that can serve as a meeting area and provide an opportunity for new community businesses to trial their ideas and initiatives.



The Community Hall Roussillon Park 2014

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

Community Hall located overlooking the green and play area at Roussillon Park, the Community Hall is a well-equipped, purpose-built facility with a kitchen. The floor-to-ceiling windows and natural daylight enhance the sense of space in the large, open-plan area.

HISTORY:

Officially opened in June 2014, with a welcome event for the early occupants, which drew about 60 new residents. The event received local press coverage, marking a strong start to CCDT's asset management. A great BBQ and party got the early community consultation going, regarding what people would like to see delivered there, and the delivery of a versatile, resident-led community space began. Transferred to CCDT by the developers on a 250-year lease, the Hall was transferred as fit for purpose and required a fully stocked kitchen, including crockery, as well as furniture to be purchased. Much of the furniture was purchased from a recycled office furniture organisation in Portsmouth to minimise costs. As the first of CCDT's formal community spaces (beyond the freezing, damp steel container on the Graylingwell Park development site where the staff team worked), it was necessary to create the hiring policies, booking forms, user manuals, and new processes. These were to be evolved and reiterated multiple times as new assets were added. Our experience and understanding of optimum resourcing and software development evolved until we reached our current, low-resource automated process.



TRANSFORMATION:

Roussillon Park was a new development of 254 homes, with residents moving in rapidly. While shared challenges, such as issues with the district heating system, began to connect the community, a dedicated space was needed. Opening the doors to the Community Hall provided just that: a place to come together. It not only enabled residents to build connections but also created opportunities for employment and enterprise, allowing local startups to offer classes, workshops, and meetings right at the heart of the neighbourhood.

CURRENT USE:

The ethos behind the Community Hall is to make it as affordable and accessible as possible for residents and the wider community, whilst ensuring its financial sustainability. The most multi-use space in the CCDT portfolio, within the sound restrictions of being built into a residential unit. The hall hosts weekly art workshops, yoga lessons, and a community café, all hosted by CCDT. This is an opportunity for residents to connect and share concerns or new ideas about how CCDT can support them.



COMMUNITY IMPACT:

Because of this space's early economic sustainability, the residents' association has been granted unrestricted use for multiple annual meetings. The weekly community cafes hosted by CCDT provide regular outreach to the community, and the activities and programmes have evolved throughout the year, ranging from resident socials to art and fitness classes and serving as a central hub for community charitable activities, including book and second-hand clothes sales. In the last year, CCDT hosted 52 community cafes within the Community Hall, hosting 208 visitors.

HOW DID WE FUND IT?



The developers leased the space to CCDT on a peppercorn basis for 250 years. Asset transfer negotiations between Homes England and Zero C took over 18 months, so patience was required, as well as a great legal advisor!



LESSON LEARNED:

Noise travels fast, and without proper soundproofing, a community space can quickly become limited in its use. From day one, sound from the hall leaked significantly into the upstairs flat, impacting how the space could be used. It's a powerful reminder of the importance of holding developers to account and ensuring that any community asset is genuinely fit for purpose. Even if it's your first or only space, have the confidence to push for what's needed. Although we've added soundproofing over time, it's been an ongoing challenge that could have been avoided from the start.

The space is modest at just 1,000 square feet, but its impact has been immense. For over a decade, it has provided a sustainable source of income, proving the lasting value of even a small, well-used community asset. We repaint annually, maintain fixtures and fittings to a high standard, and take pride in keeping it looking fresh. It's a brilliant example of a newbuild facility that truly shines, both in appearance and in purpose.

Unpacking 60 chairs and assembling chair trolleys just two hours before opening was a lot harder than you'd think! It was a last-minute scramble that taught us the value of preparation and a good power drill.



The Water Tower 2018

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

Located at Graylingwell Park, this is a wonderful, iconic building that stands proudly and visibly just north of the city centre in Chichester. As the head office for CCDT, this simple, stylish, and minimalist building is designed in a modern style.

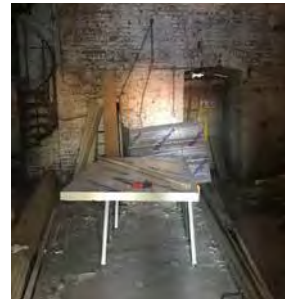
HISTORY:

The Graylingwell Water Tower is a prominent historical landmark situated within the former grounds of Graylingwell Hospital. Constructed in the late 19th century, it was integral to the hospital's infrastructure, providing essential water storage and pressure for daily operations. The tower's substantial height made it a dominant feature in the area, second only to Chichester Cathedral's spire, and made an ideal location for fire 'lookouts' in the Second World War.



TRANSFORMATION:

Although the complete transfer of the tower to CCDT is not scheduled until 2027, an extension was added to the front of this iconic building and officially opened in 2018. Local builders Wayne and Andy provided essential building support, creating a new staircase, mezzanine, and glazing. A new extension also allowed for the installation of a kitchen and toilet, transforming the space into a much more functional hub. The painting of the staircase, however, was left to the staff team — and after plenty of time, patience, and a fair bit of headbanging under the stairs, it was finally complete!





CURRENT USE:

The principal office of Chichester Community Development Trust is currently the team's base, and they are constantly seeking ways to monetize this unique space when possible to ensure its viability. In its five years of operation, the space has gone far beyond serving as an office for the team. It has regularly showcased local startups and trades through evening exhibitions featuring artists, jewellers, and regional wine and gin producers. It has provided hot-desking facilities for residents seeking a flexible yet professional work environment and has temporarily accommodated other charitable organisations as needed. The building has also supported families by housing a contact centre for parents who require supervised visits with their young children outside office hours. Additionally, it has hosted a series of self-employment programmes specifically designed for women in the region, helping them launch their own businesses while balancing caring responsibilities with a professional career.



COMMENTS/QUOTES FROM HIRERS/USERS:

Here's a little history:

"Dad had to do the fire watching every fourth night and you had to climb the ninety steps inside the tower... and then there was a ladder that had ninety rungs on it, and you had to climb that in the dark, 'cos you didn't dare let the light out at the top. And he always had a tin hat on, and you pushed the trap up with your tin hat and climbed out to the top of the tower, and there were two of them up there. And he said, 'near the end of the War, the Royal Signal Corps came up there as well'. And they built a little brick hut for them, but he said, 'they were fighting a different war to us' because when it rained they wouldn't let the farm chaps and the nurse and that, who were all doing fire watching, in the hut."

- Cicely Glover and Shirley Wingham are reminiscing about the Water Tower during the Second World War.

HOW DID WE FUND IT?



In partnership with Chichester City Council, CCDT secured £20,000 from Chichester District Council's New Homes Bonus grant scheme to develop the space into a hub for the voluntary sector. An additional £6,000 from the Big Lottery Fund's Awards for All programme supported the purchase of furniture and upgrades to IT infrastructure.

LESSON LEARNED:

Further invaluable support came from John Hayler at Chichester District Council and the Communities Team, led by Dave Hyland, who helped turn the vision into reality. Thanks to their commitment and collaboration, the voluntary sector hub was born.





Graylingwell Chapel 2018-2022

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

Graylingwell Chapel – a community and events space, with a modern but in keeping café extension, located at the heart of Graylingwell Park.



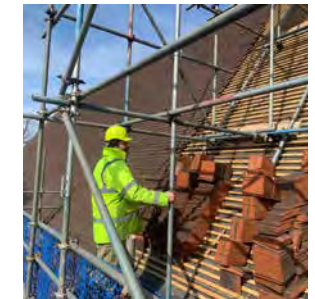
HISTORY:

Graylingwell Chapel was built in the 1890s as part of the West Sussex County Lunatic Asylum, later Graylingwell Hospital. Designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield & Sons, leading Gothic Revival architects, it remains essentially unchanged since its construction. Notable features include Downland flint cobble walls, a cedar-shingled bell tower, and striking stained-glass memorial windows. Its real significance lies in its unique design as an asylum chapel, with features such as a large narthex separating male and female patients and quiet rooms for those in distress. At its peak, the hospital served over 1,000 patients, with the chapel at its heart, a space for worship, reflection, and calm.

TRANSFORMATION:

As part of the Section 106 agreement for the wider site, CCDT was offered Graylingwell Chapel in a 'shell and core' condition. However, after assessing the potential benefits, CCDT instead requested the equivalent financial value of the proposed works as an endowment payment, alongside retaining the chapel in its original form. This allowed the capital to be used as match funding from other sources. CCDT went on to secure nearly £1.6 million for the major renovation of the original chapel and the construction of a new annex housing a café and kitchen.

Work began in 2019 and continued through the challenges of the COVID19 pandemic, including rising costs and limited workforce availability. Crucially, the investment in early design planning, pilot activities in nearby spaces, and extensive community engagement paid off. When the chapel reopened, the community responded immediately, embracing the space and its programmes. The sense of sanctuary that the chapel once offered patients has been revived and now serves a broader community.



CURRENT USE:

The Chapel opened its doors just weeks before completion, with its first event, An Evening with Jonathan Agnew, the BBC cricket commentator, setting a high standard. While the events programme has been a success, it's the everyday use that truly brings the community together. Beyond a welcoming café space to eat, drink, and meet, a wide range of inclusive and accessible activities are now run regularly. The Chapel hosts a wide range of inclusive and accessible community activities that support wellbeing, connection, and opportunity. These include food support initiatives such as a fortnightly pop-up pantry and a community fridge; wellbeing groups such as Frazzled Café for young families, Chatty Tuesdays for those facing loneliness, and Art for Wellbeing workshops. Regular social events include a monthly fish and chip quiz night, live music and performance evenings, and a fortnightly Stitch Club. Practical support is provided through a weekly IT café and monthly financial advice sessions. Young people are engaged through the Foot in the Door music programme and Discover Your Future, which supports those at risk of leaving education or training.

COMMENTS/QUOTES FROM HIRERS/USERS

"Our group had an absolutely brilliant day today with Rob and John equally fantastically opening our eyes to the many treasures in the chapel and it's history and I know that almost everyone is going to revisit, as two hours clearly is no where near enough time to see everything. Please thank both the lads, and I promise, once again, to publicise your events as widely as I can."

"We love stories and supper! My son (almost 3) has a brilliant time. We love the chapel and this in particular has helped us through a really tough time by introducing us to new people and giving us a safe space to play. I love it."



COMMUNITY IMPACT:

Graylingwell Chapel has become a vital and trusted community hub, welcoming over 46,000 visitors between April 2022 and March 2023 and far exceeding expectations. Developed and managed by CCDT, the Chapel plays a central role in the local area, supporting a wide range of activities and services that foster social connection, inclusion, and wellbeing. Over the year, the space hosted nearly 1,500 hours of room hire across 893 bookings, delivering 226 activities and 57 community events. Regular programmes included 52 UK Harvest food hub sessions, 26 Chatty Café gatherings to tackle isolation, 24 free IT drop in cafés to reduce digital exclusion, and 20 Art for Wellbeing workshops. Its continued success reflects the strength of local partnerships and the commitment to building a stronger, more connected community.

HOW DID WE FUND IT?

£ 492,000 was received from Linden Homes, as well as £1.3m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. £ 200,000 was received as S106 contributions from Chichester District Council, alongside smaller grants and sponsorship amounts. The final £30,000 was secured through the community's crowdfunding investment, as increased costs left a distinct lack of funds for chairs once the incredible renovations were complete.



LESSON LEARNED:

Managing and maintaining buildings like the chapel is expensive, and when it comes to design, function must take precedence over form. The original designs looked stunning, but they were also way over budget. We needed to undertake some serious design engineering to bring things back down to earth (and within budget). We changed the glazing options in the extension, value-engineered fixtures and fittings, swapped out a polished concrete floor for vinyl, and made numerous tweaks that visitors would never notice but that saved the project thousands. After touring other similar spaces and learning a few cautionary tales, one thing became clear: you can't just look at the price tag of an item; you have to factor in how much it will cost to look after it, too. Yes, those beautiful lightbulbs suspended 20 feet in the air look incredible, until you realise you'll need a scaffold tower every time one blows.

RW Armstrong worked throughout the challenges of COVID and ongoing budget constraints, collaborating closely with NJS to deliver the building on time. Chris and Ella Pope also provided invaluable support throughout the project; without their commitment and guidance, it is likely the doors would not be open today. Their efforts were instrumental in making the development a reality. Angie Bacon and the incredible volunteer team came to the rescue, unpacking furniture and getting the space ready with energy and enthusiasm. Lina Poskitt and Nina Boden expertly oversaw the exhibition's delivery. At the same time, Claire Robinson was a true hero, mopping for what felt like days to make sure everything was spotless. It was a massive team effort, with everyone playing their part to bring the Chapel to life.



The Pavilion Chichester 2020-2021

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

The Pavilion, Chichester, is a mind, body wellness space, designed to help residents feel better, regardless of age or experience, fitness, or agility. The space accommodates a fitness studio, six therapy rooms, and a café space.



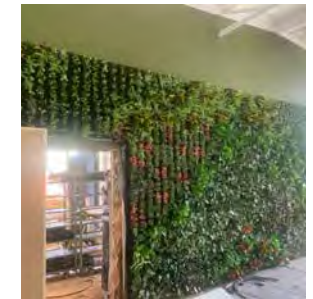
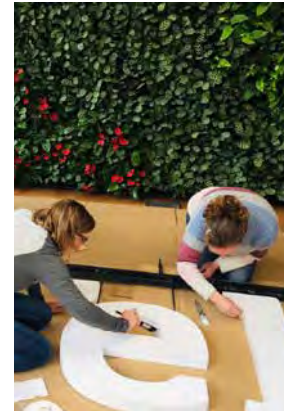
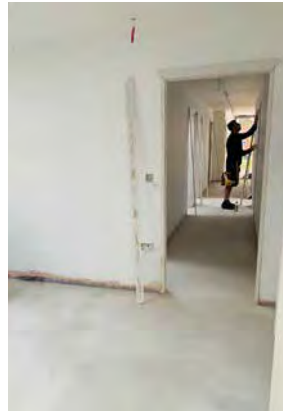
HISTORY:

Originally the sales and marketing office for Linden Homes, the building was transferred to CCDT in 2020 as a freehold asset for £1. While many residents were initially led to believe by developers that it would become a restaurant, a comprehensive programme of community consultation told a different story. Very few residents wanted a restaurant on their doorstep — instead, they wanted something that reflected their daily needs and aspirations. CCDT facilitated workshops, surveys, and informal conversations to shape a genuinely community-led design process. Residents were invited to imagine what would make their neighbourhood healthier, more connected, and more supportive. Two clear frontrunners emerged: an NHS surgery and a café. Although a medical practice wasn't a viable option due to service constraints, CCDT didn't stop there.

Guided by community input, the team reimagined the space as more than just a café — a wellbeing hub designed to address not only physical health but the emotional and social factors behind it. Residents spoke of stress, loneliness, and long-term pain, and so the design included elements like massage therapy, mindfulness sessions, and gentle exercise programmes. The resulting space now helps tackle the root causes of ill health, offering daily support in a setting shaped by the very people it serves.

TRANSFORMATION:

Designed with the needs of the Chichester community in mind, this beautiful location is the perfect space to care for residents' minds and bodies and connect with those around them. The Pavilion now houses a stunning fitness studio for group classes, featuring a living wall down one side and full-length windows on the other side overlooking the park. It also includes six therapy rooms for one-on-one sessions and a friendly café with outdoor seating overlooking the park. The living wall is featured on either side of the wall, intersecting the Studio and the café, providing not only restful views but also bringing the natural surroundings indoors and providing vital additional soundproofing to prevent the café ambience from interfering with the zen calm of mindfulness workshops.



CURRENT USE:

The Studio is a light-filled, airy room with large windows that look out over Havenstoke Park, which is regularly used for a variety of larger classes, including Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Pilates, Yoga, Zumba, dance, theatre, kids' classes, and music. This 9x9m space accommodates approximately 20 students on mats, or more for dance and other classes. In addition, monthly free wellness talks are hosted at the Studio to further ingrain wellbeing into the lives of residents in the area, covering topics ranging from mental health to menopause. The peaceful treatment rooms, featuring comfortable chairs and soft lighting for relaxation, are also heavily soundproofed for added privacy and tranquility. There are large enough to facilitate massage or beauty therapy, while three smaller units are optimised for one-to-one talking therapy, including grief counselling and CBT. The café, initially run as a community café staffed by a roster of extraordinary volunteers, demonstrated to us just how hard it is to run an economically sustainable café. Now licensed to local hospitality providers it provides an essential space for residents and users of the facility to stop and take a break whilst overlooking the park.



COMMUNITY IMPACT:

Health and wellbeing are about more than just visits to the doctor — it's a mindset rooted in prevention, everyday habits, and accessible support. The Pavilion was designed to reflect this broader understanding, providing an inclusive and welcoming space that supports both mind and body. It also serves as a platform for community-led health enterprises to grow and thrive.

Over the past year, the Pavilion has been a hub of activity. A total of 514 studio classes were delivered, supported by 1,359 hours of studio hire and accommodating 274 individual hirers. The therapy rooms were used for 7,288 hours across 266 separate bookings, providing vital one-to-one support. The Pavilion also hosted two free taster days, giving local people the chance to explore new approaches to wellbeing. In addition, 82 talks and workshops were delivered, many of them free, covering topics from parenting to menopause, offering practical advice and shared experiences in a supportive setting.

COMMENTS/QUOTES FROM HIRERS/USERS

"Just wanted to say what a space and what a team behind this place. Been a pleasure to have the opportunity to be here." "As soon as I see the Pavilion in the distance (as I approach in my car) I relax and once I enter the studio I feel like I can finally breathe properly."



HOW DID WE FUND IT?

The building was given to CCDT as a freehold asset, but with no funds to develop it, and it was transferred in a shell-and-core state. £200,000 was received as a s106 contribution from Chichester District council. Further funds were received from the National Lottery Fund, trusts and foundations, and Cooperatives UK.

LESSON LEARNED:

The unintended consequences of creating a high standard of style community space, not in keeping with the traditional sticky blue carpet squares, and magnolia walls, is that some may consider the space 'not for them'. Seen to be a facility for those with financial means by those facing financial deprivation, it was necessary to implement a programme of support specifically for this demographic to demonstrate that it's their space. This initiative began with a weekly food pantry operating out of the Studios, in conjunction with other free-access programs that helped diversify the user group of this beautiful facility.

The Pavilion project benefited from incredible local support, particularly from Chichester District Council. Special thanks go to Sarah Payman and the Sports and Leisure team, as well as John Hayler from Building Control, whose continued guidance was invaluable throughout the process. Architectural Homes, led by Rob and Paul, alongside the entire team, Karl, Matt, and many others, brought the vision to life with exceptional attention to detail and a beautiful, high-quality finish. The result is a space that not only meets the community's needs but exceeds expectations in design and functionality.



Havenstoke Park 2021

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

Havenstoke Park is a beautiful, green park area providing a public space for residents and visitors to walk, relax, and play in, including a full-size and junior football pitch, and a children's play area.



HISTORY:

Havenstoke Park has a rich history rooted in its origins as the grounds of a medium-sized, echelon-style psychiatric hospital that opened in 1897. The landscape was designed by Mr. R. Lloyd, the Head Gardener at the Surrey Asylum in Brookwood, who specialised in creating serene and functional asylum gardens. Most of the park stretches west of the original hospital building, bordered by two main drives to the north and south and Summersdale Road to the west. The area was primarily laid out as open lawns and playing fields, dotted with scattered trees and a beautiful avenue of mature trees connecting the two entrances. Historically known as Havenstoke Field around 1910, the park is uniquely marked by an ancient earthwork ditch running north-south—a scheduled monument described in 1898 as an entrenchment or dyke. Today, Havenstoke Park blends its historical roots with its role as a vibrant community space.

TRANSFORMATION:

In recent years, the developers have met their landscaping obligations to create and lay out football pitches within the park – grass pitches, one adult and one junior-sized. Due to the delivery of this commitment at a later stage in the development, at approximately 600 occupations, the process was highly contentious, prompting a strong protest from a portion of residents accustomed to the initial layout.

CURRENT USE:

A space that is treasured by residents and visitors alike, featuring over 300 trees retaining the original design laid out as the hospital grounds. A favourite local dog-walking space, it also hosts community exercise programmes and groups, as well as a team of volunteers, the Friends of Havenstoke Park, who work.



COMMUNITY IMPACT:

The park is a space for residents to enjoy the many benefits of the outdoors and the natural environment, including dog walkers. A space that hosts community football teams – including being where Graylingwell Girls team first began as a couple of small teams, encouraging 8-11 year old girls to enjoy the game that is now a thriving and flourishing group of more than 200 women and girls. In 2024 CCDT also secured funding from Sport England to host Park Play. This relatively new initiative invites residents of all ages to get outdoors and active through informal ‘playing’, supporting those not wanting to participate in more formal team or individual sports.

Since 2024 there has been a Friends of Havenstoke Park group developed to bring the resident voice even more directly involved in the enhancements made to the park, empowering them to become actively involved in the works that are needed. In the last year CCDT also enabled 40 free weekly dog training sessions.

COMMENTS/QUOTES FROM HIRERS/USERS:

“Don’t miss the opportunity to explore Havenstoke Park and experience the rejuvenating benefits of outdoor activity in Chichester. Whether you’re a local resident or a visitor to the area, the park’s natural charm and diverse trails await your discovery.”



HOW DID WE FUND IT?

A freehold asset transfer to CCDT, along with an endowment to support the ongoing management and maintenance of the park.

LESSON LEARNED:

Where there are later triggers for the delivery of key assets widely used by the community, it is essential to keep them at the forefront of residents’ and users’ minds until their implementation is achieved. People typically are not comfortable with change, especially when it relates to something they are emotionally attached to. The late delivery of pitches for this park, at approximately 600 occupations, created a great deal of bad feeling among many residents who felt they were not needed as they had not been there previously. Once the implementation was underway, residents came to see the minimal changes that this would generate in the long run, once the pitches were installed and matured. Still, the interim impact felt heavy and hard to manage. Communication is everything in these matters.





The Wild Space 2022

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

The Wild Space is an outdoor learning shelter with open sides and a more expansive space for activities and outdoor lessons.



HISTORY:

As part of the Graylingwell Park development, a wilderness corridor was created in Havenstoke Park to safeguard the wildlife disrupted by construction. A wilderness corridor is a protected strip of natural habitat that connects green spaces, allowing wildlife to move freely, find shelter, and thrive despite urban development. This initiative preserves biodiversity while enhancing the local environment for residents. Beyond its ecological benefits, the wilderness corridor fosters community connection to nature, a connection developed through CCDT's work. Residents feel pride in their community-owned spaces, leading to increased engagement and a stronger sense of belonging. The improved green space contributes to better physical and mental wellbeing, aiming to reduce antisocial behavior and promote positive social interactions.



TRANSFORMATION:

Due to its legacy as a Wild Space, the initial steps in creating an outdoor learning and activity shelter involved collaboration with the Council's environmental team. We first assessed the site to ensure that no biodiversity would be damaged, then plotted an area and boundary to minimise the impact on natural resources while creating a usable space that would help bring the community into a green, rich environment. CCDT then secured funding from the National Lottery and Clarion Futures and worked with local contractors to source timber from the locality, creating a beautiful, 100% timber shelter with ventilation for a fire pit, seating around the edges, and an open space cleared for a mud kitchen and activity plot.



CURRENT USE:

On completion, the Wild Space was used for sessional hire by organisations, starting with CCDT's existing forest school groups that were operating at the time (later ended due to the completion of funding available), alongside third-party community enterprises, and an 'Into the Wild' adult mental health session. It was a chance for adults to get together and take part in a range of activities to explore wildlife, enjoy the outdoors and meet their neighbours and friends. These sessions were completely free, thanks to funding from trusts and foundations, and were an excellent support for those who used to spend a lot of time working on a screen, feeling isolated or just had an interest in wildlife. It was also available for birthday party hire for young children.



COMMUNITY IMPACT:

An outdoor learning space provides a vital connection to nature, offering a peaceful environment for both young people and adults. Forest schools give children hands-on learning experiences that build creativity, confidence, and resilience. For adults, workshops in nature provide an alternative to overwhelming indoor settings, offering a calm space for skill building, mindfulness, and social connection. In an era dominated by screens and digital pressures, such spaces encourage mental wellbeing, reduce stress, and promote physical activity. By creating an inclusive, accessible environment, an outdoor learning space strengthens community bonds and enhances overall wellbeing for all who engage with it.

COMMENTS/QUOTES FROM HIRERS/USERS:

"I attended the wild Wednesday group in Havenstoke park today... Gavin and the sessions have been invaluable and provided a lifeline and safe space through what has been a difficult time for me personally. Being socially isolated and lacking in confidence the groups have given me an encouraging and welcoming environment that has become an important part of my week. The informal and outdoor space is lovely and such a great space. And I have made friendships that have continued outside of the hours of the session."



HOW DID WE FUND IT?

Funding was secured from the National Lottery, trusts and foundations, and Clarion Futures.

LESSON LEARNED:

The project was made possible by the determination of the project manager, Nina Boden, and support from the team at BareFoot Carpentry. Sanctuaries of nature, hidden away from the rest of the world, are a true respite for many. Still, unfortunately, they also provide an opportunity for young people to engage in antisocial behaviour discreetly. The Wild Space was sadly plagued by repeated visits from teenagers seeking privacy to smoke, creating unsafe fires, and frequently using the very timber from the shelter or nearby logs cut for community groups.

In the past, CCDT has successfully engaged with disenfranchised young people by offering a chance to discuss why they feel so bored and frustrated that they would turn to such activities. It led to a positive connection with the young people, who subsequently engaged more positively and productively with youth groups and other services. With the Wild Space, we had to come to terms with the fact that this isn't always possible. Despite many messages from other young people in the community urging them to respect their space and offering support, a resolution couldn't be reached. For the benefit of the broader residential population, it was therefore necessary to relocate the shelter to a local primary school to ensure the value of the build was retained and the area could rewild, thereby preventing its future use for ASB.



The Lodge Keepers Green 2020

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

The Lodge – an affordable nursery school for residents, open 51 weeks a year.

HISTORY:

One of the newer buildings on the development, constructed by Hill Construction, it initially began as a space where Little Learners developed a 'pack up and play' nursery from 9 am-3 pm during term times, with other youth and sports-based community activities outside of those hours, including groups from a marching band to local scouts' groups. A growing demand for affordable nursery services, however, culminated in the decision to turn the space into a full-time nursery, coinciding with the development of the Chichester Shed, which provided an alternative, neighbouring venue for youth and sports activities to relocate to.

TRANSFORMATION:

CCDT worked with Hill Construction to create a space that would accommodate the intended use – initially designed with a specific focus on becoming the cricket pitch's pavilion, the Trust helped the developers see the need for a space that could combine the changing facilities required by the cricket teams, with a space that could be financially sustainable, able to accommodate income generating activities and provide a broader service to the community.

This was made possible by creating a nursery space that could also serve as a location for 'cricket teas', featuring a small kitchen and a serving hatch that could be operated independently of the changing rooms. The segregation of these two aspects of the facilities was further strengthened as the nursery became full-time, resulting in the creation of a separate external door and entrance to the changing rooms.





CURRENT USE:

The asset now provides a full-time, affordable nursery, with separate changing facilities for the cricket ground. At Little Learners Preschool, they capitalise on the teachable moments that occur daily by enhancing and scaffolding children's skills. This enables them to grow in confidence and self-esteem, become independent thinkers and inquisitive learners, and be ready for their transition to school.

Little Learners Preschool is a small, friendly preschool based in Ofsted-registered premises for 30 children, operating 51 weeks of the year from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm, Monday to Friday, for children in and around the Chichester area. Private and funded places are available for children aged 25 years.



COMMENTS/QUOTES FROM HIRERS/USERS

"Little Learners is a lovely pre school. The staff are fantastic, they always go out of their way to make not only my son comfortable but me too. They always make an effort to tell me how my sons day has been and works with me to guide my son through his pre school journey. I go to them when I have questions and they are always happy to help. The facilities are really good, there are so many different things to play with and do, the staff always do things to teach the children through hands on activities. They ask parents to get involved with activities they do such as coming in to join in the dance session which they do which is lovely because you get an insight at what your child's typical days at school are. I have seen so much difference in how my son has developed in the four months he has been there since his old pre school, he is so happy and everyday he asks me if he has school today and goes to school as fast as he can when we get out the door. Even though the children have their own key worker, all the staff make effort with all the children and it is a lovely feeling knowing your child is being cared for and looked after so well whilst your not there."



COMMUNITY IMPACT:

Little Learners has now been running for 12 years. They currently support 60 families from the localities of Graylingwell Park and Keepers Green, with more on their waiting list, resulting in CCDT's current investigations into how we might expand the building to help the nursery meet the constant and growing demand for affordable services. Little Learners employs 12 staff members, ranging from trained teachers to preschool assistants, all of whom are passionate about delivering a strong early year's curriculum for the children. The nursery is registered to support 30 children at any one time, and Little Learners currently supports 58 families across various sessions during the week. Users of the service access private and early entitlement places, ensuring priority for those who need it most.

HOW DID WE FUND IT?

The Lodge was gifted to CCDT as a freehold asset transfer as a s106 obligation from Hill and Homes England, along with the cricket pitch, 50 trees, and surrounding play areas. While the building and land were transferred in full ownership, no endowment was provided to support the ongoing maintenance of the land, community garden, and associated facilities within the site boundary. As a result, CCDT needed to establish a sustainable income stream to cover essential costs — including a sinking fund for long-term upkeep, maintenance of the building's exterior, and the management of the cricket pitch, changing rooms, and surrounding grounds.



LESSON LEARNED:

The income generated from cricket matches is modest — around £50 per match — and does not include any charges for the use of the changing rooms. This level of income is far from sufficient to manage and maintain the full range of associated facilities. No provision was made for residents to contribute to the upkeep of these shared spaces through their service charges, leaving CCDT to cover ongoing costs. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the building, the land, the trees, and the pitches, a reliable income stream had to be developed to support their continued care and maintenance. To generate a sustainable income, CCDT introduced a licence fee model for the nursery operating within the building. While this provided a vital revenue stream to support the upkeep of the land, trees, and pitches, the terms were deliberately kept significantly below market rent. This flexible and generous arrangement was designed to enable the delivery of affordable nursery provision, ensuring that the space could serve both financial sustainability and community benefit.

Thanks to a sellout opening gig with national comedian Dom Holland, also known as Spider-Man star Tom Holland's dad, we packed the venue. We raised enough funds to support the nursery with much-needed furniture, equipment, and a new garden area. It was a memorable night that brought the community together and delivered a lasting benefit. I'm not sure we've ever laughed as much since....



The Cricket Pitch Keepers Green 2021

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

The cricket pitch at Keepers Green sits alongside the community garden, Chichester Shed, and The Lodge.



HISTORY:

The cricket pitch at what was once the West Sussex County Asylum—later renamed Graylingwell Hospital—holds a unique place in local history. Initially established in the late 19th century, the pitch was integral to life at the asylum, reflecting the Victorian belief in the therapeutic benefits of outdoor activity. Cricket was encouraged as a form of recreation for both patients and staff, promoting physical health, social interaction, and a sense of normalcy within the institution. Over time, the cricket pitch became a cherished feature of the hospital grounds, building a sense of community among those who lived and worked there. Even as Graylingwell Hospital evolved, the pitch remained a symbol of continuity, providing a green space for sport and leisure. Today, as the site has transformed into Graylingwell Park, the legacy of the cricket pitch endures, connecting past and present through a shared appreciation for recreation and wellbeing.

TRANSFORMATION:

Having reviewed the costs and time requirements for creating and maintaining a grass wicket, it was quickly apparent that this would be difficult to safeguard as an affordable and accessible community-level pitch. CCDT therefore applied for funding from Sport England to install an all-weather pitch, minimising the long-term maintenance costs.

CURRENT USE:

Today, the pitch provides a community-level space with a single all-weather wicket for local teams. With an outfield that is not large enough to meet ECB standards for formal matches, this space is designed to engage people with the game at an informal level and bring together people of all ages. To date, it has regularly hosted the lower-league and youth teams of the Chichester and Priory Park Cricket Club, local pub teams, walking cricket for older generations in partnership with Sussex Cricket and Everyone Active, and street cricket delivered in an informal setting in partnership with Sussex Cricket.



COMMUNITY IMPACT:

A game often considered to be the realm of the privileged few, this cricket pitch has encouraged many local teams, and developing sides to experience an all-weather, professional styled pitch, enabling residents from young children unable to access private clubs and receiving minimal cricket tuition at school, to older, retired men and women that reinvigorated their love of the game at a more leisurely and comfortable walking pace.



HOW DID WE FUND IT?

Sport England, trusts, and foundations funded the all-weather surface, and £16,000 was generated.



LESSON LEARNED:

Sports facilities at a community level are an essential part of residential infrastructure, but they are economically challenging to make financially sustainable. In our experience across multiple sites, developers are required to create sports pitches to ensure the wider region's sports pitch strategies are implemented. To make this viable, consultation must first be conducted with local teams to establish their needs and interests and those of the community. Having established the use and stewardship model to take forward, i.e., licensing out to one sports club for a set fee and/or the ongoing management and maintenance of the pitch, or sessional hire to multiple teams and clubs, it is then necessary to determine if that is sufficient to cover the costs. This seems obvious, but too often community sports facilities are built with the pitch and extensive changing rooms, but no community space that enables income generation, such as subletting to organisations, including nurseries or community groups, to use the space when sports are not being delivered. Only then is it likely that the space can be safeguarded for long-term community use. The project benefited greatly from the ongoing support of the Sports and Leisure team at Chichester District Council and from our dedicated volunteers. Claire Robinson led the charge when it came to securing funding and championing all things cricket, playing a vital role in ensuring the pitch and facilities could thrive as a community asset.



The Community Garden Keepers Green 2021

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

The Community Garden at Keepers Green is a shared green space designed to support wellbeing, environmental learning, and food growing, created with and for residents. It reflects a long-term commitment to community-led placemaking in the heart of a new neighbourhood.

HISTORY:

The vision for a community garden on this site dates back to 2009, when Tim Lawrence Owen led the development of the first iteration of a communal growing space on the site. His early work laid the foundations for what would become a thriving community asset years later.

TRANSFORMATION:

Under the watchful eye of Tim Lawrence Owen, and with plans shaped by Mike Pickering, the garden was reimagined and redeveloped with the involvement of residents and partners. The current version was funded by Hill and delivered onsite in 2021, transforming a previously underused patch of land into a flourishing hub for community engagement and sustainability.

CURRENT USE:

Today, the garden is actively used by a team of volunteer community gardeners working alongside residents, Little Learners nursery, and the Chichester Centre. It supports intergenerational learning, environmental education, and collaborative gardening projects, while also providing a peaceful and sociable space for the broader community.



COMMUNITY IMPACT:

The garden has become a vital green lung within the development, offering opportunities for connection, outdoor activity, and wellbeing. It has fostered a strong sense of ownership and pride among participants, creating a platform for collaboration between different local groups.

COMMENTS/QUOTES FROM HIRERS/USERS

"The community garden has grown more than just plants – it's nurtured friendships, confidence, and a sense of belonging." – Community Gardener.



HOW DID WE FUND IT?

The core funding came from Hill, with additional support from local suppliers, including Covers, who provided materials and resources to help complete the project. In-kind support from the community, including time and tools, made delivery possible.





The Chichester Shed 2024

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

On February 1st, 2024, the Chichester Shed, a new youth centre funded by the Youth Investment Fund, officially opened. Managed by the Chichester Community Development Trust, the Shed offers a safe, dynamic space for young people in an under resourced area to explore hobbies, develop life skills, and connect with others.

HISTORY:

The opening was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting event attended by Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Lucy Frazer, who engaged with youth enjoying activities like skateboarding, music, and yoga. Funded by a £421,375 grant, the Shed was built in just six months, providing work and social spaces for evening and holiday programs. It also connects youth with nature through community gardens and outdoor activities. Additionally, the Shed fosters intergenerational learning by encouraging older members to share practical skills. This vibrant centre aims to empower young people, promoting personal growth and community connection.





TRANSFORMATION:

Funding was received for a capital project that commenced in August 2023 and was completed in February 2024. A bespoke space was created that is light and bright, complete with underfloor heating, sustainable materials, and a safe space for young people to enjoy and come together.



CURRENT USE & SOCIAL IMPACT:

The Shed hosts a combination of programmes, including those delivered by the CCDT youth team, and empowers and enables external youth organisations to utilise this ideal and versatile space to deliver their projects. The Shed in Chichester has become a vital hub for young people, offering a safe, creative, and inclusive space where they can build confidence, learn new skills, and connect with others. At the heart of its work is Discover Your Future Youth, a targeted intervention for students at risk of school exclusion or avoidance. Delivered in partnership with local schools, this programme supports young people academically and emotionally, with a remarkable 83% of participants reporting an improvement in their wellbeing. An extension of the project offers one-to-one counselling, where specialist support has made a measurable difference to students' confidence, attitude, and engagement in school life.

Skill building and empowerment are central themes across all Shed programmes. The Youth Kitchen, for example, helps young people develop practical cooking skills and healthier habits. At the same time, the Yoof Club provides a weekly social space that has significantly boosted attendees' confidence in building peer relationships. In parallel, Sonic Space offers a creative outlet for young people facing social anxiety and neurodiversity challenges, using music as a powerful tool for expression and emotional regulation.

A sense of community leadership and civic responsibility is nurtured through the Youth Ambassadors initiative. These young leaders organise and participate in events alongside groups like the Community Gardeners and The Shedders, strengthening intergenerational connections and fostering pride in their contributions.

The Shed also opens its doors to external organisations working with young people. Think Out Chichester utilises the space to support 18–35-year-olds with disabilities, helping them develop independent living skills. Meanwhile, The Young People's Shop (YPS) offers mental health support sessions, including yoga, Pilates, and group counselling. These partnerships ensure the Shed is active and impactful throughout the week, providing safe, structured support for diverse needs. Across all its programmes, The Shed places young people at the centre, creating opportunities for personal growth, connection, and hope. The social impact is clear: young people leave feeling more confident, better supported, and more engaged in their communities.



COMMENTS/QUOTES FROM HIRERS/USERS:

"That your concentration is on the task rather than talking has been a huge achievement for him, it's a nice small group, there is very little sensory distraction and when there was time, he was uncomfortable it was quickly picked up and he was made to feel comfortable again. I am as his parent so impressed with this as it's been a struggle to find something he can do. This has been a huge help with his mental health as well. Thank you for all you do"
- Parent of a young person attending a music workshop aimed at those with neurodiversity and/or anxiety.

HOW DID WE FUND IT?



Revenue funding from DCMS has enabled the project to hire a project manager, a youth program manager, as well as youth workers and facilitators, bringing a new program of activity to life. In addition, revenue funding has been received from The Buck Family Foundation, the Solly Family, the Blagrave Trust, and the Friarsgate Trust to deliver specific interventions.



LESSON LEARNED:

The success of The Shed has been shaped by strong collaboration, creative vision, and the right funding conditions. Securing support through the Youth Investment Fund was made possible in part due to the location and eligibility of our postcode – a critical factor, and one for which we are deeply grateful to Peter Roberts at Chichester City Council for his guidance and advocacy. Once again, Architectural Homes delivered an exceptional space – beautifully designed and expertly built by Rob, Paul, and the whole team. The vision was brought to life through the creativity and architectural talent of Karolina Stephenson, whose designs were both practical and inspiring. We also benefited greatly from the ongoing support of Chichester District Council's Building Control team, who ensured a smooth process from concept to completion.

The delivery and overall concept was managed by Nina Boden, whose leadership as Project Manager kept the work on track and purposeful. The energy and engagement brought by Sarah Nute, our Youth Programme Manager, ensured that the opening and early activities were not only well-organised but meaningful to the young people involved.

Finally, we are especially grateful to Sarah Clifford and the team at Social Investment Business for their faith in the project and their ongoing support through the Youth Investment Framework. Their funding and guidance were essential in making The Shed a reality. This project has underscored the importance of partnership, creative collaboration, and local leadership in creating impactful spaces for young people.



Chichester Bike Project 2024

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

The Chichester Bike Project, whose mission is to empower individuals from all walks of life to embrace the joy of two wheels. The Chichester Bike Project is built on bike donations from the generous people of Chichester, which are then repaired by the workshop attendees and volunteers and rehomed within the community.

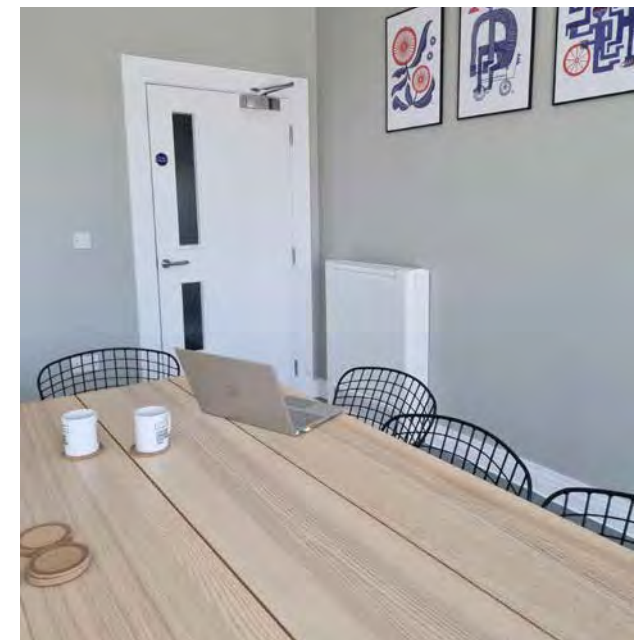
HISTORY:

Since the very early days of her employment at CCDT, CEO Clare de Bathe has dreamed of building and developing a local Bike Project, inspired by her experience with other projects in the UK. As with so many of CCDT's projects, it is not about designing something shiny and new – creating unique innovation, but instead about identifying essential and successful programmes that have been tried and tested that the team can meet with, learn lessons from, and replicate local provision. Bike projects have a long history of promoting sustainability, community engagement, and skill development. Originating in the mid-20th century, grassroots bike initiatives emerged to encourage cycling as an affordable and eco-friendly mode of transport. Many early projects focused on refurbishing donated bikes, making cycling accessible to low-income communities.

Over time, bike projects expanded to include repair workshops, training programs, and social enterprises supporting employment and education. Today, community-led initiatives like the Chichester Bike Project follow this legacy, combining sustainable transport with skill-building opportunities. These projects continue to build independence, inclusivity, and environmental responsibility through cycling.

TRANSFORMATION:

The Chichester Bike Project is in Shopwyke Lakes, a development to the south of the city. It is the first retail unit that the charity has taken on, and as such, is ideal for such a project. The ground-floor unit of a larger residential building offers a space with high foot traffic in and out of the development. Built into one larger unit functioning as a retail space where visitors can view the restored bikes available for resale, and those awaiting servicing, featuring a small café area for project users and residents funded by a grant under from the Rural England Prosperity Fund administered by the Chichester District Council. In addition, there is a small community hub, providing a convenient, clean and fresh space providing important hire income generation to support the community initiatives of the wider programme; and a small training room where programmes can be delivered to support community members, offering a discreet space to make it accessible even to vulnerable groups.



COMMUNITY IMPACT:

The Bike Project is a vibrant, community-led initiative offering a range of inclusive programmes that build confidence, life skills, and work experience for people of all ages and backgrounds. Focused on supporting young people, refugee communities, and those facing financial hardship or social isolation, the project runs several hands-on workshops. These include Earn Abike, which allows participants to refurbish and keep a donated bike while learning essential maintenance skills, and After School Bikes, offering free sessions for 8–18-year-olds to repair their own bikes and encourage sustainable travel. The FixaBike workshop is open to everyone, providing opportunities to learn, contribute, and support the restoration of bikes for others in need.

Alongside these community programmes, the Bike Project also operates a bike servicing business and second-hand bike sales, both of which generate vital income to sustain and expand its social impact.

HOW DID WE FUND IT?



The project was initially supported through funding from the Reach Fund and Cooperatives UK, with additional contributions from Sport England and other key funders. To strengthen community ownership and raise further capital, a successful crowdfunding campaign was launched to sell community shares. Within just four weeks, 73 shares were sold, raising an impressive £115,000 — a total that included match funding from Cooperatives UK. This blended approach not only secured the project's financial foundations but also built a strong sense of shared investment and local commitment.

LESSON LEARNED:

Launching and running a Community Benefit Society (CBS) has demonstrated the immense value of actual community business ownership. The Chichester Bike Project, structured as a CBS, empowers the local community by reinvesting profits into social good while building sustainable transport and skills development. The local community serves as shareholders, allowing them to own the future of this incredible business truly. For CCDT, this marks a first in supporting the development of such a community enterprise structure. This shift has provided valuable lessons in striking a balance between autonomy and strategic guidance. By holding two seats on the Bike Project's CBS board, CCDT ensures alignment with the charitable objectives, shares the Trust's leadership expertise to strengthen governance and long-term sustainability, and maintains sufficient distance as an organisation, taking on a role purely as a supportive landlord. This experience underscores the importance of collaborative enterprise models where local people take ownership of community-driven solutions. It has reinforced CCDT's commitment to supporting socially beneficial businesses while demonstrating how community-led initiatives can thrive with the right blend of independence, guidance, and shared purpose.



Marchwell Studios

2024- 2027

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

Marchwell Studios – the renovation of a 19th-century stables courtyard into accessible makers and creative spaces. This asset renovation aims to restore the historic Marchwell Stables at Graylingwell, which are at risk of collapse. The restoration will preserve both the physical structures and their legacy of pioneering art and occupational therapy, which influenced mental health care nationwide. Identified as significant assets during the site’s redevelopment in 2009, the Grade II-listed stables are vital community resources, blending Graylingwell’s heritage with modern use.

TRANSFORMATION:

CCDT aims to transform the Grade II-listed Marchwell Stables into a vibrant, creative, and community hub, restoring its heritage while building civic pride, cohesion, and creativity. The project will revitalise an unused site, converting derelict stables into studio spaces for creative businesses, charities, and individuals, alongside a central workshop for community skill building. A covered courtyard will serve as an exhibition and trading space, connecting residents and supporting personal development. Spanning 8,000 sq. ft., the hub will offer affordable and commercial spaces to support local makers and those facing employment barriers. Partnerships with Chichester University and regional charity Outside In will ensure inclusion for marginalised artists. A skilled steering group and detailed business plans contribute to the project's success. We are seeking funding to prevent the site's conversion to residential use and to preserve this vital community asset, boosting the local economy and transforming a crumbling heritage site into a thriving space for creativity and connection.





The studios will create opportunities for creatives to work locally, and exhibit and network regionally and nationally through the studios' online presence. Broken down into spaces, the refurbished heritage asset – Marchwell Studios is a purpose-built creative hub designed to support a diverse and inclusive range of artists, makers, and community organisations, while also championing environmental sustainability and community engagement.



The south elevation will provide five affordable workspaces for early-stage creative startups, including potters, jewellers, and fine artists who often struggle to access suitably priced units in the district. These studios will serve as a critical stepping stone for emerging talent, helping them scale their practices and develop sustainable careers. On the east elevation, an open design incubator space will be created to support recent graduates from the University of Chichester's creative programmes, as well as artists affiliated with Outside In, many of whom face significant barriers to entering the mainstream creative sector. This area is designed to encourage collaboration, experimentation, and professional growth. The west elevation will host five market-rate units available for lease to established creative businesses, such as film production companies and graphic design studios. These tenants will bring industry expertise and professional networks to the broader Marchwell Studios ecosystem. The north elevation will be dedicated to community organisations and creative charities, with a particular focus on those supporting individuals with protected characteristics. These groups will be able to deliver crucial services and programmes from a safe, well-equipped space that encourages creativity and connection. At the heart of the site, the central workshop unit will serve as a shared training and skills space, engaging local youth groups, residents, and people with disabilities or other protected characteristics. In partnership with organisations such as the Young People's Shop and Think Out, the workshop will offer training in both traditional and contemporary crafts and skills, supporting employment readiness and personal development.

COMMUNITY IMPACT:

Marchwell Studios is set to revolutionise the Chichester District's arts scene by breaking down barriers that have long excluded talented individuals due to poverty, mental health challenges, or limited access. Historically, figures like Van Gogh, who sold only one painting in his lifetime, highlight the exclusivity that persists in the arts. Today, this inequality remains, as emphasised by Outside In, a charity CCDT is working with on this asset transformation, as they are championing marginalised artists. Through five transformative elements, Marchwell Studios will build inclusivity and opportunity. Outside In's onsite presence will empower artists via development programs, exhibitions, and digital platforms. Recent graduates from Chichester University will gain affordable incubator spaces, nurturing local talent. Creative businesses will find smaller, budget-friendly studios, creating collaboration and growth. Community enterprises will access affordable spaces, amplifying their social impact. Finally, the training room will offer skill-building opportunities in crafts and creativity, enhancing prospects for individuals facing economic or educational barriers. Marchwell Studios will inspire creativity, inclusion, and lasting change.

HOW DID WE FUND IT?

Funding for Marchwell Studios was secured through a combination of innovative negotiation and significant grant support. Rather than receiving the building in shell-and-core condition as initially agreed, Chichester Community Development Trust (CCDT) negotiated an endowment from the Vistry Group in lieu of delivery, enabling greater flexibility and control over the build. This agreement provided a significant starting point, which was then strengthened by a £1.3 million enterprise grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. CCDT is now actively fundraising to close the remaining shortfall, ensuring the studios can be delivered as planned.



LESSON LEARNED:

The journey to secure and develop Marchwell Studios has not been without challenge. The asset was originally due to be handed over at 600 home occupations, which, based on the original build timeline, would have been in 2015. However, delays in housebuilding have pushed this milestone to 2025. This ten-year delay has had a profound impact on CCDT's financial sustainability. Marchwell Studios was always intended to be a key source of income for the Trust. Without it, CCDT has had to raise approximately £100,000 per year through fundraising and consultancy work to bridge the gap.

Further complications arose when it became clear the developers would not deliver the building in a shell-and-core state by 2025. CCDT responded by negotiating a financial settlement instead, which provided the means to apply for and secure matched funding from the National Lottery. However, as the project progressed to the capital works stage, tenders came in significantly over budget. This has triggered a new and urgent phase of fundraising to ensure the project remains viable and can deliver on its vision for community impact and long-term sustainability.



The Club House and Pitches

Shopwyke Lakes 2025

NAME AND OVERVIEW:

As part of a community asset transfer linked to the Shopwyke Lakes development, Chichester Community Development Trust (CCDT) received the freehold of the new clubhouse, two adult sized football pitches, a cricket pitch, and associated parking. The asset transfer was a partnership with Cala Homes and Hanbury Properties.

HISTORY:

The clubhouse and sports provision were agreed as part of the Section 106 obligations of the Shopwyke Lakes housing development. The aim was to create a long-term community facility that would support both sporting and social uses. CCDT was identified as the most suitable steward of the space due to its existing experience in managing community assets and delivering community benefits. CCDT collaborated with the developers to design the clubhouse's internal layout, ensuring the space was both functional and financially viable. This included creating flexible rooms to accommodate long-term tenants and occasional community use. A community "thinking day" was held to consult with residents and stakeholders to shape priorities for the site.

TRANSFORMATION:

CCDT collaborated with the developers to design the clubhouse's internal layout, ensuring the space was both functional and financially viable. This included creating flexible rooms to accommodate long-term tenants and occasional community use. A community "thinking day" was held to consult with residents and stakeholders to shape priorities for the site. This project exemplifies the importance of early engagement with developers and local communities in shaping assets that meet current and future needs. The use of secure tenancies with social impact providers, combined with community access arrangements, supports financial sustainability and public benefit.





CURRENT US::

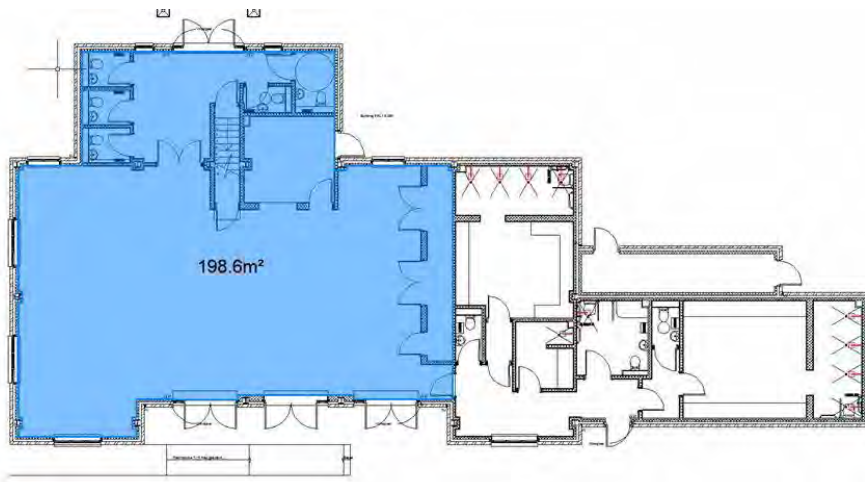
The building is now let to Teddy Wilf's Nursery, a well-established local early years provider, who will begin operating from the site from 1st July. They will offer spaces for up to 30 children, including a baby room. In addition to weekday use, Teddy Wilf's will make the space available for local community use during evenings and weekends, with the support of CCDT to build this model. A similar arrangement is already in place with Little Learners at Keepers Green, and the income CCDT receives from both leases supports the ongoing maintenance and management of these facilities and their associated pitches.

From September, Chichester Rangers Football Club will take on the licence for the management and use of the sports pitches. They will be responsible for their upkeep and will work in partnership with local cricket clubs to ensure year-round use. Through this approach, CCDT has created a sustainable model that balances long-term tenancy with access for local groups, enabling the building and pitches to thrive as active, inclusive, and valued community assets. The project has also helped to foster a stronger sense of identity in this new-build neighbourhood by providing a welcoming space for people to connect, play, and learn together.



HOW DID WE FUND IT?

The asset was transferred as a freehold from the developers to CCDT, with no capital receipt required. Internal fitout changes were undertaken in collaboration with the developers, reducing the need for additional fundraising. The project is financially sustained through long-term lease agreements and pitch hire income.



LESSON LEARNED:

One of the key lessons from the development of the Shopwyke Lakes Clubhouse has been the importance of early involvement in the design and layout of community buildings. By working closely with the developers during the planning and construction stages, CCDT influenced decisions that have significantly improved the space's long-term usability and financial sustainability. The project also reinforced the value of combining commercial leases with clearly defined community access. This blended model not only secures regular income to cover ongoing costs but also ensures that the building remains a community resource. Establishing transparent agreements with partners, such as Teddy Wilf's Nursery, has proven essential in balancing operational needs with wider community benefit.

Engaging residents and stakeholders early in the process also played a crucial role in shaping a facility that reflects the needs and aspirations of the neighbourhood. The consultation process helped build trust and a sense of shared ownership, which will be crucial as the site becomes an increasingly active part of community life. Additionally, the management of the sports pitches highlighted the need for clear, robust agreements on maintenance and use. By granting a licence to Chichester Rangers Football Club, CCDT has ensured that responsibility is shared and the facilities will be well-used and well-cared for. Finally, replicating successful models from elsewhere, such as the nursery at Keepers Green, gave both CCDT and potential partners confidence in the approach, helping to reduce risk and streamline delivery.



Community Programmes: Building Confidence, Skills, and Opportunity Across Generations

At the heart of Chichester Community Development Trust's (CCDT) work lies a belief in the untapped potential that exists in every corner of our community—from women experiencing significant life challenges to young people struggling to find their path in education or employment. Our community programmes are designed to empower individuals with the tools, support, and confidence they need to thrive, regardless of their stage in life.

Discover Your Future Women was born from a deep understanding of the barriers many women face—low confidence, caring responsibilities, past trauma, or neurodiversity—all of which can make self-employment feel out of reach. This 12-week programme supports up to 20 women at a time through a tailored mix of one-to-one mentoring, confidence-building workshops, and peer support networks. Each course creates a safe, encouraging environment for participants to develop not just business skills but a renewed belief in their potential.

Women referred to the programme have come from partner organisations supporting mental health, domestic abuse survivors, and employment support services. The results have been inspiring: participants have gone on to develop business ideas ranging from an adapted taxi service and custom portraiture to crafting tutorials and handmade pottery businesses. Mentors from local companies offer their expertise, delivering over 50 hours of personalized mentoring and structured workshops covering business planning, marketing, financial management, and more.

As one participant shared, *“DYF is an excellent programme for women of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Every coach, speaker, and mentor is knowledgeable and a great champion for women in business. I am very grateful that we received such a high level of expertise for free.”* Another wrote, *“There are a lot of women out there that would be suitable for this course, like myself, and this course has done me wonders.”*

In parallel, Discover Your Future Youth (DYFY) focuses on young people at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training). Through carefully structured interventions, this programme has supported 148 young people over three years, providing more than 170 hours of workshops and nearly 90 wellbeing sessions. Participants learn essential life skills, take part in motivational exercises, and build confidence in a welcoming environment. One young person told us, *“Talking about our problems makes us feel good because we opened up,”* while another said, *“The breathing exercises helped me with my anxiety and feelings.”* DYFY is a lifeline for many who have experienced social isolation, anxiety, or difficulty with mainstream education. By creating consistent, safe spaces and building trusting relationships, young people begin to reengage with their futures—whether in training, employment, or further education.

Supporting and sustaining these programmes is a broader strategy of partnership and collaboration. CCDT helped to found the Chichester Youth Network, working with Chichester District Council and youth prescribers to bring together service providers from across the district. Through this network, we ensure that youth support is coordinated, duplication is avoided, and young people are signposted to the most relevant services quickly and effectively. Quarterly meetings and shared initiatives help create a stronger safety net for those in need.

We also support local organisations by providing affordable, safe spaces to run youth-focused services. The Chichester Shed, one of CCDT’s community assets, hosts activities run by charities such as TOC and The Young People’s Shop, offering essential life skills, mental health support, and opportunities for peer engagement for those who need them most. Our ongoing youth programmes have grown to include:

- **Yoof Club:** a weekly hangout led by our dedicated youth worker, where young people can connect, share a meal, talk openly, and access informal support. Its popularity has led to the launch of a second group on Friday nights.
- **Youth Kitchen:** a practical programme teaching cooking skills to young people from financially vulnerable backgrounds, using ingredients from our community fridge. Each week, they prepare and take home a meal to share with their family.
- **Foot in the Door:** a youth music event series, where young performers showcase their talents in a safe and supportive venue. It offers first-stage performance experience and builds confidence in young musicians, encouraging them to pursue creative paths.

As one participant in Foot in the Door explained, *“It’s a big thing going out and playing in public, but this was a safe place to start.”* Another added, *“There’s nowhere for us to go out, so coming along makes a real difference.”*

Through these community programmes, CCDT is not only meeting immediate needs but also laying the foundation for long-term transformation. From the woman ready to launch her first business to the teenager rediscovering joy and purpose after a challenging year, these stories remind us that meaningful change begins when people are given space, trust, and the support they need to grow.

The Future...

AMBITIONS:

CCDT continues to plan for and develop new community assets in and around Chichester. With residential development continuing at a pace, the charity is taking on the management of a new development as well as community land and buildings within the city itself.

A key development in recent years has been the development of CCDT's trading company, Connecting Spaces. Initially created to accommodate the Pavilion and Chapel's catering and hospitality, the remit of this business has expanded to include a significant consulting arm. Supporting developers, councils, emerging development trusts, and other charitable organisations, Connecting Spaces was founded to empower and enable organisations at the beginning of their asset transfer journey and support them throughout the process, including:

- Feasibility assessment
- Community consultation
- Business planning
- Finding and securing funding
- Capital appeals
- Managing and maintaining assets

We also work with town, city, borough, and county councils, delivering presentations, tours, and training. The subjects we cover include working with developers, engaging with resident associations, and working with communities. We take an innovative approach to buildings and land acquisition, with a successful

track record in funding, delivering, and running thriving community businesses. We work with purpose-led organisations to establish projects and trading operations in the heart of their communities, safeguarding assets for future generations. Existing clients include Ebbsfleet Garden City Trust, East Suffolk County Council, VIVID Plus, and The Steadings Community Management Trust.

LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY:

The Trust secures its sustainability through a multifaceted approach, blending funding campaigns, innovative trading in community assets, resident levies in partnered developments, and consultancy through its trading arm, Connecting Spaces. Each community asset operates as a social enterprise, with programs designed to cover operating costs and generate sinking funds to address future disrepair or damage. Where that is not possible, funding is sought, or where assets generate available surplus, it will subsidise those providing a larger portion of programmes for those on no or low incomes.

A proactive interior development and maintenance schedule ensures that CCDT's spaces remain vibrant, welcoming, and fit for purpose. By prioritising upkeep, these spaces remain places where people want to gather, connect, learn, and get active, building a lasting sense of community ownership. Incorporating environmentally sustainable technologies and utilities, CCDT designs and manages its spaces with a vision for long-term impact. These thoughtful measures secure not only the present functionality of the spaces but also their enduring legacy as hubs of connection and opportunity for future generations.

COMMUNITY VOICE:

For the Chichester Community Development Trust (CCDT), placing the community's voice at the core of decision-making is paramount. Accountability to residents and visitors underpins all our work, ensuring our spaces and initiatives reflect the needs and aspirations of those we serve. Our Board of Trustees exemplifies this commitment, comprising an elected district council member, a Graylingwell developer, representatives of Clarion Futures, residents, service providers such as the affordable nursery, and support organisations. This diverse governance structure ensures balanced decision-making and community representation.

Additionally, a second tier of governance involves volunteer management groups working alongside staff. These "champions" focus on areas they are passionate about, such as youth activities, the environment, and marketing. Before developing or renovating assets, CCDT conducts public consultations, distributes flyers, hosts "thinking days," and forms steering groups to align projects with community needs. This collaborative approach ensures spaces are impactful, inclusive, and economically sustainable for the long term.

CALL TO ACTION:

Get Involved: CCDT is a dynamic, ever-growing organisation eager to collaborate with individuals and organisations to shape its future. Whether through sponsorship, grant giving, or sharing innovative ideas, there are countless ways to get involved. Financial contributions enable us to expand our community development work, supporting those in greatest need while helping sponsors fulfil vital corporate social responsibility goals. We also welcome volunteers, partner organisations, and advocates who can amplify our efforts and help bring innovative ideas to life. Together, we can create meaningful change and ensure our work continues to benefit the community for years to come. Where organisations – councils, developers or emerging community or charitable organisations would like to learn from our experiences we are happy to work with you to learn from our experiences and to help shape exciting new spaces and initiatives.

CLOSING QUOTE:

"I just wanted to say a massive thankyou for taking us around so many of the amazing assets that the CCDT now own and run in and around Graylingwell Park! It was incredible to see how much progress has been made, since the CCDT was formed 15 years ago! Whilst I cannot believe that so much time has passed, when I look around and see the impressive buildings that the Trust now owns and manages, I realise that the development of a community takes time. Whilst the buildings are great, it is of course the people and in particular, the community that makes it so special."