



# Diabetes Prevention

## Project Update – Dec 20

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**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

### **1.0 Introduction.**

GCBC were commissioned to undertake a piece of work to initiate community responses to diabetes prevention. The organisation takes a place-based community building approach, which means Community Builders go out and meet people in their community to find out about their interests and passions. In doing so, they reveal issues that are important to them, including their health and wellbeing, and actions they might want to take to improve their situation and their community.

Whilst the investment from the CCG is specifically targeted in Kingsholm, this report also includes additional relevant stories from across Gloucester that showcase how friends and neighbours are coming together in their community to take action on managing their health. At the heart of the approach the project is seeking to help residents to build relationships before they need them.

The community building approach seeks to build up the capacity of local residents to take action on what's important to them. This can often mean that the starting point for a relationship with a resident might not always be health related. However, this starting point is often catalytic and leads to multiple outcomes. To capture this unique approach Gloucester Community Building Collective is working with University of Bristol on using Ripple Effect Mapping in Kingsholm, Gloucester to measure impact, which we have included a description of within the report.

### **2.0 Stories**

Sharing stories is an important element of community building practice as it helps to inspire other residents and provide a bridge between residents and organisations.

#### **2.1 Stories from Kingsholm**

Kingsholm resident Mrs L and Mrs F had never met, but they shared an interest in creating a Covid Safe Pumpkin Trail across Kingsholm. Despite not meeting in person the two ladies joined forces and created a Halloween Trail that attracted the involvement of over 60 families who participate over a weekend by walking the trail and spotting pumpkin designs.

Mr P applied to Gloucester Community Building Collective's Neighbourhood Fund for £200 to establish a spring bulb planting group in Kingsholm. He secured the involvement of a group of residents who independently went around the community to plant bulbs in a variety of community spaces. The hope is that this will generate a wave of colour in the spring and improve the local environment. Through working together the Kingsholm Gardeners have formed closer relationships and friendships from whom they can turn to for support.

Ms A is a single mother from a BAME background with 3 children living in Kingsholm. The youngest being 18 months. She had a tough time during lockdown #1 having to home school her 2 older children. This together with her youngest child began to affect her wellbeing and weight gain. She does not go out except shopping. After having conversations on a couple of occasions she would like to see if there are other mothers who would like to get together to be more active. A local venue with outside space housing some farm animals would

welcome being connected into the local community. An introduction was put on pause pending the national lockdown #2, but can now be pursued.

For many years a group of residents in Kingsholm have created a living advent calendar. Those taking part adopt a day of advent and decorate a window of their house. Residents are encouraged to light up their window in the evening to create a walking trail around the community. Many other communities have taken inspiration from this story and have replicated it. Such as the Advent Fester trail in Coopers Edge, which has over 100 houses taking part and 3 walking trails. Other Living Advent Calendars exist in Tuffley, Quedgeley, Matson, Robinswood and White City.

Mr B, was met by the Community builder whilst out walking in the Kingsholm area. Through conversation he revealed that he has been playing the guitar since aged 9 and is self-taught. He lives in social housing, but the communal lounge is closed due to Covid 19. He uses a disability scooter and misses playing his guitar and socialising with his neighbours. Before lockdown #2, I introduced him to the landlady who had recently taken over the local pub who I had also met while I was out and about in the area. They got on very well especially when the landlady heard that he was able to play songs from her favourite band. Mr B was able to play his guitar at the pub just before lockdown #2. He is looking forward to inviting his neighbours and friends to join him as soon as the Covid 19 situation allows.

Mr K is 92 years old and still drives his car. He tells me that he was diagnosed a few years ago by his GP with type 2 diabetes. He was prescribed medication which he took for some time however decided instead to embark on a more healthy eating diet and has been medication free for over 12 months now. Mr K is happy for me to interview him and share his story either via social media or as a case study.

A Kingsholm resident linked to her local church has brought much joy by creatively painting pebbles with a nativity theme and hiding them all over the community. Friends and neighbours are encouraged to get up and go out and to keep moving and find these treasures using local walking trails.

## **2.1 Beyond Kingsholm**

Following lockdown #1 a group of residents in Elmbridge were connected together by the Community Builder. The residents were interested in creating their own fitness group. The Community Builder helped them to secure funding to have fitness sessions on the green open space during the summer. From this group friendships were made and a spin opportunity emerged to create an informal IT group to help older residents use video technology to stay connected to their families.

The fitness group in Elmbridge, inspired another group of residents in Tuffley to take the same approach. They too applied for funding from Active Gloucestershire to run their own fitness sessions in a community venue.

These combined stories show the catalytic impact of the community building approach. However, as can be seen from these stories, outcomes are driven by the community and therefore are difficult to anticipate. The actions of residents often leads to unexpected outcomes, hence the necessity to deploy Ripple Effect Mapping to measure the outcomes and demonstrate how resident lead action stimulates a change in community culture where more local people become involved in activities where they live.

## **3.0 Learning**

The community building approach focuses on spending time in a place meeting and getting to know people who live and work there, making connections between residents and underutilised assets. This process has been interrupted by Covid 19 having to stop and start. This disrupts the continuity of the relationships, which can affect trust. Residents will work at

their own pace, which can mean some things can take a longer period of time to emerge, but to truly build community capacity it is essential that Community Builders respect that and do not do things for the community that people can do for themselves.

As Community's Builder meet people where they are at, the opening conversation is often not about diabetes, but typically conversations often lead to people talking about what they want to do to be more active, connect with others and look after their wellbeing. The dilemma for the Community Builder's is trying to stay true to the values of not pushing a specific agenda when having conversations with residents, whilst fulfilling the expectations of the project.

Whilst this project is specifically focused on Kingsholm, we have also noticed that there are many additional outcomes that related to leading healthier, more active lives in other areas of the city where other Community Builders are based. The project may wish to consider how these outcomes from other areas are also captured, as they too will be contributing to diabetes prevention.

#### 4.0 Dashboard

Gloucester Community Building Collective uses a dashboard to collate the numerical data on how many people the community builders have had contact with across the city. The dashboard is used to give an overall sense of reach across the city.

Please see below the cumulative figures for the team until Nov 2020.

Total for team	Annual Targ	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total
New conversations* with residents		62	27	3	34	107	142	174	231	32	0	0	0	0	812
Continued interactions with known resident		29	63	59	50	63	87	94	139	99	0	0	0	0	683
Responses through the Help Hub		0	211	155	140	47	8	1	2	43	0	0	0	0	607
Number of conversations with professionals		22	55	48	73	98	96	88	92	84	0	0	0	0	656
New connections between residents made		25	9	4	2	4	15	23	37	21	0	0	0	0	140
Connections made between residents and organisations		8	49	41	39	27	38	28	34	35	0	0	0	0	299
New groups formed		2	1	0	1	0	2	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	11
Number of conversations* with residents	3000	105	297	221	236	221	237	259	372	174	0	0	0	0	2122
Significant stories															
Number of stories	50	0	3	3	8	7	11	15	9	10	9	9	9	0	0

#### 5.0 Evaluation

Measuring the impact of community led change is a constant challenge for those of us working in organisations that are seeking to grow community capacity rather than 'do to' communities.

Within more traditional project-based approaches, its often easier to predefine the outcomes at the start of the project and deliver on those. However, in taking a community building approach, our role is to enable the capacity of others, so they own the change they want to see. In doing so citizens will also often inspire other friends and neighbours to get involved, which leads to many unintended outcomes. This results in a ripple effect.

To capture this process and the outcomes that emerge from community driven development, the Gloucester Community Building Collective is working with Dr James Noble from the University of Bristol to assess the impact of community building.

As part of this partnership, Gloucester Community Building Collective has an embedded researcher working with the team over the next year. The research project will aim to better understand the role of a catalytic organisation.

We have started the process of ripple effect mapping in Kingsholm, so it would be good to share this approach and findings with in the new year.

**Author: Lin Waters – Forest of Dean Community Builder Project**

Patty

Profile: Female aged 61, living in Mitcheldean but using Dockham Road Surgery.

Patty was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes after having her regular blood tests for thyroid. Not completely unexpected as Patty knows she is overweight. This diagnosis came in March 2020 just prior to lockdown. Patty was told that she would be referred and put on Metformin.

Due to the situation with Covid Patty felt very isolated as the service was paused. She was directed by her Doctor to read about Type 2 diabetes on the NHS site. Patty found advice conflicted with general diet advice and had some success with following the Michael Moseley diet even though she was alarmed by the high fat content. On her next HBA1c test her levels had reduced by 20 and she was pleased with this although she says she doesn't really understand what the reading means.

In November 2020 Patty attended part one of the diabetes education sessions which was delivered online. Patty found it hugely informative and is looking forward to the subsequent sessions.

Patty doesn't have any contacts that have type 2 diabetes and feels isolated because of this. She is trying to walk her dog more and is still working so is quite active. She would positively embrace more contact with people with the same condition and would be interested in joining the exercise session at Cinderford Rugby club when it restarts. She would also like to join the local Diabetic support group on FB and attend their meetings. I sent a join request to this group many weeks ago and have still not been accepted into the group. As they are not meeting at present it would be helpful if they were more proactive with their page as there could be many others in the same position.

Patty joined the Cinderford Diabetes and Wellbeing Forum fb page that I started on recommendation of a family member who had seen it. After joining in with comments on posts she was delighted when I offered to contact her for a chat. Patty would be an ideal candidate to get involved with the community to share ideas and support.

Addendum 27/11/20

Patty is joining in with the FB page regularly now and when another member commented about lack of support on diagnosis she responded to them with offers of help and support.