

Appendix B

Case Studies

These case studies are intended to give you more information about some of the community engagement work taking place in libraries. They represent a sample of the information gathered in the course of this project. Each case study shows different aspects of community engagement:

- **Bury and its strategy for community libraries.** This case study shows how the community can be involved in developing and delivering services. Work has been done in partnership with a community organisation. A management board for the library and community centre has been formed.
- **Leicestershire and co-locating to serve community need.** This example of working with public and community bodies shows how use of an under used facility can be transformed successfully.
- **Southend and partnership working.** Southend has taken a proactive approach to partnership working. A variety of community partners are involved in promoting their services to the library with great results. Looking at new ways of working with community groups is an important aspect of community engagement.
- **Southend and community involvement in delivering Bookstart.** The case study includes a quote from a member of staff who was uncertain about how effective this new way of working would be. Find out what her experiences have been and how this project operates.
- **Kent and involvement in decision making.** Showfields Library is taking a new approach to community involvement and encouraging participation in decision making.
- **Kent - skills development and a growing interest in working in the cultural sector.** Dan has been involved with the Kent project since 2003. He tells his story of how he has developed skills and an interest in a new career.
- **East Riding and creating a new project.** This project shows how involving the community can demonstrate that there is demand for a service. This project led to a community group being formed which employed its own staff as a result of a partnership between the library service and a voluntary sector organisation.
- **Cambridgeshire and reaching rural communities through involvement.** The library service has moved out into the community and encouraged community ownership over its Community Access Points (CAPS).
- **West Midlands and increasing capacity through community involvement.** This case study shows how more can be achieved when the community get involved.

Topping Fold Community Centre and Library: Bury

What was previously a row of derelict shops is now the Topping Fold community centre and library. Working in partnership has involved more people and has been the key to success.

The opening of the library introduced the first council presence on this estate for many years. The library service set up the Topping Fold Partnership, with a management group consisting of two officers (one from the library service and one from housing) and eight community members. The constitution of the Partnership states that it should be an equal partnership, but the library service was keen to ensure that voting rights were weighted in favour of the community. Honesty was important and trust between organisations and individuals is central to a successful partnership.



The partnership was successful in obtaining funding from SRB5 to appoint a community development worker, who was selected and employed by the partnership itself rather than the local authority (the post has since been mainstreamed).

Funding was then obtained from the local authority for the main project identified by the community, the creation of a joint community centre and library. Three shops (including the one housing the library itself) were developed at a cost of about £100K. The centre now offers a wide choice of adult education and leisure courses, ranging from computer courses to flower arranging, as well as advice and information sessions. There is also a flourishing youth group run by the library (despite youth service insistence that the estate was a lost cause) and a reading group with several members, who had previously never read a book as an adult.

The Topping Fold Partnership remains active. They continue to direct the work of the Community Development Worker and have undertaken several improvement projects on the estate, e.g. security lighting being installed by volunteers at peoples' homes as part of a community safety initiative. They obtained a grant of £25K from ODPM, which has paid for the creation of a fully accessible garden for the whole community to enjoy. This was designed by local people and built with Groundwork and volunteers. The garden is maintained by these volunteers and used to host activities such as open days. It also acts as a space in which regular activities take place. One result of this is that the library is probably the only one in the country to operate a garden tool loan scheme. Volunteers help local residents who are not able to improve their gardens themselves, in return for which they make a donation to the project.

The library service has also converted a maisonette above the library into an office for its social inclusion unit, meaning that they now have a permanent base on the estate. Future plans include the conversion of a second maisonette into community offices for other agencies; and of a further shop into a community café.

Southcross Street: Bury

The community library was set up in an area with some level of racial tension between the white and Asian populations. The approach taken by the library was to identify a problem that the two groups shared, with the library working with the groups to tackle this. Litter was the solution to the problem!

The partnership between New Mosses Tenants & Residents Association (TRA) and the library was able to show that they could deliver on an issue of importance to the community and encourage new people to get involved with the group.

An environmental project was organised through the partnership involving:

- Street cleaning, in which local children worked with staff from Library Services and Environmental Services.
- An anti fly tipping campaign, which combined education and enforcement.
- Work with children, involving education about recycling and creating art work from litter collected.
- A family fun day to showcase the children's work in the library, whilst bringing the parents together.



Bury Council provides 8 community libraries. During 2005, the outreach library service wrote a position paper outlining what it had achieved and how it had gone about this. This paper is now available on the MLA North West web site <http://www.mlanorthwest.org.uk/>

For more information about Bury community libraries, contact Elizabeth Binns E.binns@bury.gov.uk

The Fleckney Centre, Leicestershire: Maximising Use of Rural Libraries

The project

Through working with the community, the services on offer have been expanded and the new site is used by both individuals and community groups more frequently. This example of joint working between public and community bodies shows how an underused facility can be successfully transformed.

Issue

Fleckney is a small village lying between the Leicester City boundary and the Leicestershire County market town of Market Harborough. Pre-2003, the village library operated with low visibility in deteriorating premises, and with declining usage and visits. In 2000/01 before the Fleckney Centre development, book issues were reducing by 6.2% a year. The challenge for the County library service was to respond to the commitment in the 2001 Medium Term Corporate Strategy (MTCS) to improve access to libraries and the quality of library services as part of an integrated approach to delivery of a broad range of services in local communities. The revised MTCS (2003) also contains a commitment to “improve the standard of our libraries by refurbishing sub-standard buildings and developing different ways of accessing library and public information services as part of our Better Access to Better Services initiative (BABS).”

Action Taken

In 2002, the County Council used the refurbishment of the empty local village school as an opportunity in line with the MTCS and BABS. The purpose was to improve the library premises, at the same time as utilising the building to offer a range of complementary services by other organisations that were interested in providing services in rural centres.

An extensive consultation exercise was carried out with local residents to find out what they wanted the proposed centre to deliver. This was carried out by the Rural Community Council and the results fed into the overall planning of the project. The three top requirements identified by residents, in addition to the refurbished library, were: access to Police services; ICT/training equipment; and Adult Education services.

A partnership between the County Council, Leicestershire Rural Partnership, Harborough District Council and the voluntary sector developed the building during 2002-3. The renamed Fleckney Centre was opened in 2003 and launched officially in September 2003. The centre, using the library as its core, offers:

- An ICT centre
- Community meeting room
- Interview rooms for confidential agency work
- Kitchen facilities
- Facilities for community groups e.g. the local history group.
- Police drop-in session.

In addition to this, the Centre is used by a variety of other organisations, notably GAIN (Adult Careers Advice), Connexions, the Pensions Service, and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to offer sessional advice to residents at set times during each week. The District Council also has prominent information on display and sends staff to the Centre on a sessional basis in order to increase access to its services.

Current Position

The development of the Centre has had a demonstrable impact on the performance of Fleckney library in addressing key performance indicators.

| | July 01 – June 02 | July 02 – June 03 | July 03 – June 04 | July 04 – June 05 |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Issues Trend | - 2.68% | + 5.1% | + 11.6% | - 7.3% |
| Average Visitors | 12,714 | 20,436 | 23,205 | 27,950 |
| Number of Hours Open | 816 | 852 | 1,086 | 1,086 |
| New Borrowers | 180 | 256 | 374 | 102 |
| Enquiries | 1,259 | 1,148 | 1,485 | 2,636 |

Investment made in the Centre has attracted additional Heritage Lottery Funding to develop an arts mosaic using the skills of young people to enhance the appearance of the building, which was launched in October 2004.

Local library managers are engaged with a management group of Centre users and residents to formulate a sustainable action plan for the continued development of the Centre.

Two new groups, WizKids (a parental craft club); and Enabled Disability Group; have started as a result of the centre and all its facilities being available to them.

Regular bookings for use of space include a monthly police surgery, Connexions and the local CVS. IT training courses have been provided by Beauchamp College, South Leicestershire College, in the IT suite. The Youth and Community Service uses the training room for a wide range of courses including Save a Baby, First Aid, and Excel for Farmers. The centre is used by a variety of groups on an ad hoc basis.

The Centre represents an excellent example of a partnership project which is centred on the citizen. It demonstrates how a range of service providers can add value and re-define a traditional library service.

For further information contact Nigel Thomas, Leicestershire County Council
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Southend and partnership working with the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS)

Southend has worked in partnership with a number of VCS organisations. These case studies look at how Southend Libraries promoted 'Safer Living' agendas with Help the Aged; Southend Neighbourhood Watch; and Southend Council's Trading Standard Department.

The partnerships were not about delivering projects jointly, but about the library service contributing to corporate agendas, publicising services available to the community, and promoting the library as a place to find information about local initiatives.

Volunteers, especially those with the home library service, are in contact with people in the community who would not otherwise know of these initiatives. They were provided with information about the schemes, so allowing them to identify clients who may be in need of these services. If this role had not been taken on by library volunteers, some customers would not have benefited from services available.

It was considered important that staff understand why the library was involved with the project. Staff had access to information about the project, meaning that they could respond to enquiries from the public about these initiatives.

Help the Aged – Southend HandyVan Service

The scheme offers a free security lock fitting service and smoke alarms to anyone on low-income and aged sixty or over.

The award-winning Senior Safety scheme aims to make older people's homes more safe and secure, thus reducing the risk of loss through burglary and providing peace of mind to vulnerable residents. Help the Aged wanted to further publicise this service to increase the uptake from residents.

Roadshows were held at libraries to increase awareness of this facility. The roadshows saw demand increase and as a result, 95 people took up the free lock fitting service.

The partnership is continuing and further four roadshows are taking place in spring 2006.

Neighbourhood Watch- How to beat the bogus caller

Bogus callers, also known as distraction burglars, disproportionately target older people who are often house bound and/ or living alone.

The library stocks free Home Office videos, leaflets, posters and audio cassettes providing people with more information. Large print leaflets and subtitled videos are also available.

Message in a Bottle.

Message in a Bottle is a simple scheme that aims both to reassure those who live alone and to help save lives.

In this area, the scheme is organised by the Southend Neighbourhood Watch Association and supported by Essex Police, Southend Borough Council, Essex County Council and the Essex Community Foundation.

The "bottle" is a plastic container, which is kept in the fridge and contains details of the person's next of kin, medical condition and doctor. This information can be easily found in an emergency and acts as a simple but effective lifesaver.

Inside each bottle there are two special stickers known to the emergency services. These are put up in the person's house; one on the outside of the fridge door; the other inside their front door. They can be easily found in an emergency.

This free voluntary scheme is intended for use by any person living at home and to date it has saved the lives of 12 people across Essex. Bottles were made available through the libraries (including mobiles) to increase the accessibility of the project.

The Access Services team also produced a large print information sheet about the Message in the Bottle scheme to ensure visually impaired customers could find out more about the service.

Access and Social Inclusion staff automatically take out Message in a Bottle and Southend HandyVan literature to any new Home Library Service customers.

Publicity for all the schemes is routinely included in outreach displays, events, talks to groups and Home Library Service Volunteer Induction packs.

For more information about these projects contact Simon Wallace
simonwallace@southend.gov.uk

Southend Bookstart

Southend decided to deliver their Bookstart initiative through volunteer involvement. Once volunteers have completed the recruitment process and been accepted, they are provided with training covering:

- Introduction to Southend Library Service (joining requirements etc)
- What Bookstart is about
- The benefits of sharing reading with children
- Parents with basic skills needs
- Language development
- The contents of the Bookstart bag
- Questionnaire
- Confidentiality
- Further help and advice for parents
- Clinics as partner organisations

Volunteers are based in GP surgeries. When parents bring their children in for their health checks, a library service volunteer meets with them in the waiting area. They talk to the parent about the Bookstart project, the value of sharing reading with children and the services that the library has to offer. As well as answering queries, volunteers complete questionnaires with parents.

There are now children's books in the surgeries, following suggestions from volunteers. Volunteers have also started coming into the library to help pack bags. This gives them the opportunity to talk to fellow volunteers about their roles and to share experiences.

For more information about Bookstart in Southend contact Mark Thres, markthres@southend.gov.uk

The information below is what Joy Rutter, one of the project workers had to say about delivering Bookstart in this way.

'First the admission; when the possibility of using voluntary help to deliver Bookstart was first discussed, I was not keen. I was afraid that;

- the professionalism of the project would suffer;
- families would not receive the message about the importance and the benefits of early book-sharing properly;
- we could not guarantee reliability, people being there when needed, if we used volunteers.

All could be problems. Staff time and commitment are needed to ensure they are not. A careful recruitment process followed by thorough training is needed. Volunteers have told us they felt better trained for Bookstart than they had been for some jobs! This is followed by frequent contact, volunteer meetings, and the regular involvement of partners.

Our side needs a well-organised admin & support system (we have a part-time Co-ordinator who is a superb organiser) and on the volunteer side, a large enough stable group, with a strong identification with the project.

Benefits

- **Community ownership.** Southend Bookstart is not only delivered to Southend it is delivered by Southend. A difficult benefit to quantify but important; especially when you are looking for funding!
- **Flexibility.** Our 600 volunteer hours are the equivalent of a part-time member of staff – but a member of staff who can be in several places at once simultaneously and who works solely when called upon. This is also an advantage that Bookstart has over other volunteering opportunities – no-one has to commit every single Thursday morning etc; they either can cover when called on, or they can't and we move to the next name on the list.
- **Credibility.** The Bookstart message may come with a lot of authority from a Health Visitor, but it often comes a lot more palatably from a fellow member of the public who is not pushing an official agenda
- **Approachability.** Similar to above; many families will voice doubts or concerns or even personal difficulties more readily to our volunteers than to someone with an official badge
- **Time.** The volunteers can usually spend far more time chatting to the family than a Health Visitor with a full appointment schedule could manage
- **Other help.** Our volunteers have real ownership of Southend Bookstart, they give us all sorts of other help (eg packing), anything that contributes to the success and growth of their project.
- **Input.** The views and ideas of a large group of people of varied experiences, talents, insights. Their feedback has been invaluable to us and has resulted in many developments in the project
- **Enthusiasm.** Warming our hearts and seeing us through difficult times!

Showfields (Kent) and involvement of the community in decision making

Background

Kent County Council's Showfields Library is an interesting model. Showfields and Ramslye are estates of social housing. Whilst not featuring in the County's most deprived wards, there is a high incidence of unemployment, single families, excluded children and disaffected youth. This combined with the close proximity to Tunbridge Wells town centre, with all its air of affluence, highlights the relative deprivation suffered by these communities.

A small community facility and café (Number One) had been running adjacent to the library in a facility owned by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The facility was in a poor condition and was sparsely used. Showfields Library was in a similar poor condition, being a target for vandalism and graffiti. Issues and visitor numbers were low. Kent County Council Library Service and the Number One Trust came together to explore the potential for renovating and improving the whole building as a centre for the community.

Ownership of the two buildings was transferred from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council to the Number One Trust in 2004 to enable them to secure approximately £400k (Lottery funding) to refurbish the facility as a community centre. Kent County Council agreed to continue to deliver a library service from the building.

Kent re-furnished the library with new mobile shelving, furniture and a reception counter transforming this part of the building into a bright, attractive and flexible multi-functional space. This allows the space to be used by community groups and the Number One Trust outside of library opening hours.

The Trust is run by a Board which includes representatives from the local community so gives real ownership of the project to local people.

Learning points

As with most new initiatives there have been a few teething problems. The partnership was able to secure significant capital funding to allow the space to be improved and developed but revenue funding to sustain a post to manage the centre has been more difficult to obtain. However:

- The two local authorities have funded services for young people and activities in the building and a part time youth worker.
- BBC Children in Need has funded another youth worker for three years.
- Sponsorship from individual donors and local churches has paid for a part time café manager and a Project Manager for the refurbishment programme.

Funding continues to be a challenge. The café has been less successful than envisaged and the Project manager left soon after the building work was completed and has not yet been replaced. However plans are afoot to address these issues.

Library use and issues have increased although there is clearly capacity for further improvement. Visitor figures and issues are expected to continue to increase as the library develops better relationships with partners and the public, and as community use of the building increases. The space is being used more flexibly and this has introduced

new people to the services. For example, a boxing club now runs to capacity on two evenings a week in the space used by the library at other times. Incidences of vandalism and graffiti have decreased. The youth workers have initiated some evening sessions for young people and attendance is building for these. A group of older people from a nearby residential home meets regularly in the building and a ladies aerobics class is about to start.

Next steps

Both the County and Borough councils are keen for the centre to succeed and are leading partnership work to secure;

- core funding commitments from the councils and other external agencies (PCT, Weald Housing Association);
- the opportunity for the café to become a young enterprise scheme (the Housing Association have agreed to pump prime this with funding from their community budget);
- joint programme planning to ensure the building is well used and the community's needs are met;
- help in achieving a part time Centre Manager post to facilitate partnership working, community engagement and a coherent approach to managing the facility.

Ongoing work

- The Library service is working with Kent Adult Education Services and currently providing free Basic Computer Courses, Basic Literacy and Basic Numeracy courses in the library using the People's Network computers.
- There is joint working with the Family Liaison Officer and local schools to encourage joint projects and to increase family use of the library.
- Showfields is targeted for the Reading is Fundamental project work, sponsored by Starbucks. This allows them to introduce fun events and author visits and workshops.
- Kent Libraries is supporting the Boxing Club with relevant book and AV stock.
- A Rural Volunteering Kiosk is to be set up, to encourage local residents to find volunteering opportunities to widen their experiences and help them back to work if appropriate.
- The library space is used for various activities, from discos to church services and Connexions courses for young people when the library is closed.
- Local artwork (particularly from the schools) is displayed and locally relevant information is available.
- The library hosted a Neighbourhood Fair, put together by the Housing Association.
- A Young at Heart reading group for the elderly residents of nearby Lavender Court has started, supported with input from the stock and community librarian.

- The library has loaned collections of stock and other materials to support the Breakfast Club at local primary school.

While Kent pursues this ambitious programme, it is constantly building relationships with local people and learning how to deliver the services that they want. They do not believe that it is coincidence that incidents of vandalism have decreased significantly since the space was refurbished and the community took ownership of the facilities through the Board of Trustees.

In Kent, they look forward to much more joint working with other agencies to implement a programme of action which will improve the quality of life and the life chances for local people. In particular, they will be focusing on projects to improve the health of the community through encouraging healthy eating and healthy living, in partnership with health agencies including the doctor's surgery next door and the Primary Care Trust. This will include delivering a "Books Can Help" (books on prescription) service in partnership with local health care colleagues.

Contact: Clare.Hamilton@kent.gov.uk

(District Manager: Tunbridge Wells)

Developing skills and an interest in a career in the cultural sector through volunteer involvement (Kent)

Dan (pictured left) talks about his experience of getting involved with the library:

'In January 2003, CSV offered me a placement as a volunteer at Sevenoaks Library as part of the Lending Time Project, for one day each week. Sevenoaks Library, Museum and Gallery is currently being redeveloped with Heritage Lottery funding of £1 million to provide the Kaleidoscope, an integrated and accessible centre at the heart of the community. My role involved sorting, cataloguing and displaying a wide variety of artefacts held in the Museum collection. I was offered training in MODES, a computer package widely used in museum work and I developed a keen interest in local history.



With the skills developed in this role, I was able to apply for a part-time post within the Museum & Library Service. Through these I gained experience of working with members of the public, using the library computer package GALAXY, and a range of library skills from shelving and cataloguing to exhibition display. I was invited to take part in various library and museum training programmes and funded my own City & Guilds course in Library & Information Skills, completed in 2004.

I applied to CSV in August 2004 to do a further one day of volunteering in the Music Section at the County Central Library as a song indexer. This has given me the chance to learn about many different kinds of musical expression and introduce myself to classical music. I'm still a volunteer at CCL but now have added a further part-time museum post in the Kent & Medway Museum Development Service, where I'm pursuing an NVQ in Cultural Heritage. None of this would have been possible without the opportunities, help and support I received from CSV.'

Teresa Pritchard, Kent Libraries and Archives Public Involvement Manager, tells us what she thinks:

'Kent Libraries and Archives have a strong commitment to public involvement with targets to embed public involvement into all our activity and involve the public in decisions that affect their services. This includes consultation on policy development and a pilot to test the involvement of library users in the recruitment and selection of staff. Our User Groups already provide a sounding board for policy development and are engaged with modernisation plans for libraries, as well as working in their communities to promote library use. We also work closely with a range of local organisations and community leaders to better engage local people including Town and Parish Councils. We are proud of our partnership with CSV who have been appointed to manage volunteers and the development of *Time2Give* volunteering projects across the county building on the success of *Lending Time*'.

For more information about the volunteer programme, contact Nicola Brown
nicola.brown@csv.org.uk

East Riding creating partnerships through The Reading Assistance Teaching Scheme (RATS)

Chris Smithurst of East Riding Library service tells us about the RATS partnership

'RATS began in 1996. Several potential volunteers had enquired at the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) offices in Goole as they were interested in voluntary work involving children and reading. Lynne Hunter (Chief Officer for RATS) who, at that time, was working for the CVS, rang me to ask if I knew of any such organisation and, if not, would I be interested in setting one up. After consultation with 2 schools in Goole who agreed to take part in a pilot, the project was set up. The CVS provided the office accommodation, clerical assistance and Lynne's time. The library service provided £2000 worth of specially selected books and increased borrowing entitlements for the volunteers.

Over the past 10 years RATS has gone from strength to strength, training volunteers to work in schools right across the East Riding as well as in North East Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire.

It is now a registered charity with Gervaise Phinn as Patron. Over the years RATS has also been involved in various other projects connected with children, families and training but with the original concept at the core'.

Through using volunteers to show a need in the community for a service, RATS has been able to attract further funding and employ staff.

Benefits to the Library Service

- Improves the reading skills, confidence and self-esteem of children taking part.
- Volunteers encourage children to become library members.
- Volunteers become library members themselves in order to select books for the children they are supporting.
- Children are introduced to books they may not have chosen themselves and are offered a wider reading experience away from reading scheme materials.
- Volunteers build up a rapport with library staff especially with regard to choosing appropriate material.
- RATS' staff and volunteers support library-based activities such as the annual Summer Reading Challenge by promoting it and by working with children in the library alongside library staff.
- Library staff have input into the training of volunteers with regard to choosing and using books with children.
- The Library Service is represented on the RATS Management Committee.
- Working in partnership helps both organisations achieve their objectives.
- Both organisations support and promote the other. Library events and activities are promoted in newsletters and at RATS events. RATS is promoted in the library with posters, leaflets, displays and volunteer recruitment sessions.

Cambridgeshire: Community Access Points



This Community Access Point is based in Lyn Gidding village post office.

Community Access Points (CAPs) offer ICT-based learning through PCs and broadband Internet access at different community venues across the county. Each CAP has a standard set of equipment, which is replaced every 3 years, and access to digital cameras, scanner and printers. This allows residents to access learning and e-government services including library services at their convenience in community settings, thus extending services to more rural areas of the county where there are no library buildings.

CAPs are located in village shops, pubs, post offices, church halls, community centres, and housing associations. Cambridgeshire Library Learning Services manages the delivery of learning to the CAPs and the provision of other services such as information and advice, with referral onto Guidance Services. The service provides tutors to offer a variety of learning opportunities including Learndirect and Skills for Life qualifications. It also recruits, manages and trains a network of volunteers who act as 'community champions,' supporting and encouraging community use of these locations. Some volunteers are based at one site, whilst others work across several.

As well as providing access to learning, Cambridgeshire Library Learning Services also develops other activity at the CAPs to broaden their usage within the community. A successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2005 established 7 community archive groups who have set up digital community archives, using the CAP as their base.

CAP in use in Wilburton.



How was this started?

CAPs were originally set up in partnership with two District Councils, Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire. Bids were made for both capital and revenue funding from a variety of sources including NOF, ESF, RRF and Vital Villages. The funding enabled the service to establish a coordinated network of over 40 CAPs, which has subsequently expanded and linked to other districts and now totals some 55. The service is managed by Cambridge Library Learning Services, which along with the District and Parish Councils, identified suitable locations for CAPs. Once the IT and connectivity had been set up, Coordinators worked with the community to identify training needs to help up-skill residents, enabling them to access e-government services, improve their employability and engage with the new facility in their community. Cambridge Library Learning Services also established recruitment, vetting and training for volunteers and worked with the Districts to assist any community that was interested in bidding for funding.

The CAPs are now part of Cambridgeshire Community Network, a broadband PFI project linking up County Council and other public buildings such as schools.

Difficulties

Space and the right location were the two biggest issues. For some organisations, such as the post office, security was a prime concern, whilst for others the physical space required to allow comfortable access to the facilities was a problem. Some of the most isolated villages had no suitable 'public' location. Where CAPs are based in businesses, there is also the pressure of running the business and maintaining a community facility.

Success factors

Over 4,000 people have been trained, ranging from complete beginners taking taster session through to Level 2 ICT and SFL qualifications. Establishing a network of volunteers has allowed CAPs to develop their own identities and in a way that best suited the needs of their community. Good communication between host sites, volunteer and Coordinator was essential.

People's War in West Midlands

The BBC was commissioned by Culture Online (a section within DCMS) to increase access to digital technology amongst older people. This was to help them record their personal memories of the Second World War as part of the WW2 People's War online archive. West Midlands Museums, Libraries and Archives Council supported museums, libraries and archives to reach people with a story to tell.

Seeking additional capacity

From the outset, members of the community were involved in delivering People's War in the West Midlands. In order for both contributors and staff to benefit from the whole process of story telling, IT demonstration, and story entry, it soon became obvious that a great deal of staff time and resources were required. The answer in many cases was to seek out volunteers, who as a team could fulfil a number of roles such as coordinator, interviewers, typists and where possible drivers.

Volunteers were recruited via county wide press campaigns, targeted campaigns, liaising with local interest groups and existing groups of volunteers.

Lessons learnt

Important lessons were learnt about planning events to operate with community participants.

- Recruitment of volunteers took longer than planned
- Marketing of an event can not start until there are enough volunteers
- Volunteers need to be given things to do in order to retain their interest
- Volunteers needed to be trained, again this took time
- More personal satisfaction was derived from the experience where there was a coordinator to facilitate the groups working

Jenni Waugh from the West Midland Museums, Libraries and archives council shares her thoughts on the experience of working for the project.

'It has been thrilling to see the growing confidence with which libraries, museums and archives in the region have worked with each other and with partners from the voluntary and community sector to deliver the People's War project. We have all learned new ways of working and of engaging with the communities we serve, and we plan to build on this experience in the future. I feel profoundly privileged to have met so many wonderful people, young and old, who gave their time and their energies to make this project a huge success and in turn have inspired others by their generosity. This has been a job that I will never regret taking.'