

## Community engagement Case Study: St Luke's Prestonville, Brighton

2020 saw our community work take over in a really positive way. We found a real solidarity with our partners and by pulling together, our relationships are better.

95% of our Community Volunteers are from our immediate neighbourhood and not our congregation. We set up a network, or 'starter group', of 30 people and in ten days we had 70 people.

As 'frontline' workers, supporting the most vulnerable in our community, we have been able to stay open for groups such as the AA Recovery group, and have added an additional Narcotics Anonymous group.

The Real Junk Food Project is preparing and distributing 80 hot meals a day from our kitchen.

- **The Real Junk Food Project**
- **Brighton & Hove Centre for Spirituality**
- **St Luke's Community Garden**

Rowan Williams's description of spirituality as being 'the cultivation of a sensitive and rewarding relationship with eternal truth and love.'

1. Say Yes: whatever requests come in start by saying yes.
2. Make it easy for people to contribute. For example, work alongside new partners by setting up a good risk assessment template with suggestions.
3. Provide the resources, such as bulk buying supplies.
4. Take advantage of funding available, such as now there are Covid Funds available specifically to support community projects. SLP re-built their kitchen during one of the lockdowns and now has a catering friendly kitchen that benefits them and their partner, The Real Junk Food Project.

A local horticulturalist approached Martin about a patch of 'dandelions' sitting unkempt at the side of the church and asked to create a community garden. This was in 2012. The answer was yes, some money and congregational help was made available to resource this project and now there is a garden and six vegetable plots.

TRANSFORMING A PATCH OF DANDELIONS INTO A COMMUNITY GARDEN

Posted by Hedvig Murray on October 14, 2012

Traditional needs-based problem-solving focuses on identifying needs in a (failing) community and creating external inputs to meet those needs. This approach does not create a sustainable solution because it fails to deliver the tools necessary for that community to create its own success.

Strengths-based practice is a collaborative process between the person supported by services and those supporting them, allowing them to work together to determine an outcome that draws on the person's strengths and assets.

When you look at building relationships or partnerships that have real value, the most successful interventions – or collaborations - are based on assets and capabilities, not needs.

### **So – does building community and community partners generate any income?**

In theory, yes.

5% of donations to The Real Junk Food Project revert to St Luke's – although most of this is re-invested in the project.

Funding application are more productive and have a bigger chance of success when partnerships are formed. As these partnerships grow and scale up together, funders are likely to continue their support.

<https://grandjunction.org.uk/about/>

Sometimes partnerships show resilience and an unexpected new scope in a crisis. One of the partnerships for St Luke's Prestonville that has is Brighton & Hove Centre for Spirituality:

<https://centreforspirituality.org/about-us/>

The Labyrinth has run weekly events at St Luke's and across Brighton since 2009 – now pivoting to Labyrinth Online and reaching a new global community, as well as generating income. Read more about embracing technology and online worship in Martin Poole's article The Art of Television and Online Worship in the Anvil.

<https://churchmissionsociety.org/resources/the-televisual-art-and-theologyof-online-worship-anvil-vol-37-issue-1/>

Rev Martin Poole and Sarah Rogers

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