A guide to **Asset Based Community Development** in East Hampshire

Empowering communities to thrive







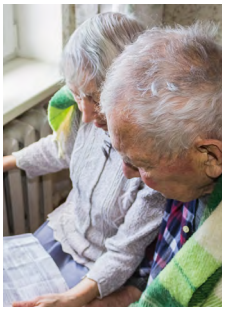












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EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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FOREWORD

Enabling and empowering our communities

East Hampshire is home to strong, active and caring communities. Across our towns and villages, residents, community groups, businesses, volunteers and local organisations make an invaluable contribution to the places where they live.

Too often, we focus on what communities need rather than recognising what they already have. Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) starts from a different place. It recognises that every community has strengths, skills, knowledge, relationships and resources that can be harnessed to create positive change.

Over the past year, through our Asset Mapping pilot work, we have seen first-hand the power of bringing people together, identifying local assets and creating opportunities for residents to shape their own future. By connecting people, building relationships and supporting community-led action, communities can unlock ideas, tackle local challenges and build on what already makes their area special.

This guide has been developed to share that learning and provide practical tools to help communities, Town and Parish Councils, and local organisations adopt an asset-based approach. It is not a blueprint, but a starting point for conversations, collaboration and action.

At East Hampshire District Council, we believe thriving communities are built with local people, not for them. We hope this guide helps you discover the strengths that already exist in your community and provides the confidence to build upon them.



Cllr Adeel Shah
Portfolio holder for Community Development and Engagement, East Hampshire District Council

The ABCD approach to building thriving communities

Empowering communities to have greater control over the areas where they live is a core focus of the government's plan for devolution of power from Westminster to the regions. It is also a key element of the East Hampshire District Council's **Council Strategy**.

In our Council Strategy, we identify Thriving Communities as one of our four core aims, and this is underpinned by adopting an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach.

ABCD recognises and mobilises the strengths, talents, and resources that already exist within communities, to enable local people to shape the services and decisions affecting their local area. It is not simply about transferring assets from the council to communities, but about supporting communities to take the lead, with the council acting as an enabler where needed.

To support communities in identifying their priorities and ambitions, and as part of the ABCD parish pilot project (2025-2026), we have created this guide and supporting toolkit. It will help local stakeholders to recognise existing assets and community activity, build on opportunities, and develop five-year action plans that reflect their local aspirations, and build community infrastructure.

We would encourage you to read and use this guide and toolkit if you are:

- A Town and Parish Council that wants to engage and listen to residents' views and opinions to help shape local priorities in the area.
- Any organisation delivering any form of community/public service.
- A community organisation that would like to adopt an ABCD approach and would like to know more.



How to use this guide

To understand the values, principles, and theory of ABCD, it is recommended you read the step-by-step process of this guide. However, you may feel that you have already adopted elements of the approach into your work. Therefore, the guide has been written so you can take out each section and use it as a standalone document, enabling you to develop a bespoke fit.

Each section is accompanied with tools and tips, including links to practice examples to support your learning. The guide is accompanied with a toolkit containing key factsheets.

There are three sections to the guide:

- **Understanding the theory of ABCD**
  This includes examples of asset-based approaches, acknowledging that working in an asset-based way supports the wider development of an ABCD approach in a community.

- **Putting ABCD into practice**
  How to develop ABCD in the community.

- **Gathering the evidence**
  Measuring Impact how to sustain momentum and Case Study examples from the ABCD pilot project 2025 -2026.

Next Steps

Get in touch with your local Community Development Officer. They will come and talk to you or your organisation about ABCD.

To contact your local Community Development Officer, please email community@easthants.gov.ukl

Lastly, please remember that there are no wrongs or rights with how to establish ABCD in a specific neighbourhood, it is all about the testing, learning, and growing.

Have fun and enjoy the journey!

TOP TIPS

As you read this guide, keep a look out for the light bulb icons for top tips to help support you in this work.



SECTION ONE

Understanding the theory of ABCD

What is Asset Based Community Development?

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is about recognising and mobilising the strengths, talents, and resources that already exist within communities, both social and physical assets, to enable local communities to shape their own futures. It is not simply about transferring assets from the council to communities, but is about supporting communities to take the lead, with the council acting as an enabler where needed.

This approach enhances social capital, trust, cooperation, and collaboration within the community, leading to improved well-being, and creating a more vibrant and resilient community.

The core values of Asset Based Community Development

ABCD is underpinned by a set of core values:

- Everyone has skills (assets), and everyone has something to contribute.
- Relationships are the foundation of community.
- Local people are the primary force for change, as they represent a community-first approach.
- Sustainable community development grows from the inside out.



The principles of Asset Based Community Development

ABCD has a set of five key principles that underpin the development of the approach, these are:

- **Resident-led:** ABCD places residents at the centre as active producers of solutions, not just recipients of services.
- **Relationship-driven:** Focuses on building connections and social networks (social capital) to create sustainable change.
- **Asset-based:** Recognises that individuals, associations, and local institutions possess skills and resources that can be leveraged for improvement.
- **Place-based:** Encourages local control and initiatives rather than depending on external, top-down approaches.
- **Inclusion focused:** Supporting local residents and creating an environment within which everyone's contribution and value is recognised.

Five key principles of ABCD Asset-Based Community Development



Empowering communities

The four modes of change

The four modes of change explain how we work with people in communities and how we implement change with an asset-based approach. The model looks at shifting from a top-down approach, where public agencies are "doing to/for" residents, towards a bottom-up approach and "doing with/by," local communities. It prioritises community-led development over professional-led interventions.

Sometimes professionals or organisations assume they know what a community needs and act for people rather than asking them. Even with good intentions, this can create dependency.

A better approach is to work with communities—combining professional knowledge with local experience. This leads to solutions developed by the community, where residents take the lead, build confidence, and create lasting change.

The Four modes of change do not replace the legal requirement of statutory/public duty to commission and provide services; ABCD is more about a shift in thinking and practice.



What is it that people and communities are best placed to do for themselves?

ABCD is founded on the principle that given the tools and the opportunity, small groups of people can change things that they believe need changing in their community better than anyone else. It recognises people as the experts.

What is best done by people and communities with support?

ABCD recognises that there are some things best led by people but with support from outside agencies and organisations through collaborative partnerships.

What is it that people and communities need outside agencies to deliver?

ABCD recognises that institutions with specialist expertise can sometimes be the most appropriate agencies to deliver and co-ordinate services. It is not about replacing services or things that are best undertaken by institutions and agencies with specialist expertise in appropriate and individual circumstances.

What is it that outside agencies need to stop doing, so people and communities can be in the driving seat of change?

ABCD is truly rooted in the community doing things by themselves not having things done 'for' or 'to' them.

Organisations need to learn to 'step back' and create the space and opportunities for neighbourhoods and communities to be nurtured to lead and take action.

The diagram on the next page shows the TO/FOR/WITH/BY approach.

How does change happen?



Examples

To – A parish council removing play equipment due to under use

For – Residents forming a food bank to provide food for residents in need of support

With – A parish council working with residents to co-design a youth service

By – A local resident setting up a fibromyalgia peer support group

TOP TIP

***As an exercise** – Think about what has been your experience of being 'Done to' or 'Done for'?*



What's the difference when we talk about an asset-based and strength-based approach?

- Asset-based and strength-based approaches are similar, often used interchangeably, focusing on community capabilities rather than community need for help (deficits).
- Asset-based approaches often focus on broader community resources, relationships, and institutions.
- Strength-based approaches emphasise personal skills, resilience, and goals. They are often used in health and social care settings, such as Social Prescribing and strengths-based conversations during social care assessments, or where learning from ABCD is used to support staff to work with individuals focusing on their strengths to achieve agreed goals/outcomes.

TOP TIP

Avoid Common Pitfalls *– Start with people, not projects. Take your time, build relationships first, and resist the urge to lead or 'fix' things too quickly.*

Small, community-led actions will always create stronger and more lasting change than big, top-down plans.



Other types of asset-based approaches

- **Local Area Coordination (LAC):** Focuses on empowering individuals to build their own vision for a good life, supported by community connections.
- **Social prescribing:** Connects individuals with community resources and activities to improve health and wellbeing.
- **Family group conferencing:** Empowers families to find their own solutions to challenges, strengthening personal support networks.

  Examples such as In Sync, which provides adaptable support for families, children and young people with disabilities, neurodiversity, or support with their emotional needs.
- **Community-Led Support (CLS):** Rebuilds public services to be more collaborative, focusing on local relationships.
- **Co-production:** In East Hampshire we will test and develop new models of neighbourhood governance, we will establish two Community Area Partnerships (CAPs) as pilots. These will bring together town and parish councils, the VCSE, and public sector partners to co-design local solutions, influence decision-making, and deliver area-based action plans.
- **Participatory approach:** Ensures that residents actively participate in all stages of development, from identifying needs to implementing solutions and evaluating results.

SECTION TWO

Putting ABCD into practice

Community Builders and Community Connectors

A dedicated 'Community Builder' is key to the successful development of an ABCD approach in the community. They build relationships of trust, gather place-based knowledge, discover people, unlocking unique skills, connecting others, and empowering social-led action and change.

Their role is to:
Discover – Connect – Mobilise – Celebrate

Through this process, Community Builders turn the traditional approach to community development on its head: instead of focusing on what a community is lacking (deficits), they identify and mobilise what is already present (assets), and working with 'Community Connectors' create an 'Asset Map' of the local area.

Understanding Discover – Connect – Mobilise – Celebrate

- Community Builders and Connectors are vital to engaging with the community and central to the Asset Mapping process. They play a key role in identifying the talents and interests of local residents and the potential resources available through local associations.

- By connecting and building relationships of trust, discovering people to share interests, and enabling them to exchange skills and resources, it empowers communities to mobilise to take action on the issues that are most important to them.



- The Community Builder connects people, highlighting what local people care deeply about and provides opportunities for them to act on these passions to spark local action, and lever in small pockets of funding to kick start ideas, to foster social-led action, and people-led change.

- Key to the ABCD approach is to share and celebrate stories of local success, focusing on how people are using their own assets and connections to drive positive change. Celebrating achievements and sharing success is essential because it recognises the power of communities when they identify and mobilise their own strengths and resources. This creates solutions that are sustainable and tailored to their specific needs. Empowering individuals to take ownership of their own development fosters a sense of pride, responsibility, and commitment. By focusing on "what's strong, not what's wrong," they help neighbourhoods thrive through internal strength rather than external dependence.

TOP TIP

Reflective questions



1. Where would you begin seeking out Connectors in your community or neighbourhood?

2. Can you think of anyone you know already who is a Connector? Make a note of their skills, gifts, and qualities that you feel are relevant.

Who are Community Builders?

ABCD Community Builders are usually paid members of staff working for a locally based institution or community voluntary sector organisation.

Some areas fund local authority staff as Community Builders to develop ABCD; in Bristol Council, Community Development Officers take on the role of Community Builder as part of their job role. Some Local Authorities commission ABCD out to the Third Sector to employ a Community Builder, such as Leeds City Council, and the organisations employ a Community Builder. As we have explored in the previous section, there are many examples of how a builder role can be applied, scaled up or down to suit organisational or community needs. It is important to remember that this is a way of thinking, adapting, and applying ways of working with communities in an asset-based way, and anyone with a passion for people empowerment can be a community builder.

To support our work with Town and Parish Councillors, we recommend using the The 21st Century Councillor paper (University of Birmingham) as a guiding framework. It promotes a shift from traditional, committee-based roles to councillors acting as community builders, leaders, and connectors—working directly with residents to build resilience, strengthen local networks, and address complex challenges.

Who are Community Connectors?

Local Residents acting as Connectors: Local individuals who are creators, natural networkers, relationship builders, connecting people with common interests (e.g. someone with a passion for gardening who links together fellow enthusiasts to improve a local space) many have trusted relationships in the area they live in. They are seen as community leaders and 'Agents of Change.'. They know their neighbourhood, streets, people, groups, and associations.

Asset Maps – What is asset mapping?

Asset Mapping is a collaborative process that involves generating a map or inventory of the capacities, skills and talents of individuals, associations, organisations, the natural and built environment, and local economy, inclusive of its 'gift economy' (the skills and time given for free).

The goal of asset mapping is to document a community's existing resources, incorporating these strengths into community development work.

The process of asset mapping can include identifying the institutions, individuals, and resident associations existing within communities that serve as positive resources, and act as a lever for improvement by shifting the focus from a community's deficiencies (needs, problems) to its assets (skills, capacities, resources).

The Asset Mapping process is not about data collection; it is about connecting people to their neighbours, their environment, and their economy based on their shared assets and priorities. It is about collective realisation and empowerment.

The diagram on page 14 shows the six levels of 'assets' with examples of what type of assets might be listed when creating an ABCD Asset Map.

Ultimately, an asset map is not just a document; it is a catalyst for community mobilisation. The process of asset mapping is as important as the asset map itself. While the final map is a useful tool, the process holds equal or greater value than the final result.

The mapping process supports the following outcomes:

Building Relationships and Social Capital

- **Connecting people:** The mapping process brings together residents, organizations, and businesses who might not otherwise interact.
- **Fostering trust:** By engaging in face-to-face dialogue, participants build trust and reciprocal relationships, strengthening the social fabric of the community.
- **Empowerment:** It encourages residents to recognise their own skills and capacity, moving them from passive service recipients to active partners in development.

Shifting the thinking from 'Deficit' to 'Asset'

- **Changing the narrative:** Traditional data often focus on what a community lacks (needs, problems, deficits). Mapping flips this, forcing participants to look at what they already have and can build upon.
- **Uncovering hidden gems:** The process identifies overlooked assets – such as informal skills, local stories, or passionate residents – that a simple survey might miss.

Building community engagement and ownership

- **'Doing With' not 'Doing For':** When community members create the map, they own the findings. A map created by experts might be ignored, but a map created by residents is a call to action.
- **Long-term engagement:** This collaborative process can spark new partnerships, voluntary actions, and initiatives that continue long after the map is completed.

Creating a Shared Vision

- **Common perspective:** The mapping process helps different groups (residents, local government, businesses) agree on what is important to the community.
- **Bridging differences:** It can bridge misunderstandings and help align priorities between community residents and external stakeholders.

Six community assets



Physical assets 1

Physical spaces such as:
Gardens
Parks
Playgrounds
Car parks
Bike paths
Walking paths
Forests/forest reserves
Picnic areas
Campsites
Fishing spots

Associations 2

Animal care groups
Heritage groups
Anti Crime Groups
Hobby & Collector Groups
Business Organisations
Men's Groups
Charitable Groups
Mentoring Groups
Civic Events Groups
Mutual Support Groups
Cultural Groups
Neighbourhood Improvement
Education Groups
Groups
Elderly Groups
Political Organisations
Environmental Groups
Recreation Groups
Family Support Groups
Religious Groups
Health Advocacy and
Service Clubs
Fitness Groups
Union Groups
Veteran's Groups
Women's Groups
Youth Groups

Institutions 3

Schools
Universities
Community colleges
Police stations
Hospitals
Libraries
Social service agencies
Non profit organisations
Museums
Fire departments
Foundations

Local economy 4

Local Economy
For-Profit Businesses
Consumer Expenditures
Merchants
Chamber of Commerce
Business Associations
Banks
Credit Unions
Foundations
Institutional-Purchasing
Power & Personnel
Barter and exchange
Corporations and Branches

Individuals 5

Gifts, skills, capacities, knowledge and traits of:
Youth
Older adults
Artists
Welfare recipients
People with disabilities
Students
Parents
Entrepreneurs
Activists
Veterans

Culture & stories 6

Background and personal history
What you like to do and contribute
Existing and ongoing skills and capacities
Successful community development
Economic growth
Adressing racism
Including those who are marginalised
Recognising the value of everyone
A time when you or your group felt appreciated and valued.
A time the community was at it's best

Identifying community assets

Start small

- **Locally determined:** The area to be mapped is decided by the residents, not by professionals.
- **Manageable size:** This could be a street, a block, a neighbourhood, or a parish.
- **Goal:** The focus is on starting with the manageable to build momentum, rather than trying to map a whole area at once.

Discover the assets

- **Resident-led** Inventory: Identify the strengths already present within the community. These are primarily determined by those who live there, not by external experts.
- **Method:** This can be done through "walkabouts," surveys, or mapping workshops using big paper and post it notes.

Connect the assets (build relationships)

- **Map connections:** Look at how the mapped assets can link together to create new possibilities.
- **Find connectors:** Identify the local connectors—people who naturally bring others together and make things happen.
- **Relationship focus:** The goal is to build relationships before contacts; it is about strengthening the social fabric, not just listing assets.

For further information to support your Asset mapping journey please refer to the ABCD guide

TOP TIP

***Take your time** – It is important to slow down and ensure that each step is community-led and remember that good work takes time.*



Mobilise the assets

Create opportunities to mobilise these assets to be productive and powerful together:

- **Create opportunities:** Intentionally create space – such as community meetings, fairs, or workshops – for ideas to emerge, grow, and be productive.
- **Actionable goals:** Use the map to identify simple, early wins to build confidence.
- **Shared vision:** Move from mapping to action by encouraging local residents to take ownership, drive change, and reduce reliance on outside services. Useful Links:



SECTION THREE

Gathering the evidence and measuring impact

Gathering the information to evidence the impacts of working in this way takes time, and it is important to think about what you want to capture and why? ABCD avoids heavy metrics and instead focuses on longer term meaningful change which supports the wider social determinants of health and wellbeing and building of sustainable thriving community.

Why adopt an ABCD approach?

Evidence has shown that the ABCD model has improved health and wellbeing, builds connections, social capital, and community cohesion. ABCD fosters trust and improves relationships among residents, reducing social isolation and loneliness, which are significant community-level determinants of health.

Empowers communities to tackle disadvantage

By fostering autonomy and local leadership, ABCD helps communities build their own vision for change, addressing some of the structural inequalities that cause poor health. to reduce the gap of health inequalities.

Uncovers untapped potential

ABCD helps identify hidden skills, resources, and passions of local residents, businesses, and spaces that are often overlooked in traditional needs-based assessments.

Builds communities

Communities grow from inside out, evolving from the place where 'I' live, to the community where 'we' grow. They can only grow through interconnectedness and the deepening of human relationships. ABCD builds communities from within, creating long term sustainability that builds, resilience, and self-reliance.

Strengthens relationships

It builds on the premise that relationships and connections are the key to building community, creating stronger social capital and local cohesion.

Nurtures the local economy

Most enterprises start small and local, in community centres or at the kitchen tables. In return they become the heart and blood of local economies and one of the most reliable sources of employment for many communities.

Sustainability and self-sustainability

Because projects are driven by local passion and resources rather than temporary external funding, initiatives tend to be more sustainable and enduring. ABCD integrates social and financial value, by fostering connections, ABCD reduces the need for statutory service intervention while promoting social cohesion and better economic outcomes for communities.

Reduces social isolation and loneliness

The ABCD approach builds and strengthens connections between individuals and across associations and institutions thereby increasing community cohesion, reducing isolation, and improving the health and wellbeing of the people that live there.

Cost effective to support prevention

Developing an ABCD approach can help attract other funding streams to an area. Equally, volunteer time and resources are a very cost-effective investment to support prevention activity. A revised Social Return on Investment Study conducted by Leeds Beckett University in 2025 evidenced a return of £36.90 for every pound invested in an ABCD model.

Empowerment and dignity

ABCD treats residents as co-producers of solutions, not just consumers or clients, which creates active citizenship.

As part of the East Hampshire pilot project, an ABCD Monitoring Framework has been created to support the East Hampshire District Council core strategic aim of Thriving Communities and the East Hampshire Community Development Strategy.

We would recommend that anyone reading this guide refer to the monitoring framework as a tool to help you to gain insight and capture the immeasurable impacts and values that an ABCD approach can have on people in the communities where this is developed. The framework supports the user to capture, gather and build an evidence base, and potentially gain support for future funding initiatives to upscale the approach.

Sustaining momentum

Developing an ABCD approach takes time. It involves working at the speed of trust with the community. Asset Mapping is part of community development, but its success lies in building upon the connections and relationships of people who live in these neighbourhoods who mobilise, take action, and drive change that creates a lasting momentum and long-term sustainable change for the people who live there.

TOP TIP

***Town and Parish Councillors** – Take a moment to read the 'Testing the 21st Century Councillor Framework' as a guide.*

Ask yourself what role do I take as a councillor in how I engage the community?

How do I listen to people and develop Community Area Business Plans based on the local communities' priorities?



Findings from the pilot highlight several practical ways to sustain momentum and success:

Build from internal assets & relationships

- **Continue to identify connectors:** Find community members who are natural networkers, focusing on connections over professional design 'projects.' Lasting momentum is built on relationships, and fostering mutual trust, which creates a foundation for action. Connectors live in the community all the time, (most professionals/ paid staff do not) they are the golden thread and are best placed to build momentum, and continuity.

- **Keep asset mapping:** Actively continue to keep asset mapping, remembering that it is the process itself is more important than the end result. This keeps the focus on local capacity and reducing reliance on external support.

- **Resource sharing:** By encouraging everyone involved, from the local residents to professionals, councillors to business owners, ABCD shifts the focus on abundance, not scarcity, it refocuses from "what is needed" to "what is available" within a community. It highlights the "gift" everyone has to contribute; resources and sharing of assets, the sharing of equipment, and donated space.

- **Lead by stepping back:** Empower local leadership & ownership – Facilitators should encourage residents to take charge. Avoid over reliance on a single champion. True sustainability happens when the community, not external professionals, drive the agenda.

  Town and Parish Councillors are local convenors. They encourage and empower community mobilisation "By placing power in the hands of communities, supporting local leadership, and investing in the assets that already exist, the district is building a future that is more resilient, inclusive, and rooted in place" .

Create Sustaining Mechanisms

- **Host regular meetings:** Maintain regular—ideally weekly or monthly—meetings to keep momentum going, ensuring they are open and welcoming to new members, all views are listened to and used to help shape plans in the area.

- **Develop a core group:** Stewardship groups – Identify a committed, small group of residents who are enthusiastic about the community to drive initiatives forward.

- **Use storytelling:** Collect and share stories of successful community actions. This highlights cultural capital and motivates others to get involved.

Celebrate!

- **Embrace small wins:** Do not wait for major project milestones. Celebrate small, visible successes early that can boost confidence and motivation.

  Celebrating achievements and successes in communities is key to developing momentum, which helps sustain long-term community engagement, and builds a tangible legacy. It acts as a powerful tool to empower individuals and groups to own their development process, transforming them from service recipients into active residents.

Be patient and adaptable

- **Take time:** ABCD is not a quick fix and requires patience to allow deep-rooted changes to emerge.

Test, Learn and Grow

- **Embrace 'Failure' as learning:** Nothing is a failure, so encourage experimentation and allow the community to learn from what does not work, rather than enforcing rigid metric and KPIs that do not tell you about true impacts of a community.

Successful ABCD communities pilot schemes in East Hampshire

CASE STUDY

Horndean

The Horndean Asset Mapping pilot began in January with a small group of local organisations and resident representatives. It started with a launch event, followed by an asset mapping walk around the village centre to identify local strengths and build relationships.

This led to the formation of the Stewardship Group, which now meets regularly to support and sustain community-led activity.

Several small but impactful initiatives quickly emerged. These included a partnership project between young people, The Kings Arms Youth organisation, the Parish Council and British Telecom to create artwork covering graffiti on the BT exchange building.

The 'Small Sparks' fund supported early ideas, including a resident-led "20 is Plenty" campaign and funding for venue hire for a new Health Hub, being developed by Horndean Community Association and local social prescribers.

Other activities included a volunteer fair delivered alongside an existing event, a fibromyalgia support group, and a new wellbeing walk.

The pilot has also strengthened connections between groups. Community organisations are now sharing learning and supporting each other. For example, volunteers caring for a war memorial were connected with a local retirement village, which is now helping with its upkeep. Links have also been made between the U3A and a local pensioners' lunch club to help boost membership and sustain the group.

Overall, the Horndean pilot shows how starting with conversations and connections can lead to practical, community-led action and lasting local impact.



CASE STUDY

Four Marks and Medstead

The Four Marks and Medstead Asset Mapping pilots commenced in January 2026, following a launch event the work began with some initial tabletop asset mapping with a small group of local representatives who worked together to plot community assets, physical and non-physical, on large maps of the two neighbouring villages. From this very first exercise new community connections were made, and a clearer picture emerged of the strengths, skills and assets already present within the two communities.

These initial 'asset maps' have continually evolved throughout the pilot, they've been discussed at many local groups and with local residents to share the information on the wealth of community activity that exists locally, identify opportunities for collaboration and continue building on the information gathered.

A combined stewardship group for the two pilot villages was formed, including representatives from both villages, many of whom hold community roles in both parishes. Whilst the two areas and parish councils are leading their own paths with their asset mapping work, the combined stewardship group has helped to bridge connections between the villages and share learning.

It was evident early on that both Four Marks and Medstead already benefit from a huge wealth of community activity (groups, events, sports, social gatherings). Four Marks Parish Council (FMPC) have recognised the role they can play in helping to promote, connect and celebrate community activity, building on the strengths that already exist within the parish. New social media content has already begun and plans are underway for a new online community resource. The local community magazine, Four Marks News, have also been supporting this local promotion for both Four Marks and Medstead parishes.

FMPC also recognise the importance of supporting their existing local volunteer base and arranged a celebration get together for community volunteers, with plans to expand on this further in future. One of the local care homes has also shown interest in this work and are building new connections with groups in the local community and have plans to run community courses and launch monthly fish & chip supper for residents in the village.

Through this pilot, Medstead Parish Council have recognised that ABCD is a useful tool for identifying local strengths, increasing resident involvement and strengthening community engagement. Following an engaging slot at the annual parish meeting an open public session was held encouraging the community to come forward with ideas for local initiatives, alongside proposals for funding which may be supported via the Parish Council's Neighbourhood CIL funds. MPC hope to build further on this engagement by introducing a regular Parish Council Councillor surgery 'cuppa & chat'. Other ideas being explored include a community book swap and welly-boot exchange.

Medstead Village Hall have also been a key organisation in the Medstead pilot, they hold a pivotal role as a hub of community activity and source of information in the village. With support from a local social prescriber, they have expanded the reach of their community information into the local GP surgeries. The Village Hall are exploring how they can further build on their role as a community hub by looking into providing new activities such as youth activities and a community directory.

In summary, the Four Marks and Medstead pilots have shown that even in areas with strong community activity there is value in identifying, celebrating and connecting local assets, helping communities build on their existing strengths and encouraging new activity and relationships. This helps to safeguard the existence, sustainability and growth of thriving local communities.

Useful references and links to further information

References

We have compiled a list of useful references to local authorities and other organisations offering advice, guidance and examples of good practice in Asset Based Community Development.

www.easthants.gov.uk/ABCDreferencelinks

Nurture Development

www.nurturedevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/

ABCD Institute

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute is a non-profit membership organisation that supports a global network of community-based practitioners.

abcdinstitute.org/

Nesta

Asset-Based Community Development for Local Authorities: How to rebuild relationships with communities through asset-based approaches.

www.nesta.org.uk/report/asset-based-community-development-local-authorities/

ABCD in Leeds

Leeds City Council has funded the ABCD since 2013, working with our partners in the third sector to discover people in neighbourhoods and communities, unlocking potential and creating the key building blocks of sustainable community led action.

www.abcdinleeds.com



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EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ABCD – Asset Based Community Development Guide

This guide will be reviewed annually (or sooner following any significant changes to policy or legislation) to ensure that is remains fit for purpose.