



Funded by
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Kirklees Community Anchors Impact and Learning



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What are Community Anchors?

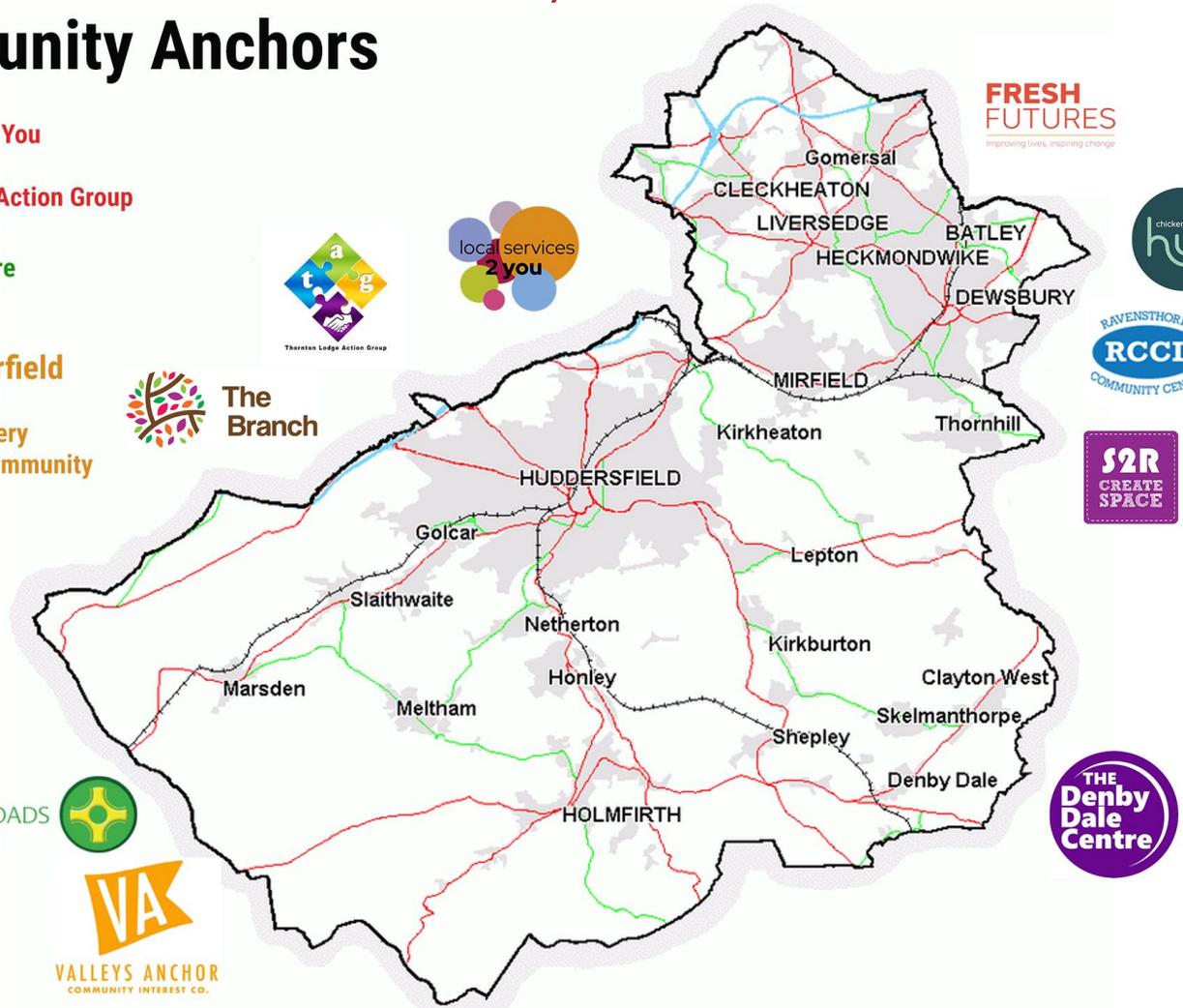
Community Anchors

Huddersfield
 Local Services 2 You
 The Branch
 Thornton Lodge Action Group

Rural
 Denby Dale Centre
 Valleys Anchor
 Crossroads

Dewsbury/Mirfield
 Chickenley Hub
 Support 2 Recovery
 Ravensthorpe Community Centre

Batley/Spennings
 Fresh Futures



Community Anchors:

- are **independent** organisations
- are **community-led** organisations
- meet the **diverse needs** of local people
- build on existing **relationships, strengths and alliances** to provide local services
- provide a **voice** to local people
- work in enabling and co-productive ways to shape their services and activities

There are currently **ten Community Anchors in Kirklees** supporting local activities, community groups and community organisations in their areas.



Why were they set up?

Community Anchors were **set up in 2021**, emerging as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time, Community organisations that were **well established in their local areas** were playing a key role in supporting mutual aid groups and others to help people in need. The unique conditions of the pandemic required local organisations to **leverage their local knowledge, expertise and wisdom to meet the needs** of people in their communities.

After the pandemic, the **Community Anchors adapted their efforts to align with funding opportunities**. They are currently funded by the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support and strengthen local activities** in response to local needs and aspirations.

Third Sector Leaders Kirklees has coordinated this effort across the district since the Covid pandemic.



What do they do?

Community Anchors **Support** includes **training, learning, advice on governance, information about funding, communications expertise** or anything which helps community groups and community organisations work in effective, inclusive and accountable ways.

Community Anchors **Connect** community organisations and community groups to other local groups, activities, building spaces and services for example **social prescribing or other health services**. Community Anchors can also make connections with decision-makers including local grant-makers, politicians and Council contacts.

Community Anchors **Unite** community organisations and community groups. This means bringing people together to share plans and ideas, have a strong voice on community concerns and work together on more ambitious community projects.

A group of approximately 12 people of diverse ages and ethnicities are posing in a lush, green forest. Some are standing on a rocky path, while one person is sitting in the foreground. Many have their arms raised in a celebratory gesture. The background is filled with dense foliage and trees.

Community Anchors Impact Data

(April 2024 – March 2025)

General support

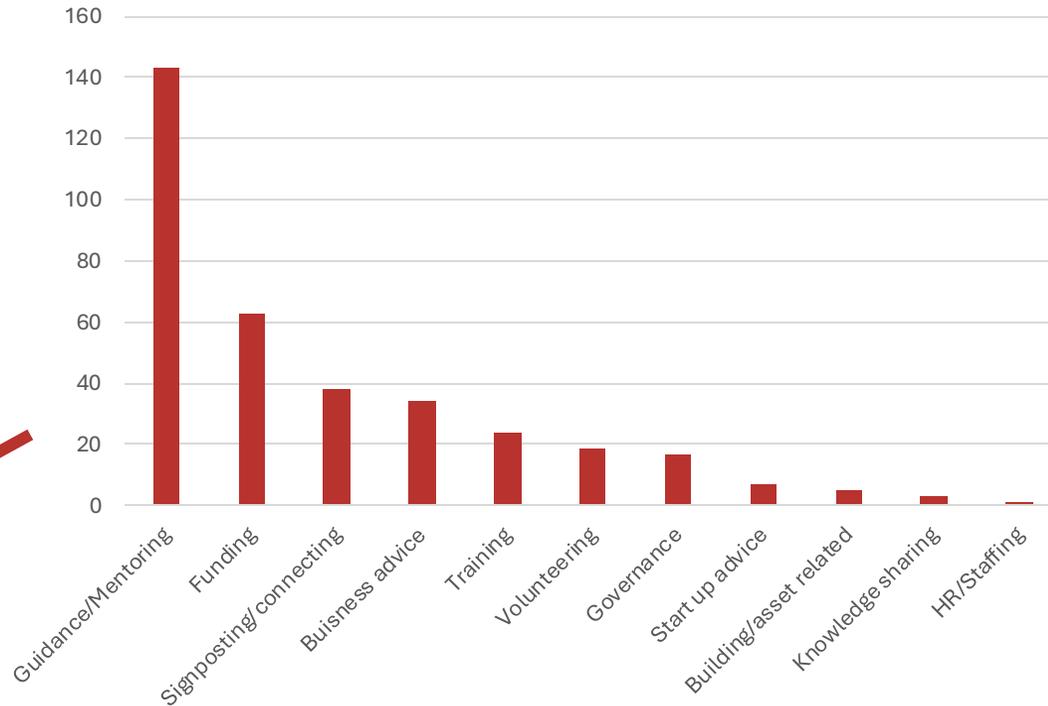


53% of organisations accessing **general support** from Community Anchors were **informal (unincorporated) groups**



Community Anchors helped **247 different (individual) organisations** in one year

Types of support



60% of organisations who have received **general support** from Community Anchors were in the **top three Index of Multiple Deprivation areas** in Kirklees.



Top three areas addressed by community groups and community organisations that received general support from Community Anchors were **community, health and wellbeing and mental health.**

Events support



68% of events supported by the Community Anchors were in the top three Index of Multiple Deprivation areas within Kirklees.



58% of events were designed to support specific population groups.



42% of events supported through Community Anchors have been open to all members of the local community



Over **50%** of events Community Anchors supported were one-off events - other events provided ongoing support to local people.

Volunteering support



Community Anchors supported local groups and organisations to fill **608** volunteer roles.

“A volunteer supported our digital hub; they gained confidence in supporting other people and they were happy to help!”

“Volunteer drivers play a key role, providing a friendly, safe, and supportive environment that helps members feel comfortable and confident travelling as a group”

“Created happy, engaged volunteers who helped activities run smoothly and attendees feel supported.”



Top types of support provided for volunteering to community groups and community organisations were **volunteer management, general support and training/mentoring.**

A group of approximately 15 diverse individuals are seated around a large, light-colored conference table in a meeting room. They are looking towards the camera with various expressions, some smiling. The room has a whiteboard in the background and papers and water bottles on the table.

Stories demonstrating the diversity of support from Community Anchors

Chestnut Centre: A Community Hub

Local Services 2 You (LS2Y) hosts a diverse range of local community groups as a vital community hub in their local area. Being a host at the Chestnut Centre means LS2Y provides **physical space** for local community groups, alongside **safeguarding guidance, emotional support** for group leaders, and **access to small pots** of funding.

This holistic support helps groups to start up, operate safely and thrive as part of a strong local community hub. Their support includes the following local groups:

- **Chat & Compute** - a weekly group which provides digital literacy support to community members.
- **The Lipstick Project** - a community-driven group that focuses on self-care and empowerment for individuals, particularly women.
- **Bread and Butter Thing** - this group provide crucial support for people facing hardships due to the cost-of-living crisis. The Chestnut Centre serves as a collection and distribution point.
- **Coffee Connections** - provides a relaxed, informal setting for people to meet. Primarily targeting towards new arrivals to Huddersfield, the volunteers running the group have personal experience of immigration and asylum and support members with any signposting to additional support.

LS2Y is a Social Enterprise, working across Huddersfield with local communities. It creates quality local employment, supports sustainable community services, and delivers outstanding services that create positive outcomes for children, families and communities.

Zenebu from Coffee Connections:

“I am so grateful we started this group with help from LS2Y and have been able to support people new to this country.”



Parent Sanctuary CIC

The Branch were approached by the Director of **Parent Sanctuary CIC**, seeking support to explore ways of educating parents about sling safety. Following an initial meeting, they agreed to trial a collaboration by integrating their service with an existing parent group based at the Jubilee Centre.

Six families were supported during the initial visit. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from participants. A **fortnightly attendance has now been agreed upon to continue offering sling safety advice and support for parents**. This partnership demonstrates a successful example of supporting new community-led initiatives that align with the needs of local families, while maximising use of existing group spaces.

Parent Sanctuary also joined the **Melody Makers (another local group)** for a trial session. The aim was to assess whether fortnightly attendance would be beneficial and feasible. Plans were made to follow up with a further meeting to evaluate outcomes and explore next steps.

The Branch is a grassroots organisation developed by passionate volunteers from the needs in the community. They provide community places and spaces where people from different backgrounds can find love, connection and belonging.



Keeping young people safe

Bonfire Night is a busy and often challenging period for the local community. The recent focus has been reducing anti-social behaviour, preventing fire-related incidents, and supporting young people through direct engagement and practical activities.

Thornton Lodge Action Group delivered sessions involving talks to **22 young people** led by West Yorkshire Police on safety and expectations ahead of Bonfire Night. Sessions were delivered in an environment where young people felt comfortable and confident in their own wellbeing space.

In terms of impact, the young people **demonstrated a better understanding of the dangers of fireworks misuse and the serious physical harm and property damage** that can occur. They gained clearer knowledge of the **legal and personal consequences** of antisocial behaviour, including police involvement and community impact. They reported being more **likely to avoid unsafe firework use and antisocial behaviour** during Bonfire Night, and to **influence their peers** to behave safely. Furthermore, direct engagement with West Yorkshire Police helped **build trust, reduce fear, and improve perceptions of the police** as supportive rather than punitive. This early intervention and clear messaging contributed to a lower risk of firework-related incidents and antisocial behaviour in the local area.

Thornton Lodge Action Group is a local charity focussing on addressing needs in the local areas relating to education and training, health and wellbeing, sports and recreation, and the environment.



Nourish to Flourish

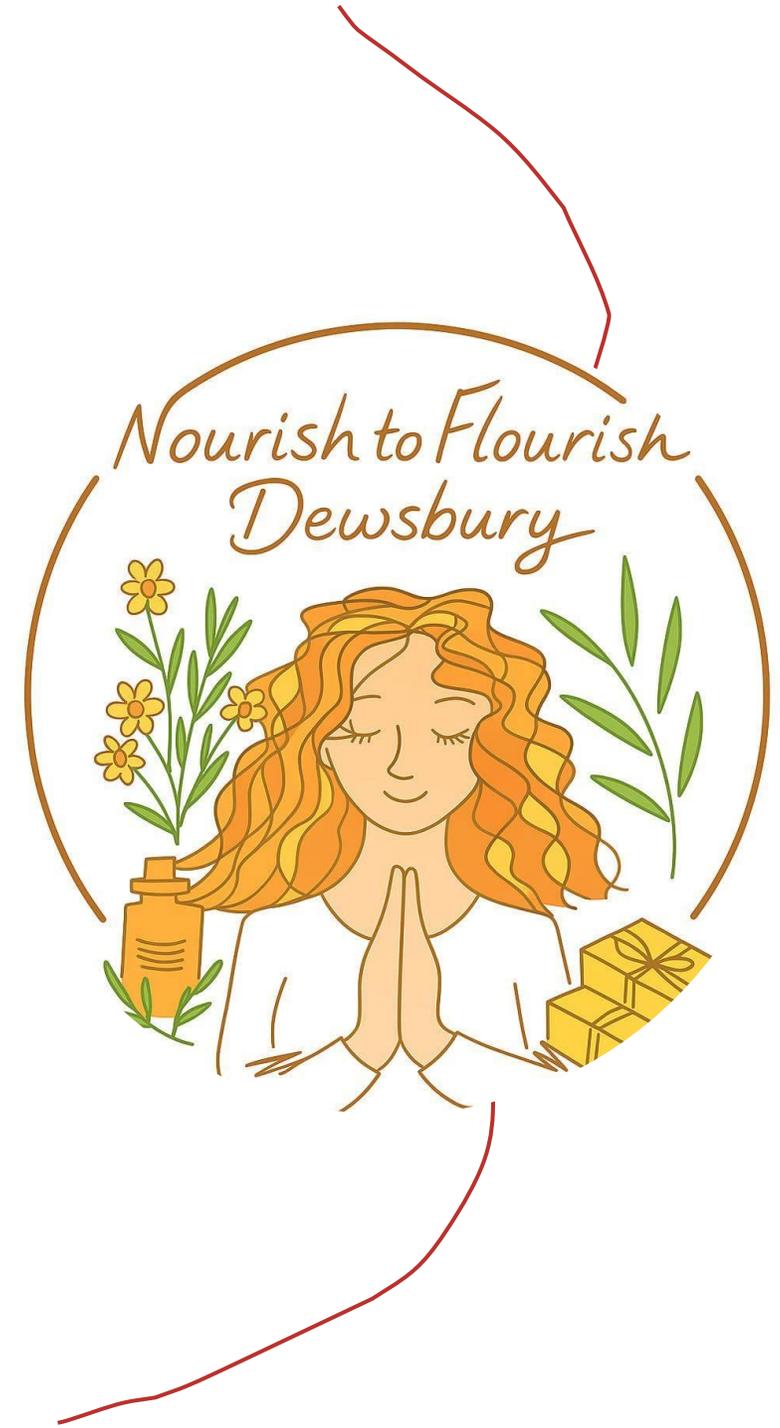
Support to Recovery (S2R) received a request from a brand-new, women-only group called 'Nourish to Flourish', who were about to hold a launch event after procuring a free space to meet each week. Sian from S2R met with them the week before their launch and offered **advice on event safety, risk management and follow-up information**. She also attended the launch event along with **25 to 30 other women** and shared information about S2R and other local services.

After the event, Sian contacted the organisers and offered her continued support. Nourish for Flourish asked Sian to **help them with a funding application, fine-tuning the bid document** until they were both satisfied it had covered all their targets. They sent the **bid and were successful**.

Facilitator Zara added Sian to the WhatsApp group which currently **has 88 members**, so she can keep up to date and respond quickly where needed. The group are aware that Sian is **available to them for ongoing support and advice**.

Sian has since helped Nourish to Flourish to **procure a promotional stall** at the annual Lantern Parade, held at Crow Nest Park in Dewsbury – this involved supporting all attendees to engage as volunteers on the evening of the event and in advance to encourage people to make items that could be sold to make extra funds that will help with the continuation of the group .

Support to Recovery is an independent mental health and wellbeing charity, providing support across Kirklees through a range of social wellness opportunities, nature-based and creative activities.



Engaging the local community

Ravensthorpe Community Centre (RCC) engaged in a series of events that promoted health and wellbeing, inclusion, and community development. These **events were designed to support local families, individuals, and community groups** through celebration, education, and shared experiences.

In total, **over 1,200 people engaged across 9 events**—each helping to grow a more informed, connected, and resilient community. Two events to highlight:

1. The Flower Bomb Event (60+ attendees)
2. RCC's 25th Anniversary (1000+ attendees)

Both events **celebrated creativity and connection** with local community groups and organisations and a **networking opportunity for group leaders/ coordinators**.

RCC also held **educational events** like the School Readiness Session and Fire Safety Workshop, which **equipped families with vital knowledge, and support services** within the local community.

Ravensthorpe Community Centre is the largest community-based organisation within Dewsbury both in terms of services delivered and reach.



A New Start, A New Future

Chickenley Hub has supported a local volunteer-led group called Dewsbury Cares who work with homeless and vulnerable individuals. The group has been providing essential services such as food, clothing, and emotional support from a modest facility in the town. As demand for their services grew, the need for new premises had become increasingly urgent.

Chickenley Hub identified a new premises in the heart of the town centre, close to their original location. This central position made the venue easily accessible for the people who rely on their support. The group is planning to re-locate to the new premises in Spring 2026 (see photograph on the right-hand side), coinciding with the commencement of the market refurbishment works.

The new building includes a toilet and has the potential for installing a shower and washing machine, two essential services not previously available. The ability to shower and wash clothing is a huge step forward in helping people preserve their dignity and hygiene, especially for those sleeping rough or in insecure accommodation.

Chickenley Hub is a community centre that offers educational services, health advice and leisure activities for all.



People Helping People

This event was developed and delivered by **Fresh Futures** in direct response to priorities identified by the local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) groups in North Kirklees – particularly around **two key issues: transport and volunteering**. We **collaborated with the Dewsbury community anchor S2R and Kirklees Community Plus teams** across the North and WYCA.

The People Helping People gathering brought together nearly **40 attendees, representing almost 20 different community organisations** across North Kirklees. The event was designed as a **local network meeting for community, voluntary, and mutual aid groups in Batley and Spen**.

Participants had the opportunity to:

- **Connect with TSL Kirklees** to learn about **local funding opportunities and support** available.
- Meet their **local Community Anchor organisation**, Fresh Futures, and hear how they can **provide tailored local support**.
- Share **updates about their own services and activities**.
- Explore **practical ways to recruit volunteers, promote their work, secure funding, and collaborate** across the sector.

Fresh Futures is a regional charity that supports vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people, and their families, within Kirklees and surrounding areas.



Living with Long Covid (Peer support)

Living with Long Covid is a **peer support group** that previously operated as a Kirklees Council Wellness Service group. The group closed due to Council cuts but subsequently formed itself again as people valued the personal benefits of being part of the peer support group.

The group acknowledged the **need for better marketing**. They connected with **Denby Dale Centre** to discuss **what it needs to do to get to the point of grant applications**. This would enable them to improve their marketing. The group was also signposted to **LS2Y** (as the closest community anchor to one of their other meeting points) to **continue longer term support and connected with Community Plus and Wellness Works** for ongoing support and collaboration.

The group has now reached the point where it **accepts it needs a constitution and has a background management committee** to keep things operating. **The group is now forming a Constituted community group.**

The **Denby Dale Centre** is a leading local independent Kirklees charity operating community transport, social activities and dementia groups.

Group Member:

"This Living with Long Covid group has saved my life. I thought everything was lost, that nobody believed me, my normally healthy mental health collapsed. This group gave me a safe space to experiment in language to describe how I am feeling and how really hard life is. This group got me from rock bottom... and it showed me the light to accept that I CAN live with Long Covid..."



Holmfirth Pride!

Holmfirth Pride! A brand-new community festival in the heart of Holmfirth

Holmfirth was shocked when a young man was beaten up outside a bar late one weekend. It quickly transpired it was a homophobic attack.

The **Valleys Anchor** is an **active member of the local WhatsApp business forum** and when local people discussed the idea of having a **Pride event** to send a clear message that homophobia was not welcome here, Valleys Anchor stepped in to **provide help and make this event happen**. Valleys Anchor gave a commitment of **£300 in cash funding to cover set up costs** within 24 hours of the idea being pitched. **The final project raised over £3000.**

With experience in **event management**, Valley Anchor worked with local councillors and the Parish to **help put together a fund**. They **messaged the key officers in Kirklees and discussed doing the event on the same weekend as the Kirklees Pride activities** in Huddersfield.

In less than 6 weeks the **volunteers from the business community with support from Holmfirth Forward and the Valleys Anchor** created a diverse programme that was a huge hit with the town attracting **over 2000 people**. **Plans are already in place for 2026.**

The Valleys Anchor is a CIC and are passionate about locally run community activity and they want to see it thrive.

Isobel Heeley, festival volunteer

“Over 65 central businesses put up pride bunting and put on events. The event was extremely successful; hundreds of locals came to show their support and even the BBC reported it. Holmfirth’s community really showed that whoever you are, you are welcome and accepted in our town.”



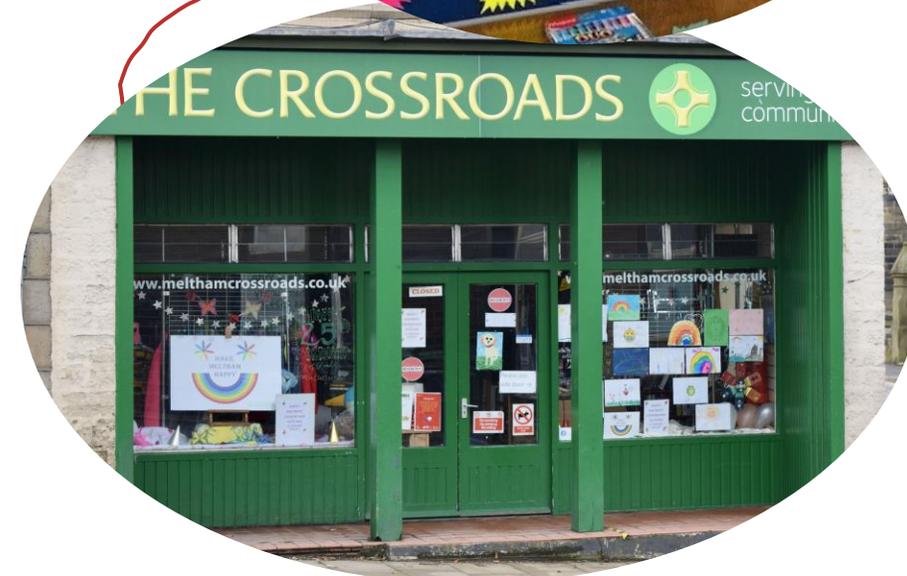
Meltham Community Day

'Meltham Community Day' was an opportunity for local groups (existing and new) to **meet, to network and learn** from each other. It also provided **opportunities particularly for new residents in Meltham, to bring people together and showcase the different groups and activities available** in the area. This was the fourth Community Day, which **Crossroads** have collaborated with other organisations.

There have been hundreds of new homes built in Meltham and so **information about events were circulated** through flyers, letter boxes, posters and on social media.

Working in collaboration with the Carlile Institute, **30+ groups and around 100+ members of the public attended**. The Northern Power Grid stall was very popular and informative. **Staff educated people** how to notify the grid if they were without power, and how to get real time updates. They also helped people find who was their supplier if they had moved into a new property and explained about renewable energy solutions.

Crossroads in Meltham is a charity that supports the people of Meltham, through their charity shop, food bank and the Crossroads Centre which provides help and advice to people.





Summary of the learning

- Community Anchors provide diverse and essential infrastructure **support** reflecting the diverse needs of new and existing community groups and organisations. Local groups and community organisations operating in the most deprived communities in Kirklees are benefitting from Community Anchors support.
- Community Anchors **connect** groups and organisations to others, connect with their local communities to proactively spot opportunities for support, connect with other Community Anchors to ensure local groups and organisations can access support when they operate in more than one local area and connect with wider partners for the benefit of their local community.
- Community Anchors **unite** local communities by bringing them together when opportunities emerge in relation to topics of community concern or moments for community celebration. This fosters a strong sense of local community.



Contact

TSL Kirklees is proud to have supported the Community Anchors for the past 5 years! Their work is vital in supporting local communities and we want Community Anchors to continue providing this support.

If you would like to learn more about the Community Anchors and support their work, please contact

Rajwinder Cheema at raj@tslkirklees.org.uk

If you have contacts who might be interested in learning about this work, please feel free to share this information with them.