



February 2024

Community Engagement in East Hunsbury

Our parish community engagement project is based on the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people in East Hunsbury. These can be special interest groups, organisations, or groups of people in similar situations, where we work to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.

What is our goal?

The goal of this engagement is to create supportive, long-term community relationships that are mutually beneficial for the health, strength, and well-being of East Hunsbury.

It is important to note, that *the parish council does not have to deliver all activities itself*. In scoping what is on offer in East Hunsbury, we take note of other providers and venues, including Library (family orientated programme), Danes Camp Leisure Centre (sport and fitness), Abbey Centre (wide range of activities), Collingtree Pub (includes targeted activities) and including the parish council operated Blackymore CC (wide range of activities).

How do we do this?

By people either directly taking part in parish-led activities [see list A below](#) OR by them valuing and knowing that their community is being made better, more vibrant, and active (feedback to social media, staff, volunteers, and Cllrs)

By communication - updating the community with key information. This includes East Hunsbury Life parish magazine, social media platforms, flyers, leaflets, information given by partner organisations

By enabling groups to run their own activities, or being joint delivery partners [see list B below](#)

By supporting local organisations – having a strong focus on collaboration and shared purpose - schools, churches, libraries [see list C below](#)

A) Community inclusion in parish-council-led projects:

1. **Age specific groups** – Youth Club is delivered by Danes Camp Team (weekly sessions term time and Summer hols) and Seniors Club (2 meetings per month plus offshoot activities for wellbeing coordinated inhouse)
2. **Intergenerational Projects** – School of Life skill swaps with all local schools (East Hunsbury Primary – Simon de Senlis – Wootton Park). This includes:

Library based games and debating * cookery skills * Q&A sessions * gardening projects * Involvement in local SEN units at schools * involving pupils in Seniors Projects – helping to deliver activities as part of their courses

3. **Main events** – East Hunsbury Summer Fete, East Hunsbury Remembers (includes community workshops over period of months), Hunsbury Christmas Fair, The Wellbeing Hub, Green Community Day.
These events are open to all the community – all ages. Many of these events include specific elements for young people, including activities, workshops (wellbeing day planting session and poppy making for remembrance), also opportunity for schools to perform (Christmas)
4. **Get Active – wellbeing initiatives** - to improve individual health or to improve our community life. Includes East Hunsbury Litter Pickers (all ages, family groups, youth organisations) * Gardening Buddies (senior and youth sections) * Big Sing (adult group) *Welcome Space

n.b. Get Active includes particular Seniors' activities – includes Craft Sessions * Strollers * Tai Chi * Yoga * Pétanque * History Group *Star Gazers *Book Club (many of these seniors' activities are supported with funding via the Get Active Seniors Committee (a separately constituted group, who were created in order to apply for grant funding which was no longer open to the parish council. But many Seniors sessions are delivered by Seniors volunteers, who have come forward to give their free time in areas of expertise

For all of these activities, the community engagement officer oversees planning, booking and delivery of these sessions, including promotion, coordination, and management of volunteers.

B) Facilitated or joint projects with input from parish community engagement:

1. Abbey Centre Fridge – assistance to bring the project to East Hunsbury, helping to find location, promotion
2. Monday Club Lunch Club – promotion of activity and recruitment of volunteers – assistance to gain support from local businesses
3. Friends of Hunsbury Library – Quiz nights organisation and promotion
4. Arts groups – support to provide venue and community promotion, Crafty Bees, EH Arts Group
5. Health initiatives – promotion of opportunities to take part to community (walking groups, step forward balancing groups, groups hosted at Blackymore CC
6. Cuppa with a Copper – provision of venue and promotion
7. West Northants Customer Services Team – assistance with venue and promotion
8. Support to schools' initiatives, including support of their green projects, forest schools, eco teams
9. Abbey Centre – promotion of community activities and sharing of ideas
10. Hunsbury Library – promotion of activities (particularly for families and young people) plus sharing of ideas
11. Danes Camp Leisure Centre/Trilogy – delivery of youth clubs funded by the parish council

For these activities, the community engagement officer is key link to other organisations, and creates opportunities for greater involvement in East Hunsbury,

C) A strong focus on collaboration and shared purpose

1. Abbey Centre – promotion of community activities for all ages and sharing of ideas
2. Hunsbury Library – promotion of activities (particularly for families and young people) plus sharing of ideas
3. Local Schools – promoting activities – sharing success – outlining opportunities for local families
4. East Hunsbury WI – promotion of activities, creation of joint projects, mutual support
5. Collingtree Pub – promotion of focussed community activities – shared ideas
6. Danes Camp/Trilogy – promotion of activities – sharing success – opportunities for people of all ages

For these activities, the community engagement officer is main link into organisations, to be across shared purpose and opportunities to support groups, for the benefit of the area.

What are the outcomes from Community Engagement and the benefit to the Parish Council?

East Hunsbury Parish is regarded as a successful example of community engagement within the county. Other councils and parishes look to engage and to seek advice, regarding how to create a similar programme.

Our key outcomes include:

- Having impact and creating action
- Keeping people connected in sustained and ongoing engagement
- Creating a base for volunteering (managed volunteers)
- Creating a real participatory culture (encouraging the community to be innovative and involved)
- Innovative use of buildings – Library space – and outdoor spaces
- Creating a sense of community
- Celebrating community achievements and sharing success

What are the challenges to the programme?

- Funding – the time to research and write funding bids
- Time – a small team
- Retaining volunteers – good management and ongoing support required (volunteers are not employees)
- Lack of venues (particularly evening venues)
- Keeping across community need – and scoping activities in the area

- Changes of Councillors – losing direct involvement in delivering of projects – lack support to small team (Cllrs may not have relevant skills or time)
- Staff changes (leaving - retirement) – the loss of key skills and knowledge