**Together In Penn Fields**

**Information taken from our**

**Lottery Bid – 2021**

**Lea Road Community Church**

**Lea Road, Penn Fields**

**Wolverhampton**

1. **Introduction - The Project – A summary**

Within the neighbourhood in which Lea Road Community Church is located there are a large number of people who have arrived in the City in the last ten years. Many of them are from Eastern Europe and Africa and more specifically many are Roma people. An extremely good relationship has been established with many of these people and this project has been put together following consultation with people from these communities including both adults and young people.

The project has been further developed over the last 6 months in order to accommodate the changed priorities and activity necessitated by Covid 19, the lockdowns that have taken place in the City and the increased pressures on people and communities.

The project that we are proposing has two clear aims:

**Aim 1.** To consolidate and develop the programme that we run in order to more fully respond to the real needs of the people who live in the area in a way that adds value to what we already do and responds to the new needs that emerged as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic and to make it more sustainable for the future.

We wish to achieve this aim by:

1. Developing the Drop In and make it sustainable and aligning it with the food project.
2. Providing developmental workshops for adults
3. Providing a weekly youth club that will raise the aspirations of those who attend
4. Providing training courses that give people basic skills qualifications
5. Running and growing the Food Project for at least the next 3 years

**Aim 2.**  Improve the accessibility of the building and secure it as a community resource for the future.

We wish to achieve this aim by:

1. Refurbishing the lift to the first floor so that it is safe for people to use.
2. Increase the use of the building and the income from room lettings

This project fits closely with all three of the funding priorities of the Reaching Communities, Lottery Fund.

1. **Bring people together and build strong relationships in and across communities.** This project will bring people together from different communities and continue the development of the relationships that we have already begun to establish. This will include people from the indigenous community and people from migrant communities who have started to settle in the area. It will also ensure that those people who have been directly affected by Covid 19 are supported. It will help to ensure that people who have potentially been isolated by Covid will have contact with other people in a mutually supportive way leading to improved mental health.
2. **Improve the places and spaces that matter to communities**

The building that this project will be based in has been a well known community asset for many years and has been at the heart of work that has been innovative and ground-breaking in Wolverhampton, especially in relation to new arrivals in the City and marginalised people. The continuation of it as a viable space that all can use is very important. This project includes ensuring that the first floor of the building is once again accessible to all. As a place from which the Food Project has been run it has gained an even greater level of importance within the Neighbourhood at this time.

1. **Enable more people to fulfil their potential by working together to address issues at the earliest possible stage.**

The aspirations of the people who we are working with are extremely low. The workshops and the training sessions are all designed to improve the confidence of people and increase their chances of securing employment. Most significant are the low expectations that the children and young people have of themselves. Intervention at an early stage through providing targeted activities for them will increase their aspirations for the future. Another major issue is health with many of the young people, already, by the age of 11 being overweight. Dental health is also particularly poor. Early intervention around these issues will contribute to enabling the targeted children and young people to reach their full potential and lead healthy and fulfilled lives.

All children have lost a considerable amount of their schooling during the past year and many have not been able to engage with on-line learning due to lack of suitable IT equipment and access to the internet at home. This is certainly the case for many of the children that both attended the Drop in and are now being supported through the Food Project. There is clear evidence that children who go to school hungry are severely affected in their educational attainment. The Project is providing food to families that include at least 30 children. The project will ensure that the number of children in the neighbourhood whose education is affected by food poverty is reduced.

1. **Impact of Covid 19**

Covid 19 has had a huge impact on Lea Road Community Church, on the groups that have traditionally used the building, the people who live in the Penn Fields area and most specifically on the communities that this project has been designed to benefit.

**Impact on the Building**

As for every other church and community building the first lockdown in March 2020 led to the immediate and complete closure of the Church Community Centre. This resulted in the complete loss of income from the groups that were, up to that point using the building. The building re-opened in August 2020 but with only two of the groups who had been using it being able to re-open in a Covid secure way at that time. In September the building re-opened for church services and another group using the building returned. The second lockdown in November 2020 has meant that these groups that had returned have been forced to close once again.

**Impact on the Drop In and the Youth Work**

The Drop In and the youth work that had been running successfully were forced to close. This was both as a result of the closing of the building and that two of the key volunteers who were running the project had to self-isolate as they fell into the category of the people most vulnerable to Covid 19. The full-time volunteer who was working for the church had to leave and return immediately to the USA, her home country.

So far neither of these groups have been able to restart.

**Impact on the local communities**

The Penn Fields area has suffered from many of the same effects that have impacted on the country as a whole. However due to low income levels the impact has been great.

* There has been an increase in food poverty and it was in response to this that the food project has been developed. (See section 2 below)
* Children have missed out on months of schooling and many have found it hard to access the online support and work that has been set by schools due to lack of the IT resources that are needed to access this.
* Having young children at home for many months has led to increased levels of stress and anxiety.

During this time volunteers have tried to maintain contact with some of these people and provided support in various ways including:

* Ensuring that they have had access to food from the food project
* Helping them access the school meal vouchers that were available to them
* Lobbying the schools to ensure that children have been able to access educational resources.

**Food Project**

This is a community project that has been developed during the past year to provide food for people living in the neighbourhood of the church who have been directly affected by the Covid19 pandemic.  This could be either by having to self-isolate, being on reduced hours at work or having lost their jobs altogether.

Surplus food is collected from Fare Share in Birmingham as well as Greggs and other supermarkets when available. The food is boxed up and either collected or delivered to people in need living in the area. The project has built up and over eighty people a week are being supported with food. The project has, to date, been exclusively developed and run by volunteers.

The project has been funded by individual donations, grants from Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) which is a charity, who aim to improve resource efficiency. The Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) gave them a grant to help reduce food waste by providing small to medium sized organisations with the means to safely store and redistribute food that would otherwise be wasted. The grant funding has been used to buy large freezers and fridges, racking on which the ambient food can be stored, other project running costs and to pay a part-time (5 hours a week) co-ordinator for a year.

Neighbourly have provided a grant to purchase food for several months from Fare Share.

Each week donations for the food are collected from the recipients on a voluntary basis. Other donations have been received for other people on a voluntary basis. Each week we need to raise about £45 in order to buy the food to distribute from FareShare. This buys 150 kilos of food that is considered to be the equivalent of providing enough food for 300 meals.

The Food Project is helping us to keep in contact with people living in the neighbourhood of the church whilst at the same time supporting some of the most vulnerable people including those who are having to shield at this time, refugees and asylum seekers and those whose work has been directly impacted by Covid. This project has also enabled us to build new relationships and for the volunteers to demonstrate practical love and caring by putting their neighbours who are in need in touch with the project or enabling food to be delivered to them.

In developing the project we have created both a Facebook page that is being shared to assist in the promotion of the project and a new email address that is being used as the referral point for people that can benefit from the project. The address is **learoadfood@gmail.com**We are hoping to grow the reach of the project and have appointed a part time co-ordinator to organise the collection and distribution of food and to help to identify the people in the Penn Fields and Graiseley area who could most benefit.

**Changes to the original Lottery proposal**

The impact that Covid 19 has had on people living in the local neighbourhood, the building, the groups that use it and the changed priorities have affected the plans that had been in place for the project. Although the basic aims of the project remain the same the changed circumstances and local priorities have led to a number of changes being made to the timetabling of the project and to the detail of what the project will deliver. The other change is that the Food Project which has secured funding for twelve months is going to be needed for at least the next 3 years and will be an important part of the Covid recovery plan.

1. **The background and rationale of the project**

Lea Road Community Church has a long history of working with people who have arrived in the City. This goes back to the people who came from the Caribbean in the 1950’s and in the 1960’s. We are well known and recognised in the City as a place that is welcoming and provides a safe community venue that is open to all. The work that we do complements what is happening at a wider level across the City and provides a more local and personalised approach to the people who live in the area. In particular we believe we are unique in working with people from the Eastern European Roma communities who are not asylum seekers or refugees in the traditional sense. There are very few places in Wolves where the Roma community feel they are safe and offered a warm welcome. Links are established with both The Refugee and Migrant Centre and Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary and people are referred to these organisations as appropriate. (Note: these links with other organisations and Lea Road Community Church and this project in particular are fully set out in section 6). By being aware of what else is going on ensures that we do not duplicate what other groups and organisations are doing. The links that we have developed with other organisations makes sure that the projects and the work we carry out remains relevant and important. Wolverhampton has designated itself as a City of Sanctuary which aims to provide a safe place for people from many places and with many, often difficult experiences to settle. We are registered as one of the Welcome Places that is part of a wider network that provides safe places and a warm welcome to vulnerable people. Parts of the programme that we are seeking to develop will contribute to the wider Welcome Places agenda.

Graiseley and Penn Fields areas continue to be neighbourhoods with transient communities into which people, from many different countries across the world, are constantly arriving. Additionally, the location of our building means it is strategically placed to reach directly into our marginalised community. Several partner agencies, such as the police have noted that over the years, our building has become an established trusted community place.

Over the last seven years we have continued to work with people who are arriving into the City through running a weekly Drop In and also a youth club for young people. This work has previously received Awards for All funding. The programme that we currently run is provided predominantly by volunteers and the use of the buildings is currently offered free. The need and demand has grown considerably and this voluntary approach is no longer sustainable.

Many of the people who will benefit from this project will be people from the Roma Community with whom the Drop In and the Youth Club have been working for the past few years. This group are perceived as being ‘hard to reach’. The proposed project has a unique contribution to make in working with this particular community. The project will not only enable this work to continue but will also provide valuable lessons and examples to other people wishing to work with people from the Roma community. The following quote from a former PCSO who has supported the group for many years helps to illustrate the need for this programme.

 *‘I think because so many Roma are used to being bottom of the pile back in*

 *their home countries they do not fully appreciate the opportunities available*

 *here. It’s like they don’t think it’s for people like them.*

 *I had many conversations with the young people as a PCSO answering*

 *questions about what I did. They just seemed to think that it was something*

 *they could never do. I know a lot work on zero/part time contracts working in*

 *minimum wage jobs through agencies. If we could help them gain a few basic certificates skills eg. First aid, food hygiene, health and safety, as well as reading and language skills they wouldn’t have to accept what seem to be the less desirable jobs offered to them by the agencies. I feel that it’s about raising aspirations*

 *and gaining skills and confidence but in a safe supportive environment*

 *where they can succeed at their own pace’.* Former PCSO

The lessons learnt from this project will be shared across the City through the links that we have with other agencies including the Refugee and Migrant Centre, Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary and Wolverhampton for Everyone.

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As a very valuable community asset there is much use of the building by community groups. The access to the whole of the building, both the ground floor and the first floor is very important. The lift, that was installed when the building was first built, is no longer fit for purpose and can no longer be used safely to carry people. The professional advice is that it needs major refurbishment.

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**3.1** **Develop the Drop In and make it sustainable**

A clear need for the Drop In is well established and prior to Covid between 45 - 55 people per week were attending. The people who attend are mainly from Eastern European Roma communities but also include people from other countries that are seeking refuge and asylum in the UK. Currently this includes people from Albania and Turkey. The people who attend are all on very low levels of income or on benefits. These are particularly low for those people who are seeking asylum and do not have the right to work in the UK.

The Drop In has now been running for the last seven years. There are a number of very committed volunteers who have run the Drop In since its start. The Drop In has consistently supported people who have arrived in the Penn Fields area of Wolverhampton and helped address the needs that they have. These have included help with:

* Housing issues
* Registering with Doctors and Dentists and accessing the Health Service
* Finding school places for children and young people
* Accessing benefits
* Completion of forms relating to all aspects of the above and claims for asylum
* Understanding British society and integration with other local communities
* Safety issues and concerns
* Integration
* Providing space for social events and children’s parties and celebrations.
* Emotional support
* Encouraging links between different communities.

There is still the need to respond to the immediate needs of new arrivals in the City. However, given the growth that has taken place and the limited resources that are available it is no longer possible for this project to be run by volunteers or the venue to be provided free of charge. In addition to this as the Drop In has grown and some of the people coming have become more settled in the area the needs of people have changed. This change has been further accelerated by Covid and additional stresses this has placed on people in the local neighbourhood.

* 1. **Provide developmental workshops for adults**

The suggested programme of workshops would add value to the more open Drop In sessions as they would provide the opportunity for people to develop skills that would enable them to become more employable and also improve their sense of health and well-being. It is planned that each of the workshops would run for a period of six weeks. The consultation earlier in the year and further conversations have shaped the ideas for the workshops for the first year.

Given the impact of Covid there is still a need for the workshops however the precise nature and content of these will need to be re-assessed. The first 6 months of the Project will now be used to undertake a needs assessment, rebuild the contacts with the beneficiaries, build new teams of people who are able to run the different aspects of the project and ensure that it is run in a safe and secure way in line with any Covid guidelines and restrictions that are in place in September 2021 when the project work with the groups will be planned to restart.

The older Roma women who have very limited English have said they want to learn English. Some of the younger women have also expressed an interest, as they speak English reasonably well, but want to improve. The plans for the first year’s workshop programme would include, sewing skills, learning and practicing English, and Tools for Health and Well Being. Consultation with the people engaged with the project will identify what future workshops would be developed.

* 1. **Provide a weekly youth club that will raise the aspirations of those who attend**

The need for local neighbourhood based provision for young people has been increased by the pandemic as young people have missed out significantly on schooling and formal education. The need for a youth club as the City Council Youth Service has, over the last 10 years been dismantled and the only facility available to young people is The Way which is based in the city Centre. Many young people do not feel comfortable going to a City Centre venue where young people from all over the City attend.

In parallel to the Drop In a Youth Club has become popular with young people and again needs to be established on a more secure financial footing. The most important development would be to secure a youth worker who would run the youth club on a weekly basis and give better continuity to this.

The building is ideally designed for a Youth Club as originally the building was designed as a Church Community Centre in partnership with the local authority and for many years the Saints Youth Club, funded by the City Council was located in the building. The sports hall, games rooms, kitchen and smaller meeting rooms make it an ideal venue for the range of activities that the Youth Club can offer. It is also important to note that the area has no open spaces where children and young people can exercise or play.

The programme of the Youth Club would include traditional youth work activities such as arts and crafts, discussions and sports but would also provide opportunities for the young people to have experiences that would not be affordable to them. These would include trips to places such as the cinema, a restaurant for a meal and activities such as ice skating and ten pin bowling. As well as this, as some of the young people get older, links would be made with Wolverhampton University and the City of Wolverhampton College so that they could be introduced to some of the career opportunities that would be open to them.

* 1. **Provide training courses that give people basic skills qualifications**

The aim of the training courses would be similar to that of the workshops in that they would help people to gain confidence and skills that would in turn increase their opportunities for employment. Currently many of the people have low aspirations and their belief in their abilities goes little beyond jobs as cleaners. The training courses that would be put on would include basic first aid, food hygiene certificates and the health and safety course that is needed for people going to work in the construction industry. These would be very basic qualifications that, alongside an increase in self-confidence would improve their chances of obtaining employment. The training courses will be accredited by using trainers and tutors from organisations that are recognised within their own specialist field as being able to deliver accredited training.

For example First Aid training could be delivered by the Red Cross, or another similar provider, who provide training and who are recognised by the Health and Safety Executive as a qualified training provider.

Any food hygiene course that is delivered would ensure that it provided by an organisation that meets the accreditation required. The basic food hygiene certificate, is for people who work or may work in the future in a setting where food is cooked, prepared or handled. This is a course that ensures that participants who go on to work handling food will have satisfied their legal requirements by taking the course that is provided.

As was laid out in the section on the workshops the content and focus of these training sessions will be considered as part of the needs assessment carried out in the first 6 months.

**3.5**  **Ensure that all the rooms in the building are fully accessible to people by refurbishing the lift to the first floor so that it is safe for people to use.**

Currently the first floor of the building is not accessible to people who are wheel chair users or who for whatever reason are unable to use the stairs. This has already resulted in some people not being able to take part in activities on the first floor. There is a lift in the building but despite numerous repairs over the years it is now unsafe for people to use as it stops between floors. We have sought professional advice on this and the only solution is to have it completely refurbished. As a community based organisation that prides itself on offering an inclusive welcome to all it is essential that we have the vital repairs done to the lift so that we can more fully use the first floor of the building. This is particularly important for the workshops and training courses that will be developed.

1. **Project delivery schedule year 1**

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| **Project Delivery Schedule** **Year One** |
| **Month** | **Activity** | **Indicators of success** |
| March 2021 | * Establish a management group for the project
* Recruitment of a Project Co-ordinator
* Recruit a Youth Worker
* Obtain quotes for the refurbishment of the lift
* Food Project continues throughout on a weekly basis
 | * Project co-ordinator and youth workers appointed
* 3 quotes obtained for the lift
* Food project continues on a weekly basis
* Part-time youth worker recruited
 |
| April – June 2021 | * Re-establish links with the people who have historically attended the groups
* Re-build a team of volunteers to work on the project
* Agree contractors for the lift refurbishment
* Start the needs assessment
 | * Links established with the project beneficiaries
* Volunteers recruited
* Contractors appointed
* Needs assessment started
 |
| July –Aug 2021 | * Induction and planning with the workers
* Management arrangements clarified and agreed.
* Work carried out on the lift
* Induction and training of staff and volunteers
* Consultation takes place with project beneficiaries
* Develop a programme plan for the Drop In and the youth club
* Carry on needs assessment
 | * Workers understanding their roles and responsibilities
* Management arrangements in place for the project
* Lift refurbishment completed
* Initial induction and training of staff completed
* Consultation carried out with beneficiaries
* Outline plan for the groups is in place.
* Needs assessment completed
 |
| September 2021 | * Drop In re-opens – once a week
* Consultation regarding the theme of the workshops and the training sessions
* Youth Club sessions start – consultation on the youth club programme.
 | * Regular Drop In sessions re-open taking place with 20-30 people attending
* People who will benefit from the project having had a say in the plans.
* Youth Club sessions restart once a week. Programme developed for Sept - Dec
 |
| Oct Nov 2021 | * Workshops 1 and 2 run
* Management group meets to monitor progress.
 | * Workshops running with a minimum of 8 people recruited to each
 |
| Dec 2021Jan 2022 | * Christmas break for 2 weeks
* Plan Youth Club programme
* Planning for workshops 3 and 4
 | * Jan – April Youth Club programme finalised with the young people
 |
| Feb2022 March 2022 | * Workshops 3 and 4 start
* Training course 1
* Food hygiene? (to be finalised)
 | * Workshops running with a minimum of 8 people recruited to each
* 8- 10 people undertaking a training course
 |
| April 2022  | * Easter break for 2 weeks
 |  |
| May 2022 | * Workshops 5 and 6 start
* Training course 2
* First Aid? To be finalised
* Plan youth club programme – May - July
 | * Workshops running with a minimum of 8 people recruited to each
* 8- 10 people undertaking a training course
* Youth Club programme planned May – July with the young people
 |
| June 2022 | * Independent review and evaluation undertaken including personal stories/case studies captured.
 | * Short report produced to include recommendations for year 2
* Case studies illustrating impact produced.
 |
| July 2022 | * Annual Project trip
* Learning from the project shared with other organisations in Wolverhampton
 | * Subsidised trip run for 35 – 50 people.
* Learning from the project shared across other organisations in the City
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1. **The difference the project will make**

It is anticipated that the project will contribute to the support of people who have recently arrived in the City. The benefits will include:

1. People become better settled into life in the United Kingdom;
2. People have better physical and mental health and well being
3. Increased aspirations of children, young people and adults from the communities supported by the project
4. People developing self-confidence and becoming better prepared for jobs and employment
5. Prejudices reduced
6. Good relationships developed between people who are arriving in the Graiseley and Penn Fields area and the people who have lived there for some time.

Aligning the food project with the Drop In and the other project work will have the following impacts that are additional to those that were identified in the initial proposal.

1. Reduced food poverty
2. Children healthier and better able to engage with their education and schooling
3. Increased well-being and reduced levels of fear and anxiety caused by food poverty

**Table 1** sets out the projected number of people who will benefit from the project over the three years of the project.

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| **Table 1** |
|  | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Total** |
|  | **Adults** | **Children Young People** | **Adults** | **Children Young People** | **Adults** | **Children Young People** | **Adults** | **Children Young People** |
| **Drop in** | 20 | 30 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | **120** | **130** |
| **Youth Club** |  | 25 |  | 25 |  | 25 |  | **75** |
| **Workshops** | 40 |  | 60 |  | 40 |  |  **140** |  |
| **Training** | 20 |  | 20 |  | 20 |  | **60** |  |
| **Food Project** | 40 | 60 | 40 | 60 | 40 | 60 | **120** | **180** |
| **Totals**  | **120** | **115** | **170** | **135** | **150** | **135** |  |  |
| **Overall total** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **420** | **385** |

**Note:** Due to the fact that this project will be working with some of people for the three years of the project and others for a more limited period of time it is estimated that over the course of three years the project will work with approximately 400 different people.

**Sustainability** It is hoped that as well as providing support and development opportunities to people arriving in the neighbourhood it will also help the project become more sustainable.

The improved sustainability will be through three main ways:

* Increased rental income;
* Small social enterprise opportunities;
* Development of further partnership work to deliver youth work.

**Increased Rental Income** A critical source of income for ensuring the building is maintained as a community resource is the renting out of rooms to people wishing to offer groups or services that are of benefit to the people of the area. The refurbishment of the lift will make a big difference to sustainability of the building which, as previously set out is an important community asset. This will be achieved by making two rooms that are available to hire, fully accessible to anyone wishing to access them. Regular bookings have already been lost because of not being able to offer an accessible room.

As an organisation we aim to keep the rental costs of rooms as low as possible. This is to ensure that both for regular and one off bookings, eg. For children’s parties, the amounts charged are affordable to people living in the neighbourhood. Having more rooms for rent will generate more income revenue which in turn will mean that the pressures on the building budget will be reduced. This will enable us to offer further subsidised rents to groups that wish to develop that have a direct benefit to local residents.

**Small Social Enterprise Opportunities** During the course of the project we will explore with the people who we are working with the possibilities of starting up mini social enterprises that could provide some income in the future. Initial ideas include Food and Catering, Sewing, After School Provision. The project will link closely with the Empowering Social Entrepreneurs (ESE) programme that has been developed under the umbrella of ‘Wolverhampton For Everyone’ and is run by one of the Lea Road Project volunteers. Project beneficiaries will be encouraged to both undertake the ESE programme and to join the social enterprise network that is emerging in the City.

**Youth Work Partnership** Funding for youth work has been significantly reduced over the last ten years and the infrastructure of youth services has been dismantled. However there is currently a resurgence of recognition that working with young people is of value. Alongside this the majority of youth work that is now happening is through the voluntary and community sectors and the faith sector. This is where an organisation such as Lea Road Community Church can play a significant role. It still has a building and an infrastructure that can support youth work provision. During the course of the project work will be done to identify both further funding opportunities and also any opportunities that may emerge for delivering the youth work in partnership with another voluntary sector organisation. Eg. Base 25.

**How we will measure the impact**

In order to measure the difference that the project makes and the impact that it has a number of different approaches will be taken. These will include:

1. Collecting monitoring information on the number of people that have taken part in the groups, workshops and training that are provided.
2. Undertaking regular evaluation of the activities that take place with the participants
3. Undertaking an annual review each year that pulls together all the benefits that have come from the project
4. Writing up of 3 case studies each year that illustrate the impact that the project is having on the lives of the people who are taking part in it.
5. During the third year of the project we will undertake a full evaluation of it that will consider how far it has achieved its aims and also the social value that it has generated.

We will collect monitoring andevaluation information on a regular basis. This will include:

1. Information collected following each session of the Drop In and the Youth Club
2. Records kept of the number of people benefitting from the Food Project
3. Evaluation undertaken by the Project Co-ordinator of all the workshops and training that are delivered as part of the Project.

This information will all feed into the annual review of the project that will be carried out internally by the NPMC who will be overseeing the delivery of the Project. On top of this for the first two years of the project 3 case studies will be written up by a person external to the project. These will specifically look at the difference that the project has made to the lives of the case study people, including the outcomes and the impact that the project has had.

**Final Evaluation**

We have contact with a number of people and organisations who would be well equipped to undertake the evaluation. These are contacts that members of the NPMC have. Given that the final evaluation is over 3 years away we would not want to specify a particular person or organisation at this point. However, an example of someone that we could use as an evaluator for this project is Nickala Torkington and her organisation. This organisation is Flourish Together which is a CiC. They have indicated that they would be interested in doing this work and that they would include an evaluation and identify the social value created. For more information see their Website. <https://www.flourishtogether.org.uk/>

1. **How people and communities are involved in the project**

The Drop In was originally started as an initiative between the Local Education Authority and Lea Road Community Church. From the start local people have been involved in running the project as volunteers and given a huge amount of time and energy to it. After the first year of the project the LEA pulled out of the project as their funding was cut. Despite this the volunteers have continued to run the Drop In providing hospitality, food, support, guidance and activities to anyone who turns up.

The people who attend the Drop In have become involved in the development of the Drop In in a number of different ways over the last seven years. A number of the people who attend are involved in setting up and clearing away tables and chairs and cleaning the rooms that have been used for the Drop In. The people attending the Drop In participate in the activities that are organised and also volunteer with the cooking. Regularly food is cooked that is from the communities from which the people attending come.

The people attending the Drop In continue to invite other people to attend and promote the group and the services that it provides to others who may benefit from it. A recent consultation evening was held when the group, including both the adults, young people and children were involved in talking about what they valued about the group and what they believe the programme should include.

The people who this project is aimed at will continue to be involved in running and developing it. This involvement will include being fully involved in planning the programme, in recruiting people to the workshops and training. The work will be reviewed at the end of each year to ensure that its impact is maximised and it is both meeting its aims and the aspirations of the people who are involved in the different groups and activities.

The youth work and the community projects that are developed by Lea Road Community Church are overseen by the Neighbourhood Projects Management Group. This group consists of people from the Church, representatives of the groups that use the building and people who live or work in the local neighbourhood. This group is always keen to be inclusive and representative and work will be done to encourage a few key people, that are involved in the project, to get involved at this level of the project management.

**Taking a Community Development Approach**

This project is about community development. A community development approach means that people and communities are integrally involved in the development and running of the project. Fundamental to this project are a number of recognised approaches to community development which underpin the work that we do and wish to do in the future. At the heart of any model of community development are both guiding principles and core values.

**Guiding Principles** This project will be delivered in a way that embraces the following principles of community development:

* **Self-determination** - people and communities have the right to make their own choices and decisions.
* **Empowerment** - people should be able to control and use their own assets and means to influence.
* **Collective action** - coming together in groups or organisations strengthens peoples’ voices.
* **Working and learning together** - collaboration and sharing experiences is vital to good community activity.

**Core Values** This project will be based on the core values of community development; human rights, social justice, equality and respect for diversity. Community development also recognises that some people, some groups and some communities are excluded and oppressed by the way society and structures are organised. This project seeks to challenge this and ensure fairness for all people.The Scottish Community Development Centre is a leading authority on community development. ***‘At its heart, community development is rooted in the belief that all people should have access to health, wellbeing, wealth, justice and opportunity.****’* <https://www.scdc.org.uk/who/what-is-community-development>

**Needs based community development –** this is an approach that focuses on the specific needs of individuals and groups within the community. This approach has historically informed our approach to community development and the work that we have developed. It was the need for a place where people could come and discuss their issues and problems in a safe space that initially led to the development of the Drop In, at that time particularly aimed at Roma people.

**Asset Based Community Development** A further model of community development that informs this project is Asset Based Community Development – (ABCD). This is an approach that develops communities by building on what already exists and seeks to develop the community assets to respond to the needs and issues that are present in the community. Within this model is the importance of recognising the gifts and talents that people already have, sharing these, bringing people together in association, recognising the important institutions that can help a community in its development and identifying the resources that can help a community achieve its aspirations.

1. **Background to our organisation**

Lea Road Community Church has a long history of working with people who have arrived in the City. This goes back to the people who arrived from the Caribbean in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Over the last seven years we have continued to work with people who are arriving into the City through running a weekly Drop In and also a youth club for young people.

Community engagement has long been a part of Lea Road Church’s identity. For several years this was overseen by a paid community worker who encouraged many local initiatives to get started such as the West Indian Elders Group. Nowadays this work is given oversight by the Neighbourhood Projects Management Committee which is made up of church members and local people from outside the church.

Lea Road Community Church’s building is not a traditional church building. In partnership with the local council it was purpose-built as a Community Centre with one room set aside for Christian worship. The structure comprises a sports hall; a workshop with carpentry benches; a kitchen; café space; various sized meeting rooms; office; toilet facilities including accessible toilets. Outside there is a patio; garden and car park.

Lea Road Community Church Building provides a very much needed community space. The local area is ethnically and religiously diverse and has many socio-economic challenges and unfortunately there are very few community facilities here. The local Gujarati Association has a hall for hire, but it is not widely used by the community in general. In addition, Wolverhampton City Council’s budget has been dramatically cut, so it is difficult to envisage investment in community space happening in the immediate future. Within this context, these inclusive facilities which are open to all are especially important.

Additionally, the location of our building means it is strategically placed to reach directly into our marginalised community. Several partner agencies, such as the police have noted that over the years, our building has become an established trusted community place. This is particularly important in a diverse and deprived area where, due to serious and complex issues related to migration and poverty, people can find it hard to access local amenities.

We see this project as also being about improving a space which matters to the people who live in our neighbourhood. Lea Road Community Church Building provides a place where the local community can meet, mingle, get to know each other and build positive relationships across the various ethnic and religious groups which are represented here. This makes life better for everyone. We believe that spending time together builds strong communities and has the potential to inspire new projects which enhance community relations. For example, arising from conversations with various neighbourhood groups who attended our Annual Big Lunch, a need and desire for the physical environment to be cleaned up was identified. A group of local people then came together in our building to organise a Community Clean-Up Day. This involved, applying for funding to hire a skip and putting a team together to supervise the clean-up.

We aim to use community development models which enable groups move from an, 'I need' position to a place where they can say 'I can'. We partner with a number of local agencies including the Police, Schools, Health Centres, Traveller Education Service and the Refugee and Migrant Centre. Through these networks, new groups are encouraged to access our facilities. Furthermore, the church Neighbourhood Projects Management Committee (NPMC) is constantly looking for opportunities to respond to emerging needs within the area. As a well established organisation we have policies in place that cover the work that we do. These include:

**Safeguarding:** We have a safeguarding policy in place with a nominated person and a small team of people who oversee safeguarding.

**Health and Safety:** In order to keep people safe, as well as the Safeguarding Policy there is also a Health and Safety Policy and a Lone Working Policy.

**Equality:** A culture of equalityand a welcome for all is well established. Policies are in place that set out what this means in practice and how incidents of discrimination or other behaviour that may mean people’s rights are impinged are dealt with.

**Environmental:** A number of things have been done to ensure that we are considering the environment in the work that we do. These include; working with Fare Share, Greggs Tesco’s and other supermarkets to bring food that would otherwise have been wasted to people who can use it, thus reducing food waste; recycling as much as possible; reducing the use of plastics; not using single use plates and cutlery and being involved in local initiatives that are about cleaning up the neighbourhood. As well as this, providing a service that is locally based in a residential neighbourhood means that the majority of people using the building, and who will access this project will arrive on foot.

1. **Project Staffing**

In order to deliver this project a number of key staff will be recruited.

**Project Co-ordinator - See Job Description**

The key purpose of this post will be to oversee and ensure the delivery of the project in line with the proposals set out in this proposal.

**Reporting** The post holder will report to the Lea Road Community Church, Neighbourhood Projects Management Committee.

**Youth Workers**

The key purpose of these posts will be to deliver a weekly youth club and work with the children and young people that attend the Thursday night Drop In.

**Reporting**

The post holder will report to the Project Co-ordinator.

**The roles of these posts will include:**

* developing appropriate programmes and activities designed in particular to raise aspirations and address issues of health and well being;
* promoting the youth club and recruiting and encouraging young people to attend and take part in the planned programmes;
* support and supervise any volunteers that work on the youth club sessions;
* undertaking regular consultation with the young people in the youth club and include them fully in the planning;
* liaise with the other organisations to promote the youth club;
* ensuring that monitoring and evaluation information is collected and providing a short monthly report on the progress of the youth club;
* share the learning and experience of the project using appropriate means including social media;
* ensuring that the policies of Lea Road Community Church are implemented with particularly reference to Safeguarding and Health and Safety;

**Food Project Co-ordinator**

In order to continue to deliver the food project as an integral part of this project it will be necessary to continue to employ a Food Project Co-ordinator. Funding for this part-time post (5 hours a week) has been secured until September 2021.

**Key purpose of the role**

To reduce food poverty within the Penn Fields and Graiseley neighbourhoods. This will be achieved by overseeing and ensuring the safe collection, storage and distribution of food to those directly affected by the Covid 19 pandemic in the area of benefit.

**Reporting**

The post holder will report to the Project Co-ordinator.

**The roles of this post will include:**

* Identify people within the area who have been affected by the Covid 19 pandemic
* Ensure that food is safely and fairly distributed to those in need
* Ensure that the food is safely stored and the food coming in and out is tracked and monitored.
* Ensure that all health and safety requirements are met both ensuring these are in line with government guidelines and the requirements of Lea Road Community Church
* Ensure that risk assessments are rigorously adhered to particularly in relation to Covid 19. Contribute to the production of risk assessments as required.
* Co-ordinate the small team of volunteers in both the collection and distribution of the food.
* Manage and keep accurate records of money that is generated through donations given to support the project.
* Keep accurate monitoring records of the distribution of the food and produce a monthly report identifying the number of people supported.
* Look out for and apply for other grants as these become available, to ensure the longer term sustainability of the project.

**Volunteers**

Volunteers will continue to play a vital role in all aspects of the management and delivery of the project. Volunteer roles will include:

* the overall management of the project through the NPMC;
* supporting the paid staff at the Drop In and youth club;
* collecting food from Fare Share in Birmingham and other sources;
* sorting food and welcoming people who come to collect food at the food project;
* supporting and befriending those people who need additional support or have specific needs and requirements**.**

All volunteers will be able to claim expenses for the volunteering they undertake. A notional cost for these expenses has been included in the budget for the project. Volunteers will be able to claim for:

* Travel to and from the project;
* Travel to collect food from Fairshare or other sources of donated food;
* Other reasonable out of pocket expenses as agreed in advance by the management group or the Project Co-ordinator

The rate that expenses will be able to be claimed is either the cost of public transport or 45p per mile if using their own car.

1. **How the project fits with other activities**

Lea Road Community Church has links with a number of organisations that offer services that complement what the Drop In offers. The following section sets are local organisations and agencies that we link with and a brief description of the relationship that we have with them.

**9.1 The Way –** (Youth Service – organised activities for young people) the Way provides facilities and programmes for young people that are more specialist and is a City Wide centre for young people. Many young people prefer to attend a more local youth club where the young people attending are from their neighbourhood. Young people can be referred to The Way and the opportunities it provides promoted to the young people who attend the youth club.

* 1. **St. Chad Mark Church** - Provides a complimentary range of activities for new arrivals, asylum seekers and refugees. A lot of the focus of this work is with Iranian and Syrian people.
	2. **Bingley - Strengthening Families Hub (Formerly the Bingley Centre)** This Hub which provides services for children and young people is a point of referral in both directions. Families have been encouraged to get involved in the programmes that they offer.
	3. **Jubilee Christian Centre –**Lea Road CommunityChurch is a member of Churches Together in Graiseley and Penn Fields and links closely with the Jubilee Christian Centre who provide a soup kitchen for people who need to have a hot meal.
	4. **Local Schools – Primary Schools: Bantock Primary School, Graiseley Primary School, Secondary Schools: Smestow, Highfields and Colton Hills,–** Lea Road Community Church can play a key role in helping children to access school places, understand the education system and the expectations that there are on the children and in some cases giving assistance in obtaining school uniforms. These links are not only beneficial to the children and young people but also to the schools.
	5. **Wolverhampton City Council –** The project has had links with the City council particularly in relation to accessing school places, obtaining free school meals and transport to and from school.
	6. **Adult Education Service Wolverhampton –** links have been made with this service and Talk English classes that provide basic English teaching were introduced in the building. It is hoped these can recommence in the future.
	7. **Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC), the Volunteer Centre and Wolverhampton for Everyone** Lea Road Community Church is a member of WVSC. The Volunteer Centre, that is part of this organisation, has provided volunteers in the past and also potential volunteers have been referred to them. Lea Road Community Church is able to provide good volunteering opportunities and a number of previous volunteers have gone on to secure employment after volunteering. Wolverhampton for Everyone is a, City wide, bottom up, community organisation that aims to support local activities that enhance the life of the City. A number of people from our organisation are linked into this and support developments across the City. The project work that we do will be disseminated through the links with these organisations.
	8. **Doctors and Dentists** – Good links have been established with a number of Doctors and Dental practices in the area. These include Lea Road Medical Practice, Penn Fields Medical Centre and Titley, Darby and Associates (Dentists). This has enabled people to be supported to register for dentists and doctors and for those for whom language is a barrier to be supported in attending. This in turn is helpful to these practices as it reduces the need for them to access translation services.
	9. **Commercial Companies –** Links have been established with a number of supermarkets including Tesco, Asda, Aldi and Lidl who have at different times provided surplus food to the project so that this can be distributed to people in food poverty. The local Greggs also provides food on a regular basis.
	10. **Wolverhampton Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC) and the CAB –** People are regularly supported in accessing the specialist services that are provided. This support includes befriending and helping write letters. The RMC can provides specialist legal support and advice, and where needed, provide translators.
	11. **Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary –** Wolverhampton has established itself as a City of Sanctuary which aims to provide a safe place for people from many places and with many, often difficult experiences to settle. This group has developed a weekly drop in that provides a point of contact and welcome for refugees and asylum seekers across the City, is based in the City Centre and is accessed by people from across the City. They are also able to provide clothes and toiletries. There are a number of people from our organisation who work as volunteers with the City of Sanctuary Drop in and referrals have been made between the two organisations. However this is currently not accessed by people from the Roma community.
	12. **One World Week –** Links are established through One World Week which enables Lea Road Community Church to make links with other faith groups that are located in the neighbourhood and to provide information to them about the work that we are doing and create links that help to build bridges and relationships

We also work with statutory agencies as and when needed. During the time the Drop In was initially being established close links were made with the Police and the PCSOs provided regular support to the Drop In alongside the volunteers.