



Community at heart

The home of Cosby Yarn Bomb
Cosby Crafters & Create & Grow Club

'I always wondered why
somebody didn't do
something about that,
then I remembered....
I am somebody.'

Share Journey

Today we're going to share with you our journey from where we started to where we are today & how, unbeknown to us at the time, we used an asset based approach to get here!



Taking an asset based approach to community projects simply means using the potential which already exists within you & your community to help build your project.

It's about starting with where you are, the strengths & resources you've already got and building from there

Without realising it, we were already using an asset based approach

INDIVIDUALS - US!

- Our shared experiences, passions & drivers
- Our skills: creative crafts, creating posters, social media

PLACE

- Booked Local Village Hall
- Used Existing Local Advertising Outlets:
Cosby FB Page,
Village & shop noticeboards

GROUP MEMBERS

- Creative skills: knitting, crochet etc
- Local networks: friends, family, other groups, professional skills
- Own personal experiences, passions & drivers

IDEAS, ENTHUSIASM & A DESIRE TO GET INVOLVED!

These were the most important assets we had & they came from the individual's involved

CREATING A YARN BOMB WAS TAKING AN ASSET BASED APPROACH TO THE STRENGTHS & PASSIONS OF OUR GROUP



MEL & NAT COULDN'T KNIT OR CROCHET!

-DON'T LET A LACK OF PERSONAL SKILLS OR RESOURCES STOP YOU.

-DON'T FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN'T DO OR THE SKILLS & RESOURCES YOU DON'T HAVE.

-PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS & DRAW ON THE STRENGTHS OF OTHERS.

-ASK YOURSELF: WHAT DO YOU HAVE? WHAT CAN YOU DO? START HERE!



Needs or skills gaps can become a strength



How we used an asset based approach to organise our first Yarn Bomb



We ran pom pom making workshops:

- at the school Spring Fayre
- at the Community Library
- at the local Beavers group
- Outside under the tree

We arranged drop-off points for donations at:

- Our group
- The local Co-op
- The community library

We reached out & spread the word!

- Made posters & placed them around the village.
- Posted on the local Facebook group.
- Told everyone we knew personally, all our local networks e.g school mum's & local groups we were part of.
- Went into every business, shop & cafe in the village & spoke to them face to face.
- Placed an advert in the Cosby News: a free monthly newsletter which goes through all the doors in the village.
- Went through an old copy of the Cosby News & wrote a list of all the village groups, which days, times & where they met. Then visited every group to tell them about the Yarn Bomb.

PART 1

Group Discussion:

What existing assets did we use?

Can you name them?

Can you identify what the wider benefits of these might be?

The wider benefits of our approach:

- We used a wide range of networks & a broad range of approaches.
- Pre-empted potential barriers to inclusion & worked to give everyone the opportunity to be involved.
- Involved different sections of the community.
- Reached diverse demographics.
- Tried not to leave anyone out or make assumptions about who may or may not want to take part.
- Built connections with existing networks like the Library, School, Community Groups & Co-op, which helps all of us.

An asset-based approach recognises that relationships build communities:

See & nurture connections, make an intentional effort to break down barriers and seek and build relationships across the whole community



Taking an asset based approach sees everyone's value - Everyone in a community has something to offer:

Everyone's contribution is valuable, it's about giving them the opportunity to join in, opening the door & helping to unleash that potential.



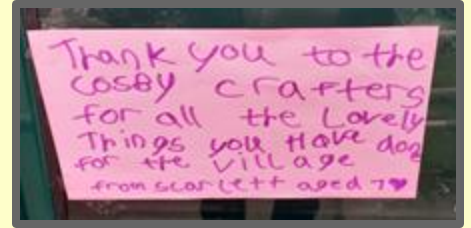
We had some brilliant successes, with lots of individuals, groups & businesses enthusiastic to get involved



But it wasn't always easy - we worked really hard, long hours, entirely voluntarily & although we found lots of supportive allies, we also had some very tough moments & lots of knock backs too

SUPPORT CAN BE FOUND IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

- ASK ASK ASK - If you don't ask you'll never know!
- Don't let fear or pre-conceptions stop you.
- Connections build connections - make a start - they all lead somewhere.
- Seek potential - don't just say no & don't just accept no - think it over, ask questions, is there a barrier you can overcome? Be flexible, is there another way?
- Not Yet! - It might not be possible now but keep ideas & connections open, ready to receive & build those future opportunities.
- Think about how a project, idea or partnership can be mutually beneficial, what assets do you have? How can you help each other?
- Keep an open mind - give ideas space to breathe, don't shut them down too soon, let them grow & evolve first, before you reign them in!
- Some people won't want to get involved & that's ok.



5 MIN BREAK

Grab a drink & nip to the loo

PART 2

Moving from an informal voluntary
group to a CIC

THERE ARE LOTS OF SECTOR SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONS OUT THERE WHERE YOU CAN ACCESS SUPPORT

Locally, Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL) is a great place to start

Lots of National Organisations provide support For Social Enterprises:

- The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE)
- Social Enterprise UK
- UnLtd
- Cambridge Social Ventures
- & many more!



Our aims are, 'To Improve Wellbeing, Reduce Feelings of Isolation and Nurture Community Togetherness'.

We want to nurture more connected communities, where everyone feels valued & included. Communities which see everyone's potential & work together to help everyone thrive



We've learned that our method of achieving these aims & purposes is rooted in an asset based approach

Our biggest asset is Yarn Bomb's reach & the publicity that it generates

We had approx 21,000 visitors in 2023



What potential opportunities or assets might those visitors offer?

Potential Visitor Assets



- Increased income for local businesses
- Potential income for community groups
- Potential income for our organisation
- Provides a platform for outreach: raise awareness, educate & inform
- Raised profile for the area in general
- Visitors could become future participants, group members, volunteers, allies & partners

Ways we have harnessed those visitor assets

To generate income to fund our projects:

- Selling maps, craft items & merchandise
- Business sponsorship & map adverts
- Food vendor pitch spaces
- Online fundraisers & donations



Ways we have harnessed those visitor assets (1)

Potential Income for Community Groups & buildings:

- Hire of public buildings
- Independent fundraisers e.g church coffee mornings etc
- Community Cafe
- Community Togetherness Day



Ways we have harnessed those visitor assets (2)

Potential for outreach / raise awareness, educate & inform

- Displays with a message / purpose
- Displays by specific groups or organisations
- Performances by local groups
- Community Cafe
- Community Togetherness Day



COMMUNITY TOGETHERNESS DAY Y



An inclusive, celebratory event we host on the last Sunday of Yarn Bomb. Local community groups & county wide mental health, SEND & community support services come together, alongside creative arts organisations, offering fun activities & entertainment for all

Creative Activities for Positive Wellbeing



Access to Community, Mental Health & Special Educational Needs Support Services



“It was so well organised, with a wonderful friendly community feel and really well attended. We spoke with more than 60 people, and linked 37 of those people to local groups or activities – that is a huge success rate! So, massive well done to you both for all the work you put in, we really enjoyed it and so did everyone else we spoke to.” *Local Area Coordinator – Leicestershire County Council*

Community Togetherness Day

“The Community Togetherness Day was a chance for services and groups to showcase what they could offer, find out more about the different communities and also catch up on projects that they may not have heard about”





Championing Local Community Groups



“What a wonderful day for our village with all ages and groups getting together”

“Cosby Yarn Bomb is a fabulous example of a community working together to create not just fabulous works of art but also a real feel of inclusion by bringing together people from far and wide”



Championing Inclusion

"My favourite thing about the event was how inclusive it was. My background is SEN, education, mental health and creative arts and it supported so many aspects of what I believe is needed in our communities"

"The Community Day was brilliant and me and my family really found it useful. My son now has a new Inclusive football club that I had not heard of that we met there"



The Community Togetherness Day event was brilliant. My daughter felt so included. Pimp my wheelchair was just an amazing idea! Not very often at a community event that wheelchair users are thought about and uncluded in such an innovative way that isn't just a tick box!

We will certainly be back next year and you will probably see a few more wheelchair user friends coming along too!

Thank you again for listening and helping x

For us the most important aspect of taking an asset based approach is bringing people together



When people are genuinely welcomed & given the opportunity to come together & take an active role in their community, a special kind of magic happens, we've seen it first hand... people share skills & ideas, encourage & support each other, friendships are forged, confidence grows & togetherness, understanding, pride, purpose & a sense of belonging & empowerment are nurtured & those are all things that help people & communities to thrive ♡



YOU ARE WELCOME HERE

**Cosby Yarn Bomb
10th - 31st July 2024**

**Community Togetherness Day
Sun 28th July
12-4pm**

If you are interested in taking part in our Community Day, hosting an information stand, workshop or activity
Please email: gathercreategrowuk@gmail.com

