

# NEIGHBOURHOODS GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE 2024



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# FOREWORD

## Foreword from Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working

I am really pleased to be able to share the Neighbourhoods Good Practice Guide 2024 with you. Contained within this handbook are examples of projects that have been delivered across every ward in Rotherham.

We are working with communities on the things that matter; we are listening and working together in partnership to make a difference; and we are supporting people from different backgrounds across the borough. The examples included in this handbook demonstrate this as well as highlighting some of the fantastic work that takes place in our communities on a daily basis.



**Cllr David Sheppard**

Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion  
and Neighbourhood Working





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## Anston and Woodsetts Ward:

### How to deliver a business forum

Developing a business forum in the local area addressed the Anston and Woodsetts ward priority of developing initiatives to support local businesses.

#### 1. Background

As ward councillors were local to the area and often shopped at local businesses, they had been in constant contact with business owners in the area. Feedback they received was that local businesses had difficulties securing local projects that they could potentially supply services for. Business owners also told councillors that there was a lack of training opportunities and networking in the area in general.

There are a number of hospitality businesses in the area and there is also a business centre close by. The businesses are very proud of their work and contribution to their communities but felt they needed more support.

The need gained traction during the Covid-19 pandemic when one of the ward councillors talked to some businesses that were struggling. It was acknowledged that there were a number of new businesses that had formed during the pandemic that were thriving.

There were some really creative and innovative business ideas that came out of the pandemic and the councillors felt it was important to try and help support businesses so that they could all

thrive. This led to the councillors agreeing that supporting local businesses should be part of their ward plan to focus on.

#### 2. Developing the idea

How councillors could best support businesses was discussed at a number of ward meetings.

Initially, an online questionnaire was considered to obtain information about what support businesses were missing out on. However, it became evident through conversations with Rotherham Investment and Development Office (RiDO) that there was no definitive list of businesses in the area.

It was also unlikely that there would be any information about start-ups unless they had contacted RiDO first. There is no official registration required for sole traders unlike companies that have to register with Companies House.

Further conversations with RiDO led councillors to contact the Development Officer who was based at the Matrix Centre in Dinnington – a business hub for start-ups. The centre had 17 offices and 24 workshops for new businesses to rent and they are also able to access full support and training from the RiDO team to help them thrive. At the time, every unit and office space was in use.

A ward councillor and the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator visited the centre and met several new businesses. They learned more about the businesses, the sectors they work in and their plans.

RiDO now send information to ward councillors about the free courses that they hold for businesses. This information gets shared in the monthly Anston and Woodsetts ward e-newsletter and is forwarded onto the businesses that councillors have engaged with.





## 3. Delivering the project

After consideration, ward councillors thought a business forum would be beneficial to offer support that local businesses were requesting. This was later agreed at a ward meeting.

Through ward members, links with the Butterfly House were made. The Butterfly House is a tourist attraction and has a range of animals including butterflies, meerkats and owls based in South Anston. They also carry out lots of important conservation in the local area.

They agreed to provide support a Business Forum and offered the use of their Lottie's Café for meetings at no charge.

A date was booked in the diaries for the first Business Forum on Thursday 10 November 2022.

Working with the Corporate Communications team, a flyer was produced and the event was advertised through the e-bulletin and on social media.

The first session was a great success and there was a request for another session to be held. This second session was promptly booked and 40 leaflets were hand delivered to businesses and posts put on social media to advertise the new date.

Before the next session, ward councillors assessed the first one so that they could take away learnings to further enhance what they were offering.

The second drop-in session was held on Friday 24 February 2023, where a number of businesses gave us feedback on the help that they need to survive and thrive. It was very clear from the conversation that took place that hiring young people for apprenticeships was very difficult. Ward councillors looked into how they can help businesses around apprenticeships by



utilising their networks.

In addition, the councillors received regular updates on what is available to support businesses and, wherever possible, promoted the start-up, growth and skills courses, grants and information from RiDO with businesses in the local area. Information sheets have been distributed at the Business Forum event for circulation to the wider business community.

## 4. Evaluation

The work around supporting businesses will continue.

Another Business Forum will take place at a later time of 6pm to accommodate the businesses who close at 5pm.

Ward councillors continued to advertise the free training and support from RiDO and it is hoped that more businesses will attend future drop-ins so more information can be gathered so they can continue to get the support they need to keep them thriving.

Councillors were able to develop a relationship with the Butterfly House, which has been really useful as they are a large employer in the local area and are a visitor destination.



## Aston and Todwick Ward:

### How to set up a Partnership and Networking Group in your ward

A Partnership and Networking Group was established in the Aston and Todwick ward, which supports all the ward priorities.

#### 1. Background

The Neighbourhood Co-ordinator for Aston and Todwick saw that there was a lot of groups, organisations and information that was available to the community which was not often shared effectively. This had led to organisations often working in isolation without sharing resources and many residents did not know who to contact to get the support they needed.

There were also cases of activities and services in the area being duplicated.

Working effectively in partnership could provide added value to organisations, especially to schools and groups at the heart of the local community. It would also allow organisations to support one another by pooling resources and funding where appropriate.

As Aston and Todwick ward is one of the smaller wards in Rotherham and there is overlap with services and organisations in the neighbouring ward Aughton and Swallownest, it was important to include all ward councillors and Neighbourhood Co-ordinators in any plans to create a Partnership and Community Networking Group. This would improve the scope of delivery for the project across the community assets, including GP practices,

libraries and Parish Councils, and allow the project to be more strategic in its monitoring of the changing needs of the community.

Discussions with councillors around about creating a Partnership and Community Networking Group were held and it was agreed that this was something that would be beneficial and would support the delivery of the ward priorities.

Along with working with Aughton and Swallownest ward councillors, it was decided that the neighbourhood co-ordinators should work in partnership with another community stakeholder. In this case they worked with a church in the locality that wanted to be involved and were happy to engage. The church took on some of the shared responsibilities around planning and preparing for the event and this meant that they were also happy to get involved in supporting the wider partnership working.

It was decided that a quarterly event would be the best way forward for the Partnership and Networking Group.

#### 2. Developing the idea

The Partnership and Networking Group would be a forum to help make things happen, having a wide reach to community stakeholders and can help plug gaps in community provision.

It would be a perfect opportunity to build relationships, especially with organisations like GP's surgeries, schools and libraries.

The neighbourhood co-ordinators from both wards set out to meet with different groups before the first Network and Partnership meeting took place.

Through working together with the church, this project became a community-led project, as opposed to a Council-led project, which



was important to help ensure the best possible outcomes.

Between the partnership, they decided who the initial target audience was and established a list of the community groups, TARA's, church groups, schools, GP practices, mental health providers etc, that should be invited to the meeting.

Engaging with different organisations did take time but it paid off. The Neighbourhood Co-ordinator had one-to-one meetings with each organisation where they shared information on why it would benefit them and the wider community. This also gave the co-ordinator an opportunity to engage with different groups, and share information about the Community Leadership Fund (CLF) that councillors can use to support projects and initiatives in the local area. This element of the meeting was invaluable at reaching places of need and pinpointing gaps in provision and service delivery.

Through engaging with local schools, neighbourhood co-ordinators realised how much of an asset that they are for community working as schools are at the heart of community life and have strong links with children, parents, grandparents and caregivers. They are also a key resource for getting an understanding of the needs in the local area.

It was important to be considerate of community partners and their time constraints, religious holidays, school holidays, bank holidays and working days. Thinking about the meeting forum is also important. It was felt that more people would be able to join in if the meetings were held on Microsoft Teams with an annual face to face meetup.

The co-ordinators created a contact list for all partners which is regularly updated. It is important to understand who the different partners are, especially if work spans across different wards.

This helped to identify the right people that they needed to involve or get in touch with quickly.

Topical information to be shared was agreed prior to each forum and key speakers were invited to present at the meeting.

### 3. Delivering the project

Delivering the project took a lot of hard work from both the neighbourhood co-ordinators and ward councillors. Initially, it was decided that the forum would take place over teams as it meant there was more accessibility for groups to attend.

Introductory meetings took place with organisations prior to the first launch where it was explained that the meetings can help plug the gaps in service provision and that it would provide an opportunity for members to share information around any concerns and things that may be needed in the local area. In these first meetings, they had the opportunity to feed information directly back to ward councillors for them to decide on any support they would like to provide.

Through these meetings a clear structure was drawn up so that the organisers could introduce, overview and manage the Network while allowing other partners to get involved and engage with other members.

For the first Network, topics focused on the cost-of-living crisis. Information was provided by organisations and delivery providers such as:

- The Council's Public Health team - benefits, prescriptions, food vouchers, and other support available through the Council
- Voluntary Action Rotherham - Energy Know How
- The church - debt advice, other debt services and who to contact





The Council's Employment Solutions were given a platform resulting in more local residents taking up the offer to work in partnership at the local foodbank.

Overall, the information was shared with partners quickly within this meeting and meant that the information could be cascaded within their organisations throughout the community, on their own platforms and to other relevant key workers.

Once key stakeholders were on board, the Network led to new projects and has helped councillors meet the ward priorities for Aston and Todwick, such as a traffic calming project that was delivered to improve safety at a local school.

#### 4. Evaluation

Since the first meeting the number of participants has grown, as word spread of the value of linking in, knowledge sharing, the offer of partnerships and shared workloads and targets.

It is important to keep presentations interesting and brief especially when using Teams for delivering the briefings. If the meeting is face-to-face, try to include an interactive topical activity. This is something yet to be developed but discussions on the possibility of delivering emergency first aid training and the usage of defibrillators as an interaction engagement activity for the first face-to-face meet.

When meeting face-to-face, it was suggested that more time was allowed to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to informally chat over coffee or lunch. The preferred meeting type of Microsoft Teams was decided on after meeting with schools and headteachers. They said that this would help them to attend more meetings without the necessity of leaving school premises especially when short staffed.

Partners were given notice of meetings and were invited to share their ideas for future meetings. Deadline for them to share information were set 'four weeks' prior to the meeting taking place.

For the first meeting, 19 groups attended and all shared good feedback.

Local groups are now talking to one another more as a result of our first Network and other organisations are looking to attend future events such as IAPT (NHS mental health services). At the second meeting this resulted in the potential for partnership working in delivering services at the foodbank at Aston, partners and councillors were chatting on the platform.

The first face-to-face meeting took place in Spring 2023 and provided an opportunity for councillors to discuss their refreshed ward priorities and share information about the Community Leadership Funding.



## **Aughton and Swallownest Ward:** **How and why Councillors Roadshows are organised**

Councillors Roadshows in the Aughton and Swallownest ward support the following ward priorities.

### **1. Background**

Ward councillors felt it was important to put communities at the heart of everything they do. This meant listening to residents and working with communities so that they feel safe and proud of where they live. Some of the ways councillors engaged with residents included:

- Councillors' surgeries
- Neighbourhood walkabouts
- Attending community events
- Monthly ward e-newsletter
- Use of social media

However, these methods are not always inclusive and councillors were aware that they were not engaging with everyone.

For example, not everyone may have access to the internet to view the ward e-newsletters and some people may not be able to attend an event in the ward. Because of this, councillors decided that they would go to their residents and that was how the Roadshow was born.

Councillors have been carrying out roadshows since 2018 in various locations across the ward. Through the roadshows, they have been able to provide support and solutions to local issues.

### **2. Developing the idea**

In the Aughton and Swallownest ward, discussions were held at ward meetings with Councillors to decide what the event would look like. This involved considering what could and couldn't be done.

It was also discussed if there any existing community groups to target. For Aughton and Swallownest ward, it was decided these groups would be key target audiences:

- Community groups
- Young people
- Tenant and Residents Associations (TARAs)
- Elderly residents
- Council tenants
- Private residents
- Disabled residents

Each ward has a ward profile which contains information and data about the people who live in the ward. This was helpful when identifying the target audiences.

Discussions about where and when the Roadshows would take place took place at ward meetings. The best practice was to have a forward plan of events so that there was enough time to plan and promote each event.

It was also decided that using an existing community asset where groups already meet would be best for the Roadshows such as existing groups, coffee mornings, community meetings. These were identified so that the Roadshows could link into current community activity and were made into a rolling programme so that Roadshows could return to groups on a regular basis.

Venues included Council Neighbourhood Centres, church buildings and Parish Council buildings.



It was also important to avoid school holidays, school pick-up/drop-off times and bank holidays.

Finally, before the Roadshows were delivered, it was important to promote the events. This was done by:

- Ward e-newsletters and other social media platforms such as community group Facebook pages
- Displaying posters in community centres, local notice boards and Parish Council notice boards.
- Delivering leaflets to residents



### 3. Delivering the project

Roadshows have been regularly arranged throughout the ward councillors' term. Listening to residents and being accountable is important, which is why councillors developed a 'you said, we did' approach. This process involved a number of steps.

**Step 1:** Listening to residents to find out what the issue is. Residents are always asked if they are happy to be contacted and kept up to date.

**Step 2:** The Neighbourhood Co-ordinator then passed this information to the relevant agency. If permission has been

granted, the partner or organisation would be asked to update the individual who reported the concern directly.

**Step 3:** Evidence of 'you said, we did' is then taken to the next roadshow and shared with those in attendance.

Between Roadshows, ward meetings were used as a channel to ensure councillors, stakeholders and partners are kept up to date on matters.

### 4. Evaluation

Through the Roadshows, councillors focused on contacting and engaging with the harder to reach groups.

Councillors improved relationships with residents and partners. Residents got involved in their neighbourhood and helped each other out. Feedback from residents showed they felt less lonely and isolated.

Further ideas and projects were developed as a result of the Roadshows which used ward budgets.

Councillors returned to groups on a quarterly basis sharing 'you said, we did' information. This has helped to build-up trust built and shows very clearly how they are listening and supporting people in the community.

After speaking to residents at the Roadshows, councillors developed many projects that supported ward priorities. Some examples of what has been done are below.

- Multi-agency crime prevention roadshows to take place where residents received safety advice from the Police. Security items such as card defender wallets, property marking kits, purse bells and torches were provided to residents. The items had been purchased using ward budgets





- Members of a community group attended a community engagement and information day at Hellaby Life Wise Centre. Those in attendance were able to receive advice from South Yorkshire Police, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and other partners about fraud and scams, financial abuse, fire safety and mobility and living aids
- Residents using one of the Neighbourhood Centres raised concerns about the lack of lighting so councillors applied for Ward Housing Hub funding. It was agreed that a solar lighting column could be provided. This ensured that there was dusk till dawn lighting, which made the centre safer to use when it is dark
- Repairs to Mason Avenue Neighbourhood centre were reported and completed
- Resident only parking signs and 'H' markings were installed at Windy Ridge, Aughton. This meant residents were able to get to their Neighbourhood Centre safely
- 'Resident only' parking signs were fitted at Heighton View Community Centre



- Ward funding was used to purchase CCTV cameras, which were used to prevent flytipping and detect anti-social behaviour
- Ward funding was used to purchase 'A' frames that prevent motorbike and off-road bike nuisance

During conversations, it became apparent that some residents were feeling lonely. Councillors sought to combat this by supporting activities at the Council-owned Neighbourhood Centres in the area. This included:

- Holding regular coffee and social afternoons at Neighbourhood Centres, including bingo, arts and crafts. This has helped with social isolation and improve the wellbeing of local residents. Ward funding was used to purchase games and materials
- Ward funding was used to provide exercise and mindfulness sessions
- When Covid-19 rules were relaxed, many residents felt isolated and didn't have the confidence to go out, so councillors held pop-up outdoor 'come and meet your councillor' events. The events were run in a safe manner, ensuring Covid-19 regulations were followed. This was the first time that some residents had been out in months
- Working in partnership with the Housing and Restorative Justice team, ward funding was used to make improvements at Neighbourhood Centres, making them a more welcoming place for all to enjoy



## **Boston Castle Ward:**

### **How a Community Summit was delivered and action was taken as a result of the Summit**

Ensuring families are supported after the Covid-19 Pandemic was a Boston Castle ward priority. A Community Summit was delivered to help identify issues affecting local residents.

#### **1. Background**

Boston Castle is a culturally diverse area which is close to the town centre. There are a range of businesses across the ward, and a mix of housing including Council housing, private rent and privately owned.

Following from the Covid- 19 Pandemic, Boston Castle councillors wanted to bring communities back together. They wanted to support local community groups and organisations and to identify the important issues that were affecting residents in the Boston Castle ward.

It was felt that getting a range of stakeholders into a room to discuss what support, advice and activities could be offered to residents would be beneficial.

#### **2. Developing the idea**

Boston Castle councillors chose to host a Community Summit where representatives from voluntary sector organisations, community groups and individual volunteers would be invited to

discuss these issues.

Staff from the Council's Neighbourhoods team met with councillors to discuss how a Community Summit could work. Initial meetings were important to ensure that the event would be of benefit to the local community and also to councillors.

During this time, it was agreed that it should take place in September 2022. Planning for the event started in June 2022.

The Community Summit had a number of aims and objectives outlined by the ward councillors. These included:

- To identify how councillors and staff from the Neighbourhoods team could provide relevant support
- To ensure that organisations and volunteers working across the ward on a day-to-day basis knew how to get in touch and were aware of what support is available
- To inform how ward budgets can be allocated, to ensure they are providing what the community needs and so that any funding can deliver the maximum impact
- To gather information to help inform future ward priorities

Information could also be shared with colleagues in other Council teams to help inform service planning.

Working together, councillors and the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator identified how the Community Summit would be delivered and what processes they would need to follow. They wanted to ensure the Community Summit was an accessible event.

Councillors and the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator agreed who they wanted to attend the summit. In particular, we wanted to target groups who work with families.

The main stakeholders were community volunteers and agencies



who undertake work on the ground and have contact with members of the community daily. It was felt that these groups would help to provide a valuable insight into the key issues that were affecting local people.

Ward councillors also thought carefully about the diversity of the ward, as they wanted to ensure that attendees would be representative of all sections of the community.

The stakeholders identified included:

- Local primary and secondary schools
- Rush House
- Nayi Zindagi
- The Community Tree
- Voluntary Action Rotherham
- Ward councillors
- Council Neighbourhoods team
- Council Children and Young People's Service (CYPS)
- Council Housing team

Once these groups had been identified, the ward councillors and Neighbourhood Co-ordinator looked at the best way to engage with them.

It was decided that a face-to-face meeting would be most appropriate as it was felt that this would allow for discussion to evolve naturally. There was also a desire to bring people together after the pandemic.

Holding the summit face-to-face would also give stakeholders the opportunity to connect with each other, allowing them to build relationships, identify common concerns and needs, and to possibly share resources.

It was also agreed to hold the meeting at the Town Hall, a central location that is easy for people to access.

## 3. Delivering the project

The meeting took place at the Town Hall and 20 representatives from across the Boston Castle ward attended.

The format/agenda was as follows:

- Welcome and Introductions facilitated by councillors
- Each attendee was given the opportunity to introduce themselves and give an overview of their group or service
- Attendees worked in small groups to identify the main issues and concerns they were seeing, alongside any gaps in support for the local community
- Attendees then looked at how they could work together to try and tackle some of those issues, including where they may need to develop new projects
- Finally, attendees summarised the discussions and looked at what the next steps should be

A teatime meeting was organised to ensure that the widest possible representation of stakeholders were available to attend. For example, school staff may have found attending the event difficult during school hours.

Food was also available, as people may not have had time to eat before the meeting. A small business that was new to the local area was chosen to provide the catering. The councillors felt it was important to support a local business.

Information about the format of the summit was sent out in advance. This ensured that attendees had enough time to consider the subject matter and to prepare any relevant questions, observations, issues or information that they thought would be relevant or would like to be considered as part of the discussions.

The event was well received by ward councillors and stakeholders.





During the event and the following activity was discussed:

**Canklow Woods School:** The school contacted the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator to support them with organising an event where they could invite parents to come into school and get information regarding money management and energy efficiency advice. The Neighbourhood Co-ordinator linked the school to staff from RotherFed's Making Your Money go Further and Energy Know How projects, who attended an open morning at the school.

**Warm packs:** Councillors purchased a number of warm packs using ward budgets. The warm packs were given to people who were struggling with energy bills and heating their homes. The warm packs contained practical items such as a hot water bottle and a pair of gloves. They were distributed via local community organisations.

**Food vouchers:** Funded through the ward budget, food vouchers were given to families and individuals who were struggling with the cost of buying food. Again, these were distributed via community organisations.

**Social Supermarket:** Funding from the ward budget was used to enable Rotherham Minster's Social Supermarket to provide food hampers to struggling families over the Christmas period.

**Canklow Community Tree:** Christmas hampers were provided to older residents in the ward and this was supported through funding from the ward budget.

The Community Summit increased the councillors' awareness of the challenges the community was facing with the rising cost-of-living. Through holding the summit, it was possible to support a wide range of initiatives using ward budgets, some of which may not have been delivered had the event not taken place.

Information about the Community Summit and the outcomes were shared in the Boston Castle ward e-newsletter.

## 4. Evaluation

The Community Summit helped to build new relationships between local groups. They continue to build relationships and maintain contact with representatives who attended the Community Summit event, supporting them with future projects and initiatives.

Another event was arranged for during the summer to celebrate all the hard work undertaken by volunteers across Boston Castle ward. Further Community Summits were planned for the future.

Councillors welcomed the initiative as a return to face-to-face contact with local groups and supported work through using their ward budgets.





## **Bramley and Ravenfield ward:** **How a Community Open Day was organised**

One of the ward priorities for the Bramley and Ravenfield ward was bringing people together and improving mental and physical wellbeing, whether that's through inter-generational projects, community events, supporting community groups, or supporting activities for children, young people and families. A Community Open Day had the potential to support all the above.

### **1. Background**

Ward councillors and the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator recognised that there was a wealth of community resources in and around the ward. This included Parish Councils, other voluntary groups, support services and places to go, such as the local library.

It also became apparent that not everyone knew what was on offer or where they could access support or activities.

Councillors wanted to ensure that as many people understood what the local offer was and that the positive impact of these amazing organisations reached as many people as possible. They also saw an opportunity for bringing these groups and organisations together, to encourage networking and information sharing.

### **2. Developing the idea**

Planning for this event began in December 2021 with the event looking to take place in April 2022. It was important to establish the purpose of the event and to visualise what it would look like.

The Neighbourhood Co-ordinator took a leading role on planning and facilitating the event with support from Councillors, who provided a contribution from their Community Leadership Fund to purchase refreshments and to help deliver some activities. This helped to ensure that the event was appealing and engaging on the day.

The event was discussed at ward briefings, which took place with ward councillors and key partners.

Regular communication took place throughout the event planning process. Ward briefings were used as the key platform for information sharing.

The next step was to decide the target audience. It was important to identify who the event would be aimed at.

There are a number of groups to consider, including:

- Young people
- Adults
- Families
- Council tenants
- Private tenants
- Businesses
- Community groups

Agreeing on a good time and venue to deliver a community event was an essential part of the planning. During this part of the planning, consideration was given to school holidays, the weather,



indoor or outdoor venues, accessibility and transport links, using community facilities (Bramley Parish Council) and parking facilities.

The Neighbourhood Co-ordinator took the lead to book a venue and liaise with staff to ensure that the venue could accommodate the needs of the event.

Bramley Parish Council's Bill Chafer Centre in Bramley was chosen as it is well-known to the community and offers indoor and outdoor facilities. It also had good accessibility for residents who needed help walking or those using prams.

It was decided to host the event during the Easter holidays so that more people had the opportunity to get involved in the event.



## 3. Delivering the project

Once the date and venue had been decided, the rest of the planning could be completed. The first part of this was to find suitable partners and community groups to have stalls at the event.

The Neighbourhood Co-ordinator made a list of local groups, such as Bramley Brass Band, Ravenfield Parish Council and the local library, as well as organisations that provide services across the borough, such as Rotherham and Barnsley Mind, South Yorkshire Fire Service, and RotherFed.

These were logged on a spreadsheet which was kept up to date and regularly checked by the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator. This meant that progress could be monitored and any appropriate actions taken, for example, a place at the event could be given to someone on the waiting list, or a risk assessment could be chased up.

They also drew up a floor plan, ensuring that the event was reflective of Covid-19 guidelines at the time. During set up for the event, the tables were labelled, as were entrances and exits and the one-way system.

As this event wasn't on Council land, the events pack paperwork from the Council did not need to be completed. However, for good practice, a risk assessment was requested from each stall holder.

For those stall holders who were providing inflatable equipment outside, insurance certificates were requested.

Prior to the event, a number of promotional activities were undertaken. This included creating a flyer and poster which was distributed in public spaces so that residents, businesses and groups are aware.





These were also shared with stallholders so they could share with their own networks.

Prior to the event, the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator prepared an 'events pack', making sure that all posters and signs were printed off, a check list and risk assessment would be to hand, and that all equipment was available. They also checked in with stallholders, reminding them of the set-up times and requirements of the day so that they would feel prepared and welcome.

The Community Open Day was held on Wednesday 20 April 2022 from 10am to 2pm during the Easter School holidays at the Bill Chafer Youth Centre in Bramley.

By working together, the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator, councillors, Parish Council and other partners, were able to put on an event that was informative, engaging and open to all.

The ward councillors' Community Leadership Funding paid for refreshments, as well as an inflatable football pitch.

On the day, councillors engaged with residents and organisations who attended. It was the perfect opportunity to network, shout about the great work that goes on in the ward and build relationships that would lead to future projects in the ward.

Throughout the day, the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator took on a facilitator role, ensuring that the event ran smoothly, everyone was safe, informed and happy, whilst encouraging people to come inside and take a look around. Everyone supported in the set-up and tidy-down of the event.

## 4. Evaluation

There were of course areas for improvement and key learnings to take away which will inform any future events.

Footfall at the event was lower than expected. However, the feedback from the event was positive and encouraging, with organisations commenting on the event being a great networking opportunity, a brilliant way of connecting with local residents, that the event was well organised and located at an ideal venue within the heart of the community.

Members of the public were happy with the opportunity to get speak with local services and took away useful information and resources.

Those in attendance found the event useful and enjoyed taking part in the activities, which included inflatable football and a fire engine tour. The stallholders found it a great opportunity to network and get to know other local providers.





## Brinsworth Ward:

### How an 'Adopt-a-Tree' scheme was delivered

The delivery of an 'Adopt-a-Tree scheme' in Brinsworth supported the cleaner and greener Brinsworth ward priority.

#### 1. Background

Rotherham Council's Woodlands team secured funding from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund and Trees for Cities to plant hundreds of trees across the borough. Through the funding that had been secured, over 100 new trees were planted along Bawtry Road.

Potential locations were discussed at the Brinsworth ward meeting, and it was agreed that the green spaces at either side of Bawtry Road would be ideal locations as they would deliver several benefits to local people.

Trees would help to reduce noise and air pollution along the busy stretch of road, and would help to improve the look and feel of the local area.

With this project, ward councillors wanted to meet the following priorities they felt were important to the local community:

- Develop and support tree planting schemes and enhance the natural environment through wildflower and bulb planting opportunities.
- Work with schools to raise awareness of nature and protecting the natural environment.

The tree planting scheme was initially a standalone project delivered by the Council's Woodlands team and promoted by the ward councillors and Neighbourhoods team.

As part of the ward priority listed above there was a 'wishlist' of ideas waiting to be developed into projects that all formed part of the same theme around the environment.

This included working with local schools and the community around bulb planting; sowing wildflower seeds; encouraging wildlife and insects such as bees, birds and bats; planting trees; and the natural environment. These ideas were to be incorporated into an environmental day.



The trees were planted late in the season, which also coincided with one of the hottest and driest summers on record.

Although the trees were on a watering maintenance programme, the extreme conditions meant that some of them were unable to withstand the heat and drought.

As the trees were suffering with the heat, people raised concerns about the welfare of the trees. Lots of comments were posted on local Facebook pages. Brinsworth Parish Council, ward councillors and Neighbourhoods team all received several emails and calls from residents worried about the welfare of the trees.



## 2. Developing the idea

The concerns highlighted about the welfare of the tress were discussed at a ward meeting in July 2022. It was apparent that there was a growing number of people who did care about the trees and making sure they were looked after.

It was felt that if there was a way of giving local people a sense of ownership over the trees then they may be more likely to thrive and grow into mature trees. The Woodland Officer, Neighbourhood Co-ordinator and ward councillors discussed ways of addressing this and the group decided to pilot an Adopt-a-Tree scheme, the first of its kind in Rotherham.

A concept was developed for how this initiative could work and is summarised below:

- All the trees were numbered and entered onto a database.
- Residents living near or around the trees could sign up and adopt a tree, at no cost.
- Residents could opt to adopt one or more trees and once signed up they would be given the tree number and location.
- Those who adopted a tree would receive regular updates on the trees.
- Residents did not have to solely take care of the trees. This would continue to be done by the Council, however if they felt that the trees needed more water out of the maintenance schemes and they were able to do so, this was positively encouraged.
- Residents who signed up were asked to keep an eye on their tree and report any issues regarding the welfare and condition of the tree.
- They were made aware that if the tree died then a replacement would be provided as part of the funding scheme.

## 3. Delivering the project

The scheme was launched at the end of August 2022.

The first step was to put together a leaflet to explain the concept of the project. It was important that the information on the leaflet made the scheme feel like it was fun and free.

Councillors did not want people to think that they would be the only person looking after the tree or that it would cost them any money to take part in it.

Through working closely with Council's Corporate Communications team, several drafts were produced to ensure the information included reflected the concept of the project and how it would work.

The leaflet was approved by all partners (ward councillors, Neighbourhood Co-ordinator and Woodland Officer) and 300 copies were printed.

Houses along Bawtry Road and side roads were targeted, and partners delivered door-to-door leaflets, speaking to people and signing them up on the day or leaving leaflets for them to sign up themselves.

Publicity materials were produced for the Brinsworth ward e-newsletter that could be shared on local Facebook pages.







A short video was produced with ward councillors and the Woodland Engagement Officer. The video helped to explain the scheme, how it works and the benefits. This was shared with local schools and on Rotherham Council's social media accounts.

The Council's Corporate Communications team prepared a press release that was shared on the Rotherham Council website and featured on the Sheffield Star and the Yorkshire Post websites.

### 4. Evaluation

The initial response was very positive. People were, in general, happy to be included in the scheme and many people who signed up felt a sense of pride about this.

All of the people that were spoken to were happy to see the trees had been planted. The scheme raised awareness of the positive environmental impact that tree planting delivers.

People were aware that it was the Council who had planted the trees and appreciated that this was something good that had been delivered for their local area.

Within the first few weeks, 20 households signed up to the scheme. In total, since its introduction, 50 residents signed up to the Adopt a Tree scheme.

There was a small number of negative comments that were mostly received on Facebook. Some of the comments stated that the Council should not plant trees if they cannot look after them. However, the positive feedback far outweighed any negative feedback.

As a result of the success of this project, two other projects were planned around the 'Cleaner and greener Brinsworth' ward priority. The first activity was a bulb planting event for local school children. The second project was a free bird box scheme for

residents.

It was decided that linking these two projects with the Adopt-a-Tree scheme would be a good way to continue raising awareness around the trees and would help to reach out to a wider audience.

This led to the Brinsworth Environmental Day in October 2022.

Local schools were involved, including four primary schools and one secondary school. Each was invited to adopt six trees and received adoption certificate with tree numbers.

The pupils attended from 9am to 12pm and took part in bulb planting around the trees. This was led by the Council's rangers. Funding for equipment and bulbs was provided by ward councillors through their Community Leadership Fund.

Pupils were also given a presentation on the importance of trees and why it was important that they had been planted by a busy road. As a thank you for taking part, they were given seed pencils to plant their own Christmas tree.





Bird boxes were commissioned by ward councillors and made from recycled wood by a local social enterprise called Casting Innovations. On the Environmental Day, they were available for local people to collect for free with a fact sheet and instructions.

People collecting a bird box were also encouraged to sign up to the Adopt-a-Tree scheme.

All schools who took part were very positive about the Environmental Day. They expressed an interest to attend any future events and activities, as well as linking the trees into their curriculum.

On the day, a further 22 people signed up to the Adopt-a-Tree scheme and 30 people collected bird boxes.

A follow-on Environmental Day took place in March 2023 at the same community venue.

The theme this time was around bees. Primary school children were invited to plant summer flowering bulbs whilst checking the progress of their previously planted bulbs.

The Community Leadership Fund was used to purchase the bulbs. Seed paper was also given to the children to plant at home to encourage bees in their gardens.

Overall, the project reached out to a much wider range of people who were interested in engaging with projects that tackle environmental issues.

All primary and secondary schools were engaged, which has helped to build up a relationship between ward-based working and links with young people.

Linking in with schools and organisations as early as possible would be recommended for anyone looking to create their own Adopt-a-Tree scheme.

It was important to consider the timings for when to launch the scheme. In the future, it was proposed that launching the scheme before the trees arrive would be appropriate as it would mean that as soon as they are planted, people would be already signed up and ready to care for their allocated tree.

The councillors and Neighbourhood Co-ordinator explored how they could continue to share progress updates about the trees. This included using the Brinsworth ward e-newsletter to send general updates, rather than sending individual updates to people who have adopted a tree.

Overall, councillors felt that they had engaged well with schools and residents. In doing so, they helped to deliver the 'Cleaner and Greener' Brinsworth ward priority.



## Dalton and Thrybergh Ward:

### How a Towns and Villages project at Ridgeway shopping parade was completed

One of the key priorities of the thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy is to ensure neighbourhoods are safe welcoming. The Towns and Villages project was a great opportunity to work towards this priority.

#### 1. Background

The Towns and Villages Fund is a £4 million commitment from the Council to deliver improvements to local towns and villages across the borough. The programme was developed alongside the ongoing works to revitalise and improve Rotherham town centre, recognising the importance and need for investment into local centres.

The scheme aims to work with neighbourhoods to enhance their lived environment, through a variety of projects focusing on public spaces and local centres.

There are five objectives that the programme seeks to deliver:

1. Improve the lived environment of all residents
2. Enhance the visual appeal of neighbourhoods across the borough
3. Inspire pride in our neighbourhoods
4. Co-produce projects with neighbourhoods to deliver change that is needed
5. Deliver on the priorities of Wards and/or wider masterplans

In the Dalton and Thrybergh ward, the Towns and Village project focused on the Ridgeway shops in East Herringthorpe. Ward councillors decided on this location because it was historically very vibrant and a place where residents gathered to meet and access local amenities.

Ridgeway Road is the main thoroughfare to Rotherham Crematorium and the main bus route through the housing estate. It was felt that the scheme would have a positive impact on the local landscape, attract commercial partners to the area and bring people together in an inviting space, thus recreating a sense of community and pride.

The improvement work took place in front of the shop (Ridgeway Convenience Store) and the surrounding built environment, where Bradstone Road and Hawksworth Road meet Ridgeway Road.

#### 2. Developing the idea

A range of issues outside of the stores at Ridgeway were identified. These were as follows:

- Broken and uneven pavements and footways
- Crumbling walls surrounding the area/green space
- Inadequate steps (access) up to the shop
- Damaged bins and lack of bins
- Poor lighting
- Unused green space – no seating area/planting
- Road safety concerns – crossing points and parking
- Built environment very tired, run down and in need of repair
- Aesthetically unattractive/uninviting - contributing to a neglected look and feel

A stakeholder mapping exercise took place and a communication plan implemented.





The external stakeholders identified, included:

- Business owner/tenant (convenience store)
- Residents
- Community groups active in the area
- Rotherham Federation of Communities

Internal stakeholders that were identified, included:

- Street Scene
- Highways and Transportation
- Housing
- Green Spaces
- Planning

The purpose of the stakeholder mapping exercise was to identify the different groups that would need to be kept informed and involved throughout the process of this Towns and Villages Fund scheme.

A consultation process was started to ensure that local residents had the opportunity to feedback their views and ideas about the design of the project.

The timescales for the consultation were established. It was important to consider the project milestones, response times and feedback mechanisms. The appropriate channels and methods for communicating and involving stakeholders were identified at the point.

The councillors and Neighbourhood Co-ordinator focussed on including and involving local residents, particularly harder to reach groups, or less likely to engage groups (a high proportion in the ward).

Time was taken to reflect on what worked well or didn't work as well in previous projects in the ward. New methods of engagement were also identified.

Accessibility was also considered. This involved ensuring consultation materials were prepared in alternative formats, for example large print. It was also agreed that in-person support would be offered.

It was important to promote the consultation events and activities through ward, councillor and partner channels, as well as through local broadcast media.

Once the consultation had been carried out, the data was collated and evaluated.

Quantitative evaluation from the questionnaire on Microsoft Forms was carried out. This was shared with councillors and the project team.

Qualitative thematic and conversational analysis was undertaken, using the data collected from the community conversations.

A Likert Scale was used to ask people how they felt about the plans. A Likert Scale measures people's level of agreement to a statement, typically in five points: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree. The findings were presented in a written report, which was shared with councillors and the project team.

Outcomes and results were shared with stakeholders. The project team was advised on the next steps.

Wider stakeholder communication was delivered through local channels and further engagement with those who expressed an interest in future involvement with the project was undertaken.

The outcomes and findings from the consultation played a key role in informing the final project design.



This specifically included:

- Agreement with the overall concept of a ‘community garden’ and remain a green space
- An overwhelming request/need for CCTV to prevent anti-social behaviour and mitigate any community/stakeholder concerns
- Consideration of alternative materials/designs for seating
- Consideration of access and placement of tactile crossing points

### 3. Delivering the project

Following the consultation and discussion with Council services and partners it was agreed that the project would include the following elements:

#### Infrastructure (Planning, Highways, Street Scene, Green Spaces)

Broken, uneven pavements and footways were replaced within the boundary area to ensure a good standard of accessibility.

Crumbling walls surrounding the green space and footways at the site were repaired. The area became more accessible.

Steps to the shop were suitable and safe, through the installation of a new handrail. Dropped kerbs were agreed to be installed at the main steps and at the corresponding crossing point.

#### Road safety (Highways and Transportation)

Measures to improve road safety were included as part of the project, with new signage and a safe crossing point created.

#### General safety

Improved lighting was installed to ensure that the area was well lit.

As a safety measure, new CCTV was installed. This helped to make sure the improved green space was not misused and remains a safe and enjoyable space for all.

The shop was made more secure through the installation of additional bollards.

#### Green space (Greens Spaces, Highways)

The green space was made a focal point for the local community. A new ‘community garden’ space was created. This included planting and seating.

#### Cleanliness

Damaged bins were replaced, and more bins were installed at the site. The materiality of the site was enhanced through new block paving.







### 4. Evaluation

The project was completed in January 2023. The project was a success with works being completed to a high standard. Residents were pleased with the improvements to the area and have utilised the new space and benches greatly.

The new paving allowed the site to be more accessible. This received a lot of praise from councillors and residents in the area.

The site continues to be monitored by the Towns and Villages team to ensure the quality of the build is retained.

The site was one of the first of the Towns and Villages projects to be undertaken and helped shape how other projects across the borough deliver the project, such as the good practice from the consultation.

Creating a sense of community ownership and encouraging ongoing involvement has been key to the sustainability of the project. Additional funding from a variety of budgets, including Councillors' Leadership Fund was secured and used to further this aim.

The funding enabled neighbourhoods to work with other departments and involve a local school in a planting project on the site. Pupils living on the estate and who were members of the school's gardening group, helped to plant 200 Spring bulbs on the site. Including and involving the local community has helped to strengthen relationships, maintain the community garden and make it more vibrant - increasing ownership and sustainability for future generations.

Overall, the feedback has been positive for this project and the Neighbourhoods team looks forward to further localised regeneration projects across Rotherham.







## Dinnington Ward:

### How a CCTV scheme in Brookhouse and Slade Hooton was delivered

The CCTV scheme that was delivered in the Dinnington ward supported priorities to reduce crime in the area whilst supporting communities.

#### 1. Background

Dinnington ward is a varied ward with extensive rural areas as well as an industrial area. There is a former mining community in Dinnington as well as new, modern suburban housing estates, popular with commuters, have been built over the last few years.

The village of Brookhouse is an affluent neighbourhood within the ward and lies to the north of Laughton en le Morthen, on the border with Thurcroft and Wickersley South ward. The village is built along the central Main Street with large residential properties and a pub. Surrounding land is agricultural. There is also a railway bridge and footpaths. A residents association was active in the area and had previously taken part in 'Britain in Bloom'.

Ward councillors attended Parish Council and Residents meetings across the ward. Councillors listened to feedback from the Village Association at a Laughton en le Morthen Parish Council meeting in 2021 where residents felt that Brookhouse and Slade Hooton had become a target for crime.

The Brookhouse and Slade Hooton Village Association is made up of a team of residents who help their community and were involved in activities such as litter picks, regular work days to tackle areas

of concern in the village, Christmas tree light switch on, lunch events and socials. The group also worked together to report and monitor water leaks and sewage issues, as well as sharing information on crime in the area, concern over animals, the reporting of flytipping and the reporting of potholes.

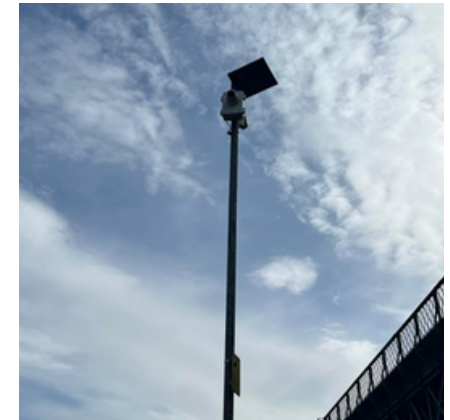
The two villages experienced six break-ins over a six-month period up to September 2021, including daytime break-ins at houses with security alarms. People in the area reported that they felt vulnerable and asked for the support of elected members to do more to reduce and deter crime.

The Village Association also highlighted concerns over speeding vehicles and resulting vehicle collisions, as well as illegal quad bikes being ridden through the area.

The concerns raised by residents were discussed at the September 2021 Community Action Partnership(CAP) meeting from which the action was for the Neighbourhoods team to contact Street Scene so that the team could look at options around CCTV and streetlighting.

#### 2. Developing the idea

The Neighbourhood Co-ordinator arranged for a site visit with the CCTV Officer, members of the Residents Association and ward councillors to take place on 1 October 2021 so that they could speak with local residents.





During this time, Council staff listened to the concerns of residents and Street Scene was able to explain how a CCTV system could operate. The steps that residents could take independently were also highlighted. Some of the steps included investing in video doorbells and the importance of reporting in a timely manner to local police.

After the meeting, discussions were held between the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator and Street Scene to ensure that a CCTV scheme could be financed. They then discussed finances with the Village Association who agreed they would explore further funding options.

A total of four CCTV cameras were proposed for the area, including three in Brookhouse and another one in Slade Hooton. Two of these cameras would have Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). This would allow them to deter burglaries, off road bikes and quads and antisocial behaviour, as well as assisting the Police with investigations around these issues.

It was also decided that approximately 50 per cent of the scheme would be funded by ward councillors' Capital Budget. Additional funding would come through donations from residents and the local parish council.

Following reports made to police, the local PCSO attended the village in October 2021 with the Council's CCTV officer to deliver personal security items such as window alarms and stickers.

### 3. Delivering the project

On 6 October 2021, an initial quote was provided and sent on to the Village Association and ward councillors. The total cost quoted for the project was £13,888.



Dinnington ward had a Capital Budget total of £10,680 for 2021/22. Capital funding can be used for the purchase or construction of fixed assets (or improvements to them) that will be of use or benefit the local community for more than one financial year.

Discussions were held between ward councillors and the Neighbourhoods team regarding how best to use the capital budget available. It was decided that £6,500 would be used from the Capital Budget towards the scheme. Initially in the application for funding from ward councillors, £15,000 was sought.

The Village Association indicated that due to the urgent need for this project that they wished for the project to be done in one stage and would look at supporting the project through fundraising and other funding sources.

The Village Association undertook door-to-door calls around the village to raise funds as well as awareness. They were able to raise £4,000 with a further £1,500 provided by the Parish Council.

Unfortunately, there still was a funding gap for the full scheme. While it would have been possible to leave the installation of one camera until the following financial year, this was something that was not ideal for residents.



The Council's CCTV Officer was able to negotiate with the contractors providing the cameras and they decided to help fund the fourth camera. The CCTV Officer described this as 'a real Christmas present for the village'. All four cameras installed in December 2021.

### 4. Evaluation

Following the installation of the cameras, the number of burglaries in the village has dropped.

CCTV footage was obtained for one burglary which took place in Brookhouse. The footage showed a vehicle and a vehicle registration mark that was then used for the investigation.

Local policing teams see off-road bikes on CCTV footage most weekends and use these images as part of their intelligence gathering.

Local PCSOs report that access to the extra cameras has been very useful to identify reports of suspicious activity and antisocial behaviour.

News of the scheme was promoted in the Dinnington ward e-newsletter. Councillors provided progress updates around the project from when the scheme was initially proposed.

The work of the local residents cannot be understated in this project. They worked brilliantly to raise both funding and awareness to build a sense of community spirit following the Covid-19 pandemic and the spate of burglaries.

Residents had initially wondered if the CCTV cameras would be permanently manned and queried what the Police response times would be once a crime was observed.

Residents were also keen to have numerous cameras to ensure as many properties as possible were covered. Council staff took time

to explain the system available through Rotherham Council and outlined the approximate cost of each camera unit and its maintenance. As this was done from the outset so there was no later disappointment.