

# Community Development Impact Report 2021



## Introduction

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) has made a long-term commitment to support our most vulnerable residents and communities through community development. In 2021, we focussed on:

- Merstham
- Redhill West
- Preston
- Horley
- Woodhatch and Whitebushes

Each of the community development workers produces an annual impact report for their area. This report for 2021 provides an overview of some of the highlights of the team's work.

Community development is described as “a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems.” (United Nations).

The team takes a strengths-based approach to their work, focussing on “what’s strong, not what’s wrong.”



## Food and fuel poverty

**We worked to help our residents access food and Fuel Poverty support - focussing on choice and dignity.**

### Fuel poverty

A household is said to be in fuel poverty if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level), and
- were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line. (A framework for Future Action (DECC 2013).

RBBC reallocated a small underspend from another project to pilot a new project to support residents in fuel poverty through top ups to their key or card meters provided by our partners.

During winter 2020-21, we worked with seven partners to provide support to 352 individuals.

We were able to carry forward £12,000 in funding, which we will allocate to partners in 2022. Here are some comments from beneficiaries:

**“Top up has given me a rest from anxiety caused by low income and whether I can keep the lights on.”**

**“It’s meant I can have the heating on more and keep the kids warm.”**

**“The top up made a massive difference, thank you.”**



## Food Clubs and Community Fridges

Food Clubs were established in five of our community development areas (Horley, Woodhatch, Merstham, Redhill and Preston) and they provide access to low-cost food for a small weekly subscription of two pounds. The clubs are supported by partnerships with Fareshare, local supermarkets, Redhill Baptist Church, Merstham Community Facility and St Marks Church (Tadworth).

Established in late 2020 and early 2021, the clubs continued to attract increasing numbers during 2021.

We are currently supporting about 190 people to access food to help them manage their budgets,

Now COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, the clubs are beginning to bring in partners to support Food Club members (including SES Water, Surrey Community Action, Money Support (RBBC) and employment support services).

Following the success of the Community Fridge in Merstham, the Woodhatch and Whitebushes community development workers (Ash and Sare) obtained funding and support from community partners to establish a fridge at the Woodhatch Community Centre. This allows people to access food from the fridge that would normally go to waste, at no cost and with no referral, which greatly reduces any stigma they might feel about seeking support from a Food Bank or Food Club .



## Funding support

The team worked with our partners to develop funding bids to support the delivery of local projects.

Project work didn't return to pre COVID-19 levels in 2021 and so the amount raised is not as high as in previous years. The Community Development team wrote or supported successful bids for £169,750 including:

- Surrey County Council (SCC) awarded £9,999 for a community budgeting pilot project in Horley.
- Two Redhill projects (Renewed Hope Trust and R&B Women's Aid) supported to apply to the VINCI Foundation for a total of £10,000.
- £13,000 from Monty's Bakehouse to support delivery of school holiday food poverty projects (including an extension of the successful Munch Club in Merstham).
- £2,000 from SCC to develop a health champion project in Merstham.
- £40,000 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for a skatepark in Preston.
- £40,000 for the Woodhatch Pump Track (£20,000 from CIL and £20,000 from British Cycling).
- £1,750 for the Woodhatch Christmas lights (£1,000 from the Woodhatch Community Association and £750 from the Co-op).

There were many other small bids and in-kind support, which the Community Development team were able to access through their community links and ability to deliver projects in their local communities.



# Community engagement

**Key to our work is listening to our residents.**



## Horley - community budgeting

Working with our partners at Surrey County Council, we have been leading on a community budgeting project. Our Horley community development worker (Tony) talked with local people about projects they would like to see and how they would like to be involved in delivering them. Leaflets were delivered to homes in Court Lodge and the Rivers Estate asking for suggestions. Delivery of these projects will take place in early 2022.

## Summer events

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and uncertainty, not all our community development areas hosted summer events in 2021. Well received events were held in Preston, Redhill and Whitebushes.

## Partnership meetings

Partnership meetings remain at the centre of our engagement. The meetings bring together partners and active citizens to devise local action plans and share their local knowledge to find solutions to local issues. We currently have about 440 individuals on the mailing lists for partnership meetings.

## Support for individuals

Our community development workers are often a trusted link into other organisations. All our community development workers support individuals in their areas to access services and support (including those offered by RBBC). We also support individuals into volunteering for community projects, including our Food Clubs and Community Champions.

## Work with internal partners

Supporting consultation on the refurbishment of the Merstham Rec, which resulted in a higher than expected level of engagement with local residents.



## Work with our health partners

**Increase in joint working with health partners as we move out of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

### Growing Health Together

Growing Health Together started as a GP-led project in Horley, which has now been extended across East Surrey. Linking to the wider aspects of health, the project aims to encourage GPs to look at preventative measures to increase health and wellbeing. In Merstham, this led to a series of health talks at the Merstham Hub, in Redhill. The group are looking at inclusion for people living with autistic spectrum disorders. In Horley, local residents are planning to increase access to green space through community allotment and garden ideas. All our community development workers are actively involved in delivering these projects.



### Pulling Together - Surrey Downs

Surrey Downs hosted a series of events to map local community provision, share good practice and identify new preventative, community-based projects. Our Preston community development worker (Maria) gave a presentation on her work with young people, which was very well received. This work will, we hope, lead to investment in additional community led projects in 2022. Maria's work also helped to raise the RBBC profile with our partners in Surrey Downs.



### Vaccine uptake project - Preston

Working with partners in Public Health we used our community connections to support a project to increase the number of residents who received the COVID-19 vaccine, in a community in the lowest 20 per cent of vaccine uptake in Surrey. Our Preston community development worker's established relationships with partners and residents led to a significant increase in the numbers of people choosing to take the vaccine.



## Local projects

The whole team work to understand the needs of their local community - supporting residents and partners to develop new projects to meet those needs.



The community development team is involved in many small scale, local projects that support our communities. Below are some examples of work in 2021.

Impact	Project or activity
<b>Tackling loneliness and isolation and promoting emotional wellbeing</b>	<p>BASRRA (Bereavement Advice &amp; Support Redhill &amp; Reigate Area) - a volunteer led project in Redhill supporting people who have experienced bereavement.</p> <p>Preston Intergenerational Arts Group - monthly arts and crafts group for families and individuals.</p>
<b>Strengthening communities</b>	<p>Community gardening projects - including the new planters in Whitebushes.</p> <p>Community litter picks - across the borough.</p> <p>Woodhatch Christmas tree - over 150 people attended an event to turn on the lights.</p>
<b>Reducing anti-social behaviour and supporting young people</b>	<p>Youth football projects - established in Preston emerging in Redhill.</p> <p>Supporting universal youth work - through the 'Get Connected' joint bid with YMCA.</p> <p>Pump track refurbishment in Woodhatch.</p>
<b>Increasing employability</b>	<p>Work to establish an employment 'hub' in Horley.</p> <p>Employment and Skills Group - bringing together a range of partners working to support residents into employment.</p> <p>Supporting training for volunteers - including Food Hygiene Level 2 qualifications for food club volunteers.</p>