

To all groups and organisations in Hastings, supported at some point by the 'Making it Happen' Project. 'Thank you' so much for being a vital thread in the patchwork of local communities.



The Making it Happen project, which covered specific neighbourhoods within East Sussex, finishes at the end of March. We have invested in the future, leaving behind a legacy of useful information and tools; not just relating to Asset Based Community Development but capturing a record of the wonderful projects and groups who have been involved via an exciting and accessible report and website, due soon.

The work that you have developed is so valuable to the town and its residents. We hope that by capturing stories of your progress we are helping to illustrate that the community sector is crucial, and that appropriate support to enable it to continue to flourish is vital.

Hastings Voluntary Action has secured funding from ESCC to help us continue to support groups into the future. HVA wants to help develop strong and resilient communities, and we will be inviting you to involve yourselves in the best ways to do this.



From April, alongside generic community development work, I will be working with my new colleague Lucy Abbott to coordinate the 'Nature & Green Connections' project. This project aims to not only support groups who are managing green spaces but also to improve access to local countryside, gardens and other natural places which improve health and wellbeing; particularly for those people for whom access is a challenge.

I encourage you to please keep in touch with me, and follow social media for updates.

Many thanks and keep Making it Happen!

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## Making it Happen in Hastings – A summary

Starting during the pandemic, when people were living in separate bubbles from each other; Making it Happen, like all businesses and organisations, had to learn how to engage with individuals in less traditional ways. Zoom meetings became commonplace, gradually loosening up into outdoor meetings, but it took some time to reach what felt more normal and natural when gathering together into groups.



During the first year the Hastings project supported projects linked to supporting communities affected by the Covid pandemic. Food hampers, art equipment, mobile phones, outdoor exercise and outdoor Christmas activities were funded with small grants.

As the world opened up, the project was more able to hold more face-to-face community conversations and support more individuals with their seeds of an idea. Photography, art and creative activities, friendship groups, wellbeing and environmental groups were funded and supported.

The successful event that happened on the pier in 2022, supporting the cultural diversity that Palestine offers and supporting our local links with the town of Al Mawasi, now takes on new significance.

Groups that have focussed on engaging young people have been supported to hold skate events, and MiH has helped to sustain a bike repair workshop. Summer sessions to learn woodworking skills and kickboxing have also been funded.

Making it Happen has hosted the Hastings Youth Partnership regularly, providing opportunities for organisations working with children and young people to link knowledge and ideas, to back our younger residents.

Recycling, re-purposing and lending useful equipment has burgeoned from a small idea to a sustainable project offering a regular service for learning skills and borrowing kit.

Groups working with inclusion as a focus have received grants that have supported their continued development and growth. These include LGBTQ+, neurodiverse and global majority folk together with gender focussed projects.

Activity bringing inter-generational individuals together has developed in ways that were not envisioned; such as responding to challenges in accessing heritage and countryside. Offering children a chance to learn an instrument has changed lives, increased confidence and expanded horizons.

Projects to encourage community involvement in sustaining local green spaces, gardens and growing food have been enabled to buy equipment and to offer networking and developmental activities to help with this.

Resident focussed associations have been funded to bring people together around their neighbourhoods; and to act as a conduit to local housing providers.

Spaces have been cleared, developed, planted and maintained bringing a sense of community and safety to residents, children and families.

Over the last five years, the neighbourhood focus of the Making it Happen project has allowed groups and organisations to work together, whilst retaining their identities. It has encouraged the small seeds of ideas to flourish into a variety of initiatives in specific areas of the town; but has also enabled connections across the borough that will help sustain the activities in the longer term.



**MAKING IT HAPPEN**

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for making it happen  
& being a vital thread in  
the patchwork of local  
communities

**HVA**  
Hastings Voluntary Action