



A Focus on Community Venues in Blaby District Thursday 30th September 2010

Introduction

There are two parts to this document;

1. Section One; is the recordings provided by the Facilitators of each of the table top workshops.
2. Section Two; is made up of questions posed by participants for which you may have an answer.

Section One

Commercially Viable; The discussion focused mainly on ways of marketing and raising incomes. As is often the case, delegates often wanted to concentrate on their own issues, such as Blaby having a problem with what is on front of the Arriva bus!

Post-it note point	Notes
Branding	Are there opportunities to develop a commercial branding for single halls or collectives? Do halls have a "marketable" brand?
Public perception	What do people expect when hiring a hall? Is the reality of quality etc better than what people think?
Competition	Should halls have a competitive attitude towards securing hirers?
Limitation on private clubs	Income opportunities are limited for private clubs as facilities should be used by members only
Hiring rates	Halls need to ensure their rates are both competitive but realistic to cover costs and produce a surplus
Advertising	Limited advertising is undertaken
Notices / posters	Local advertising
Local restrictions on signage	Local authorities may limit exposure through rules for posters/signage etc
Business planning	Halls must look to develop a long term rolling business plan, not just when they are looking for funding.
Running costs	Reductions in energy / utility bills.

- 1) Facilities cost themes
- 2) Branding - what is the venue
- 3) Restrictions on advertising

Recruiting

- 1) Volunteers to help with applications
- 2) Help with the running of venue
- 3) Younger volunteers



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Actions: Local Newsletters – word of mouth

Energy Efficiency

- 1) Keep temperature down
- 2) Prevent draughts
- 3) Keep hours down

Diversifying

Questions were asked about what participants understood by diversifying:

- When building is used by other people. Essentially a greater use of the building to maximise demand and decrease funding dependency. This is called sweat asset management.
- Use of renewable energy as income generating resource (as well as decreasing energy dependency; when combined with energy efficiency measures).
- Business sponsors.
- Contribution from building tenants based on a fee structure (depending on the nature of the organisation; charity, social enterprise, volunteer group, etc).
- Creative income generating options:
 - Developing a regular cinema slot
 - Hiring of office equipment (fax, printer, scanner, etc)
 - Mini-office space (hot desking)
- Local networking with other villages to pool services, coordinate use of resources and develop a common approach

Then questions were asked around what is necessary to ensure a good building management. **It appears three situations can be encountered:**

1. There is a good demand of services from the community centre, but the fees raised don't cover an adequate proportion of the building costs
2. There is not enough demand of usage of the community building
3. There is insufficient volunteering and community support for the community building that needs to be managed

Other ideas to consider:

- Community buildings need to be considered as a balance between how much it costs to run them, the demand for service and space, and the income generated (whether through grants or through income generating activities)
- Can volunteering help to reduce the need of certain costs, hence reducing current expenditure?
- Consider who your clients can be, how much can they pay and what you are offering. Can you work collaboratively with others to reduce the costs of your building or improve your funding options?
- Considering community buildings can be in place in excess of 15 or 20 years, is it worthy to install renewable energy measures (providing there are good energy efficiency measures in place) which can be fed back into the grid and in return either obtain a decrease utility bill or a little income stream derived from 'feed-back tariff' into the grid - <http://www.fitariffs.co.uk/eligible/> -

- 1) Income generation not just grants
- 2) Renewable energy can generate income



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3) Use of precept – need community engagement

Marketing and Promotion

The group discussion started with participants sharing their questions and thoughts about promotion and marketing.

Issues/Questions that were raised are:

- How do I promote my resource on a small or no budget?
- How can I get more people to use the resource?
- My resource is very popular at certain times but not at others what can I do to fill it at non-popular times?
- Where can I advertise for free?
- We have a group booking in every month on a Thursday for an hour and we can often fill that booking for longer periods, should we cancel the group?

Ideas and suggestions that were discussed:

- 1) Think about your market
- 2) Who are you targeting what is the main demographic of your area? What are your key messages?
- 3) Do a SWOT analysis (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats)
- 4) Review your pricing structure
- 5) What do other people charge? Am I competitive? Do my prices reflect my service? Am I being sustainable whilst fulfilling the community need?
- 6) Use Social Media- Set up a Facebook page, Leicestershire Villages website, Twitter
- 7) Submit stories to local media
- 8) Use human interest angle to promote the use of the community building, strike up relationship with a reporter, use local media to advertise events
- 9) Diversify activities
- 10) Start new groups, hold one off events, and approach new groups to use space
- 11) Register on Google Places/Maps
- 12) Visit www.google.com/places to register for free
- 13) Leaflets and Posters - Make them eye catching, simple and professional, stick to simple fonts, use good quality images, follow copy right laws www.sxc.hu good site to use.
- 14) Branding - This is about your whole image including logo, slogan, ethos and values. Choose something that reflects this and ensure all materials reflect this at all times
- 15) Have your own website - Always register your own domain name, don't pay someone to do it then you will always own it, 123.reg is a good simple site, purple zebra also offer good ICT services to community groups. Possibility of buying domain name having front page and linking to Facebook site or other social net- working.
- 16) Paid advertising - Research the market, set a budget, get a clear message across, keep it simple, think about target market and choose publication to best suit it.



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Funding

Post-it notes;

Paul Muton - Football/Cricket Pavilion, Refurbishment – Northfield Park, Blaby

Julie Edge – Chair, Karen Smith Treasurer Sharnford Youth Club – Rebuilding of youth club £80,000 approx.

Sue Jones, Leicester Forest East, Parish Council – Playground. 8-13yrs.
Refurbishment of existing parish hall facilities.

Alison Bates, St Andrews Church Leicester Forest East. Looking for grants to fund: Disability Toilet, Upgrade existing Gents, Security doors for play school and outside play area for play school.

Colin Dickens – Kirby Muxloe Church Hall Committee. Present project to install sound system in hall.

Dave Williams – Countesthorpe Bowling Club. Clubhouse & facilities improvements

Tom Bates – Littlethorpe Community Association, Kitchen refurbishment

Graham Anderson – Cosby Village Hall. Funding for upgrade to electrical distribution in hall, to meet new safety regulations.

Andy Kirk – Glenfield Scouts.

Michael Langman – Braunstone West Council of Social Service
Funds needed for very large revamp for the meeting room, renew kitchen and 2 toilets to 1 disabled toilet.

Dennis Walker – Leicester Forest East Parish Council
Funding to replace play building, funding recently withdrawn (£50,000).
Funding for refurbishment of parish hall – kitchen, toilet and heating system.

Volunteers

Post-it notes

- Recruiting through local newspaper
- Word of mouth

Tom Bates – I would be willing to volunteer in January.

Jo Small, Glen Parva Parish Council. Volunteers to run a parent and Toddler group.

Rosemary Hall – Whetstone Memorial Hall – Recruiting volunteers for management committee and younger volunteers

Ann Dixon Blaby and Glen Parva Community Service – Recruiting Younger people, recruiting volunteer drivers, recruiting volunteers for management committees.



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Denise Wright – Volunteers to help file funding advice and applications.

Dennis Walker – Leicester Forest East. Community volunteers to assist in running various aspects of parish management e.g. magazine distribution quarterly.

Roger Kelly - Cosby TOCH. Effective promotional marketing of premises & How to recruit volunteers?

Section Two

Do you have suggestions or ideas for any of these questions?

1. What is the most effective way to recruit volunteers?
2. How can you work collaboratively with others to reduce the costs of your building or to improve your funding options?
3. How can I promote my resource on a small or no budget?

If you have any ideas or suggestions, then send them to victoria.bowers@leics.gov.uk to the rest of the participants at the event.

Did you meet people at this event who you would like to meet again? What would you like to discuss? Are you able to offer a venue for this discussion?

If you think any of this is of interest, then contact Victoria on victoria.bowers@leics.gov.uk