The Anchor Project Community Consultation & Action Plan

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1. THE ANCHOR PROJECT

1.1 The Local Community

The Anchor project is located in the ward of Bowling and Barkerend, Bradford. This ward of over 7000 people is in the top 1% most severely deprived living environments in the UK[1], is ethnically and culturally complex[2], and shows evidence of dangerous self-segregation[3]. High crime and unemployment, racial antagonism, drug abuse, and elevated levels of ill health[4] are prevalent[5]. It is a community deprived and under pressure.

Of particular concern to the project was the issue of marginalisation and isolation. A Joseph Rowntree report highlighted the issue of chronic loneliness in this area as extremely pressing[6] and a significant contributing factor to early mortality. This is an issue the project is eager to tackle.

1.2. The Anchor Project's Community Goals

The Anchor Project started over 10 years ago as a community-based project with 4 broad goals; to:

* 'Nurture understanding and compassion in our divided neighbourhood
* Support the needs of our neighbour (especially those on the margins and isolated) with helpful, practical assistance for their everyday needs
* Create a space where the community can come together to share their lives and experiences
* Empower local people to take pride in, and restore, our neglected living environment'

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[1] Government's Office for National Statistics: Neighbourhood Statistics (area 039B)

[2] White British (8%), Asian (75%), Black African / Caribbean (2%), European (2%) in our LLSOA

[3] Urban Study 2008: http://usj.sagepub.com/content/45/3/553.short

[4] Life expectancy is in the lowest 3% of wards

[5] ONS

[6] https://www.jrf.org.uk/topic/loneliness

A decade of active presence in the community has established this project as familiar, trusted and hugely valued. It has grown to a part time staff of 4 and a volunteer base of 19 local people who now help over 60 people every week and over 300 individuals every year. Their services reach every ethnicity and people group within the locality and cut across age groups and cultural divides.

"The Anchor Project is a model of how to build capacity within communities and achieve great results with little resource. I often send new community workers to visit their project to be inspired!"

Canon Denise Poole

2.   BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION

At the end of 2015, The Anchor Project took stock of over a decade's worth of community action and service. Questions were raised about:

- What the future might hold for the project

- What sort of services should be provided and how these should be delivered

- How to tackle the ongoing issue of fundraising and income generation - which had become increasingly difficult and time consuming

With these issues in mind, the project contacted local development charity, The Olive Branch Trust, to assist in organisational development and fundraising and to deliver a community consultation. The desire was to turn to the community to find out how they regarded The Anchor project, what they valued, what community needs they perceived as most acute, and how The Anchor Project might respond.

This consultation was commissioned in early 2015 and funded by Awards for All England.

3.   CONSULTATION DESIGN

3.1. Background

The Trustees of the Anchor Project, and its Project Manager and Community Engagement Co-ordinator (Indi Elcock), were keen to highlight some important boundaries to the consultation. They were concerned that the consultation would be so broad as to identify issues that would not be within the scope or remit of their community group. Their goals therefore were to:

- Commission an in-depth (thorough analysis of data), targeted (specific groups) and focused (clear areas of analysis) community consultation
- Help identify community needs that the Anchor Project could help address
- Develop a 3-5 year action plan
- Identify how the Anchor Project might develop as an organisation (internal structures and systems) to implement the findings of the consultation

This was deemed the crucial next step for the project. They also desired consultation with a cross section of the community, including working partners, beneficiaries, children, elderly, young people, businesses, professionals and the general public.

3.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were developed to engage different targets groups and to elicit responses to a wide range of issues.

3.2.1 Target groups

Questionnaires were developed for:

- Partners
- Service users

- And community members

3.2.2 Nature of the questions

Questions were constructed with the following considerations in mind:

1. How to identify community needs
2. How to evaluate the Anchor Project
   - Does it meet needs
   - Does it meet important needs
   - Do people know about the project
   - Do they value the project and get a lot out of it
   - In what ways does the project makes a difference
   - In what ways could it be improved
   - Are there other services / organisations / groups offering the same kind of service
3. Demographics
4. How to identify new opportunities and draw new ideas from the community
   - Would the community want to receive assistance and help
   - And for what sorts of need

To help stimulate thinking we considered the use of basic categories of need. These were as follows:

- Financial (poverty, debt)
- Education / Training
- English language
- Social / Recreation
- Integration (bringing all the community together)
- Developing greater understanding of and respect for people of other faiths and backgrounds
- Environmental (graffiti, litter, lack of green space)
- Meet new people
- Feel more part of your local community
- Develop a greater sense of pride in where you live
- Other

We felt that these would <u>stimulate thinking</u> and provide <u>comprehensive coverage</u> of potential community needs and how to evaluate the Anchor Project. This approach worked well in practice.

3.2.3 Measuring responses and gathering information

We used tick boxes and a standard five point Likert Scale to measure responses, leaving space for respondents to offer their own specific ideas and comments. These background considerations resulted in the following questionnaires.

3.2.4 Questionnaire for Anchor's partners

The Anchor Project, St Clement's Church - Partnership Survey

In what ways have you partnered with the Anchor Project?

How successful was this partnership?

Not at all	A little	Quite	Very	Great

What did you find most successful?

To what degree do you think your collaboration helped the local community (please tick the relevant box):

	Not at all	Very little	Good	Great	Fantastic
Meet new people					
Feel part of their community					
Feel happier about the place you live in					
Get to know people of different backgrounds (beliefs, religions, ethnicities)					

How important do you think the Anchor Project is to the local community?

It doesn't matter if it stops	Maybe it's important	It's important	It's very important	It's vital

What needs do you see within your community and how do you think these could be addressed?

Type of Need	This is one of our community's most important needs (tick all that apply)	I would like to prioritise these needs in order of importance as Ffollows (put a 1 for the most important, a 2 for the next Important, and so on)	I would like to see the following types of support in these areas (e.g. Job Clubs)
Financial (e.g. poverty, debt)			
Education / Training			
Integration (bringing people together)			
Understanding and respecting different faiths and backgrounds			
Environment (litter, green space)			
Safe social and recreational spaces			
English language skills			
Other (please name)			

Name & Position

Age:

Up to 11	12-19	20-30	31-45	46-65	Over 65

Do You Have a Disability ?: Yes / No (please circle)

Are you (please circle all that apply)

Male	Female	Parent with children under 18	Looking after other people's children	Retired	Student	Carer	Seeking work	Full time employed

Part time employed	Voluntary worker	Anything else:

Do you normally attend meetings of any religious community (please tick)?

Muslim	Christian	Hindu	Sikh	Other

3.2.5 Questionnaire for Anchor's service users

The Anchor Project, St Clement's Church – Community Survey

What is the name of the activity you've attended?

[ ]

How much did you enjoy this activity?

I didn't	A little	Moderately	A lot	I really enjoyed it

What did you like most about this activity?

[ ]

How much has this activity helped you (please tick the relevant box):

	Not at all	Very little	Quite a lot	Lots	Loads
Meet new people					
Feel part of your community					
Feel happier about the place you live in					
Get to know people of different backgrounds (beliefs, religions, ethnicities)					

How important is this activity to your community?

It doesn't matter if it stops	Maybe it's important	It's important	It's very important	It's vital

What needs do you see within your community and how do you think these could be addressed?

Type of Need	This is one of our community's most important needs (tick all that apply)	I would prioritise these needs in order of importance as follows (put a 1 for the most important, a 2 for the next important, and so on)	I need help in this area myself (please tick)	My ideas for activities in this area are: (e.g. Job Clubs)
Financial (e.g. poverty, debt)				
Education / Training				
Integration (bringing people together)				
Understanding and respecting different faiths and backgrounds				
Environment (litter, green space)				
Safe social and recreational spaces				
English language skills				
Other (please name)				

Name (Optional)

Age:

Up to 11	12-19	20-30	31-45	46-65	Over 65

Do You Have a Disability?: Yes / No (please circle)

Are you (please circle all that apply)

Male	Female	Parent with children under 18	Looking after other people's children	Retired	Student	Carer	Seeking work	Full time employed

Part time employed	Voluntary worker	Anything else:

Do you normally attend meetings of any religious community (please tick)?

Muslim	Christian	Hindu	Sikh	Other

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3.2.6 Questionnaire for wider community members

Community Survey in BD3

How many projects and activities in your area do you know that bring the whole community together?

None	A few	Some	Quite a number	Lots

If you do know of some, can you remember their names?

How important do you think it is to have activities that bring the whole community together?

Not important	Matters a little	Important	Very	Vital

What needs do you see within your community and how do you think these could be addressed?

Type of Need	This is one of our community's most important needs (tick all that apply)	I would prioritise these needs in order of importance as follows (put a 1 for the most important need, a 2 for the next important, and so on)	I would attend these activities myself (please tick)	My ideas for projects in this area are: (e.g. Job Clubs)
Financial (e.g. poverty, debt)				
Education / Training				
Integration (bringing people together)				
Understanding and respecting different faiths and backgrounds				
Environment (litter, green space)				
Safe social and recreational spaces				
English language skills				
Other (please name)				

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Would you go to community activities where you could (please tick the relevant box):

	Definitely not	Possibly	Probably	Most probably	Definitely
Meet new people					
Feel part of your community					
Feel happier about the place you live in					
Get to know people of different backgrounds (beliefs, religions, ethnicities)					

If you wouldn't go to such activities, please give some reasons why not?

In what other ways do you think the local community could become a better place to live?

Name (Optional)

Age:

Up to 11	12-19	20-30	31-45	46-65	Over 65

Do You Have a Disability?: Yes / No (please circle)

Are you (please circle all that apply)

Male	Female	Parent with children under 18	Looking after other people's children	Retired	Student	Carer	Seeking Work	Full time employed

Part time employed	Voluntary worker	Anything else:

Do you normally attend meetings of any religious community (please tick)?

| Muslim	Christian	Hindu	Sikh	Other

3.3. Data Collection

Data was collected from April - August 2015. Efforts were made to gain feedback from partners, service users, and the wider community. Initially a target number of respondents was set at 150.

4. RESULTS

4.1 A representative sample of the community

289 people responded to the consultation: 122 people who have been beneficiaries of Anchor's services, 25 partner organisations and 142 community members that have not benefited from any of Anchor's services. This number captured a broad demographic, local cultural diversity, a diversity of employment categories and representative faith groups. The data in represented in graphical format below.

Population pyramid for respondents

Occupations

Religion
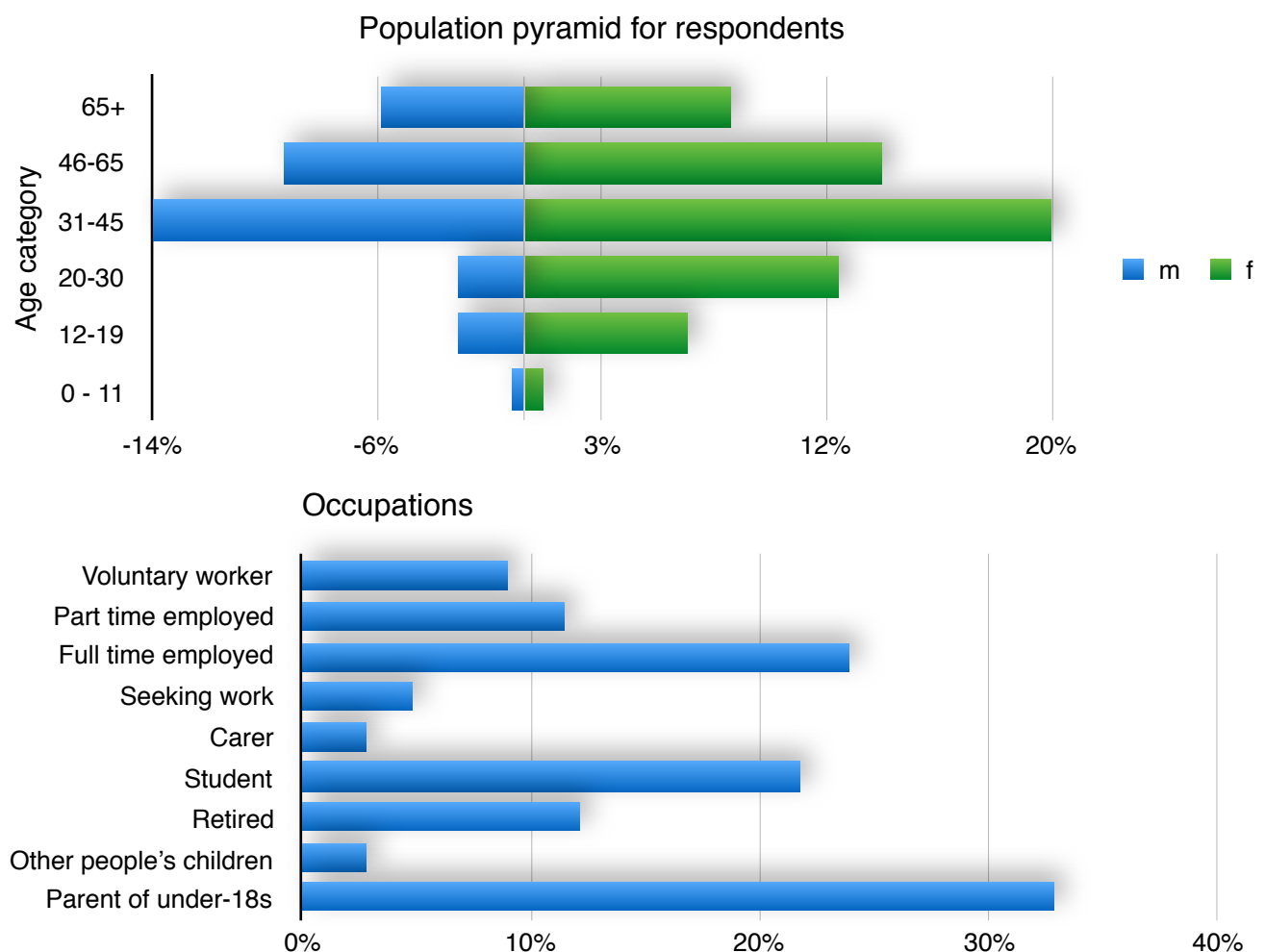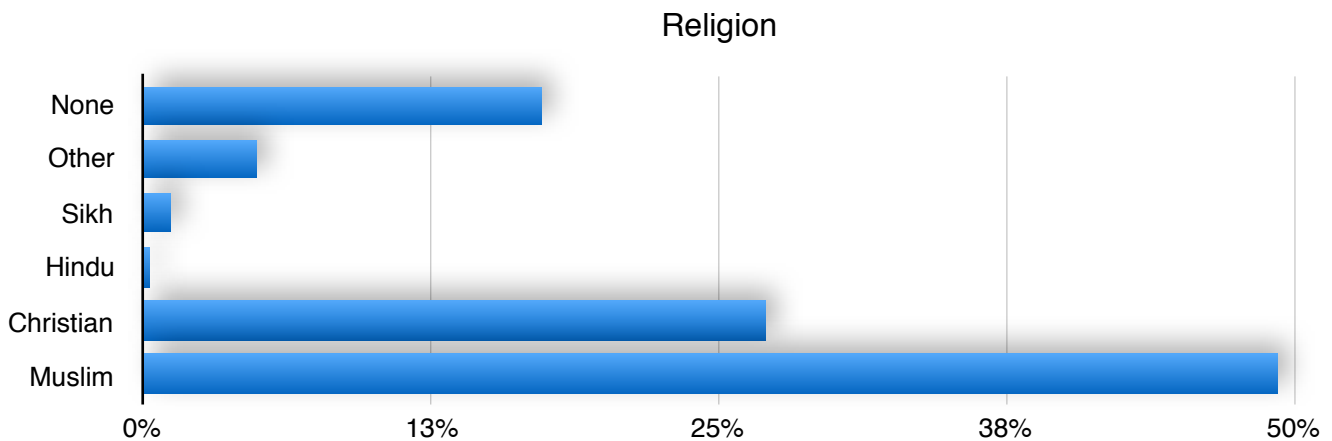
4.2 In the community there is a lack (or lack of knowledge) of 'community integrating' projects

This consultation indicates a distinct lack (or knowledge of) projects 'that bring the whole community together'.

Nearly half of respondents (42%) didn't know of a single project that brought the community together, and only 15% knew some. Furthermore, of those who said they could think of quite a number, or lots, when prompted to name some they struggled to name more than a couple - and these were often restricted to one-off events rather than specific projects.

Projects and activities I know of that bring the whole community together?
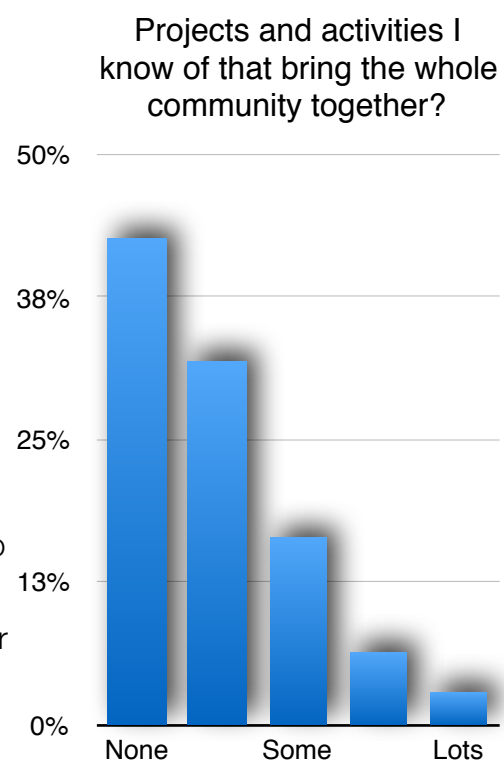
## 4.3 The Anchor Project is greatly enjoyed by beneficiaries and regarded as a great success by partners

It was overwhelmingly clear that partners and users greatly valued the Anchor Project. Partners found Anchor's activities hugely successful, and users found the activities highly enjoyable.

Over 90% of users and partners gave Anchor the top two highest scores; with 60% of users really enjoying activities, and 60% of partners noting that their collaboration with Anchor was a great success.

"Because AP know their local community so well, there isn't any persuasion needed on our part to get involved. They recognise the role and strength of working in partnership with others; they help us learn more about how poverty impacts on local communities and together (with other local organisations) we have tried out different interventions to find out our best way of working. Basically I love working with the Anchor Project and wish all our partnerships were as joyful and successful and worked with the same level of commitment and integrity."
Response from partner questionnaire

Enjoyment and success of The Anchor Project's activities and partnerships
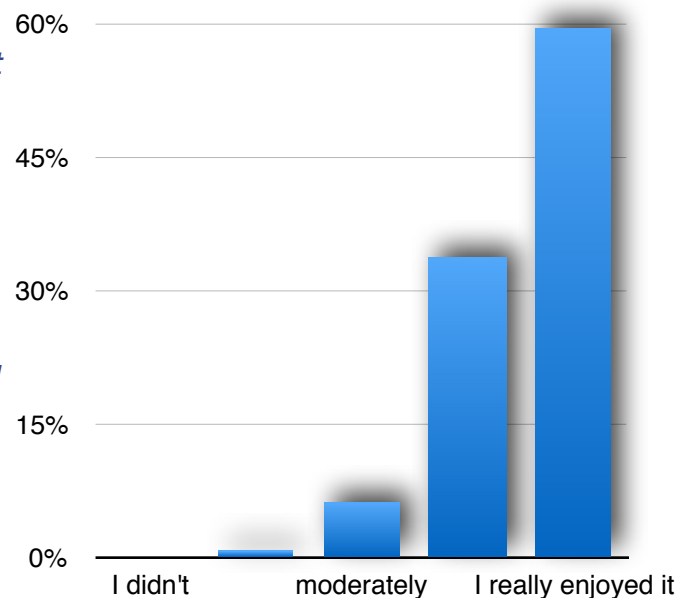
4.4 The Anchor Project's goals and activities are highly relevant to the community at large

The Anchor Project's goals are to bring the community together, to help people integrate (feel part of the community), enjoy and improve their environment, and share their stories of faith and culture. When the community were asked if they would attend projects with such goals, the overwhelming response was very positive. We found that:

• 39% of respondents would definitely attend activities that help them meet new people
• 33% would definitely attend projects that would make them feel part of community
• Around 50% would definitely attend activities to feel happier about their location and encounter other cultures.

Scores across each of Anchor's key areas averaged out as follows (0 being the lowest ranking score, 4 being the highest):
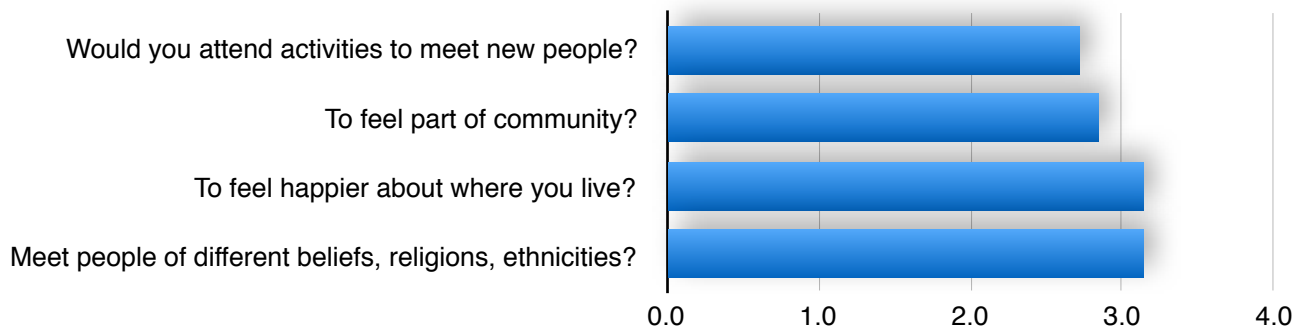
And the response profiles for each specific area is as follows:

Would you attend activities to meet new people

Would you attend activities to feel part of community

Would you attend activities to feel happier about where you live

Would you attend activities to encounter other cultures
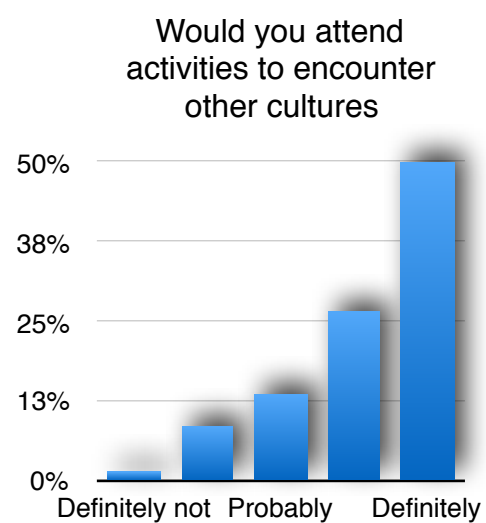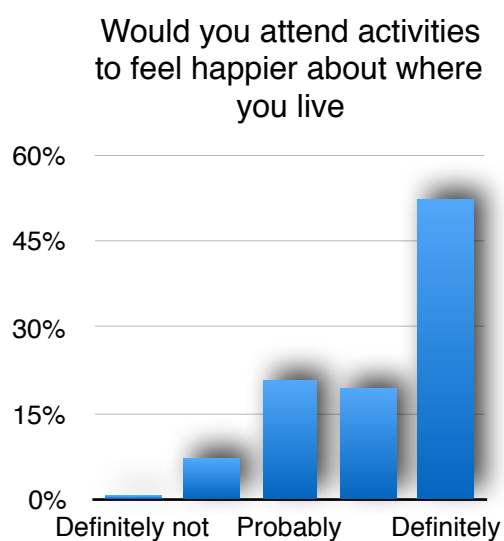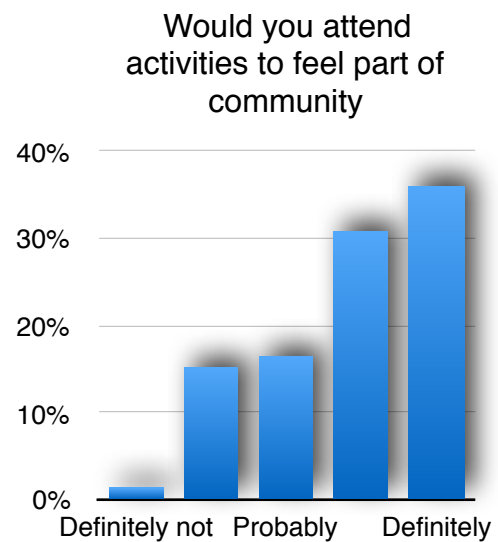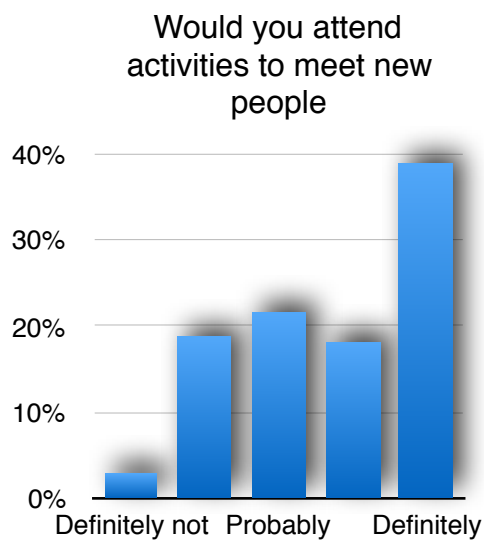
4.5 The Anchor Project delivers key community outcomes

It also became clear that The Anchor Project is meeting its key community objectives. When beneficiaries were asked to what degree the project helped them in relation to meeting new people, feeling part of their community, feeling happier about where they lived, and getting to know people of different backgrounds, the response was very positive, averaging at the 3rd highest score - Lots.

(0 being the lowest ranking score, 4 being the highest)

These results are all the more impressive given that not every Anchor Project activity is designed to achieve all four aims - e.g. some projects are mainly concerned with environment, or interfaith issues.

4.6 Partners and users regard the project as either very important or vital to the community

When users and partners were asked how important they perceived the Anchor Project to be to the local community the results were very consistent. For users, 40% believed the project to be vital, with nearly 70% regarding it as either vital or very important. For partners a similar picture emerged.

Users: How important do you think the Anchor project is to the local community?

Partners: How important do you think the Anchor Project is to the local community?
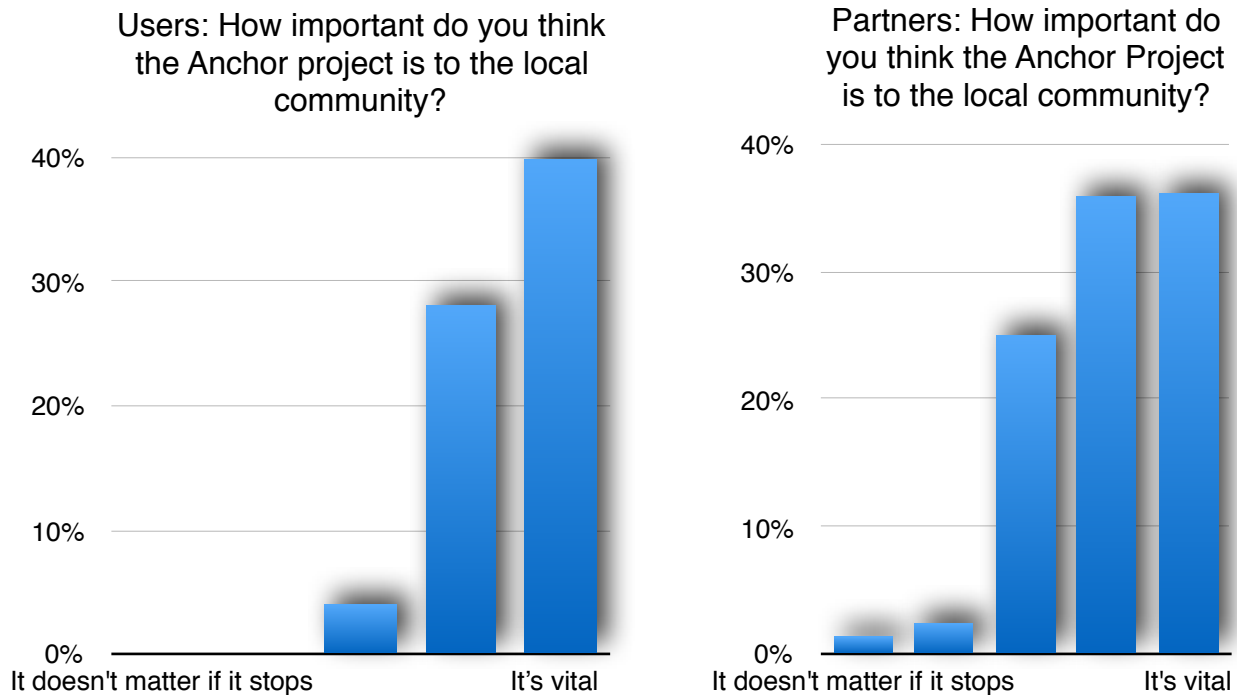
4.7 The Anchor Project's goals are amongst the community's most important needs and priorities

When the community were asked what they thought were the community's most important needs, The Anchor Project's goals are clearly important to the community. 67-70% of all respondents regarded community integration, improving the environment, understanding people of different faiths and social issues as the community's most important needs and priorities. The scores are as follows:

What do you perceive to be your community's most important needs
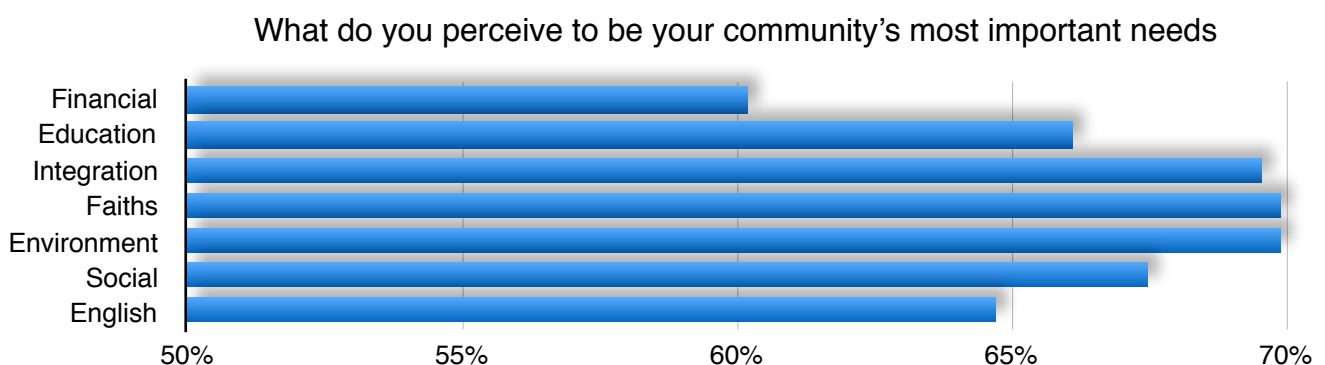
4.8 Finances, Integration, Education and Faith as top priorities

When respondents were asked to prioritise these needs (1 being the highest priority, 5 being the lowest), a slightly different picture emerged. In light of this question respondents placed financial issues as the most important priority, followed by integration, education and learning about other faiths.

I would prioritise these needs as follows:
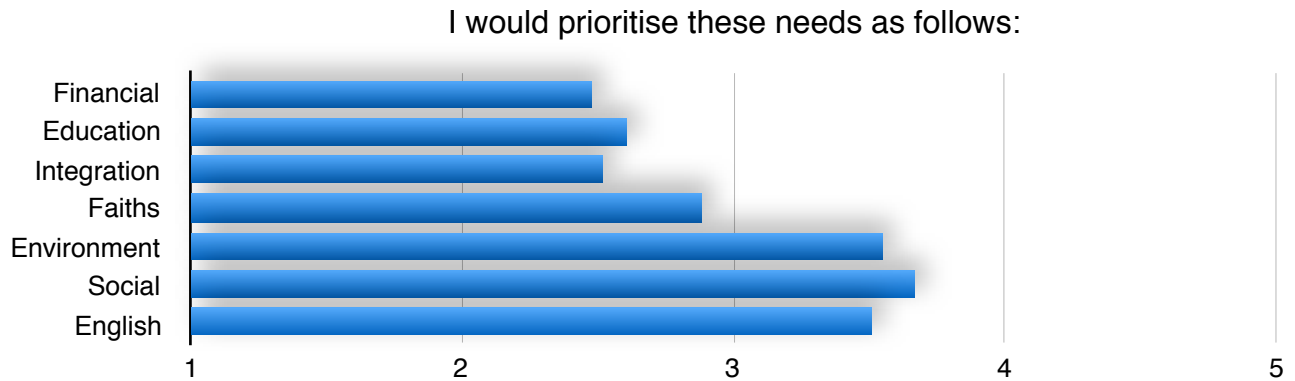
It is unsurprising that financial issues were placed first, given that this community is in the top 1% most deprived and poor communities in the UK. It is also not surprising that education is in third place because it is seen as provide a clear route out of poverty. Nevertheless, the Anchor project is clearly hitting the right note with integration and bringing together people from different faiths and cultural backgrounds.

4.9 20% of respondents require immediate help across multiple areas

When respondents were encouraged to point out the needs the they would like help with, the following profile indicates that around 20% of all respondents need immediate help in a host of ways. Many of these clearly relate to The Anchor Project's key areas of integration, faith, social interaction, English, and the environment.

I need immediate help in the following areas
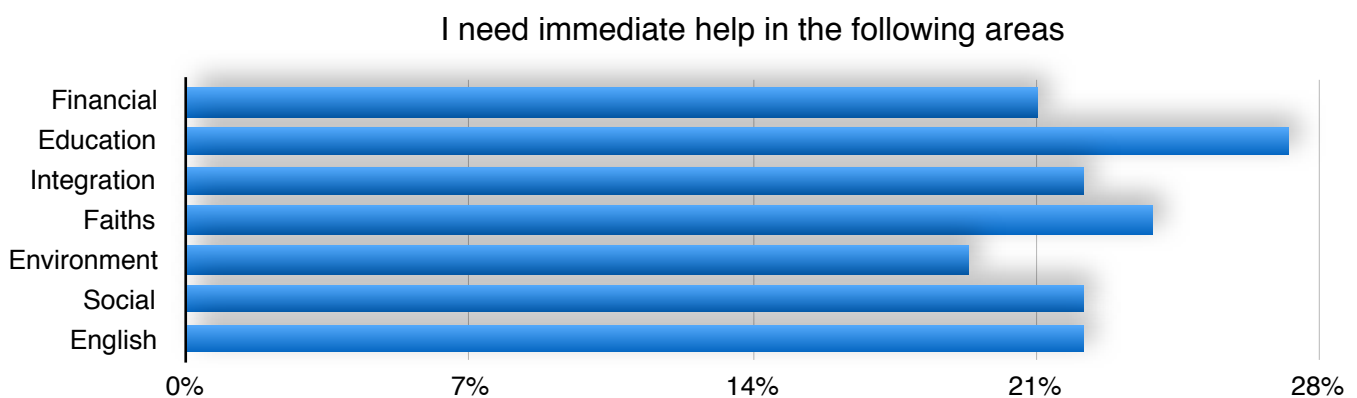
There is clearly evidence of considerable need for The Anchor Project in this community.

4.10 The community's ideas for tackling needs

Everyone was given an opportunity to present ideas for tackling the community's needs and 84 people responded (29 people who are beneficiaries of The Anchor Project, 7 who work for partner organisations and 48 others). Every idea (even duplicates) are recorded in the list below: (AP identifies ideas that are regularly delivered by The Anchor Project).

Financial

1. Job and advice centre
2. Energy switching events
3. Money management sessions and advice for debt management (AP)
4. Drop-in events (AP)
5. Free debt advice
6. Food bank and debt management course
7. Computer skills for OAPs
8. Budget management (AP)
9. Social enterprise business

Education

1. Short courses in community centres (AP)
2. Skills building up - personal life skills and confidence (AP)
3. Access to schools
4. IT and literary skills (AP)
5. Adult training courses (AP)
6. Mens group (AP)
7. After school homework clubs
8. Apprenticeships/placements
9. Jobs club - computer training (AP)
10. Core values education (AP)
11. Free after school classes
12. Education of social understanding (AP)

Integration

1. Interfaith and intercultural projects (AP)
2. Coffee mornings on Saturdays
3. Celebrating different faith festivals (AP)
4. Eat and drink together (AP)
5. Photography group (AP)
6. Local events/outings open to the community (AP)
7. Community events (AP)
8. Integration of White British into Asian Communities (AP)

Environment

1. Enforce litter laws/ school litter picks
2. Awareness programmes (AP)
3. Ownership/responsibility for green spaces (AP)
4. More engagement with residents to build social capacity and volunteering in the area with residents at the heart of this (AP)
5. Communal litter pick (AP)
6. On the spot fines
7. Walking group (AP)
8. Local clean up days using local volunteers (AP)
9. Gardening and street clean (AP)
10. Places to dump big items (a skip)
11. Clean ups - tidy look will deter crime and drugs (AP)

Social

1. Residents involved - set up friends of groups (AP)
2. A team of volunteers to be available
3. Gardening group (AP)
4. More fun (AP)
5. More fun (AP)

English Language

1. Learning English (AP)
2. Community Classes (AP)
3. English for new migrants, asylum seekers and refugees (AP)
4. Pre-ESOL classes and job search (AP)
5. Free teaching (AP)

6. Skills swap
7. Higher standard of English teaching (AP)

Other
1. Organise youth clubs
2. Concerts and music lessons (AP)
3. Police
4. OAP clubs (reading/book clubs) (AP)
5. People need to be not so wrapped up in their own world
6. Have more places like Mortimer House Children's Centre
7. Sports, outdoor activities (AP)
8. Parking
9. Family breakdown counselling
10. Crime, neighbourhood watch, direction in policing

The following points can be raised from these data:

1. This list can be used to look for fresh ideas for Anchor projects

2. Many of the ideas are relatively straightforward and small scale; such as the desire for small groups, clubs, reading groups, community classes, clean ups, walking groups, coffee mornings, and somewhere to meet

3. Other ideas will need more specialist input and reflect some of the complex challenges the community is facing; such as crime, drugs and drug dealing, policing, family breakdown, education, and access to local schools

4. The anchor project already delivers (or has delivered) over 40% of the activities identified by these respondents (see (AP) above) which indicates that it is putting on projects that people see the need for

5. Over 70% of respondents didn't suggest a single idea across these categories (finance, education, community, integration, social, English Language); which implies that creative ideas need to be generated by groups such as The Anchor Project - many in the community are looking toward others to come up with ideas

4.11 Reasons why residents might not attend projects, activities and events

Only 5 responses were given as to why local residents might not attend community projects, activities and events:

1. Don't have anyone to go with

2. Date or time of event due to work or other events

3. Only able to attend day time

4. Why bother?

5. Boring and same as before

These are clearly relevant, but because so few people responded it supports the finding that many people are willing (and desire to) attend projects, activities and events that will benefit them and their community.

4.12 Conclusions

The data from this consultation enables us to draw some useful conclusions.

Firstly, sufficient respondents were consulted (289) across a broad demographic to draw reasonable conclusions about the community's needs, the impact of The Anchor Project and further opportunities for this community group. This consultation suggests most strongly that:

• There is a shortage (or lack of knowledge) of community integrating projects in the immediate locality

• The Anchor Project has focussed upon the community's deepest needs and priorities, achieves crucial outcomes, and is highly valued by both users its partners - it's value is such that 70% of partners and users find it's activities very important or vital to the community at large

• The community expresses a strong desire to participate in projects, activities and events that The Anchor Project is currently delivering, with 20% of respondents indicating they require immediate help in Anchor's priority areas

• Relationally based, trusted and smaller-scale initiatives are attractive options for The Anchor Project. This approach has been its *modus operandi* for a decade, is clearly deeply attractive to local people who value this trusted and locally based grass-roots initiative. This finding validates the culture and ethos of The Anchor Project.

5. STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

In light of this consultation The Anchor Project commissioned the development of a broad 3-5 year action plan, which would be followed by a short period of collaboration with The Olive Branch Trust to introduce (where practicable) some organisational structures and systems necessary to deliver this plan. This strategy was put together in consultation with The Anchor Project's project manager, Indi Elcock, to ensure that the plan was both feasible and practicable.

Recommendations are as follows:

5.1 Continue to be guided by the project's core goals

It is clear that The Anchor Project has developed a plan of action that aligns with the community's deepest and priority needs; i.e. to:

- Nurture understanding and compassion
- Support the needs of individuals (especially those on the margins and suffering isolation) with helpful, practical assistance for everyday needs
- Create a space where the community can come together to share their lives and experiences
- Empower local people to take pride in, and restore, our neglected living environment

So strong is this alignment that it is our proposal that these should remain as guiding principles for the next five years.

5.2 Improve communications

This consultation indicates that whilst the community identifies The Anchor Projects goals as priority needs, they are not aware as they might be about the project and what it offers.

Suggestions to improve this are to:

- Clarify the message of the organisation and of its numerous projects
- Invest in a dedicated website

- Invest more in publicity (fliers, posters, signage)
- Develop a word of mouth strategy
- Develop a system of support relations (newsletters, e-shots) that will help keep people informed in an efficient and timely manner

This we trust will give The Anchor Project a sound platform from which to communicate its project and its services.

5.3 Prepare for an increase in users

The Anchor Project had set a goal of increasing the number of service user over the next year by 30%. It is our recommendation that this is not exceeded and that foundations are laid to ensure such growth can be managed and handled well.

This preparation could involved such things as:

- Increasing its volunteer base
- Developing further partnerships and deepening existing working relationships
- Formalising a signposting strategy (so that the project can more efficiently and effectively direct people into wider services)
- Increasing existing staff capacity (with either new staff or the increase of existing hours)

5.4 Consider carefully how to manage growth

This consultation has indicated that there is a significant number of people in the community who desire help across a wide number of categories (financial, integration, isolation, education). This needs to be borne in mind by the project when formulating publicity drives and advertising services in order to avoid becoming over-subscribed.

There is a strong desire within The Anchor Project to help as many local residents as possible, and yet respondents to our questionnaires indicated that one of the most important needs of the community is a 'social' need, the ability to go to safe spaces where they can meet and converse with others and build relationships. It is our recommendation that this 'social' feel needs to be protected as the project grows. Increasing numbers of users too quickly runs the risk of creating an environment that feels chaotic and less intimate. We

recommend that growth is steady and that attempts are made to consider how best to achieve this.

5.5 Evaluate existing services and organisational structures

Our recommendation is that all current services are evaluated in order to assess their contribution to Anchor's core goals. Whilst this consultation indicated that all projects are deeply valued, we would encourage that improvements or refinements are considered within existing services in order to promote a culture of reflection and innovation.

5.6 Redouble efforts to combat community isolation

Isolation is clearly an issue within the community (Joseph Rowntree) and it is our recommendation that attempts are made to develop strategies to connect more deeply with the community's most marginalised. One particular group is elderly White British residents.

Particular effort and creativity will need to be invested in working out how to reach such groups, and we encourage such endeavours in light of The Anchor Project's commitment to reach the most vulnerable and isolated.

5.7 Balance organisational growth with financial sustainability

The Anchor Project has demonstrated considerable financial resilience over the last decade. It is our opinion that this resilience is related to it's employment of a light-weight staffing structure (4 part-time) that possesses a great diversity of skills (e.g. management, education, inter-faith, family, elderly, toddlers, environment). This structure enables the project to respond relatively quickly to a variety of community needs, and also bid for varied streams of funding.

Overall turnover for the project is between £40-60K p.a., and whilst there have been some challenging months and periods over the last 2 years, this figure has proved sustainable.

It is our recommendation that this model continues to shape the development of the organisation.

5.7.1 Develop contracts and a regular giving programme

In light of this structure, and in view of historical income generation (which has come primarily from trust funds and contracts), we recommend that keen attention should be paid to:

- Local contracts
- Developing a regular giving programme that reaches 10% of annual expenditure

It is our opinion that these income streams from contracts should be regularly monitored and sought after, and that a regular giving programme should be developed before further commitment is made to growing the staff team.

The development of a regular giving programme, however modest, will serve not only to help cover core-costs (which have sometimes proven difficult to obtain) but can also serve to draw in further support - volunteer and publicity. It is our recommendation that a trial event be undertaken to start this process and reflect on the most suitable format to achieve good results.

5.7.2 Improving grant applications

It is our recommendation that grant applications be improved to maximise success. Our recommendations are to develop:

- Clear descriptions of each project activity
- Clear budgets for 1 and 3 years for each activity
- Clear indications of outputs and outcomes across the project

Application success rates should be formally reviewed every 6 months, along with project descriptions and budgets.

5.8 Monitoring and evaluation

Currently there appears to be a lack of thought given to the type of monitoring and evaluation that would be beneficial to the project.

It is our recommendation that time be given to work this through, to work toward the development of a set of insightful and practicable measures that enable robust evaluation of the project and its activities. This will not only serve in promoting refinements and innovations, but also help to communicate more clearly the impact of the project in further trust fund applications.

5.9 Consider becoming a registered charity

It is our recommendation that The Anchor Project consider becoming a registered charity. This recommendation is not offered lightly, given the sustainability of the project over the last 10 years under the oversight of St Clement's Church, and the good will of the church to the project in a whole host of ways.

We recommend this for the following reasons:

- We believe that as the project grows it will be beneficial to have direct oversight from a skilled and competent board all of whom have skills relevant to the project and knowledge of the local area
- We also believe that by becoming a registered charity the project will have access to a greater number of trust funds

5.10 Consider adding new skills to the trustee board

A clear commitment of The Anchor Project is to remain rooted in the community as a grass roots initiative. We view this as a stand-out feature of the project - an initiative run and resourced by local people with a passion for their local community.

We would however encourage adding trustees to the current groups, from within the community wherever possible, that could increase the current skill set to cover the complex range of issues with which The Anchor Project deals. This will help the board provide more insightful leadership and evaluation moving forward.

5.11 Identify organisational strengths and weakness

Finally, we recommend a full organisational analysis of the organisation as a whole. To identify strengths, weakness and opportunities for further growth and development. We offer this as an immediate task to pave the way for further development.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Six days were spent with The Anchor Project looking at ways in which systems and structures could be quickly implemented that would pave the way for further development.

The following was achieved.

6.1 Organisational Analysis

A thorough organisational analysis was undertaken of The Anchor Project in relation to:

- Purpose
    - Knowledge of context, theory of change
    - Strength of shared vision
    - Planning
- Capacity
    - People and resources
    - Managing of people and resources
    - Governance
    - Policy and procedures
- Delivery
    - Programme design and implementation
    - Impact
    - Evaluation and development
- Sustainability
    - Leadership
    - Fundraising systems
    - Culture

In this analysis it was found that The Anchor Project scored well in:

- Knowledge of context
- Having staff and volunteers with shared vision
- Managing people and limited resources

- Policy and Procedures
- Programme design and implementation
- Impact
- Leadership
- Culture

The following areas were identified as areas to improve:

- Long term planning
- Increasing resources
- Governance (wider skill set)
- Evaluation (of activities and impacts)
- Fundraising systems (regular giving, trusts, contracts)

These areas have been flagged up as improvements for 2016-2017.

6.2 Evaluation of existing services

Existing services were evaluated as part of the consultation and also by the project manager (Indi Elcock) and staff.

It is clear from this consultation, and the internal evaluation that followed, that every project is valued by users and deemed to be meeting needs. One important question did emerge, though, which was the need for regular reflection on when to change or adapt existing services.

It was concluded that improved monitoring and evaluation would make a valued contribution to this discussion, but moreover, it was decided that each project should not be seen as end in itself, but as a means of meeting community needs; therefore, it would not be inappropriate to close successful projects if the needs this project was addressing could be met elsewhere, and more pressing community needs were presenting themselves in the community and being unmet. This commitment to needs rather than to projects is to be embedded as a cultural feature of the project.

6.3 Redoubling efforts to combat community isolation

In response to the issue of isolation, work was undertaken to reach out to one of most extremely isolated groups - white elderly residents.

The family project worker was commissioned to take on a specific brief to reaching and supporting the needs of this group. Considerable work has been undertaken in partnership with the People's Health Trust to define an appropriate project and monitoring system to ensure the most vulnerable and isolated elderly in the locality are contacted and cared for.

This project has recently been formalised and funding secured for the next two years.

6.4 Financial Sustainability

In response to the issue of sustainability the following actions were implemented:

6.4.1 Contracts and regular giving programme

Great efforts were made to secure a contract through the People's Health Trust for work with the elderly. This paid dividends and a contract (£7k p.a.) was secured for the next two years.

In addition, the trustees have agreed to embark on a regular giving programme and a pilot event has been earmarked for the first quarter of 2016.

6.4.2 Improvements to grant applications

Grant applications have also been improved. A new style application was written, including budgets and comprehensive outputs for every element of the project. This ground work proved a success and over the last 12 months trust income totalling £26,200 has been secured. This has been a hugely positive result.

6.5 Becoming a registered charity

The current trustees also made a decision to make an application to the Charity Commission for charitable status.

The structure they are considering is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), with the trustees as members. As part of this process bringing in people with wider skills will be considered.

7. CONCLUSION

This consultation has evidenced the considerable value of The Anchor Project in its local community, the validity of its core goals, and the opportunity for it to both strengthen and develop it's four main areas of activity.

It is clear that The Anchor Project has identified the community's priority needs, knows how to deliver key outcomes, and has considerable opportunity for development and expansion. And yet within these opportunities we would encourage the project to maintain its relationally-based and grass-roots approach to community development - a commitment that has served both the project and its community very well over the last decade.

With continued good management, the maintenance of delivery standards, and capacity building (volunteer and financial) there is potential for The Anchor Project to play an ever more valued, significant and vital role in its community for many years to come.