

Community Mapping Toolkit



Community Mapping Toolkit

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Community Mapping Toolkit

Overview of the Toolkit



Overview of the Toolkit

This toolkit has been developed by the Creative Rural Communities team in the Vale of Glamorgan Council. It is a user friendly practical guide to help communities understand and participate in the community mapping process. It includes:

- things to think about before starting the community mapping process
- how to organise community mapping events with check lists of all the things you need to think about
- ideas for community engagement with a series of hand-outs explaining how each exercise works and the material required
- some advice and guidance on how to bring all the information together to take things forward, evaluate the process and give feedback to the community.

The information collected from the community mapping process will be invaluable in any grant application process. In most cases you will need to demonstrate how you have engaged with the community and how much community support you have for the project.



Community Mapping Toolkit

What is community mapping?



Introduction

The community mapping process (also known as community asset or resource mapping), acknowledges that individuals, organisations / groups, and physical places all have the capacity to create real change in their communities, but that no one can do it alone.

With increased accountability, tight budgets, resource shortages, and fragmented services, it is a sound decision for communities to encourage cross-agency and cross-systems co-ordination.

It is important to understand:

- What local partnerships and programs exist
- How money is allocated
- What resources are available
- What the communities priorities are to ensure local people are served effectively.

Community mapping focuses on the positives in an area, not the problems or deficiencies in a community. It tries to seek solutions to problems arising. The process involves getting people talking about what already exists in terms of social assets (individuals, community groups and organisations) and physical assets (eg. community centres, open spaces and businesses) and what really matters to the community. This will help identify the community's capacities and assets and plan for future provision.



What community mapping can do?

The community mapping process can help communities to accomplish a number of goals, including

- Building on and expanding existing community strengths;
- Enabling the community to explore their assets within the physical and social environment;
- Generating a shared awareness and understanding of community assets;
- Identifying new resources;
- Ensuring that the community has access to the resources it needs;
- Giving external agencies a greater understanding of the area and avoiding duplication of services and resources;
- Cultivating new partnerships and relationships;
- Providing information across agencies; and
- Encouraging collaboration.



What is community mapping?

The Community Mapping Process

This tool kit identifies four stages in the community mapping process:

- 1) Pre-mapping** – sets out the work involved before the mapping can take place.
- 2) Mapping** – sets out some examples of exercise you could do to capture the community's views and guidance on developing a community survey.
- 3) Taking things forward** – enables the community to determine the most useful plan of action for effectively addressing the data findings and established goals as well as guidance on providing feedback to the community.
- 4) Maintaining momentum** - Communicating and disseminating information is key throughout the implementation step. The final step involves maintaining, sustaining, and evaluating the efforts outlined in the community mapping process by continuously evaluating progress, making necessary changes to the plan, and learning from experiences.



Top 10 Tips

- **Be flexible in your approach to engagement as not everyone wants to participate in a specific task. Some people would rather just have a conversation.**
- **Put sufficient time into planning the community mapping engagement**
- **Be clear on what you're trying to achieve and keep it simple as this helps explain it to others.**
- **Keep engagement techniques simple.**
- **Promote any event as widely as possible linking into existing networks and use Twitter / Facebook.**
- **Use plain English and jargon free language**
- **Ensure everyone can take part by overcoming as many barriers as possible**
- **Keep records as evidence of activities including events held, publicity**
- **Document successes and lessons learnt from your project.**
- **Feedback is as important as the information gathered. Keep the community up to date with progress on the project and how individuals can be involved.**

Community Mapping Toolkit

Stage 1: Pre-mapping



Introduction

The pre-mapping stage enables you to gather information / statistics to find out more about the area, and develop a network to find out who best to engage with on the mapping phase as well as shaping the overall direction for the mapping activity.

Setting the framework

It is important to set out a framework of how you are going to undertake the community mapping exercises. Depending on how well you know your community you may need to allow up to 3 months planning for the Stage 2 mapping, at least a 6 week engagement period and 2 months to analyse and write up the feedback from the engagement.

You need to ensure that you have sufficient resources (both budget and staff time) to undertake the community mapping. Consider the overall budget requirements however volunteers may be available to assist including additional funding for commissioning additional research independent facilitation, communications and promotion, printing costs and circulation.

As part of planning the community mapping, it is recommended you develop a Community Engagement Plan.

The key things to think about are:

- **What is the vision and objectives for the community mapping?**
- **Who needs to be engaged?**
- **How to engage with the community?**
- **Where and when to engage?**
- **How to publicise?**
- **What are the barriers to engagement?**

• Refer to **Appendix 1** for further guidance on developing a Community Engaging Plan.



Developing a Community Network

Determining which stakeholders, community groups and individuals need to be part of the mapping process is a crucial at the beginning of the mapping process. Meeting with individuals to find out what they do and where, who they know and whether they want play a more active role in the mapping process. Usually meeting one individual will lead to new openings of other useful contacts in the community.

Developing and sustaining new relationships with stakeholders and individuals takes time. Producing a contacts database is a useful way to keep an easy reference of who is who in the community.



Fact finding

It is useful to gather baseline evidence to monitor progress against. Researching local statistics to find out about the local area is essential.

Useful websites to collate data are:

- **Vale of Glamorgan facts and figures** - http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/vale_facts_and_figures/vale_facts_and_figures.aspx
- **Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2014** - <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/150812-wimd-2014-revised-en.pdf>
- **InfoBaseVale** - <http://vale.infobasecymru.net/IAS/>
- **Crime Statistics** - http://www.ukcrimestats.com/Neighbourhood/South_Wales_Police/St._Athan
- **Police Statistics** - <https://www.police.uk/south-wales/>
- **UK Crime Statistics** - <http://www.crime-statistics.co.uk/>



Introduction

You will have identified the key stakeholders to engage in the mapping process and created a common vision and set of objectives. The community mapping process enables you to use the vision and objectives to identify and evaluate the usefulness of current and potential resources.

This stage involves working with stakeholders and the community to gather data or resources and analyse the information collected. Although the mapping is time consuming, it is the most rewarding stage as new relationships start to develop. There are a number of ways you can engage with the community to gain feedback including undertaking community engagement events / activities, community surveys and having informal conversations. The aim is to gain community momentum and get people talking about issues that interest them locally.

You will need to gather a team of volunteers to help as well as some funding for things like printing of surveys / fliers, room hire and refreshments. The team can help spread the word about the community mapping, assist with flier distribution, develop a community survey and help with data analysis as well as volunteering at events to get feedback from the community.

The most successful community mapping work is led by the community as residents have existing networks/ contacts. It is important however that anyone involved in community mapping is open, inclusive and welcoming. Remember everyone should have the opportunity to speak and give feedback as a member of the community.

Community mapping activities

You may decide to organise an event yourselves (which may be an invite event to certain groups or an open invitation to the whole community) or link into an existing event / activity (such as a Christmas fair, summer fete, fireworks displays or summer produce show) to engage with your community. Alternatively you may wish to target certain groups such as young people or older people by attending activities they go to eg. brownies, cubs and OAP luncheon clubs.

If you are organising a specific event think about:

- **RSVP's** – do you know how many and who is coming?
- **Venue and room layout** – it is always useful to have a room large enough to allow for mingling.
- **Agenda for the day** - Keep the event focused with a timed agenda and range of activities.
- **Equipment / food** - What equipment / refreshments you need?
- **Volunteers** - who you can to help out on the day and leading up to it?

You will need to focus on what you want to get out of the event and plan it accordingly. It is important not to cover too much in one event, but to give people time to have a chat, share their views and give feedback. Appendix 2 gives guidance on preparing a engagement event including advice on event organisation, equipment required, things to remember on the day and things to think about when you're there. After each event it is important to evaluate feedback.

Remember people are giving their time to contribute so make events as much fun light hearted and informal as possible to ensure that everyone is at ease to participate.

To help run events and focus groups, the following activities have been suggested as possible ways to gain feedback and get people talking. It is not intended that all these activities are used in one event, but you may wish to pick and choose what activities may be best for your community.

• **Ice Breakers:**

Ice breakers are a gentle way of ensuring that ALL participants start to talk to one another and find out the names of people in their community. They are particularly useful when people are meeting for the first time as well as an effective way of getting people to talk to other people they don't normally talk to.

Ice breakers are relatively-active, energetic exercises. They are a good way of getting participants moving around the room. It is a good way to split people into smaller groups and mix a room of people up, so everyone is not necessarily sitting next to their friends. This can be done by getting the group to form themselves into a continuous line based upon criteria you set eg.

- Length of time living in the community – shortest period to longest period
- First Name – Andrew to Zoe
- Height – Shortest to tallest
- Date of Birth by Month – January to December

Stage 2: Mapping

• Community Photo Quiz

A group activity, which is an icebreaker, is to give each group a page of photos of different sites in the community and ask them to identify on the map where they are. The first group to plot all photos is the winner.

Things to Consider

- Someone needs to go and take the photos and plot where they are on a map.
- Need access to be able to print a map of the community.
- A good way to getting feedback on how well people know their community and what is around them.
- *It is useful to have a prize for this activity as everyone likes to be a winner*

• Community bingo

This can take two formats:

- i. Ice breaker to get people talking and walking around the room finding out things about each other. Each person is given a list of questions about their local community to ask other participants. The first person who answers all the questions calls out BINGO and is the winner.
 - ii. A written group / individual activity – Each person /group is given a sheet of bingo questions about their local community and asked to fill in the boxes. The first person to complete it calls out BINGO and is the winner.
- *It is useful to have a prize for this activity*



Things to Consider

Icebreaker format

- Have you got the space for everyone to mingle around?
- Is everyone able to get around the room?

Written Activity

- Make sure you print with clear large font.
- **Is everyone a confident reader / writer?** Working in groups may assist with this, particularly as some many not want to participate but are happy to have a chat.



• Dream Tree:

An activity to gain feedback about the communities' aspirations. This exercise is a good way to get informal feedback at a drop in sessions and start conversations as well as group exercises at a focus group.

You need to draw a tree outline with no leaves on it. Participants are asked to write down their hopes for the future on the paper leaves or post-it notes and stick on the tree. Different parts of the tree can identify different types of hopes eg. roots representing larger values, trunk representing resources in the community to help those values and branches could be specific outcomes. It can be undertaken in a group of 4 or more people.



Things to Consider

- All ages like participating as very informal and participants happy to give their ideas.
- Kids like drawing and cutting out leaves.
- If doing this exercise in a group, you could give each participant 3 leaves to complete in a 'Silent Brain Storm Session' (participants think of ideas individually) and then share their ideas with the rest of the group.
- Possible to extend discussion in a group activity to get participants to group and prioritise suggestions.

• Home is where the heart is

An individual exercise to find out where participants access services and any barriers to accessing services. Participants are given a sheet of paper and asked to draw a heart in the middle of it with the post code in it.

They are then asked to use arrows to identify:

- What facilities / services they use?.
- Where the services / facilities are?
- When you use them?
- How you get to them?
- Are there any barriers?



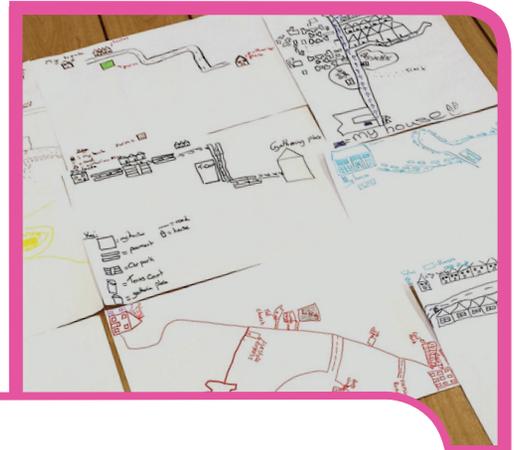
Things to Consider

- This activity worked well if you have a target audience who can focus on the activity.
- It is a useful exercise for silent brain storming and getting participants thinking, but can also quickly open up debate.
- It provides useful feedback about what services are used in the area.
- It is a good way to stimulate further discussions around what services they would like in their community and the issues around barriers to accessing services.

Stage 2: Mapping

• No map mapping

An individual activity with a focused group where participants are asked to map draw on a blank piece of paper a particular route they walk regularly and draw on the facilities / services they pass along the way for example a walk from their house to the local shop / community centre.



Things to Consider

- It is a useful exercise for silent brain storming and getting participants thinking about what is in their local community and how well they know it.
- It provides useful feedback about what facilities are in a community and what activities take place there.

• Body maps

A group activity involving drawing a body and asking participants by sticking post it's over the body to identify:

- what they love about the area (post-it notes on the heart)
- what services they use in the area (post-it notes on the legs and feet)
- what their hopes and aspirations (post-it notes on the head)



Things to Consider

- This activity worked well when you have a target audience who can focus on the activity.
- Children really enjoyed this fun activity drawing around each other's bodies.
- Possible to extend discussion in a group activity to get participants to group and prioritise suggestions for their hopes and aspirations.





• Citizen Mapping : My Favourite Places

A group activity involving participants putting post-it notes on a large map of the area identifying what they know about their local community. This exercise is a good way to get informal feedback at drop in sessions and start conversations as well as group exercises at an event.

Things to Consider

- This activity can be used to identify where the community consider the heart of the village to be.
- It helps identify what people are interested in or passionate about in their local community.

• Photo-visioning and mapping

Participants asked to capture their community in photographs, asking them to photograph things or places that have significance to them or they think are important. This can be done individually or in small groups as part of a focus group. You can ask individuals to give feedback on why the photographs represent their community.



Things to Consider

- Access to photographic equipment.
- If you are wishing to have a feedback session you will need access to projectors / printers so participants can see the photos.
- Good way to have informal conversations and look at the community in detail.
- This could take the form as a village photograph competition, with photographs and captions being entered. *You may need a prize.*

Stage 2: Mapping

• Community asset mapping

A group activity bringing the community together to define the different types of physical / social assets in the area. This activity is a good way to get informal



feedback at a drop in sessions and start conversations as well as group exercises at an event. You will need a large plan of the area. Participants are asked to identify what assets are in their community, what activities are going on in them and who is using them? This is a useful activity to gain an understanding of what is going on in a community.

Things to Consider

- Need a large plan of the area..
- Need to ensure details are collected on post-it notes.
- It can help stimulate debate about whether facilities are being underused and whether there are opportunities for new activities to take place in the village.
- It may be possible to digitally plot services / facilities for future reference by the community

• Idea Prioritisation

An activity to initiate conversations, by asking participants to vote which issue / project is the highest priority in the community. Participants can either be given a counter to vote against one issue or given an amount of monopoly money to spend against the priorities they felt were important. This activity is a quick way to get informal feedback at a drop in sessions and start conversations but equally could be used at an event if a list of ideas has been developed and need prioritising.



Things to Consider

- Quick easy and interactive.
- Need boxes / counters / monopoly money.
- Any age group can engage



• Creating a vision

A group exercise enabling a core group / team to identify a vision for their project. A follow up exercise to a number of activities above including the dream tree and body maps activities, may be to create a vision for the community. The participants need to identify three things that are fundamental to the future of their community and with flip chart paper, group words into themes and start bringing words together into a vision.



Things to Consider

- Note this would be challenging for some participants.
- It may be more appropriate for the group facilitating the community mapping work to come together once the feedback from the mapping is evaluated to work together on a vision statement.

Appendix 3 includes a series of worksheets for each of the individual activities. These activities could be used with target groups or during a specific focus group engagement exercise.

Community Surveys

In addition to organising community mapping events, you may wish to undertake a community survey to target people who may not wish to attend events or drop in sessions to give their views. You should consider doing surveys both on-line with links to social media pages and a paper version to be distributed to either to every household or to key locations in the community. It is important to give people sufficient time to complete the survey and a clear deadline for when the surveys need to be completed.



Within your community mapping team, it would be advisable to see if any of your volunteers have experience with developing and analysing surveys. This is potentially a time consuming element of the community mapping process.

Stage 2: Mapping

There are several websites you can use to create surveys on-line including:

- **Survey monkey** - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk>
- **QuestionPro** - <http://www.questionpro.com/survey-templates/community-surveys>
- **Google Forms** - <https://www.google.co.uk/forms/about/>

An example of a community survey developed for the community of St Athan is attached as a guide but would need to be altered to reflect the issues in your specific community (refer to Appendix 4). Please note this is a general community survey, however more specific questions would be required if the community mapping was relating a key issues eg. children's play areas. It is therefore advised that you customise the questionnaire to suit your communities' issues.

Having conversations

Some people may not wish to formally engage in community mapping exercises or surveys however they are quite willing to have a chat on the street or at a group gathering. The value of this type of engagement should not be underestimated as often a lot of valuable information is slipped into conversations however it is very time consuming. You should make notes during or immediately after these conversations to ensure the feedback is recorded.





Developing a partnership group

The information collected through the community mapping exercises can help:

- develop new partnerships within the community
- get stakeholders and the community working more closely together
- expand a community's service provision.

Developing a new partnership can help bring new energy and ideas to projects in the community

Interpreting and communicating information gathered

Once the collection process is completed, information must be analysed, and interpreted for stakeholders and the community. It is useful to organise the information gathered according to your vision statement and objectives. It is important to pick out trends in the feedback from all the different exercises.

It is important to engage stakeholders in the results of your community mapping activities. The information gained from the mapping process can be used to help stakeholders and the community make decisions on whether to improve, develop, and/or continue existing services or develop new ones. It can also be used to increase awareness, amongst service providers and motivate individuals and organisations to improve their performance.

You may wish to prepare detailed reports of the findings for stakeholders as well as a newsletter that highlights key findings. Press releases and social media updates are also a useful way of disseminating the information gathered. It is important to use a simple, user friendly reporting style.

Stage 3: Taking things forward

Taking action

Acting on the information from the mapping process is an important challenging step.

The Action Plan should identify

- strategic actions
- persons or organisations accountable for a particular action
- the targeted date for completion of the action
- how you will measure success.
- methods for overcoming these challenges.
- funding opportunities / new resources

You do not want an action plan to gather dust and not be implemented. It is important to have an established organisational structure up front to allow for ease of implementation. You will need a:

Leader – a person who is active in the community and has decision making powers and influence to bring in new partners.

Planners - individuals who are responsible for managing the day to day implementation of the action plan.

Implementers – individual who are responsible for focusing on design and implementation of strategies to carry out the action plan.

Once an action plan has been produced it is important to communicate the key actions to the local community as well as to a wider county, regional or national level.





It is important to take a step back and take a critical look at the process, achievement towards your objectives and impacts of your efforts to date. Measuring success towards achieving your goals is a constant throughout the process.

Evaluation is an on-going process that facilitates change as needed. Unexpected challenges are bound to emerge along the way and it is important to be flexible enough to meet the challenges as they arise and modify plans accordingly. Your vision statement, objectives or action plan may need to be changed to include new perspectives as well as re-organise your membership if necessary. This will ensure you can take advantage of new opportunities and resources.

Undertaking regular evaluation allows the group to keep all stakeholders and the community up to date with their progress results and challenges, as well as assisting with informing decisions on future direction.

Community mapping is an on-going process and never really has a specific end date. The group needs to show a long term commitment to change and plan for 're-mapping' to meet new and changing goals. Regular communication allows momentum to be maintained and efforts sustained.



Community Mapping Toolkit

Case Studies - Stories of 4 Communities



As part of developing the community mapping toolkit, the Creative Rural Communities (CRC) team were asked to pilot it to gain feedback as to how the community mapping process worked in practice and share any lessons learnt. Four communities were piloted each with a slightly different approach and had different findings. Here are the stories...

Community 1: St Athan Story

When the Creative Rural Communities Team started the community mapping pilot in St Athan in early 2016, there was no particular group which was keen to engage in the project. The general feel from the community was why are you doing this?

Some groups felt they knew everything about their local community, while others were apathetic and didn't believe positive change will happen. Some residents were reluctant to get involved and felt the Council should be providing all the services for them. The community mapping exercise was able to break through this attitude by CRC developing good relationships with key players in the community and cross the Vale council. This enabled stronger relationships to be forged between residents, other stakeholders and officers.

The community mapping pilot covered all properties in the St Athan ward as well as residents of West Camp which is part of the Llantwit Major ward.

During our initial conversations with residents we were fortunate enough to meet a couple of really enthusiastic individual residents, who were keen to see changes. They really became the backbone of our engagement within the community. Without their support, local knowledge and contacts, help delivering fliers and boosting community support and optimism for change, the project would not have been the success it was.

Given this was the first of the pilots, we entered on the community mapping journey together working very well as a team to get more residents involved and learn



about the project. CRC led on producing a community survey, promotional leaflets, fliers and posters and press releases to help promote the community mapping drop in events and community survey. The key group of residents helped with distribute of questionnaires, fliers and posters to all residents and local businesses and in public places in doing so they were building up community momentum, starting conversations and getting people thinking of what they could do in their community. Councillor John Thomas said ' A good group of younger members of the community are now involved in the community'.

On reflection, the drop-in sessions in St Athan were not the most effective way to bring residents in to discuss aspirations for the area and very few residents came to have a chat having seen the fliers. We did however hold them in key locations in the community including community centres and the library so we were able to talk to those people coming to the buildings anyway, rather than specifically for the community mapping event. There was a general feeling of apathy and that the community mapping had nothing to do with them.

The community survey was successful, as the active residents encouraged other residents to complete it. A total of 214 completed surveys were completed. Although time consuming we had numerous conversations with individuals at various activities already taking place in the area. We had made arrangements with the organisers, prior to arrival. For example at the Learn and Play group, mothers were happy to have a chat and give their ideas for the future of the area, however didn't have the capacity to necessary complete a survey or undertake a community mapping exercise from the toolkit. At the Brownie and Guides Groups, the children enthusiastically participated in the different community mapping exercises particularly enjoying the Body Maps and No Map Mapping Exercises. The trial of the community bingo activity with the bingo group was less successful. Participants were more than happy to have a chat, rather than complete the bingo sheet.



Those involved in the initial community mapping exercise felt they got to know their local community better in terms of what was there and who was there. The conversations had along the journey were so important in building new relationships and breaking down barriers. It was felt an important process to bring different generations together.

Case Studies



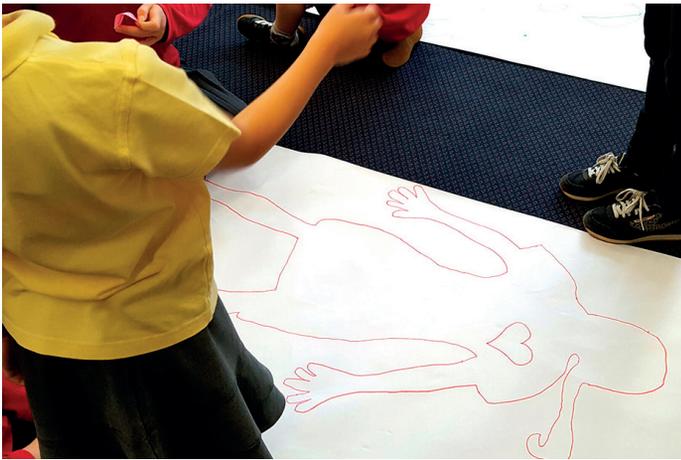
One local St Athan Community Councillor said 'I am now better connected with a wider community that have different priorities that also need attention that would have previously been overlooked'.

One of the really positive outcomes from the exercise was a new group, the SAINTS was formed to focus on addressing

two of the priority issues raised through the community mapping: 1) to improve the play areas and 2) more activities for children. By the summer 2016 they helped organise a community fun day which was very well attended by a wide range of the community. Lisa, Chair of the SAINTS, St Athan said 'It was successful because we included people. We want them all to feel part of the success and help towards the future of the area'. The SAINTS were keen to apply for Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF) funding for the play area and have been actively fund raising, holding more kids activities and using the community mapping toolkit to undertake consultations with the school children and parents.

A further outcome from the mapping was the realisation from the Community Council that residents were not aware of what was going on. Consequently the Community Council has now updated its website. Key stakeholders including the community centres, library and Community Council are now working together to develop an on line community directory and calendar to promote everything going on in St Athan. Sharon, manager of the Gathering Place said that 'the community mapping was well received. It was good to see an overview of things that are going on'. As





a result of the feedback from the community mapping, additional activities such as Zumba were organised at the Gathering Place.

The comments from Charlotte, St Athan Community Centre representatives says it all, 'I have had contact with people in my community that I would never have met otherwise. Slowly I think more information is being shared locally.

We have the information we need about the area to make improvements. It has highlighted what we need to improve on. This experience has been great. I feel I have learnt so much and I feel that this experience has been life changing for me. It has given me the confidence to and knowledge to make positive changes in my area.'

Community 2: Wenvoe Story

Following the success of the community mapping in St Athan, the CRC team were invited to undertake a further pilot with the Wenvoe Community. The target area for the community mapping focused on the Wenvoe Community Council area only.

The community mapping was driven by the Community Council's aspirations for a new library building. Following the Community Council's community engagement exercise in 2012, a list of 16 priorities had been identified including a new library.

Since 2012 the community of Wenvoe had changed with new residential developments on Port Road and at the former ITV studios, near Culverhouse Cross. Additionally as a result of the new developments, Section 106 money (funding from developers given to the Council to mitigate the impact of the development) had been allocated to the Vale Council towards community facilities. Although some members of the Community Council felt that they had a good understanding of the communities priorities, it was felt that feedback up to date community was important to understand what their services needs area and what their priorities are for the expenditure of the secured Section 106 money.

The support given by the CRC team in Wenvoe was less hands-on than in St Athan to test whether the community would drive the exercise themselves. We attended a number of meetings with a sub team of the Community Council to set

out an engagement plan. It became apparent that the community representatives had limited capacity to commit to leading on the community mapping engagement.

The CRC team provided support in terms of preparing the community survey, designing and distributing fliers to all properties, press releases and organising the community mapping events. A distribution company delivered fliers around all the properties. The volunteers helped with promoting the community mapping events and survey on the Wenvoe facebook page and writing an article in 'Wenvoe What's On' as well as distributing paper copies of the flier and survey in Village Store, Community Centre and library. They were invaluable in contacting local residents and encouraged them to complete the village survey. In all 91 surveys were completed.

Given the limited capacity of volunteers it was decided at an early stage to link into existing events including the Village Produce Show in September 2016 which was organised by the local scouts group and held at the Wenvoe Community Centre. A total of 85 people participated in the community mapping exercises which included voting on 16 priority projects identified back in 2012. This proved a very good way of engaging with a wide audience initiating conversations. They were also asked to identify where they lived on a large map of the village and as well as being asked to write their aspirations for the area on paper leaves which were then stuck onto the dream tree. This event was particularly successful discussing the future of the area with an inter-generational sector of the community.



The CRC team attended the Gwenfo Primary School MacMillan Coffee Afternoon undertaking the same community mapping exercises as at the Village Produce Show earlier in the month. Approximately 50 residents participated, however it was slightly more difficult to have conversations as many were looking after young children.



From the discussions and survey results, the same top 3 priorities were highlighted by the community which were 1) to provide a village café, 2) provide a new library which could potentially be multi-functional including a café and 3) afterschool club and improve play areas and a new multi-use games area.

As there was more limited support for the community mapping in Wenvoe from CRC, we did not build such strong relationships with the community as in St Athan. However the feedback from the community mapping has been shared with the Vale Council who are keen to work with the Community Council to undertake further research in taking the library project forward. Additionally with the evidence gathered from the community mapping, the Community Council have submitted an application for Rural Community Development Fund towards the new library building. We feel that the community mapping is an ongoing process and further work is required to ascertain what a new library provision may look like.

Community 3: Rhoose Story

The final community CRC piloted the community mapping was in Rhoose. The team had been approached by the Rhoose Library Management Team (RLMT) to assist with community mapping in the wider Rhoose community. The RLMT were in the process of taking over the library from the council and were keen to find out from the community what services / activities they would like to see in the future. The aim was for the community to drive the exercise and CRC to provide limited support.

The Rhoose ward is a large ward geographically in the rural Vale and including the Rhoose community as well as a number of small outlying villages. Rhoose itself is disparate and has a number of separate areas. The area is undergoing significant changes including new developments at Rhoose Point.

We had a few meetings with RLMT, but as the majority were on-line it was difficult to build strong relationships. Given one of the key outcomes of community mapping is to form connections, we prefer to have face to face meetings. We agreed a variety of community engagement activities including undertaking a community survey, a series of drop in sessions and an invite only community mapping event. CRC provided support in terms of organising the survey, printing fliers and organising events. The group were leading on providing community contacts and building up support within the community. The Vale Homework Club provided invaluable support delivering fliers to all households in Rhoose.



CRC prepared a community survey in consultation with RLMT which was open for 5 weeks from the mid October to mid November 2016. A total of 185 surveys were completed.

The two drop in sessions were less successful, partly due to the layout of the buildings without a large lobby area to display material clearly, less enthusiasm from those

attending activities in the building to engage with us and finally similar to St Athan, residents did not seem want to just 'drop in and have a chat'. That said we did have a resident coming over to have a chat at one community centre who was interested in volunteering there. We were able to immediately put her in touch with the chair person and she ended up attending the committee meeting on the same day.

The final activity was to hold a community mapping workshop inviting residents / representatives who were involved in the community to get together and have a chat about service provision in Rhoose, where there may be gaps in provision and what their aspirations were for the future.

A total of 16 people attended, following a lengthy exercise of individually ringing up people to ask if they were interested in attending. Upon reflection it may have been better to open the invite up to the whole community with the hope that more people would have attended. Equally it may have been more effective if the group had invited and chased attendees. It felt like it became an event being run by CRC rather than by RLMT and lacked community ownership.

There was however a diverse group of people attending who fed back that they valued the session and found it most useful having an opportunity to network and hear other people's views / ideas.

This was the first workshop style community mapping event held by the CRC team and provided an opportunity to trial some of the exercises from the Community Mapping Toolkit including 'My favourite places', the 'Dream Tree' and brainstorming ideas for new services/activities in the library. In future it may have been better to



spend a little more time on ice breakers to get people talking to those they wouldn't normally talk to, and less time on the range of community mapping activities. Additionally we tried to cover too many things which may have caused confusion, rather than on one issue such as the library.

Councillor Jeffery James said that 'the Community Mapping was well received by the community and people could see the benefit of consulting residents. There has been a heightened awareness of what other organisations exist in Rhoose and also a shared wish to increase co-operation between them.'

Karen from the RLMT said 'I don't think it was understood. The terminology is new to people for one thing so when they saw it on a poster it didn't mean much to them. More upfront work is needed to make this meaningful to people.' This was useful feedback to understand the importance of simplifying things and using less jargon. Equally the exercise highlighted that this community needed more support and upfront work from CRC to promote and broker the community mapping project. We had far fewer individual conversations, which therefore resulted in fewer stronger relationships developing and no new community champions coming forward.

Community 4: Ystradowen Story

The CRC team were not involved directly in the community mapping work in Ystradowen, however the Ystradowen Community and Sports Association (YCSA) sought our assistance in applying for Rural Community Development Funding (RCDF) in late 2016.

Whilst reviewing the application form, the YCSA soon realised that they needed to demonstrate effective community engagement. They were the first group who were given a copy of the draft community mapping toolkit and took it upon themselves to undertake their community mapping journey.

Ystradowen is an expanding rural village of around 800 residents. The village has become fragmented over the years with an increasing divide between those who have lived in the village a long time and the newcomers. The community has changed over the years with many residents commuting large distances, children attending a number of schools and more isolated retired people. The YCSA felt it was timely to undertake a community mapping exercise.

Given the new developments in the village, the Penllyn Community Council was aware that S106 money was available towards community facilities. The YCSA

identified a need for additional play facilities for young people and increased space at the Village Hall as potential areas for improvement however the group did not have any feedback from the community as to how they felt about these proposals.

And so the community mapping journey began. The first step was to start conversations with the wider community. The group took the approach of saying that they had money available, and were asking the community how they wanted to spend it as a way to build interest in the project.



At the annual Village Fireworks event on 5 November 2016, over 220 attendees were each given three counters to distribute among six broad areas for development that had been identified by the YCSA, namely digital technology and broadband; health, recreational and leisure facilities; under 11s play facilities; youth activities; activity, tourist trails and public open

spaces; and community meeting areas. . Children were encouraged to join with accompanying adults in discussing and making choices as they gathered and met before and after the display. Residents engaged enthusiastically. It was seen as a good way to promoting the other community mapping activities. Many observed that 'it was a good idea', that 'it was fun' and that they were 'very pleased to have been asked' in this way. The group found it an invaluable exercise to promote the wider community mapping work and a great way to warm the community up and start conversations.

A further engagement exercise was organised to target young people aged 10 - 11 years (Year 6's at two local primary schools, Pendoylan and Llansannor). They were asked about how much they used facilities in Ystrdowen, whether they had access to computers and which from a list of issues was the most important to them. Safer Roads, Senior Activities and under 11s play facilities were their three most important issues.



To achieve a more inclusive and detailed picture of perceived needs, the YCSA did a community survey which was open to residents, visitors and Village Hall stakeholders. Returns were made online through SurveyMonkey (79%) or through a hard copy circulated to every property in the village (21%). The group noted that they had to gain the skills to use survey money and analyse the information which took one volunteer a few days. Although the survey in the community mapping toolkit was used as a framework, it was significantly changed to take account of local circumstances. The survey was live for 3 weeks in November and a total of 123 responses were received. The group were surprised by the feedback with only 40% of the respondents saying that community spirit in the village was good. The survey also highlighted that there were now two focal points in the village – the established centre of the village with the pub and village hall but also the new Bedger's Brook Estate.

Christopher Howard from the YCSA group said that 'the survey was a good starter as it backed up view, but also brought out other views not previously considered'.

Following the analysis of the survey, three priority schemes were identified. To test the communities support for these, the YCSA hosted a further Village Forum in which all residents and stakeholders were invited to. A local resident, who was employed as a professional facilitator designed and conducted activities that disseminated key messages, encouraged all participants to engage and contribute and allowed unbiased selection of priority themes and options.

There was a great turn out with 52 residents attended and took part enthusiastically. Feedback was overwhelmingly good. Attendees spoke very positively about the structure of the event and the way in which they felt able to make valued contributions. There was a genuine feeling of a community 'coming together' simply as a result of attending.

Feedback from those attended included 'the event was a great way to bring the community together... fantastic to see people of all ages come together and share ideas' and 'this has been a very valuable meeting in that it has allowed me to meet other villagers and hear / share views'.



The forum was only a two hour session which was very well organised. Participants were encouraged to participate in a series of ice breakers to get them talking and in small group discussions using 'silent brainstorming' and 'ideals mapping' to produce an array of possible ideas. These were then collated by each small group into 'like themes' before 'dot voting' was used to produce ideas that were most feasible and had most impact.

The following priority ideas achieved consensus approval during a 'sharing plenary' at the end of the event and formed part of the RCDF Stage one application: 2 new play areas with seating and BBQ facilities, 'Trim Track', Heritage Trail and an extension to the village hall.

Another new resident said 'it was a positive afternoon – nice as a new resident to meet others and share ideas. Exciting to see what comes of it'.

This is an example of a very successful community mapping exercise which has been driven solely by an enthusiastic, positive group of residents, with a range of skills and experience as well as time to give. They have engaged with new and established residents along the way to help identify a range of new projects as well as re-building community spirit in the village.

Key lessons learnt

Hannah Dineen, Senior Regeneration Officer with CRC who led the project, shares her key lesson learnt:

1. Ensure it is genuinely driven by the local community.
2. Focus on the positives within communities.
3. Don't under estimate the importance one to one conversations to build relationships.
4. Be inclusive and involve as many of the community as possible.
5. Encourage residents to embrace change, rather continue with the way things have always been.
6. Keep it simple and focused- the language and the content of any event / survey
7. Develop a team of volunteers with a range of inter personal, organisational and analytical skills.
8. Give it time – it may take longer then you think, but you get out of it what you put into it.
9. Feedback to the community – to show progress and things are happening.
10. Support may be required if the community does not have adequate skills.



Community Mapping Toolkit



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