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community
association

Strategic Plan 2014-15



**FRIENDLY
NURTURING
EMPOWERING**

Preface from Mary Gardiner,

Interim Director March 2014 – October 2014

I was very pleased to come back for a while to Venture, as I worked here for some time back in the 1980s and 1990s.

I came in as an interim to help to support the association to get ready for the future.

The time I have spent here has been rewarding and has reinforced my view that Venture is here to offer a hand of friendship to many of our lovely local residents.

The offer is made in a wide range of ways, always with friendship and belonging at its heart.

So we continue, now in our 54th year, to be here to provide with and for local people a place they can connect to and be an inspiration for.

Our services, on the surface, are still the same as those of our founders. They provided an adventure playground for children to play safely and then were asked why there was nothing for adults. They then raised funds to build this centre on church land that was gifted to them for local people. The first staff of the centre delivered advice and training to long term unemployed people.

The pleasure in returning and remeeting lots of old friends and making some new ones has been added to by what I have seen here in this six months.

I have seen happy adults and children joining a range of activities that they have sometimes helped to design. I have seen lots of volunteers adding to what paid staff can offer and I have seen huge amounts of help and kindness offered and received in a way that is a joy to be part of.

I am pleased to let you know that Naami Padi has agreed to join us as the permanent Director. Naami brings with her years of experience in the voluntary sector locally. Those of you who know her know that she is warm, personable and approachable. We have also promoted Lea Smith, our current community liaison officer to Centre Manager. All our members and staff know Lea well and this is a well-deserved promotion for her. These additions to our senior team now mean that Venture can deliver the promise of opening hours and activities that are embodied in this plan.

The plan was developed building on wishes and hopes expressed by staff, users and trustees over the last few years. We held two training sessions in 2014 and now have a clear idea of how to continue what we do and also add some more activities. The aim in doing this is to make sure we remain attractive to local residents and are able to offer more during unsocial hours.



Our goals:

Improve Quality of Life

Our aim:

Provide a space and an environment where the local community can relax and enjoy quality time and activities with their friends and family.

We will achieve this by:

- Offering a warm and friendly welcome that makes the Centre feel like a “home from home”
- Continuing to ensure that our valuable services are free or priced affordably
- Regularly talking to members and using their feedback to improve our services.

Empower the Local Community

Our aim:

To empower the local community by offering a full range of opportunities and support to assist members in achieving their full potential.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that we offer a wide range of classes that promote wellbeing, creativity and skills for life; including English classes and IT
- Providing career guidance and volunteer opportunities at the Centre to help boost skills and confidence
- Planning and hosting events for special interest groups e.g. our local women's sewing group.

Increase Centre Usage

Our aim:

Increase footfall and revenue to the Centre by making improvements to the space and service offering.

We will achieve this by:

- Continuing to refurbish the Centre by upgrading the current facilities
- Improving marketing efforts and materials to promote our schedule of classes and events
- Improving our services by adapting the programme based on ongoing dialogue with members, users and hirers.



Form and Nurture Valuable Partnerships

Our aim:

Form collaborative working relationships with local organisations and individuals to fill any gaps in service provision at the Centre.

We will achieve this by:

- Promoting collaborative working through providing a venue and a member base as well as actively promoting the work of our partners
- Enabling local entrepreneurs to showcase their services at the Centre
- Participating in, and helping to fundraising for, partnership initiatives which will benefit our members and users

Improve Fundraising

Our aim:

Strengthen and diversify our current finances by exploring new avenues of funding.

We will achieve this by:

- Identifying other sources of revenue, both through traded services and fundraising, to reduce our reliance on any one source of finance
- Developing beneficial relationships with local businesses, encouraging them to support the Centre as part of their commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility
- Building an individual donor database and hosting a fundraising event for the Centre.