



CCBS – Innovation Success Stories

Beacon Community Partnership

Define clearly what made this an innovative project:

The Beacon Community Partnership (BCP) includes two Hampshire County Council services, Havant Day Services (HDS) & the Countryside Service through Sir George Staunton Country Park (SGSCP) working with Highbury College (HC) and The Right to Work (TRTW)).

Beacon Community Partnership works towards this project aim:

The Partnership is committed to providing a land-based facility that will provide opportunities to improve life and work chances for individuals from the LDD Community.

The Partnership aims to promote the health & well-being of the LDD Community by offering access to a range of experiences including Farming, Horticulture, Retail and Customer Service that will enhance employability and social integration.

The BCP offers an innovative partnership enabling those with LDD a range of facilities including an interesting and realistic training / education opportunity, an active and meaningful day service facility and the chance of a more structured day provision as a Supported Volunteer.



This is an ideal placement for those who can and want to work but require limited support, in addition provides paid employment for those more able within the LDD community, including supporting and mentoring those with more severe LDD in safe and productive team environment. This project allows the individuals involved to truly develop personal responsibility, increasing independence, allowing them to develop and thrive in areas of personal interest. These people who want to, and can work, but need continued support to succeed. Staunton Country Park offers the ideal environment for this project to exist and be sustainable.

1. What were the issues?

Each organisation has its own staff team, each with their preferred ways of working so getting people to trust each other and work towards mutual goals has taken some time.

2. What did we do?

The leads from each organisation attended quarterly Partnership Meetings and communicated regularly, all necessary information was then fed back to the teams at monthly operations meetings. After 3 years we elected to make a member of the Partnership a Project Manager whose role was to work on site daily, liaising within all teams. The Project Manager meets regularly with the Staunton team leaders to discuss suitable jobs and projects to agree suitable roles as appropriate for the volunteers.

3. What were the challenges?

Some of the Staunton team were reluctant to hand over jobs to the BCP groups, unsure of the standards of work that would be delivered and a little unsure whether this would lead to job cuts within their own teams.

Some of the staff within the team did not buy into the project and used the site to work towards their own goals; this again caused issues and hindered the development of, and achievement of the aims.

In addition to the difficulties within the teams, there was also the issue around those with LDD, many of whom had never worked before and had difficulty grasping the concept. The freedom afforded whilst working at Staunton led to occasional inappropriate behaviour.

4. How were they overcome?

A clear Partnership Agreement has evolved and this has meant that all parties are certain of the objectives and invest their resources appropriately.

The use of a Project Manager focussed the direction of the BCP on all levels. It enabled there to be a constant presence linking the Partnership team and the operations team, creating much clearer direction. The link with the Park team also improved dramatically as their confidence grew in the ability of the supported volunteers and Beacon team.

The level of cognitive understanding of those with LDD can lead to misunderstandings and mistakes being made. This has to be countered in when demonstrating how to undertake tasks and ensuring the correct individuals are matched to the correct jobs, as in any workplace.

Overall a more open and honest communication within all of the partner organisations led to a more effective successful scheme.

5. What have we achieved?

Volunteer numbers have grown considerably and the range of work undertaken by the supported volunteers has increased – contributing to over 8000 volunteer days at Staunton Country Park every year.

The BCP groups are now responsible for a variety of tasks that were once completed by Park staff, including litter picking the whole site and preparing the animal feed bags for the visitor. This has created a huge saving in staff time, for example Visitor Centre staff have regained an hour each day as a result of not bagging up animal feed!

The teams are all working together in a very productive way. There is now a feeling of mutual respect, with the teams all working together, often Staunton staff and BCP volunteers working alongside one another.

Table showing number of volunteers attending each week within the partnership			
Groups	2009 - 2011	2012	2013
HDS	30	30	30
HC	40	40	30
TRTW	N/A	32	80
Totals	70	103	140

6. And the future? What are the prospects for further improvement?

- In 2014 BCP will lead on all plant sales as well as growing all fruit and vegetable produce to use within the Tearooms and to sell to visitors. This enables the Garden Team to concentrate on creating a more decorative, period Walled Garden showcasing heritage varieties.
- The Partnership team aim to promote the success of the scheme through open days, outreach through attending events and delivering a programme of presentations to County Councillors and senior managers.
- There will be more paid employment for those with LDD as team leaders or mentoring.



From Field to Fork: Beacon Community Volunteers growing & selling produce

7. What people tell us

Feedback from the volunteers, families and the professionals can be summarised in these comments;

- Life enhancing, giving a great sense of purpose to the individuals involved;
- How vital this provision is to the LDD groups involved;
- It's a unique and important provision that improves the life chances and self of wellbeing of those included;
- The difference that these jobs make to the individuals sense of self esteem;
- How their personal skills and confidence grows because of the provision;
- The trust and respect shown to individuals involved in the project and the greater level of independence allowed has very profound and positive affect on the lives of our teams outside;
- The level of progression available within the project is important to those with LDD;&
- The Supported Volunteers love working at Staunton.

8. What would you do differently?

It would have been useful to have nominated a Project Manager at the beginning of the Partnership but this may have impacted on the natural progression and some of the unplanned developments that occurred in the initial stages. Key staff have moved on during the Partnership but it has continued to grow and develop as a result of this.

9. Key Contacts / Further Information

Kerry Bailey; Sir George Staunton & Queen Elizabeth Country Parks Business Manager

Debbie Lyall; Right To Work & BCP Project Manager

Sandra Ellis; Day Service Manager, Havant and East Hants Day Services

Kevan Wayne-Morris; Head of Department – Foundation Studies, Highbury College