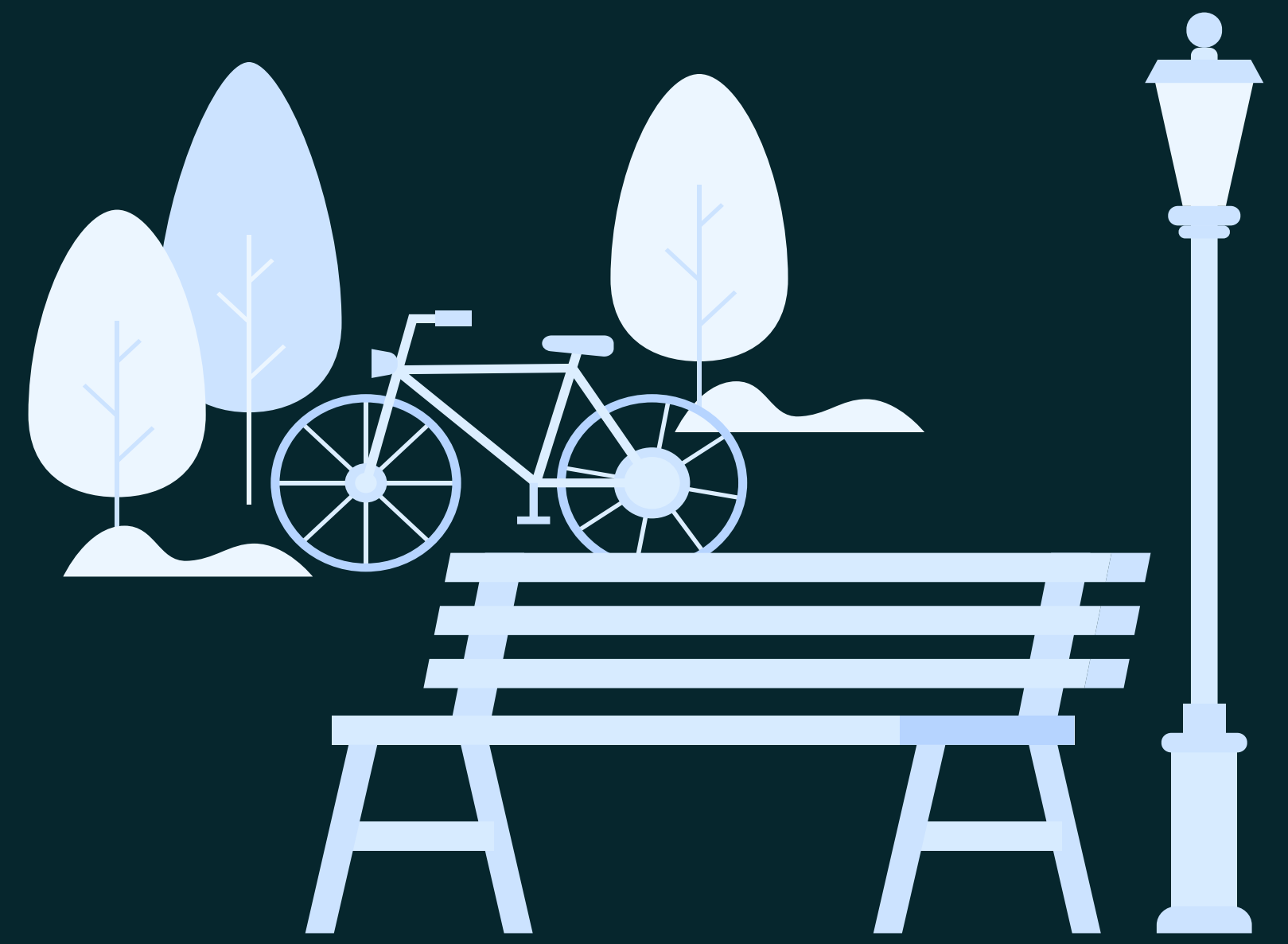


Gamesley Hangout Club Glossop



Gamesley is a residential area within the High Peak Borough, originally built as an overspill estate to house residents from central Manchester who were moved out of terrace housing in the 1960's. Due to the policies of Manchester City Council at the time, whole streets of terrace houses were moved together, so Gamesley has traditionally been regarded as insular to other local communities. Furthermore, with the nearest town of Glossop being over a mile away, up an extremely busy road, and with very low levels of driving and car ownership on the estate, opportunities for physical activity are extremely limited.

The Community Centre

Gamesley Community and Sports Centre was originally built by residents of the local community in the 70's through a scheme where everybody buys one brick. Due to financial trouble in the 80's, the centre was then taken over by the council. Services provided at the centre had been slowly diminishing for years, then the Covid pandemic shut the centre down completely.



Through summer activities provided by the Holiday Activities Fund, Helen from Move More was able to engage with Cheryl, a resident of the local area and children's sport coach. The issue of a lack of local provision for young people was raised by numerous other community members, so Cheryl and Helen set about taking steps to tackle this. Cheryl's local connections and knowledge were key to creating a shortlist of local volunteers who would be interested and reliable in providing a regular service. Engagement discussions were held over a 6 week period to gather the thoughts and desires of local parents and volunteers, with the emphasis on the club being run by and for the local people.

The Hangout Club now runs out of the Community Centre on two evenings per week, being led by a core team of five local volunteers. Rather than being focused on any key sport or activity, the sessions are advertised as a safe space for young people to come and spend time with their friends in a relaxed environment. This has helped to create a diverse range of attendees, with some playing sport and other games, some taking part in crafts and activities, and others simply sitting and hanging out with their friends.

Context
Unused facilities in an area of limited opportunities

Intervention
Engage & empower local community to deliver activities for young people

Then
Opportunities for young people will improve, potentially affecting ASB

Because
Community feel more able, willing, and supported to deliver

Barriers to Entry

Access to the building has been a consistent problem since the launch of the club. Initial problems were due to Derbyshire County Council taking so long to give the go-ahead for the club to run, resulting in earlier sessions having to be run in a local church hall. Further problems came later as only DCC caretakers had keys for the building, so turning up for the hangout club to find the building locked was not uncommon, and numerous sessions had to be cancelled. Helen has been working hard to strengthen relations and the Hangout Club are now approved to be key holders for the building, requiring a level of trust in the local community.

Another problem has been the attached football pitches being in a state of disrepair. Through Helen's links with The Bureau, she was able to arrange volunteers from Glossop Business Centre to come and clean up the pitches, expending considerable effort to ensure all of the necessary paperwork and risk assessments were completed. And yet, permission has still not been granted for this work to take place, with communications from the council being slow or non-existent.



Accessing funds for essential equipment and expenses such as DBS checks was an immediate barrier. The majority of funding bodies require an organisation to provide one year of bank statements, which a new group like this obviously doesn't have. Through Helen's links with a pre-existing local community group, she was able to apply for funding on their behalf, but without this the club might never have gotten off the ground. Application and reporting procedures also present barriers to the volunteers running the club, some of whom struggle with grammar and spelling so often lack the confidence to engage with larger official documents.

Key Learning

- Organisations from statutory, voluntary, and community organisations have a key role to play in helping new groups to get started, primarily during early planning stages.
- After a small initial investment, community groups can become self-sustainable, although funding and reporting requirements can be a barrier.
- The community must be trusted and empowered to work autonomously, as they are in the best position to understand local needs and identify key individuals to support with delivery.
- Slow decision making processes and lack of communications from the council created a number of additional barriers that were only overcome by the persistence of LP members



Next Steps

The Hangout Club has been a huge success, engaging almost 100 young people for four hours every week. Sessions are charged at £1 on entry, with any profits from the cafe/tuck shop also going into the clubs funds, meaning that after just a few months of running the club is already self-sustainable. Cheryl has also identified other groups that could benefit from use of the Community Centre such as seated exercise classes, bingo nights, and walking groups. Through the LP's links, Public Health are supporting Cheryl to undertake qualifications and make this her full-time job.

"The community got together and have met the challenge head on. People remember what youth provision there used to be on the estate and recognise that lack of provision was having a detrimental effect on young people and the community. The provision of this service appears to have reduced anti-social behaviour and nuisance, bringing the youngsters together with some focus and planned activities."

- Local PCSO