

FOREST OF DEAN Digital Inclusion Partnership

Powered by passionate partners



Facilitated by FVAF



Funded by Barnwood Trust



Our Journey



BARNWOOD TRUST DIGITAL INCLUSION FUND

**barn
wood**

What the trust wants to see happen

Disabled people and people with mental health challenges in Gloucestershire...

can access
the digital
world

in ways
that best
suit them

building on
strengths

enabling take
up of future
digital
opportunities



Partnership forming – launch
campaign incl. digital, print
and in person

JUL & AUG 22

SEPT 22

Defining Partnership
scope/ brief/ capacity/
resource planning for
facilitation of project

Lift off! First partnership
meeting

JAN 23

The vision

A collaborative community partnership project, led by FVAF. This district-wide partnership will be the first of its kind and will aim to break down the barriers people face in relation to digital inclusion and unlock the many assets available within our communities and the digital world.

Focusing on 5 key areas:

Physical Disabilities

Mental Health/ Wellbeing

Sensory Disabilities

Learning Disabilities/ Additional Needs

Children & Young people that may experience any of the above

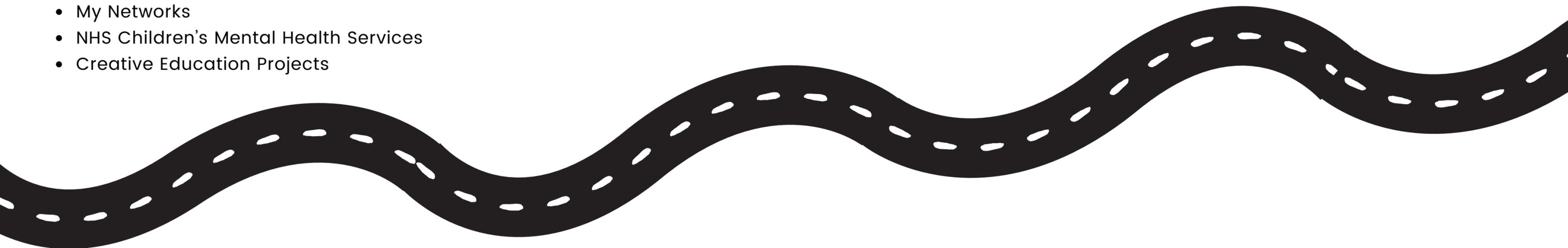


THE PEOPLE: PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Crucial to the success of the project was to bring the right community partners together. We recognised that doing this would unlock access to harder to reach communities and empower them to be directly involved in the design and delivery of support and in the development of an effective digital infrastructure.

Following an extensive campaign to raise awareness of the project aims and opportunities, a Partnership Launch event was held on January 16th and was attended by the following organisations:

- The Shalom Network
- Camphill Village Trust
- Wild Earth Journeys
- Mindful Vision
- Forest Sensory Services
- Forest Pulse
- My Networks
- NHS Children's Mental Health Services
- Creative Education Projects



Getting started

The first partnership project meeting was held on 16 January at the Wesley Centre in Cinderford.

Following this, at the next project meeting, the aims and objectives of the partners were explored, and common goals and themes were developed to ensure effective and meaningful co-production.

Introducing Consultant Project Manager Debbie Gillmore

Debbie Gillmore joined in her role as consultant project manager. Providing unique experience and skills, crucial to laying the foundations of the project

Debbie worked on the project between Jan 23 and July 23. Focusing on set-up of the partnership, programme management and creation of bespoke tools.

Remuneration

- **Informed Each selected project partner will be paid to provide up to 8 hours of time/ contributions to the project per a month**
- **Each project partner to receive remuneration of £250 per month**
- **Partners to claim time across 3-month periods.**
- **Additional funds available for research and pilot project delivery.**

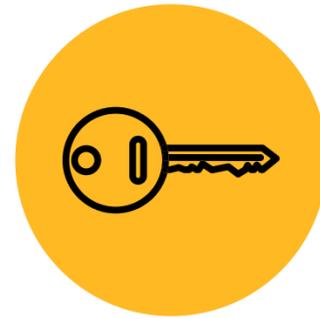
Between January 2023 & October 2023- £13,919.25 was paid in remuneration to partners for their time spent at partnership/ themed group meetings, community engagement, research and pilot creation.

Themed Working Groups

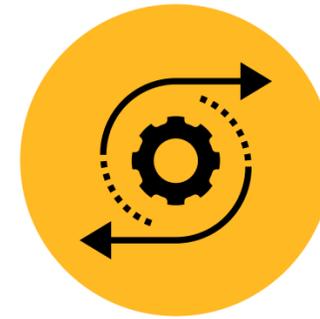
With the partnership group dynamics established, the next step was to identify the core themes research and pilot projects would initially focus on. Extensive discussion resulted in the following themes decided upon:



Education

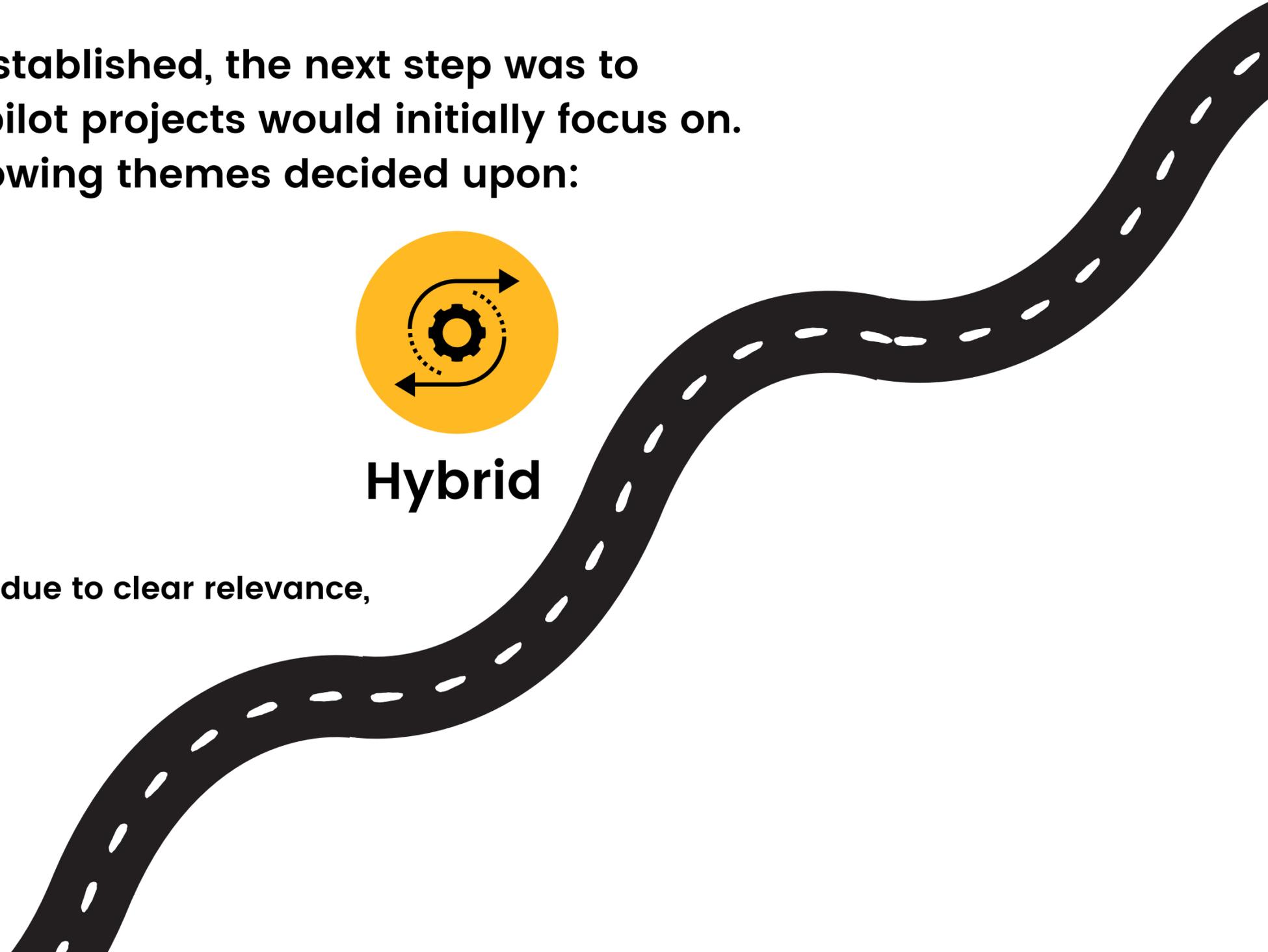


Safety



Hybrid

From this, 2 partner sub groups were created with, due to clear relevance, Education and Safety merged as one theme.



Identified 3 themes
Digital Training Camphill Village
Trust Pilot Project launches

MAR 23

APR 23

2x Theme meetings – Safety & Education and Hybrid themes

1 x Theme meetings – Safety/Education and Website research at Inclusive Benefit Employment event – 17/05/23

MAY 23



JUN 23

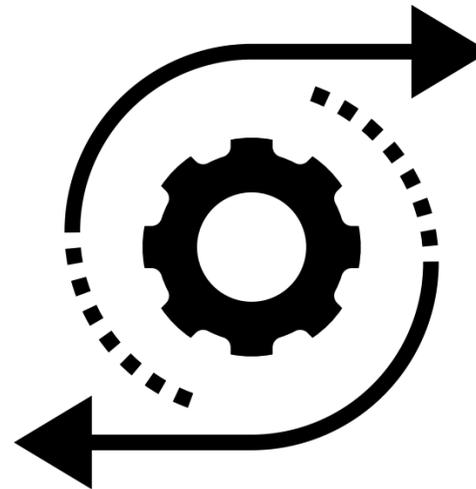
Sharing best practice.
Introduction to project documents/tools/pay stages
Website research at Royal Forest Show

Hybrid Theme

Hybrid working technology refers to the tools, systems, and technologies that enable a flexible work/ engagement arrangement where employees/ participants can seamlessly switch between working from the office/ community and working remotely, typically from home. It is often associated with a hybrid work model where employees have the option to work in the physical office part of the time and remotely for the rest. The goal of hybrid working technology is to facilitate a smooth, productive, and collaborative work experience, regardless of the employee's location.

Hybrid theme group:

- Artspace Cinderford
- The Shalom Network
- Forest Pulse
- Forest Sensory Services
- Wilde Earth Journeys
- Mindful Vision
- My Network



Suggested research/pilots:

Pop/Rock choir: trailing out sound delays, in person/zoom etc

Sensory empathy: project to explore the realities/environment/feelings of those that live with sensory impairment, put yourself in their shoes

Bring outdoors indoors/Mindscape: looking into digital options around education/wellbeing/exploratory themes

Project Engage: exploring technology (including 'raspberry pie') to help those with dementia be able to 'try before you buy'

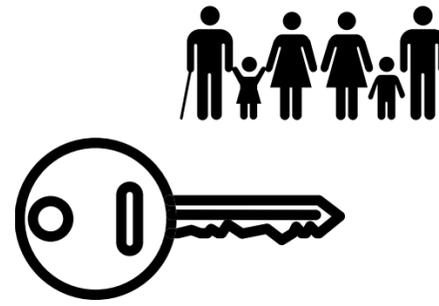
Website accessibility: exploring options/resources to help people set up websites ensuring they are accessible and inclusive with instruction that can be utilised elsewhere by others.

Education and Safety Theme

Related to digital education and safety for both adults and young people with learning disabilities.

Education and Safety theme group:

- Artspace Cinderford
- My Network
- The Shalom Network
- Forest Pulse
- Camphill Village Trust
- NHS/Young Minds Matters



Suggested research/pilots:

Self Help safety issues: People on long waiting lists going online for 'self help' and leaving themselves open to harm and exploitation

The Directory: A possible pilot to research recommendations and signposting, wording, liability etc for the Directory

Triggers: When educating people around safety, be careful not to put the 'fear into god' into them and setting off triggers

The Community

Gathering real time data about the people we are trying to reach

Recording the lived experience and ideas from the community is fundamental to building an accurate and realistic picture.

To ensure this, a range of accessible community consultation methods were used.

To-date this has included:

- 1-2-1 meetings
- distribution of paper based and electronic questionnaires
- attending community events at multiple locations

The focus at this stage had been on gathering:

- lived experience of disabled people
- lived experience of people facing mental health challenges
- existing digital support and skills training



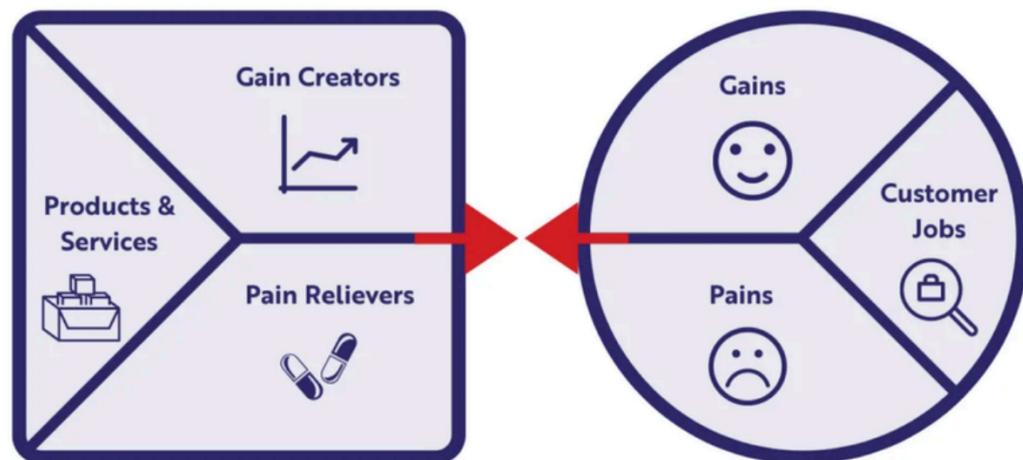
Value proposition mapping or Pilot ideas

To support themed working groups in developing pilot ideas without confirmation bias of baseless assumptions of user needs, value proposition training was facilitated by FVAF.

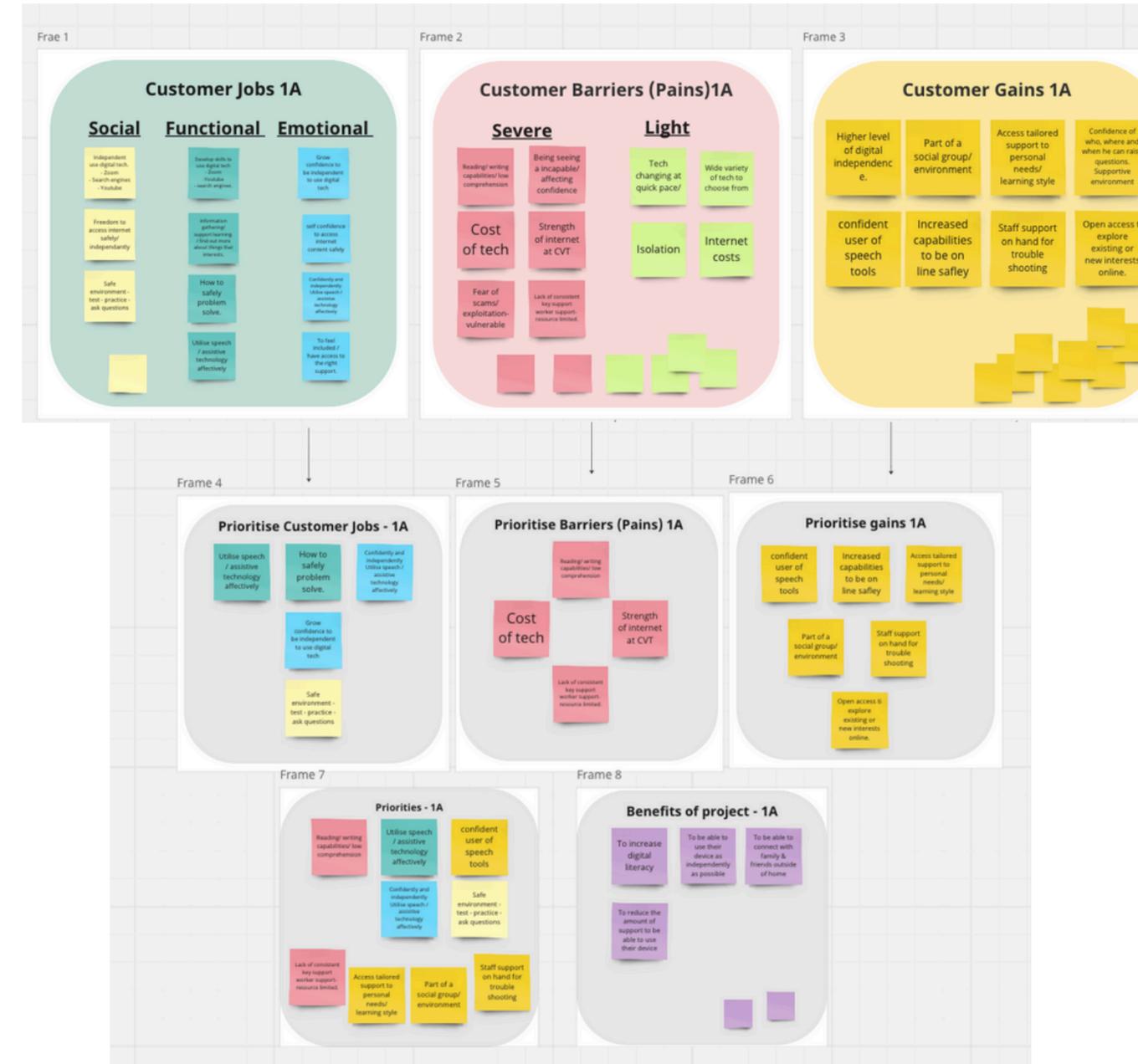
This training and mapping tool enables pilots to be designed based on the lived experiences, needs, wants and desires rather than designing something based on assumptions.

By mapping target users and profiles, it enables detailed thought on what to ask the end user to ensure its of value to them. In turn, this should create more purposeful projects, creating greater impact and engagement.

Value Proposition Canvas



PERSON 1: very little digital ability



Example: Camphill Village Trust – Persona Mapping: Digital Support for Adults with learning disabilities.

Other research examples



Website Research by Mindful Vision

Carried out by accessible website experts, Mindful Vision, to better understand people's situations and frustrations with their websites, a short questionnaire to capture people's experiences was carried out, in person at the 'Inclusive Benefit Employment event' at Taurus Crafts and community event The Royal Forest Show.



The Expression Of Interest

During the "Understanding the Community stage," themed working groups embarked on the development of pilot concept ideas.

It became imperative to establish a structured process for the presentation, evaluation, and scoring of these pilot concepts to determine their feasibility and alignment with the overarching project.

Recognising the need for transparency and fairness in this evaluation process, FVAF extended an invitation to all collaborative partners to collectively design the mechanisms and procedures required for this purpose. The following process was initially outlined and agreed upon:

SEPT 23

EOI presentation and feedback 04/09/23
EOI submission deadline – 22/09/23
Scoring EOIs – 29/09/23
Selected Pilots announcement 01/10/2023

EOI Submission:

Collaborative partners were invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for consideration by fellow partners, outlining the essential components of their research projects. These components included:

Aims and Objectives: Clear articulation of the project's goals and objectives.

Key People/Stakeholders: Identification of the primary individuals and stakeholders involved in the project.

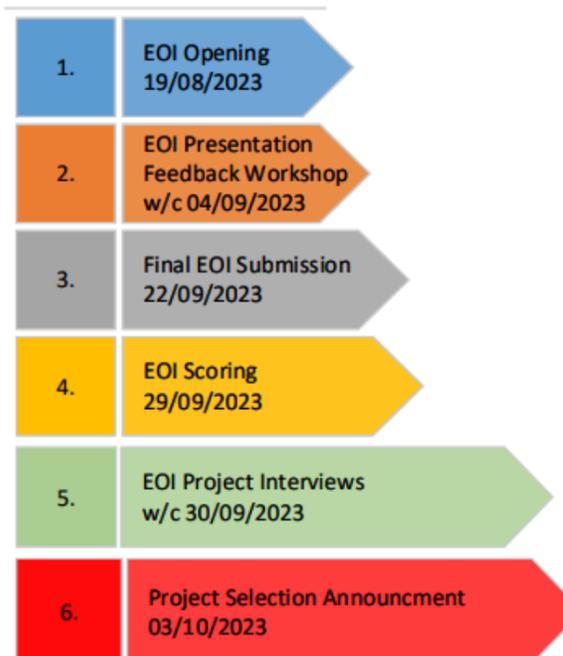
Costs: Detailed cost estimates associated with the project.

Timelines: A timeline specifying the project's duration and milestones.

Scope: A comprehensive description of the project's scope and boundaries.

This EOI process served as a pivotal step in ensuring that all pilot concept ideas were thoroughly assessed and that only those found to be fundable and feasible within the project's parameters were advanced further. It promoted transparency, collaboration, and an equitable evaluation of these critical initiatives.

EOI 6 steps process



EOIs open 19/08/23

AUG 23

EOI Interviews:

Initially, it was established that an independent interview panel would be designated for the concluding phase of the EOI scoring and selection process. The panel's composition aimed to encompass diversity and include individuals with direct lived experience. Subsequently, each pilot project would be invited to address queries arising from the EOI scoring process in a face-to-face interview.

However, owing to the remarkable quality of the EOI submissions and the overall projected costs of the pilot projects falling within the allocated budget, a collective decision was reached not to proceed with the interview stage. Instead, it was agreed, in principle, to provide funding for all six submitted pilot EOIs. This decision was made in order to streamline the process, recognizing the merit and feasibility of these initiatives, and to expedite their implementation.



Selected EOI's – £89,463

Forest of Dean Community Choir

£6,200

-
- Jim Bell, Development Director, Artspace Cinderford.
 - Lisa Jenkinson, Facilitator, and Choir Leader.
 - Natalie Turner, Forest Sensory Services.

This project aims to utilise digital technology to enable individuals with visual impairments to engage in creative activities, promoting their well-being. Specifically, it digitally connects users of Forest Sensory Services with the Artspace choir.

Virtual Sight Loss

£5,912

-
- Vicki Cocking – Forest Sensory Services
 - Seth Fright – The Lab

Innovative solution, enabling more individuals to empathize with those experiencing sight loss. This project involves creating software that simulates specific eye conditions, adjustable by severity, through VR headsets. The aim is to provide users with the experience of living with visual impairment, encouraging empathy, support for others, and thoughtful actions.

Camphill Village Trust – Digital Inclusion Workshops

£17,099.64

-
- Janet – Camphill Village Trust
 - Miriam Goldby – The Shalom Network

The project's primary objective is to deliver digital inclusion workshops to individuals with additional needs, sensory needs, and mental health conditions. The CVT Pilot Project focuses on empowering individuals with diverse needs through digital literacy, fostering inclusivity and independence.

"Outdoors, Indoors"

£28,214.22

-
- Andrew Wilde Earth Journeys
 - Vickie – Forest Sensory Services
 - Seth – Innovation Lab

Innovative initiative designed to bring the beauty and tranquillity of nature to individuals who may not have the opportunity or the inclination to explore it independently. Using digital resources, the project aims to bridge the gap between the indoors and the outdoors, reducing misconceptions and encouraging people to engage with the natural world.

"Forest Pathways"

£27,038

-
- Guy – Wye Dean Wellbeing/ Mindful Vision

Research focused project to understand and demonstrate website accessibility in FOD, This will be achieved via combined methods of automated tests, and audits by people from the VI community, The research will help inform the proposed creation of "how to" / "self-help" resources so people can better understand and improve their website's accessibility.

"Project Engage"

£5,000

-
- Lena Maller – Dementia Action Alliance
 - Alex Digby – Forest Voluntary Action Forum

Capacity building and training of community building teams to facilitate "try before you buy" / "Device loan library consisting on digital equipment that can support care whilst reducing loneliness and isolation.

Pilot lift-off!

Oct 23



Equipment purchases

To enable to quick start of projects, capital/ equipments purchases where made by FVAF to prevent delays.

60+ purchases where made varying from laptops, VR headsets, IT accessories, Bluetooth speakers & software subscriptions.

The total amount invested exceeded £12k and where placed on FVAF's asset registered alongside being insured.

Upon delivery of purchases they where cascaded to each relevant pilot via a hire agreement process and signing of agreements in line with asset management responsibilities and governance,

Included in the agreement was a clause on "potential Gifting Of assets" upon completion of pilot projects.

Feb 24

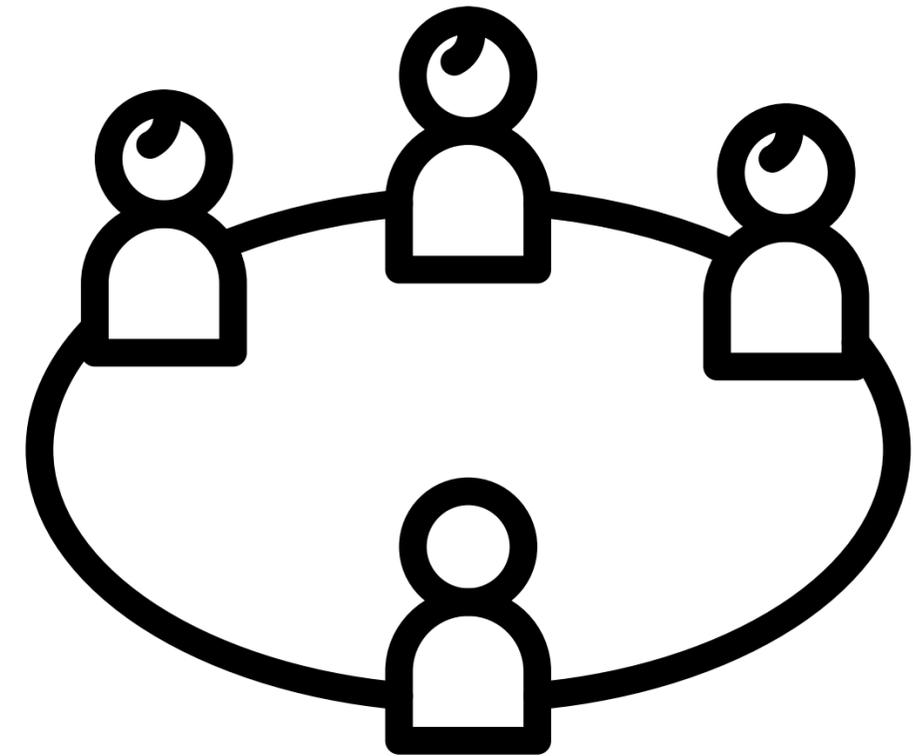
Partnership Meeting- Pilot Review Workshop

With the end of March and aimed pilot project completion approaching, partners were welcomed to Ow Bist- FVAF for a partnership pilot review workshop.

Each project provided an update presentation, sharing learning and challenges experienced to date.

Further updates were provided:

- External evaluation.
- Legacy funding pot concept
- Digital Directory- Forest Digital Compass
- Community Action podcast.



March 23

Forest Digital Compass Launces!

Thanks to the hard work of Vicki Cocking, in a voluntary capacity was designed and published.

The contents of the directory shines a light on each of the pilot project funded via the collaborative, providing information on the projects and project partners.

Over 1000 physical copies have been given out across the district!

Wilde Earth Journeys CIC

Forest Bathing and Wellbeing Walks - both virtual, at your chosen venue, and out in nature. This organisation runs walks for carers, bereavement and loss walks, and offer mindfulness programmes in schools and for private groups.

 Kelly Bluett  Times to suit

 FREE (charges apply for bespoke sessions)

 hello@wildeearthjourneys.org

 www.wildeearthjourneys.org



Forest Pathways

Forest Pathways work and research digital accessibility in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. A family organisation, rooted in personal experiences, they support individuals with sight-related disabilities through their mission to revolutionise the digital landscape of Gloucestershire and beyond. Forest Pathways is a branch of Wye Dean Wellbeing CIC in collaboration with MindfulVision.

 forestpathways.co.uk

 guy.woodland@forestpathways.co.uk

 07496 593118



Digital Projects

Hybrid Choir

This digitally linked hybrid choir began following a request from Forest Sensory Services (FSS) service users for singing classes. Around the same time Artspace began an in-house wellbeing choir, however service users at FSS were unable to access the Artspace building in central Cinderford due mostly to transport difficulties.

To solve this, FSS and Artspace Cinderford worked together to create the digitally linked Hybrid Choir. To enable both choirs to sing together online, a choir leader facilitates the singing at each venue in Artspace and at FFS community space.

The digital link between the choirs has also been used to record live stream rehearsals, allowing both groups and choir leaders to listen to and influence each other. FSS choir have moved towards singing with instrumentation thanks to the influence of the Artspace choir. Similarly, after listening to the FSS recordings, Lisa at the Artspace choir wrote a new song that both groups can sing together.



With 15-20 regular singers at Artspace and 9 regular singers at FSS, both groups have grown artistically and gained in confidence.

A joint performance is planned in July 2024 to a public audience of around 100 people. This will be the culmination of many hours of hard work and would not have been possible without the digital link.

The organisations involved in this project are:

- **Artspace Cinderford** - see page 10
- **Forest Sensory Services** - see page 8

Online Safety project

A 20-week digital workshop for people with additional needs, sensory needs and mental health conditions was created to help keep them confident and safe online. The workshops and content were designed with user feedback to accommodate the skills and the needs of the group.



Laptops, large screens, and accessible keyboards were purchased for the project. Two individuals with firsthand experience volunteered to help in the workshops and gained confidence in supporting others with their technological expertise.

The workshops covered:

- Familiarising participants with their equipment
- Teaching basic computer skills and internet safety in two groups: beginners and advanced learners
- Users created comic strips about internet safety
- Learning how to create a podcast

As a legacy, the Comic Strips and Easy Reads will be compiled into a book and distributed to organisations in the Forest of Dean and in the future the group plans to explore further work on internet safety and podcasting to reach more organisations and individuals.

The organisations involved in the project are:

- **The Shalom Network** – see page 11
- **Camphill Village Trust Gloucestershire** – see page 11



Podcast Launch!

Apr 24

THE
COMMUNITY
ACTION



CREATED WITH THE LOVE OF GRASSROOTS
AND COMMUNITY ACTION AT THE HEART

LISTEN NOW!

Showcasing inspiring stories, in an accessible format, from local people who have made their ideas come to life.

Featured guests so far:

- Camphill Village Trust
- The Shalom Network and
- Wilde Earth Journeys

The podcast kit is also available for hire to voluntary community groups.

For more information on The Community Action Pod and ways to get involved contact the Host Melanie Benn

@melanie@fvaf.org.uk 01594 822073



Produced by:
Forest Voluntary
Action Forum



Funded by:
The Barnwood Trust
Digital Inclusion Fun



LISTEN
HERE



Community Action Pod Episode 2: Digital Inclusion

4/23/2024 | 36 min

Episode 2 These episodes are created with the love of grassroots, community action at the heart of them. We showcase inspiring stories from people who have made their ideas come to...



Community Action Pod Episode 1: Nature & Wellbeing

4/23/2024 | 27 min

These episodes are created with the love of grassroots, community action at the heart of them. We showcase inspiring stories from people who have made their ideas come to life. Melanie@fvaf.org.uk ...

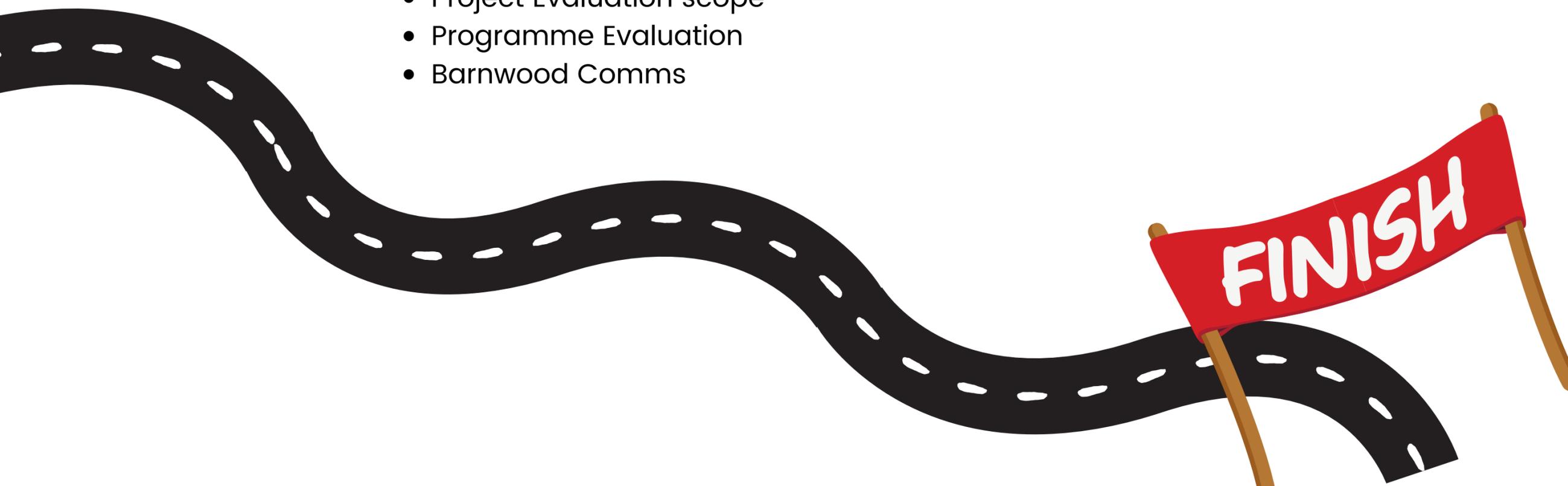


Pilot 1:1 reviews

Apr 24

Each pilot project team was welcomed in to FVAF for a 1:1 review alongside Alex Digby & Nick Penny. During the session we reviewed the following:

- Pilot Progress Update
- Budget review
- Equipment higher review
- Project Evaluation scope
- Programme Evaluation
- Barnwood Comms



Pilot wrap up/
Evaluation

May 24

Camphill Village Trust - Digital Inclusion Workshops

Research Workshops – Phase 1: March – June 2023

- Six sessions with between 8 & 12 people hosted at the Grange,

The EOI was developed through learning and feedback from the research workshops:

- Developing a better learning environment
- Budgeting to purchase the same equipment for everyone.

Phase 2: October 2023 to December 2023

- X2 groups of 4- alternative fortnightly sessions.
- Beginners and advanced group
- Purchased 5 laptops, keyboards and mice, and webcams
- Two large screens to enable people who had poor vision
- Large Print keyboard for an individual with a visual impairment.
- Read & Write software to enable speech recognition for participants who couldn't read or write.
- Two volunteers with lived experience, Reece & Jenny.
- Both volunteers had various levels of technical expertise,
- Very helpful when supporting the learners.



Camphill Village Trust – Digital Inclusion Workshops

Phase 2: October 2023 to December 2023

- looked at Zoom to connect with family.
- Became clear that the focused theme was How to Stay safe online.
- Created easy read material for every part of the project for topics such as how to use the mouse, how to access email accounts
- Used an easy read quiz to enable the group to reflect on learning
- Use of weekly feedback sheets to re-evaluate sessions and adjust content accordingly

After the first 3 months- re-evaluated and realised that the beginners group required far more support than we had anticipated and were able to provide through these sessions.

Brought the two groups together and reduced the number in the group, moving into Phase 3.



Phase 3: January 24 – April 2024

- Theme running through every session continued to be internet safety.
- Volunteer Jenny came up with the idea of creating internet safety comic strips.
- The group liked the idea which created the focus for the duration of the third phase of the project.
- In pairs people researched and designed comic strips for different topics such as using Facebook, Scams, Passwords and not giving out personal information.
- Easy read sheets were created to sit alongside each comic strip topic.

Podcasting

- **Initial podcasting sessions with Alex were so successful, people wanted to use the equipment more**
- **Last three sessions repurposed learning how to use the equipment by recording the comic strips.**
- **Podcasting brought out people's personalities, it enabled them to be themselves while talking about their experiences of the project.**

Camphill Village Trust - Digital Inclusion Workshops

Legacy

- Podcasting idea shared across CVT Cop-production team with aim to set-up new podcasting group and purchase equipment
- Easy Read Guide Booklet & ComicStrip resources-
- 70+ professionally printed copies of to be shared across CVT houses/ settlements and residents.
- Future opportunity to share learning/ resources across adult social care in Gloucestershire
- Volunteer Reece, taking role in Community Action Pod to further developer his skills and interests in Digital to find work.



“Before the Digital Inclusion project, I used Zoom on my tablet to call my mum and used YouTube. The course has helped me to understand how to be safe and not to go to areas that are unsafe.” - Learner

“It has helped me with my social skills, one to one teaching, learning how best to manage my time. I have used my computer skills to help others in the group. The Digital Inclusion project has helped me to think about other things I can do with technology. I see it as a steppingstone to future exploration into technology” - Volunteer

“I really enjoyed the podcasting and hope we can get our own equipment to do more of it.” - Learner

Forest of Dean Community Choir and Forest Sensory Services

Bringing people together through digital connectivity and music

Project Overview:

- Digitally-linked choir began as a request from Forest Sensory Services (FSS) service users for singing classes at a similar time that Artspace began an in-house choir.
- FSS service user were unable to access the Artspace building in central Cinderford mostly because of transport difficulties
- Linking the two choirs digitally allowed them to develop their own styles of singing and work on similar songs in a different way
- The benefit to participants was evaluated in terms of their reported wellbeing, confidence and improved skills (particularly performance skills),
- Both choirs have continued after the initial funding period, so continue to benefit participants



Forest of Dean Community Choir and Forest Sensory Services

Bringing people together through digital connectivity and music



Key achievements:

Number of participants–

- 11 individuals enrolled in 12 sessions at FSS for a total of 81 participations
- 21 individuals participated in 12 sessions at Artspace for a total of 151 participations.
- 30 participants across two groups identified as having a disability, mental health condition or as neurodivergent.

Key events –

- sessions completed January – April 2024,
- joint rehearsal/sharing event for both choirs at Artspace on Saturday 18 May,
- Joint performance for both choirs at The Wesley Arts Centre Friday 19 July 2024

Impact–

- Participants showed an increase in their reported mood
- Not just as a result of participating in singing sessions, but also appeared to report that their mood was improved over the course of the sessions.
- Qualitative feedback emphasised the skills and confidence improvements
- participants were keen not only to continue to participate in singing sessions but also to perform publicly as a result of participating in the project.
- There were a wide range of unexpected positive outcomes as a result of the sessions, ranging from additional volunteering, participation in external creative activities (two participants making their own performance duo at local open mic nights)

Forest of Dean Community Choir and Forest Sensory Services

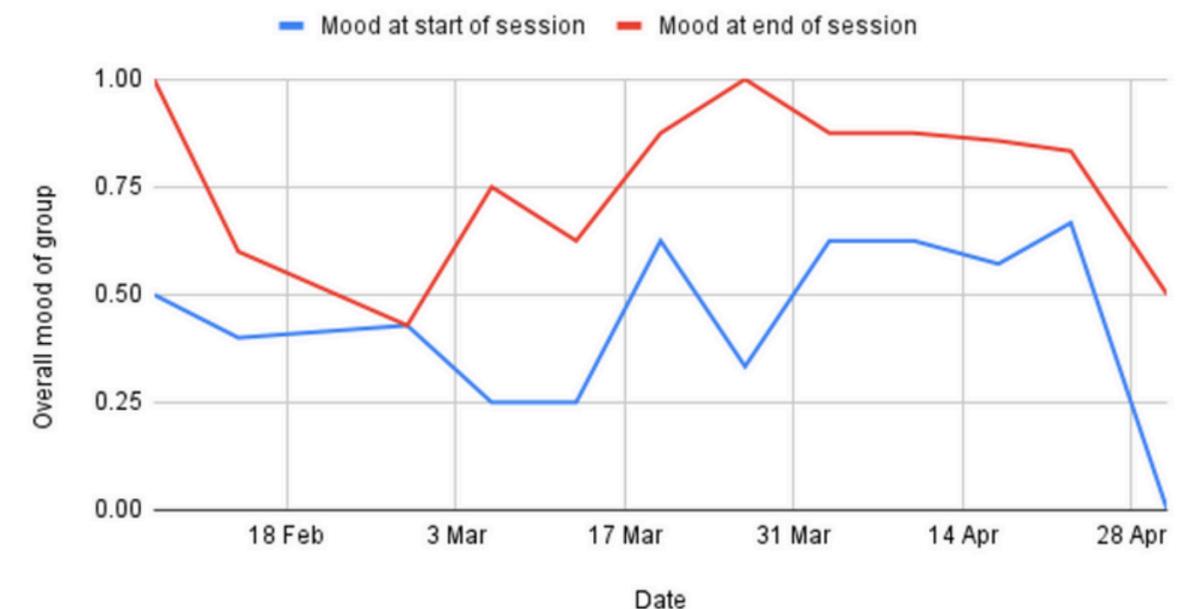
Bringing people together through digital connectivity and music



Legacy

- Additional funding provided for 10 extra sessions.
- Match funding provided by Adult Education.
- Aims to utilise technology and learning to embed in to upcoming learning programmes.
- Continuing running sessions over summer with hope of further funding to continue.

Mood at start of session compared to end of session



“These sessions are so great for getting me back into music and waking up my skills and confidence” – FSS Participant

“My mental health and wellbeing has been restored for another week” – FSS Participant

“By the end of the session I feel on top of the world” – Artspace Participant

Wilde Earth Journeys – Bring Outdoors Indoors Pilot

Project overview:

The initiative was inspired by research highlighting nature's therapeutic benefits on mental and emotional health.

This pilot project aim was to create a digital library of immersive films, audio recordings, and a virtual reality environment to replicate these benefits demonstrating significant positive impacts on participants' wellbeing.

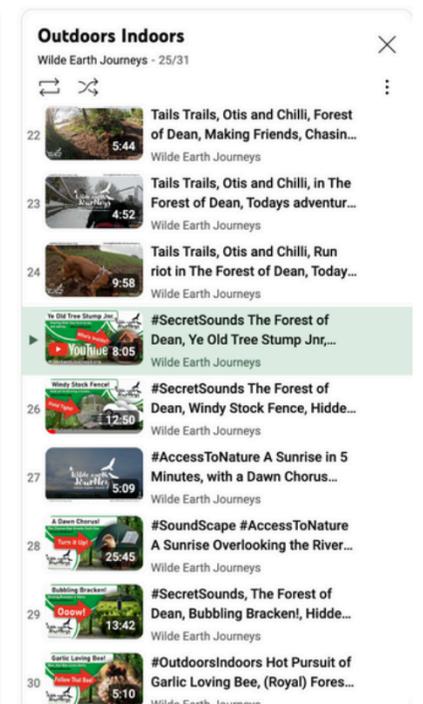
- The project engaged 41 participants, with a diverse age range from 20 to 84.
- Significant number of participants reported medical conditions or disabilities.

Created content:

- 10 Youtube Films
- 15 Soundscape films
- 2 Youtube Livestreams
- 1 VR Environment
- 30+ uploads to Outdoors Indoors YT Playlist

Content creation equipment investment

- £3966 invested in equipment
- Specialist contact Mic's
- High powered Editing Laptops
- Audio Recording device



Wilde Earth Journeys – Bring Outdoors Indoors Pilot

Sounds of Nature Playlist Events

- Event 1: Hosted on December 19, 2023, at Speech House with outpatients from Colliers Court and referrals from Social Prescribers. Participants reported the experience as "relaxing" and "therapeutic."
- Event 2: On March 5, 2024, at Forest Sensory Services for visually impaired attendees. The nature sounds, particularly a recording interrupted by a dog, were well-received, prompting engaging discussions and positive feedback about the calming and nostalgic effects.



Virtual Reality and Video Experiences

- Butterfly Gardens Event: On May 9, 2024, the team showcased VR and video experiences to volunteers and Disabled attendees at the Butterfly Garden. Positive feedback emphasised the relaxing and engaging nature of the VR environment, regardless of this being a proof of concept and needing adjustments in situ to aid user's experience.



Wilde Earth Journeys – Bring Outdoors Indoors Pilot

Legacy and future project developments:

Based on the achievements and challenges of the various pilot projects arranged by WEJ, there are a few strands of continual development and areas of research that could be interesting to develop further:

- Expand Digital content library
- Accessibility improvements & Digital Literacy Workshops
- Mental Health Initiatives
- Digital Personalisation and Technological Advancements

By focusing on these key areas of research, WEJ can build on the success of the pilot project, addressing identified challenges and expanding its impact on community wellbeing through innovative, yet inclusive nature-based engagement solutions.

“I think it was very clever, very, very clever. Thank you. I've never done that before, so. That's another tick”



“I thought it was very good. It was very foresty and I thought you could wander around, which was the whole point of it. So I really enjoyed it ... I thought it was just brilliant.”

“I thought it was lovely. It felt like you were in the forest. It was nice to be able to pick things up and turn them over to see what the flower was like underneath.”

Guy Woodland – Forest Pathways

Project Overview:

- Worked with forest related website owners helping them to understand their website from an accessibility perspective
- Informed businesses how they might be excluding people because of disability.
- Changed approach from hand holding individuals to auditing websites at mass via automated testing
- Tested over 600 forest of dean websites/ 700 Gloucestershire Websites.
- Testing phase demonstrated the very poor state of website accessibility in the Forest of Dean.
- Used the data to establish common trends of failings to develop resources and self-help videos so people and organisations can better understand how they could improve their websites accessibility.



**FOREST
PATHWAYS**

Testing:

The following organisations took up the offer for an electronic audit

during the research phase:

- Art space
- CAB
- Dean Heritage Centre
- Forest Sensory Service
- Forest Pulse
- DiverseLeap
- Newent Initiative Trust
- Ross Labels
- Shalom Network
- Forest Pathways
- Ashley's Meadow

Only one organisation undertook any remedial work.

Guy Woodland – Forest Pathways

Resources:

Written

- 25 Website accessibility
- 66 How to
- 31 News
- 7 About
- 25 About assistive technology
- 25 Testing resources
- 1 Accessibility

Videos

- 34 Our videos
- 1 Testing video
- 3 How to
- 56 Videos we love
- 2 About videos
- 1 Learning video



Project findings:

- Forest of Dean 500 sites 73 passed a WAVE test but government data would suggest that up to 60% - 70% inaccuracy meaning data could be out by a huge margin.
- Manual testing indicated that even when websites had scored with no errors 9 out of 10 websites would not be accessible.
- Automated testing identified common accessibility failings which we refined to 12 of the most common accessibility failings, (resource on website)

Guy Woodland – Forest Pathways

Learnings

The greatest take away from the project is the complete reluctance of organisations to engage with inclusivity and accessibility beyond the usual tick box acknowledgement. The common factors are:

- Lack of skills
- Lack of knowledge
- Company culture issues
- Company does not care
- No support from organisation in terms of time and or resource
- No testing so actually doesn't know the status of their platform
- Don't understand legal obligations
- A commitment to acknowledge challenges and then nothing is done about those challenges.



Plans moving forward

- Widen scope to the world wide web.
- Develop a recruitment and training program to employ people from the VI community to be accessibility ambassadors and auditors.
- Opportunity to hold an accessibility workshop at theGrowthHub in Mitcheldean.

Project Engage

Aim:

Capacity building and training of community building teams to facilitate “try before you buy “ / “Device loan library consisting on digital equipment that can support care whilst reducing loneliness and isolation.

Challenges:

- Due to capacity and shifting priorities of both Lena, Alex and respective teams, the project was unable to move forward as planned.

VR VI Pilot

Aim:

Innovative solution, enabling more individuals to empathize with those experiencing sight loss. This project involves creating software that simulates specific eye conditions, adjustable by severity, through VR headsets. The aim is to provide users with the experience of living with visual impairment, encouraging empathy, support for others, and thoughtful actions.

Challenges:

- Capacity/ staff change at FFS led to not participating in project as previously planned in EOI
- VR developer- left mid-way through project and refused to pass on work.
- This enforced a restart on content development- Feb 24 leading to delays.

Pilot Spend Breakdown

Project	EOI allocation	Legacy	Total allocated	Spend	Remaining
Podcast	£ 5,500.00		£ 5,500.00	£ 5,500.00	£ -
VR VI pilot	£ 5,912.00		£ 5,912.00	£ 2,605.00	£(3,307.00)
Hybrid Choir	£ 6,200.00	£1,520 (10+ sessions)	£ 7,720.00	£ 7,637.75	£(82.25)
Bring outdoors Indoors	£ 28,214.22		£ 28,214.22	£ 25,298.51	£(2,915.71)
Guy Forest pathway	£ 27,038.00		£ 27,038.00	£ 27,636.44	£598.44
CVT pilot	£ 17,099.64		£ 17,099.64	£ 12,415.55	£(4,684.09) pending invoices/ printing costs
Project Engage	£ 5,000.00		£ 5,000.00	£ -	£(5,000.00)
Total	£ 94,963.86		£ 96,483.86	£ 81,093.25	£15,390.61



THANK YOU!

WHAT'S
NEXT?