

The Bridge Collective C.I. C.



Annual Report April 2019 to March 2020

Table of Contents

Mission Statement.....	3
How the Bridge Collective works.....	3
Activities at the Bridge.....	4
People at the Bridge	6
Help we've received.....	8
Our stakeholders and how we consult them	9
Some feedback from participants:	10
Themes and challenges	12
Adapting to Coronavirus	14
Appendix: Group and Project reports.....	15
Art at the Bridge.....	15
Community Meeting	18
Company Systems Working Party	19
Director team	20
Experts by Experience	21
Greenwood Project	29
Newsletter.....	32
Open Afternoons.....	32
Open Minds.....	35
Open Reflection	35
Rainbowbridge	36
Underground Sound.....	37
Volunteering development	37
Wholefoods.....	39
Financials.....	40

Mission Statement

To be a company whose members are creating: a democratic community where people who have experiences, beliefs, and feelings that have sometimes been labelled as mental illness are welcomed and can talk about these experiences freely, safely and without judgement; a place to participate in friendship, support, learning, teaching, discussion, being active, and making a valid contribution both within the collective and the wider community.

How the Bridge Collective works

The Bridge Collective has a unique organisational structure. It is a flat organisation set up as a Community Interest Company with members; with each member having shared control and all staff paid the same hourly wage.

The Bridge Collective aims for everyone involved to have the same power to make decisions as everyone else. Decisions about the running of the collective are made at monthly directors meetings open to all. Directors are appointed by vote by all members at the AGM. There is no executive director, chair or treasurer. The chair or co-chairs of the community meetings are chosen monthly by people volunteering to chair or co-chair. There is no co-ordinator/manager of the organisation: management is by peer/collective management. The Bridge Collective has a small part time staff team and is run largely on good will and volunteer input. The Bridge Collective achieves a lot of peer support on a small budget. Keyholders (volunteers and part time staff) open and lock up the building for a group/activity and are the responsible persons whilst the activity is taking place. There is no assessment/referral process to take part in Bridge activities: people decide for themselves if activities are something they would benefit from. People at the collective may have multiple roles including director, employee, sessional worker, self employed, facilitator, keyholder, trainer, volunteer, member, attendee, visitor; and people take part as both providers and beneficiaries of the collective's activities. The

nature of the Bridge Collective is that it is about participating in something together. In essence that participation is equal for everyone regardless of 'roles' they have.

How this report was produced

This Annual Report has been compiled and edited from the following sources: feedback received during the year from people who have interacted with the Bridge; content generated collectively by those present at our AGM; reports submitted by group and project facilitators.

Activities at the Bridge

- Over the year April 2019-2020 our monthly What's On advertised a total of 214 events and opportunities for participation, not including 9 events cancelled due to coronavirus.
- We recorded the number of participants at 192 of our events and activities over the year. The average number of participants was 5.4 per activity.
- We do not record individual participants by name, so we don't have the precise number of individuals who participated in the Bridge over the year, but we estimate that it was between 200 and 220.

The following regular groups and activities took place during the year. Reports from each group are in the appendix.

- Art at the Bridge
- Community Meeting
- Company Systems Working Party

- Director Team
- Experts by Experience
- Greenwood Project
- Newsletter
- Open Afternoons
- Open Minds
- Open Reflection
- Rainbowbridge
- Underground Sound
- Volunteering Development
- Wholefoods

Here is a selection of additional events and activities that took place during this year:

Mad Language workshop

West Town Farm camp

Screening of a Ted talk by Sascha Altman Du Brul

Animation workshops,

Big Dinner at Herbies,

Fundraising planning meeting

Training for Directors and anyone interested in a Director role

People at the Bridge

Our community: Estimated number of people involved in the Bridge groups and activities in a year: between 200 and 220

Members: Members on 31 March 2019: 17. Members on 31 March 2020: 19

Keyholders: Sarah Everson, Rachel, Nicola, Lena, Fleur, Ben, Ashley, Andrew, Chris, Sarah T, Gill, Margaret

Regular contracted employee hours: at 31/3/2020 were 90 hours/ week, 2.6 full time equivalent.

Student placement: Ness on a Work-Based Learning placement for BA (Hons) Integrative Counselling course with Iron Mill College, Exeter.

Voluntary hours: People input unpaid time into making the Bridge Collective happen both through informally getting involved, working parties and through named voluntary roles. Informal contributions include: washing up, cleaning, shopping, mending, writing up meeting notes, proofreading, chopping wood, typing, writing funding bids, washing tea towels, checking first aid kit contents, compiling and formatting our newsletter.

Volunteers (named roles):

- Assistant Company Secretary: Ben
- Company secretary: Andrew
- Directors at 1/4/19: Mark Burnett, Sarah Trickett, Sarah Everson, Andrew Barkla, Margaret Turner, Ben Durkin.
- Directors at 31/3/20: Sarah Trickett, Sarah Everson, Andrew Barkla, Margaret Turner, Ben Durkin.
- Experts by Experience workshop speakers (see below)
- Open Minds: peer support group facilitators: Ashley, Ben
- Rainbow Bridge peer support group facilitators: Lena, Rachel
- Thursday Volunteer facilitators: Andrew, Ashley, Ben, Chris, Nicola, Margaret

- Wholefoods Project facilitator: Mike

Experts by Experience Workshop Team:

Due to 'service user- involvement work' being a special category of work, members of the Experts by Experience workshop team take part in one of the following ways: paid employee, self- employed and in a voluntary capacity. People taking part this year include:

- Volunteers: Ashley, Ben, Petra, Jane
- Bank employees: Katharina, Rachel, Ami
- Self-employed: Mary, Joy
- Facilitating sessions: Gill, Sarah Trickett

Community Development Worker Team:

- Art: Chris and Fleur
- Company system working party: Andrew, Nicola, Chris
- Communications: Andrew, Nicola, Sarah Everson
- Data protection officer: Nicola
- Experts by Experience: Gill, Sarah
- Finance: Sarah Everson, Andrew
- Greenwood Project: Andrew, Chris
- Health & safety named persons: Andrew, Nicola
- Music: Nicola
- Newsletter: Andrew
- Safeguarding officer: Nicola
- Thursday Open Afternoon volunteer coordinators: Chris, Nicola

- Volunteering Development: Nicola, Andrew.

Help we've received

We've received grants from the following organisations for work during this year and towards future work

Devon County Council

Tudor Trust

Allen Lane Foundation

Jamieson Bystock Trust

St Edmund's and St Mary Major Charities – for a residential event that has been deferred due to Coronavirus
Taw Valley Ventures (given for next year)

We received donations from private individuals and through the Waitrose Community Matters Scheme.

We received business advice through the Enhance Social Enterprise Programme, from Mark Cotton and Helen Vines.

Jo Duff of Spectrum Management helped us with Safeguarding policy development and training.

Free art workshops were provided by Magic Carpet

Our stakeholders and how we consult them

Our stakeholders include: Members, participants, employees, volunteers, funders, commissioners of training, students, trainees, people on placement, workers in local services, conference attendees. Some information on how we have consulted and communicated with our stakeholders can be found below.

Currently the following is in place at the Bridge:

Annual General Meeting - anyone welcome, Members can vote on appointment of Company Directors, Company Secretary and other formal company resolutions. All participants are invited to review the past year at the Bridge.

Monthly Community Meetings – these are the overall official decision-making meetings (Open Director's meetings) at the Bridge and all participants in the collective are invited to contribute.

Quarterly Open Reflection sessions (facilitated by a guest facilitator, Michelle Virgo) for the Bridge community to review, reflect and plan.

Bi-monthly Team supervision for people with facilitation or governance roles (facilitated by guest supervisor, Mary Booker).

Open meetings throughout the year to discuss plans for activities, events and projects, development of the Bridge, creation and review of policies and procedures, and to participate in Company running and maintenance tasks

We trialled a different approach to planning how to move forward on identified priority areas during the second half of the year. We had a planning session in August in which we looked at 7 areas of work and gathered ideas about next steps in these areas and condensed these into summary suggested actions. We then put up a wall chart to invite people to join teams to work on each area and identified a member of the facilitation team to coordinate each of these working groups. This has proved a valuable way to share work and responsibility and to open up conversation widely in the Bridge, as well as leading to some specific outcomes or starting on-going processes.

Some feedback from participants:

“It's great to see activities that make a real difference in the world despite the hurdles.”

“Teaching a DJing workshop at The Bridge Collective gave me confidence and made me feel like I had something to give.”

Some memories of the year gathered together at our AGM:

“Open reflection using cards - a very beautiful image - feeling very resonant.”

“RiPFA work - whole year to plan - doing something new - long road, lots of details to iron out - really great experience.”

"Camp at Ide - tremendous camp - camp fire sing-along - absolutely indispensable - very special camp for me - solidarity and togetherness."

"Finding people with shared experiences - enjoying being part of the community meeting and drop-in."

"Calming myself after the dentist - there wouldn't be anywhere else to do that"

"Talking about taking out clause 41 in the Articles - found it empowering that people were enthusiastic and working together to change something that didn't feel in keeping."

"Bowling Green Marsh - looking out over water - it's flat but expansive - memorable - appreciated choice of site - togetherness, freedom - to enjoy together and step away - just perfect."

"Mad Language workshop - new piece of work, just kind of worked - diverse - lovely discussion - very nervous about participating, it felt very public - walking home in October sunshine, I felt really good about it - really nurtured me - interesting, important, alive."

"There was loss in this year - pain plus warmth or the possibility of warmth - possibility of new growth after a harsh and arid landscape of confusion, pain and loss."

Themes and challenges

A theme has been learning about decision making and planning in a growing and changing team:

- New members of the team have developed and cofacilitated planning and evaluation sessions.
- New members of the team developed, tested, facilitated and evaluated our complaints processes.
- We have identified the need for developing how we create shared agreements and expectations of how we treat each other.
- We have successfully worked with flexible working, where members of the team have needed to reduce working hours for self-care needs. Being an organisation where we can do this has been identified as a key strength that increases access to employment and supports our ethos of 'we all have something valuable to offer even though our capacity may vary at times'.
- We have learnt more about holding organisational boundaries in volunteer recruitment. An area identified for development is clarifying how we create the team who will say "yes" or "no" to a request to volunteer.
- We have learnt more about holding self and organisational boundaries to fit our output to our capacity.

Succession planning has been and will continue to be an important theme for us. We have a regular employee team of 7 part time people, with a range of skills and areas in which we are confident. We have for many years worked close to the limit of our capacity so planning for change, new recruitment and induction can be a challenge. We are currently in a stronger financial position than we have been for some time though we have little certainty about our position beyond a year at a time.

We are planning for changes in our employee and volunteer team as follows:

We have 2 employees who are planning a work life transition. One phased retirement and one to retrain in a new field.

Directors: One of our directors resigned in February 2020. This means we now have 5 directors, the minimum number allowed by our constitution. We have begun a process to recruit new directors (see above). We have also been reviewing the clarity of our expectations of the Director team and the support and training that is in place for the team. Our aim is to work towards a position where the size of the team and the amount of shared knowledge means that any director could retire from the role without feeling that they were putting strain on the remaining team members.

Project sustainability principles: projects have come into being based on there being people in the Bridge who can make them work, in a way that fits with the Bridge mission statement and the structures and capacity we have to make them work. A challenge we have had to face is what happens when people who have been able to facilitate a project are no longer here or able to facilitate. A case in point is the music project. We were able to create space for people involved in the project to come together for a while, but expectations for the project to develop at a faster rate than we could sustain meant that we have had to put it on hold. We have identified a need to clarify principles and expectations about sustainability and longevity of projects.

Wages: we have a principle agreed at the beginning of the Bridge that all paid work (not including outside contractors) is paid at the same hourly rate. For 12 years this has remained at £10.30 per hour (this was equivalent to NJC pay point 24 in 2008). We are looking at increasing this to £11 per hour (equivalent to NJC

pay point 12 at April 2019) if possible from June 2020. The government hopes to raise the national living wage to £10.50 in 2024. We have recognised that a wage at the same rate as comparable work is important for retaining and attracting employees.

Adapting to Coronavirus

We thoroughly risk assessed and were swift to begin home working. We started cancelling events from the 2nd March and our doors were last opened for an open activity on Thursday 12th March. We moved essential work equipment and documents to our homes and began learning about group online meetings. We've had strength in desire to act quickly and heart-fully to find new ways to keep meeting as a community. We've been supporting each other and connecting with our own and shared resources as well as those being developed in our communities around us.

We are aware that we, like the world at large, are in a transition and that there will be further transitions to navigate through.

The Bridge is following government advice in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 and we are promoting physical social distancing. We released a statement on 19th March announcing that we would be closing the Bridge premises doors until we are advised that it is safe for us to open them again. Within our statement we confirmed that we would continue to work from our homes and that we were looking for ways that our community could continue to support each other through existing and innovative ways. On March 24th the Bridge employee team trialled the online platform zoom, a group video meeting application, for a team debrief and to look for ways in which we can adapt and branch out with our community during these challenging times. We decided to have a trial online open afternoon using zoom as the interface. March 25th, we emailed everyone on our contact list proposing the idea of an online facilitated bridge collective open space, we requested for anyone with an interest to join to confirm so that we could send them a link.

Thursday March 26th, 3 members of the employee team facilitated our first successful trial of an online open hour, at its maximum there were 10 participants including facilitators, the session included warmth, kindness and sharing, one participant called for the new experience of being able to participate in open sessions from their home to be extended beyond the lockdown to prevent the pandemic spread, into the future because it would save them from making a long journey to reach the Bridge premises.

Appendix: Group and Project reports

Art at the Bridge



This year in response to requests for art activities at the Bridge to be open to men as well as women, we started an open ('mixed') art group once a month, with the women's art group also becoming monthly, instead of bi-monthly. Both have been well supported; we held 25 sessions with a total of 170 participants over the year. (These are total numbers of people participating in the sessions, not individuals).

In April / May 2019 we had two animation workshops led by Isgard Wild, provided without charge to the Bridge by Magic Carpet. These were very popular, and the work from the second one became part of the film Mary of Exeter about a messenger pigeon in the First World War, who won medals and lived in Exeter. The film was available to be seen at the Phoenix in the autumn.

This year we also had several weeks' clay workshops, led by Fleur sharing her ceramics skills. With prompts from a worksheet made by Fleur, people learnt techniques for making a simple bowl: rolling out a slab of clay, imprinting it with pieces of lace to make a design, and forming the shape round a bowl.

People shared their skills and techniques in the different stages of making and learnt from each other. There were tips for recycling and re-using: offcuts from the slab of clay used to make slip, and clingfilm (used in the moulding process to stop the clay from sticking to the mould) can be re-used.

The alchemy of the process was experienced through the firing and glazing stages. Vitrification: moisture removed from the pots in the bisque firing. People saw their pots transformed: now hardened and changed in colour by the bisque firing. People next glazed the bisque-fired pots with underglaze to colour them. The pots were then taken back to Totnes for glaze firing, after first being coated with a clear glaze to give a glossy finish. The finished pots are once again transformed through the glaze firing, when the colours appear different from how they were when the underglaze was first applied.

There was a learning process both for people making a glazed piece for the first time, and for facilitators in the challenges of transporting and protecting the work and identifying the makers of the finished pieces. Also, for Fleur in working with the sixth form college in Totnes which required much planning and communication, and

some paperwork. It was a shared learning experience, with much triumph over the final results, and some grief for the few broken pieces, casualties of the processes involved and the fragility of the medium.

Other sessions have included: needle felting, glass painting tea light lanterns, printing, Christmas pomanders, driftwood art. Also, following attendance by Chris at a local Amnesty International workshop 'Craftivism', the group made fabric flowers with a human rights message attached, which were placed in local cafes for people to find.



Who helped us:

Stuart Crewes at Magic Carpet

Isgard Wild for workshops, and George Barron for inclusion in the project Mary of Exeter

Lili John at King Edward VI Sixth Form College in Totnes, with firing of ceramics

Lula Buzz for help with glazing of ceramics

Wayne and Louise Hardman for transport of ceramics to and from Totnes

Karina at Amnesty International Exeter Group with the idea for the 'Craftivism' flowers

We have been successful in making a grant application to Self Heal for funding for a further 3 years.

Community Meeting

At our monthly Community Meetings, which are open to everyone, we make decisions about how the Bridge is run and what happens here. We discuss policies and training, report on activities and bring ideas for new ones, and agree decisions about how money is raised to fund the Bridge, and what we spend it on. There is an agenda which is prepared before the meeting, and a form is available which can be completed by anyone who wants to bring an item, which can be emailed, or hand delivered to the Bridge. All who come are welcome to join the discussion and express their views, or just to listen and get a feel for how we work.

Originally called Directors' Meetings, these meetings are where company decisions which need to be agreed by directors are formally made, and a quorum of directors needs to be present in order for this to happen. The name was changed to Community Meeting to try to encourage more people to come and make it more welcoming.

Every month the meeting is chaired by someone who has volunteered to do this at the previous community meeting, and everyone is welcome to volunteer for this. There is a time beforehand to prepare for this with support by an experienced Bridge member.

We have set up working spaces for planning and preparing for our Community Meeting. Currently this process has been facilitated by a paid employee and we have taken steps towards creation of a formal volunteer support role, building on informal unpaid participation. This process has led to more focused and effective community meetings as well as more shared understanding of and participation in the process.

Company Systems Working Party

This monthly working party is for skill sharing, learning and doing bite size chunks of our company running systems, e.g., admin, safety and maintenance. We've met 10 times and 19 people have participated in this open monthly working space over the year. Things we've done this year include cleaning, shopping, counting money from tea and coffee donations, mending equipment, typing, safety checks, tidying, filing, sorting. We've fitted new smoke alarms and done a temporary repair to the carpet strip to remove a trip hazard (work for a permanent replacement is in hand).

Director team

Directors are elected by the Members annually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Responsibility for the running of the company is delegated to the Directors, but decisions are made at the open Bridge Community Meeting, and all members present can vote on any decisions made there. Decisions are made by consensus as far as possible. If a vote is held, the majority vote will be accepted except that the Directors have to veto any decision that would be illegal or against the interests of the company.

All directors are members of the Bridge, any member can nominate themselves for directorship. Information about how to do this is sent to all members in advance of the AGM.

Extra closed Directors' meetings were held to address an issue involving individuals with a need for confidentiality. This was challenging, something new, and tested the team a bit, helping to make us aware of responsibilities and recognise our strengths, and made us look at our systems and processes.

This year we've recognised and started to address a need for director recruitment.

We've begun to develop Director Training session plans. So far, we've held sessions on: "History and guiding principles of the Bridge"; "Our governing documents and what they mean for us"; "Safeguarding".

Mark Burnett retired from the Director team in February 2020. Many thanks go to Mark for his six years of service as a director.

Experts by Experience

Achievements:

- People have spoken about experiences including being assessed under the Mental Health Act, communication with doctors, making meaning, suicidal thoughts, self harm, hearing voices, seeing visions, trauma, foundations and rebuilding life.
- Organisations we've done workshops and projects with include: University of Exeter Medical School, Plymouth University School of Nursing, Devon County Council, Research in Practice for Adults (RiPfA)
- We've delivered: 15 training sessions this year.
- We've spoken with approximately 258 people including: trainee doctors, trainee mental health nurses, general nurses, AMHPs (Approved Mental Health Professionals), Community Mental Health practitioners, members of the public, social care researchers.
- EbyE training has brought £3,405.23 into the Bridge this year.
- Hosting a public workshop called 'Mad Language' at The Bridge premises with 14 non-Bridge attendees.
- Carrying out a brand new piece of work with RiPfA where we recorded conversations between participants on the theme of "What does your experience of a good interaction/conversation with a health or social care practitioner look like?". These will go on the RiPfA website for national social care teams to access.
- We delivered and took part in an in-house training session to develop skills around telling our stories in public.
- Experts by Experience made a new contact with Mark Bridgman from the DPT to develop a collaboration to help improve DPT services.

Team Work

- 27 people have participated in Experts by Experience session teams (24), monthly meetings (17) and development meetings (10).
- Volunteer input into Experts by Experience training over this year is estimated at 51.5 hours.
- We had an away day to Dawlish Warren Beach in August with 5 people coming along.



- Continuing to do successful handover work between Nicola, Gill and Sarah.

- We worked together to deliver the Mad Language workshop with a team effort to produce the poster design and 5 volunteers to set up and run the workshop.
- Our in-house training for speakers was a team effort with 2 members helping to deliver training. As well as being an ongoing aspiration, the training was a response to feedback from the 1:1 sessions with Ness, our student on placement in March.
- In our Monthly Meeting we decided to make more time for sharing our experiences. In one of our meetings a participant gave us an interesting insight into EFT (Emotional Freedom therapy).

Allen Lane Foundation grant - steps achieved:

- *Created Outline for Mad Language Workshop*



- *Gathered interest in topics people want to talk about*
- *Designed and printed Poster for Mad Language and worked out advertising strategy*

- *Planned Mad Language Workshop*
- *Delivered Mad Language Workshops*
- *Followed up training for speakers in line with 1:1 Ness session feedback*
- *Asked for suggestions and availability for training programme for participants (speakers)*
- *In-house speaker training session about how to tell our stories succinctly, creating personal story timelines, physical strategies for speaking in public*
- *J attended Intentional Peer Support Workshop and told Ebye about it*
- *J created artwork to illustrate journey from depression*
- *Had an away day for building resilience – Dawlish Warren Beach*
- *Created and agreed role description for an in-house speaker at a workshop or training event*
- *Updated leaflets about EbyE*
- *Sent work proposal to Mark Bridgman at DPT*
- *Liaised with Mark Bridgman at DPT to build ongoing work together*
- *Set up clear realistic costs for new work with RiPfA*
- *Did planning and recording Sessions with RiPfA*
- *Looked for possible future funders*
- *Put up leaflets/posters in University and Hospital*
- *Sent out emails to link with student psychologists and psychiatrists*
- *Established coordinator roles and divisions of labour – ongoing review and flexible working*
- *Began to write role descriptions and “How to do role” documents*

Challenges and hopes for the future:

- Challenges - Finding new training possibilities; developing and approving new role descriptions for voluntary and paid roles within EbyE; putting together and submitting an Awards for All funding application; getting the word out about what we do to attract new participants; learning the facilitator's role and managing time and working roles between 2 facilitators; learning how to work together as a team in the Bridge and work within our own capacity; evolving the format of the Monthly Meeting so people feel relaxed and included; developing and carrying out a new piece of work with a new organisation; responding to feedback from 1:1 interviews with Ness.
- Hopes - finding a new way of working in response to the Coronavirus; more training for EbyE participants; being successful in funding applications to contribute to the sustainability of EbyE and The Bridge; more in-house workshops either in the premises or online; more social days; networking with the universities, colleges, DPT, social care and other organisations to find ways of working; greater contact with the general public, more advertising, updating website.

A selection of feedback from this year:

Samples from Lived Experience Workshops

"Just a note to say a huge thank you for your excellent session on Monday. Not only was it slick and well facilitated but the narratives were so well delivered and brought incredible insights to the process of care

coordination. Thank you so much for sharing such helpful and moving accounts of care and engaging the students in meaningful conversations around how to make a difference - just brilliant. Thank you."

Which part of Training was most helpful to you?

- hearing people's personal stories and learning from them
- listening to different people's individual experiences and noticing that everybody has a different perspective.
- hearing completely honest stories of all experiences, bad and good, with no sugar coating offers insight into what to be like as a nurse
- hearing real life stories hearing what the experts found helpful and detrimental to their recovery
- listening to people's experiences and the challenge that may present in terms of my own understanding.
- Thank you so much for sharing your stories and being inspiring to not only myself but yourself.
- Thank you to all the experts by experience members, I have learnt something from each day which I will take into practice.
- Amazing. I loved it all. I wish general nurses could experience these talks!!!
- This was a fantastic experience and just to say a big thank you to you all.

Feedback from Mad Language Workshop

And may I say thank you to The Bridge Collective for putting on such a worthwhile and meaningful event. I very much enjoyed hearing extracts from both B and As stories and having read B's mother's book: 'Illth' (as opposed to Health), I found hearing B's recounting of his experiences even more compelling.

The afternoon was very well facilitated, and we were all made to feel welcome and included. From a personal point of view, it was very moving to hear people sharing their own experiences in a safe and supportive environment and I learned a great deal about others and myself.

Feedback from In-house Speaker Training

"Solid foundation for developing work/story at home. Very useful! (Manageable 'chunks' to build on.)"

"This course made me feel it's ok to speak up! It also gave me more confidence."

"The session was warm and welcoming and thank you for making me me(?)."

"Could we have a whole day?"

"Session really good today. I liked the timeline and the breathing exercises and especially the group sessions. Thank you!!"

"Although I missed the beginning of the introduction, I was made to feel very welcome and soon picked up what was expected for the day's events."

"Each part of the workshop was very well planned and organised, giving each of us time to do what was required in both the 'time line' session and later in the 'stream of consciousness' work done in pairs. I also found the short film very informative as useful background structure to giving talks. Also the breathing exercises were really helpful and made me aware of the importance of not rushing, but speaking clearly and outward to those listening.

The short presentations given at the end were all very good and personal to each. They were also extremely moving and showed how much each of us had learnt through the day."

"Sharing my story as a parent who has experienced mental health trauma within the family"

Feedback from participants and facilitators

"There have been some interesting challenges during the year, like figuring out how to work with new organisations and also balancing the needs of the project, participants and organisations."

"I love being part of the Experts by Experience team. We are a very diverse group and at meetings there is always a lot to discuss and think about. We often surprise each other with our different experiences and attitudes. I would mind a lot if I couldn't be part of E by E: it makes me feel I am doing something worthwhile and it gives me a safe, compassionate and intelligent forum where we can all grow together but in different ways. E by E has helped me to shine a light into some difficult dark places and use that lived experience to inform the student nurses and doctors we talk to in our workshops. I would miss very much being part of E by E so I hope its future remains safe as part of the Bridge."

"EbyE activities have given me a chance to share my mental health experiences with an interested audience, so that I feel that I am furthering the cause of getting us better understood and treated. Developing the "Mad Language" workshop has helped me gain new skills. The sessions have been so interesting! I've missed the positive aims during lockdown."

Greenwood Project

We met approximately twice monthly, once a month on the 3rd Wednesday at Yeo Vale Wood, where we walk and observe nature, cook on an open fire, and take part in craft activities using natural materials and processes. Activities included: wildflower walks, wildlife watching, Flower pressing and drawing, charcoal making, foraging, spoon carving , sit-down comedy, earth pigment painting, making rope and cord, birch brooms, pomanders, singing, wassail, pancakes, candle making.

Our second monthly activity takes place in different locations each month, including this year

A Sunday at Lockbar Wood, 'Delilah Day', decorating our springtime Obby Oss

A clay working day and walk at Organic Arts, Ide

A walk at Aylesbeare Common

A train journey to Okehampton and walk on Dartmoor

Two visits to the RSPB bird reserve at the Bowling Green, Topsham

A walk along the River Exe from the Quay to Countess Wear

Lantern making at Lockbar Wood

Meeting for coffee at the Station Café at Crediton, and a walk from there to Posbury church

A highlight this year was the weekend camp at West Town Farm, Ide, in September. This was made possible by a successful funding bid to the Alpkite Foundation.

We also made a successful funding bid to St Edmund's and St Mary Major Charity, to enable us to hold a residential weekend at Blytheswood Hostel at Steps Bridge in March. This plan had to be put on hold due to coronavirus. We contacted the charity and they agreed to our keeping the grant to use in future.

There were 18 meetings, plus one 2-night camp. In total 147 attendances over the year, including 2 paid workers at each session.

People who've helped us: Julie at Organic Arts, Grace at West Town Farm, Alpkitt Foundation, St Edmund's and St Mary Major Charity

Some feedback from our events:

"A lovely sense of timelessness"

"I like the big sky in the field"

"Really did fill a gap"

"Being together in a natural space – tent, fire, people sharing all the bits to make it work – and having space"

"Nice to hear the owls and the ravens"



"The Greenwood Project is vital...access to nature is important for mental health"

Newsletter

We have continued to produce the quarterly newsletter collectively. Open working spaces for being involved in producing each newsletter were advertised in the monthly What's On. There is a deadline for contributions which is advertised at the Bridge and in each newsletter, with a dedicated email address. Four issues were produced during the year, with reports from groups and events, posters advertising upcoming events, descriptions of roles within the Bridge and opportunities for getting involved in our activities, as well as individual contributions of artwork and photos, poetry and prose, recipes. There were written contributions and images from 9 named contributors and more than 15 anonymous contributors. Each quarter an average of 170 people received the newsletter by post or email. The newsletter was also posted on our website and copies were available at the Bridge.

Open Afternoons

Open Thursday afternoons are a space for people to connect with the Bridge and with each other. We opened on the first Thursday of each month, and as many other Thursdays as possible. During this year we had 31 open Thursday afternoons, with a total of 328 participations and a meeting to review how the Open Afternoon sessions are going, which was attended by 10 people.

Open Thursday Afternoons are facilitated by 2 volunteers at each session, on a rota. This year we had a team of 6 volunteers

How it works:

1st Thursday - 2 paid facilitators

2nd Thursday - Community Meeting

3rd, 4th, 5th Thursdays – 2 volunteer facilitators

2 paid co-ordinators organise a rota of 2 volunteer facilitators and 1 reserve volunteer for each open Thursday; they are also responsible for acting as back-up if both a volunteer on the rota and the reserve volunteer are unable to make a session.

On the first Thursday there are specific things done by the paid co-ordinators which are not done by volunteers on other Thursdays: printing out information we have been sent, making sure leaflets and flyers are available in our information folder, answering phone calls, dealing with new membership enquiries and payments. It is also a time for coordinating the volunteer rota.



At our Open Afternoons review we noted that our Open Afternoons offered:

- *a welcome for new people*
- *door open, introductions, informal chat and meet up*
- *a place to chill and chat*
- *having a haven*
- *looking after ourselves*
- *warmth, connection*
- *different conversations*
- *rich and wide ranging conversations, humour*
- *a stepping stone to finding out about the Bridge and what happens here*
- *a place for seedling ideas to have a chance of growing into something*
- *links and contacts with people from other organisations*
- *doing ad hoc nice things together*



- *a space to find out about Bridge membership*
- *wholefoods shop*

This year there was an interruption to the pattern of Open Afternoons in March 2020, when the Bridge building closed at the start of the coronavirus lockdown period. A Thursday online Open Space was planned and put in place in April 2020.

Open Minds

Open Minds offers a safe space for people who see, hear or sense things that other people don't (sometimes labelled 'psychosis') to come together over a cuppa and talk about their experiences. We had an Open Minds meeting every month until March 2019, when we paused due to the Covid situation.

Attendance at Open Minds over the year ranged from 5 to 12 people, averaging 7.

Open Reflection

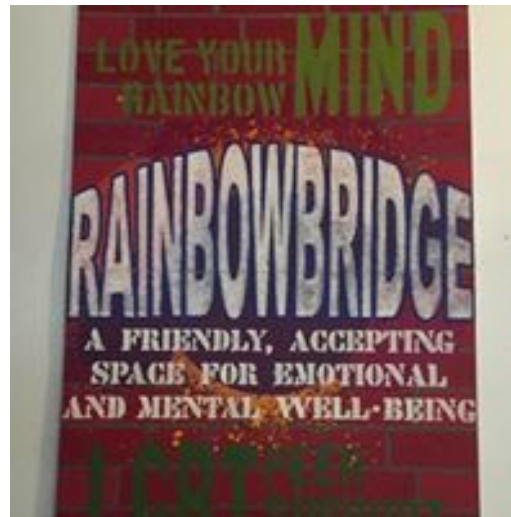
Open Reflection topics are based on what is alive and important to people at the time and are agreed at our community meeting, the sessions are then structured as a reflective space which engages with how we are doing and how we might positively develop our skills in relation to the chosen topic as a community. These sessions are facilitated by an external facilitator: Michelle Virgo. This year topics have included: power, feedback and trust. Open reflection encourages us to develop a shared understanding. Communication, how

we make decisions and reach agreements have been identified as key themes this year. As such, we also had a full day's workshop on the topic of "Language and Agreement"

Rainbowbridge

Rainbowbridge met once a month until October 2019. Rainbowbridge is an informal and friendly group for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans people affected by mental health issues. All are welcome to drop in and have a cuppa.

Attendance at meetings averaged 4 people over this time.



Underground Sound

We have worked with the disappointment of one of our long-standing and well loved projects: Underground Sound delivering its last session in May 2019.

Five sessions of music technology training were provided by Duncan Chave from the Sound Gallery with people interested in using their skills to volunteer and support the Underground Sound music project.

Volunteering development

We have been working towards greater clarity about voluntary roles within the Bridge. Because the Bridge is all about participation, it is important for us to distinguish between participation in making the company and projects work, on the one hand where people take an informal share in making events work or attending working parties; and on the other hand where we've agreed a formal role with a level of commitment and responsibility - what we described as named voluntary roles. Examples of named voluntary roles include: facilitation of peer support groups, being a director, volunteer speaker roles in the Experts by Experience workshops team.

Achievements this year have included:

- The volunteer assistant company secretary has shadowed the current company secretary through a whole annual cycle to the point that he is ready to put himself forward for the Company Secretary role at

this year's AGM - this would be the first time we would have had a change of Company Secretary since 2011 and is the first time we have had an effective model for ensuring succession in this role.

- Work towards developing a Volunteer Assistant Community Meeting Secretary role - see section on Community Meeting.
- We've continued to hold monthly Company Systems Working Parties in which anyone can come and help with day to day tasks like cleaning, health and safety checks, shopping, typing etc.
- Our quarterly newsletter has continued to be produced through a participatory working party.
- We've continued to have four groups/projects facilitated by volunteers: Open Minds, Open Afternoons, the Wholefoods Project and Rainbowbridge (from April to October).
- We've put time and focus into how to make the Bridge ready for fair, consistent, supported and resourced for future recruitment to new volunteer roles. Achievements include:
 - Updating our safeguarding policy, safeguarding training for directors, and planning for safeguarding training for paid and volunteer facilitators - with the support of an external consultant (Jo Duff, Spectrum Management);
 - We had a counselling trainee on placement who helped us with developing ideas for participants in Experts by Experience to reflect on their roles; we held one employee role review in which there was a review team drawn from paid and unpaid participants, so that we are sharing knowledge of this process. One volunteer who was part of that team is now preparing for his own role review.

- We have agreed a trial of all paid employees being on a rota to offer phone support if anyone (paid or volunteer) finds themselves in a lone working situation.
- We have created a volunteer role description for volunteer speakers in Experts by Experience training sessions and worked on a role description for the role of Assistant Community Meeting Secretary, a role which is in development but not yet formally agreed.

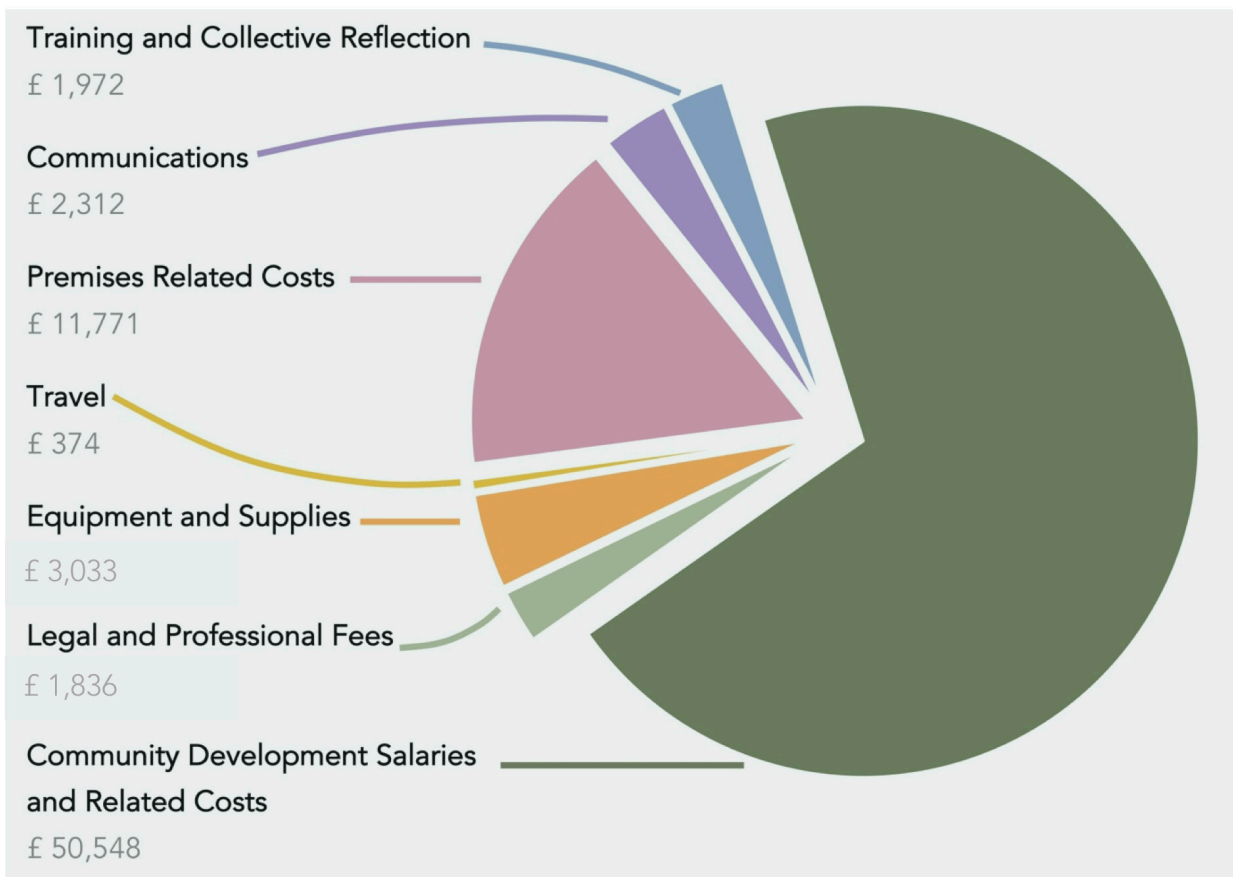
See also the “Director Team” section of this report.

Wholefoods

The wholefoods project is voluntarily facilitated by Mike. Supplies are ordered from Essential Trading, a Co-op based in Bristol, and sold at low cost to participants at the Bridge (13 customers in this year, 38 different products sold and a turnover of £444), as well as providing tea, coffee, cleaning materials and other supplies to the Bridge (value £207).

FINANCIALS

TOTAL EXPENSES: £72,112



Communications	£2,312.00
Depreciation	£266.00
Equipment and Supplies	£3,033.00
Insurance	£713.00
Legal and Professional Fees	£1,123.00
Paid Community Development Work and employment related costs (Pensions / PAYE and NI contributions)	£50,548.00
Rent and Building related Costs	£11,771.00
Training and Collective Development	£1,972.00
Travel	£374.00
Total Expenses	£72,112.00

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Donations

AMHP (approved mental health professionals)	£125.00
Private Donations	£6,249.00
Spectrum Management	£200.00
Waitrose Community Matters	£250.00
Donations total	£6,824.00

Grants

Alpkit Foundation	£250.00
Allen Lane	£5,350.00
Devon County Council	£38,214.00
Jameson Bystock Trust	£2,000.00
Tudor Trust	£25,000.00
Grants total	£70,814.00

Memberships	£135.00
Publications and Other Income	£403.00
Training and Consultancy	£3,585.00
Wholefood Sales	£538.00
Total Support and Revenue	£82,299.00



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