



BRIDGE COLLECTIVE C.I.C.
ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2016 TO MARCH 2017

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 organizational structure. It is a flat organization set up as a Community Interest Company with members; with each member having shared control and all staff are 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 organization: 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 person 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.

Building community

We build community by developing and taking part in activities together.

Regular activities at the Bridge

The following regular groups and activities took place during the year.
Please see the 2016-17 group reports in the appendix

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| • Community Meetings | • Open Minds |
| • Experts by Experience | • Rainbowbridge |
| • Greenwood Project | • Underground Sound |
| • Newsletter | • Wholefoods project |
| • Open Afternoon | • Women's Art Group |



Greenwood, May 2016

Additional activities:

- Bridget, a rhino sculpture, provided to the Bridge by the Great Big Rhino project, was painted by people at the Bridge during 2016 and went on public display in the Civic Centre, featuring pictures from all of the groups at the Bridge and images on the theme of mental health, bringing people together and raising awareness of mental health. (See Networking and communication section)
- Evening talk in Exeter Guildhall by Phil Thomas, writer, former psychiatrist and a co-founder of the Critical Psychiatry Network – *‘Austerity, Government, Economic Policy, and Recovery’*. 18/4/16 meeting people from all walks of life and generating discussion.
- 60s Singalong - 28/4/16 *‘letting our hair down’*
- James Lee, Senior Clinical Pharmacist Prescriber, from Devon Partnership Trust, visits on 22/9/16 and 23/3/17 Opportunity to chat informally about any questions about medicines.
- Loft clearout 3/6/16 and Jumble Sales 18/6/16 and 18/11/16, organised by the Bridge Builders group and raising funds of: £270 and meeting new people from our local community.
- 10 people attended safeguarding training for keyholders, facilitators and participants of the Bridge Collective - April 2016



Picture of Bridget our Rhino, taken while she was on tour at Exeter Civic Centre, August 2016

A group of people from the Bridge attended and contributed a workshop to the Recovery Camp held at Ivybridge by Working to Recovery in June 2016. Making connections with people from Recovery Devon and all over the world. *'What struck me was that people were prepared to travel from all over the world - but that showed how rare a thing like this is'*.

People at the Bridge

Members:

Members on 31 March 2016: 15

Members on 31 March 2017: 20

Attendees: Estimated number of people involved in the Bridge groups and activities in a year: between 150 and 250

Keyholders: Rachel, Lena, Ashley, Ben, Fleur, Alex, David, Andrew, Nicola, Sarah, Bev

Paid employee hours: Total of regular contracted employee hours at full complement was 77 hours/week, 2.1 full time equivalent. For much of the year the team was a quarter below full complement.

Voluntary hours:

People input unpaid time into making the Bridge Collective happen both through informally getting involved and through named voluntary roles.

Informal volunteering includes: washing up, cleaning, chopping wood, chopping vegetables for cooking on the fire, website editing, typing, writing up meeting notes, washing tea towels, checking the first aid kit contents, helping sort jumble.

Volunteers (named roles):

Company secretary: Andrew

Directors at 1/4/16, Mark Burnett, Sarah Trickett, Sarah Everson, Andrew Barkla.

Directors at 31/3/17: all the above and Margaret Turner (appointed 11/8/16)

Health and safety named person: Andrew (volunteer) and Nicola (paid role)

Open Minds: peer support group facilitators: Ben and Ashley

Rainbow Bridge peer support group facilitators: Lena and Rachel

Sing-alongs facilitators: Rachel (volunteer) and Bev (paid role)

Wholefoods Project facilitator: Mike

Greenwood Project - volunteer driver: Margaret

Bridge Collective representative on Devon Partnership Trust Open Dialogue Steering Group: Nicola, then Margaret from May

People on placement: Gemma, Trainee Clinical Psychologist from Plymouth University

Experts by Experience Training Team:

Due to '*service user- involvement work*' being a special category of work, members of the Experts by Experience training 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: Ali (from Apr 17), Ashley, Ben, Petra, Patrick

Bank employees: Ali (to Dec 16), Andrew, Beverly, Chris, Katharina, Nicola, Sarah T

Self-employed: Jane, Mary

Session facilitators: Andrew, Ashley, Nicola, Sarah E, Sarah T

Employees with regular hours per week.

Project facilitator: Women's Art Group to June: Fleur (2hrs); from June: Fleur (3hrs), Chris (3hrs)

Project facilitator: Underground Sound Alex (6hrs) (left Feb 2017), David (6hrs) (left April 2016), Em (6hrs) (Started Dec 2016)

Project facilitator: Greenwood Project Bev (9hrs), Andrew (9hrs)

Community Development Workers Sarah (18hrs), Bev (12hrs) and Nicola (11hrs) including responsibilities as below: -

Thursday Open Day facilitators: Bev and Sarah

Finance officer and website editor: Sarah

Newsletter editor: Bev

Experts by Experience project facilitator: Nicola

Safeguarding officer & named Health and safety person: Nicola

Supporting Underground Sound while under-staffed: Sarah & Bev

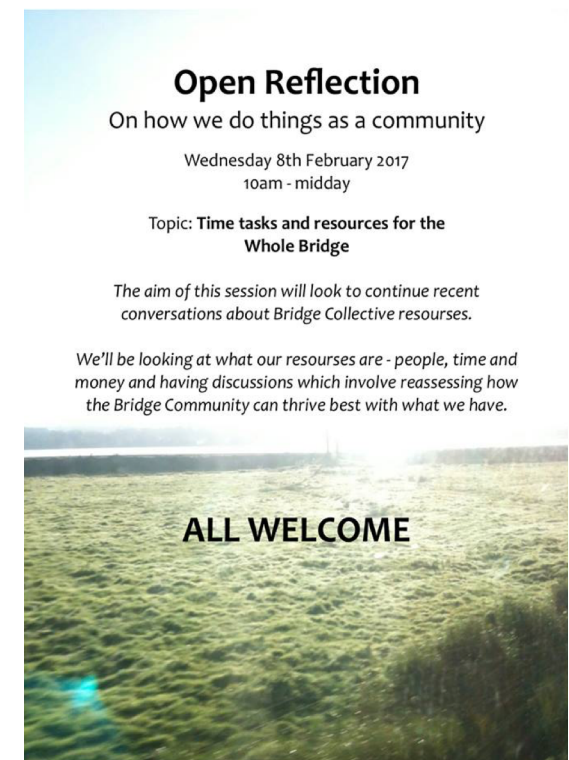
Community development bank work hours:

250 additional community development bank works hours were allocated this year from our reserves to make up the shortfall in capacity from contracted hours.

Equivalent to 4.8 hours per week.

Help we've received - thankyou:

- Alan Bruford and Escot team.
- Thank you Martin Newman (Francis Clark accountants) who left during this year

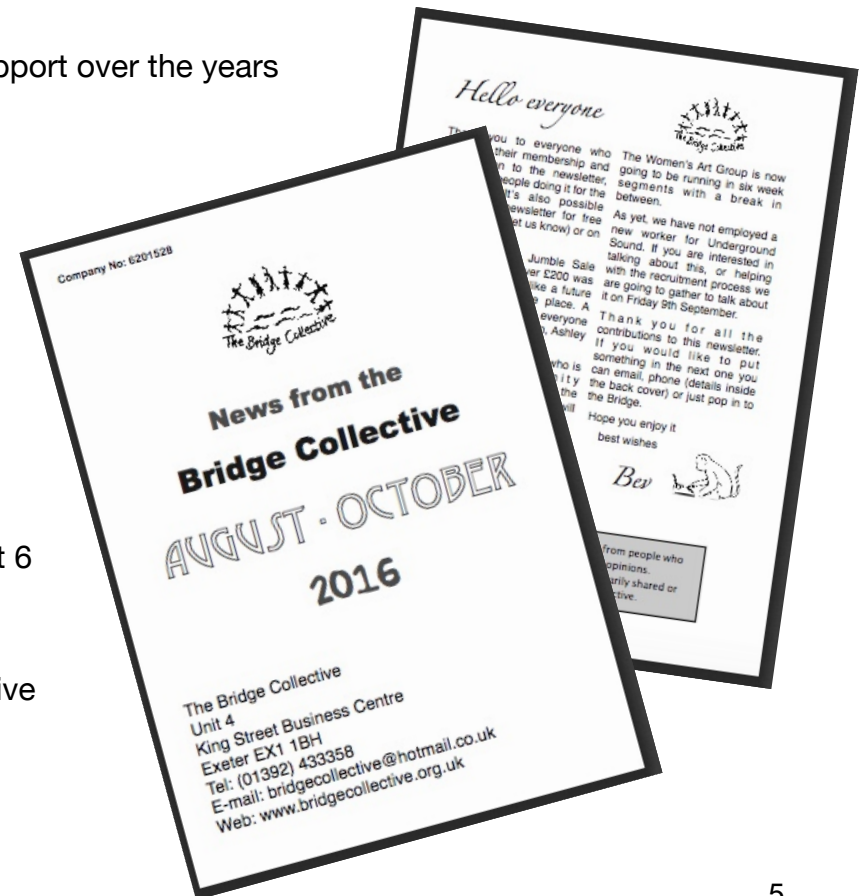


Open Reflection flyer, Feb 2017

- Gemma, trainee clinical psychologist at Plymouth University - community placement & research with the Bridge Collective: *"Exploring survivor-led democratic processes"*
- Volunteer co-researchers from the Bridge Collective: Terry & Patrick
- Experts by Experience supervision/ individual reflection sessions with Gemma
- Experts by Experience development sessions: Gemma researching lived experience training evaluation & summarising our project development ideas.
- Sue Linsley, Lecturer in Mental Health at Plymouth University. facilitating two evaluation sessions (Dec 16 & Jan 17) of the Lived Experience Module 2016: our six days of workshops we deliver with trainee mental health nursing students.
- Michelle Virgo guest facilitation via Open Reflection
- Mary Booker, guest facilitator for group facilitator supervision
- Thank you to Charlotte and Ed from Be Involved Devon for their support over the years
- Self Heal Association
- Devon County Council/Devon Partnership Trust
- Private donors

Outcomes and achievements for the company

- Producing four newsletters.
Newsletter is really illuminating and rich
- Success in negotiating renewed (reduced) DCC funding for the next 6 months Apr17-Oct17 (Devon County Council)
- Success in keeping 10 regular activities going at the Bridge Collective despite reduced staffing capacity



- Developing how we support each other in our paid and voluntary participation.
See appendix 4: *Hints and guidelines for supporting each other and being supportive at work* Open reflection Nov 16 write-up
- Collectively developing a new Job Review template and process and first job review completed
- Developing the community development role and our recruitment process as a collective
- Two new community development employees recruited

Outcomes and achievements for people within the Bridge

Please see appendix 1 – group reports

Challenges we have faced

- Be Involved Devon finishing due to funding cuts. Speak out visits stopped and we miss the collaboration.
- Coping with reduced staffing hours (by a quarter) and reduced staff for most of this year.
- A big challenge is reduction in local authority funding from April & trying to make up the shortfall.
- Reassessing how the Bridge Community can thrive best with what we have.

Our stakeholders and how we communicate and consult with them

Our stakeholders include: members, participants, employees, volunteers, funders, commissioners of training, trainees, people on placement, workers in local services, the immediate local community and Devon wide participants.

We consult and communicate by regular:

Consultation and communication within the Bridge and by developing opportunities for ***Networking and communication outside the Bridge***. (See these sections below).

In addition, this year:

- In February and March, we held 9 open meetings communicating about funding changes due to take effect from April 2017. Devon County Council/Devon Partnership Trust communicated about funding cuts, the Bridge Collective and DCC/DPT shared information, and 2 of the open meetings were held with DCC to understand and negotiate changes in the grant funding process.
- Gemma Budge of Plymouth University carried out a research project looking at the impact on people's well-being of the Bridge Collective's democratic style of working. This included focus groups and one to one interviews with Bridge participants and stakeholders. (See appendix 3)

Consultation and communication within the Bridge

Currently the following is in place at the Bridge:

- Bi-monthly group supervision for facilitators (facilitated by a guest facilitator, Mary Booker)
- Quarterly Open Reflection sessions (facilitated by a guest facilitator, Michelle Virgo) for the Bridge Community to review, reflect and plan.
- Monthly Community Meetings – these are the overall decision-making meetings at the Bridge and all participants in the collective are invited to contribute.
- Monthly Development Team meetings for the Community Development Workers to work out the practicalities of working together as a part-time team, sharing of workload, mutual support and information.

- Bridge Builders - Group meeting to discuss and plan fundraising ideas for the Bridge.

New developments this year include:

- Development of an employee job review process.
- Collective work to produce a set of “FAQs” (Frequently asked questions about the Bridge and how it works) and answers – see appendix 5.

Networking and communication outside the Bridge

Bridget the rhino displayed at Civic Centre, Exeter, over the school summer holiday - Rhino Trail. By taking part in a project that aims to highlight and raise funds for rhino conservation in a way that involves local businesses and showcases the wealth of artistic talent in the area, we connected with the wider community and raised awareness of mental health.

- Promotion to Patients' Participation Group and GP, St Leonard's practice
- A delegation from the Bridge attended the ISPS conference on 'Therapeutic Relationships' in September 2016.
- *“Margaret gave me the support and help to use the post office self automated thing!”*
- April 2016- *“This is Madness”* talk: creating a public forum where can explore alternatives, attitudes and power within mental health and our society - supported by the Bridge Collective and Soteria Network Southwest
- Open Dialogue:
In May 2016, Margaret became the Bridge Collective representative on Devon Partnership Trust Open Dialogue Steering Group. The DPT steering group is developing plans to set up a pilot Open Dialogue team within the Trust.
- Members of the Bridge Collective attended Open Dialogue conferences and Open Dialogue talks at the following events:

- April 2016: 2nd Annual Conference on Peer-supported Open Dialogue
- June 2016: Open Dialogue talk at Working to Recovery Summer Camp
- Sept 2016: International Society for Psychological & Social Approaches to Psychosis
- Feb 2017: 3rd Peer Supported Open Dialogue Conference.

Two members of the Bridge attended a Devon Communities Together course on 16.3.17: '*The Social Enterprise Approach: evolve-transform-sustain*'. Learning new things and making connections with local community businesses, then sharing learning back at the Bridge and with the Experts by Experience working party.

Hopes, plans and ideas for the future

- *"Raise money - sponsor forms!! Silence, walks, diet, swim, run"*
- *"Wish we could resume This is Madness forum -talks and discussions in pub."*
- *"Getting "Friends" to support the Bridge."*
- Increasing capacity for volunteer co-ordination, recruitment, induction, training and support.
- Developing a way of measuring voluntary input: both formal volunteer roles and informal volunteering
- Develop the income generating parts of our community business
- Developing the Experts by Experience Project and workshops – see appendix 2



Notice of Annual General Meeting May 2016

Appendix 1: Reports from groups

Art at the Bridge

Thanks to a grant from the Self Heal Association, Art at the Bridge is a new project incorporating the Women's Art Group, and Fleur was joined by Chris as a second facilitator in June 2016.

"It is nice to meet new people, also to build up potential friendships"

"It benefits me because if I am having a not so good, I can come and be distracted by doing art activities"

"the benefits I get from the group are that I can explore my potential in a creative way"

Here's a selection of activities and achievements through the year:

- Painting Bridget finished (decorating our rhino sculpture named: 'Bridget')
- Ordering tablecloth for art table
- More regular attendance
- Making printing blocks and printing

September 2016

- Soap workshop kindly offered by Spacex using perfumed soaps and cutting techniques.

Ideology re-creating new forms ideas and possibilities of things outside the box...



Photo from soap making workshop, Sept 2016

October 2016

- Making turtles using modrock and tissue paper. Ideology re creativity being precious and let out slowly like turtle eggs

January 2017

- More work on wooden made canvas from participant in group - wonderful how energy and creativity was demonstrated in another participant adding to this piece

February 2017

- Hot air balloons from papier mache. Ideology of making something that is light and can float off, reflection on this.

March 2017

- Needle felting using felt and metal shapes to create and expand confidence
- Clay work tactile and grounding, making decorations and using moulds to make shape
- Needle felting through cookie cutter shapes and making angels hearts

Community Meetings

12 community meetings were held and average attendance was 10 people.

Minutes can be seen online at: <http://www.bridgecollective.org.uk/downloads/> in the '*What we do and how we do it*' section – click on: '[Community meeting minutes](#)' and printed in our newsletters.

Experts by Experience

Updated this year - our description of Experts by Experience:

‘Opening doors, opening minds, exercising the experiential...

“Experts by Experience provides opportunities for communication between trainee and professional mental health workers and people with lived experience of mental challenges. We have created dialogic spaces where trainee doctors, psychologists, student mental health nurses, masters psychology students, and people interested in becoming psychiatrists can engage with a wide range of lived experience. We offer experiential expertise in topics including self harm, hearing voices and seeing visions, psychosis, recovery, communication, peer support, supported housing and medication side-effects. We design workshops tailored to the training needs of our clients.

Experts by Experience offers inclusive opportunities for people to process their experiences in a supportive environment. We take a collective approach, working as a team to challenge perceptions of mental health and mental illness. We encourage people to participate in ways that support their own wellbeing. People can contribute in many forms, from planned talks to shared art-work, music, writing, video. We are open to learning new ways to explore and share our lived experience.”

Organizations we’ve done training with:

Plymouth University School of Nursing, Plymouth University School of Psychology, Exeter University School of Psychology, Exeter University Grand Challenge, Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, Exeter Autumn School of Psychiatry, Westward Housing.

We’ve delivered: 19 training sessions. We’ve spoken to approximately 230 people including trainee doctors, trainee psychologists, student mental health nurses, masters psychology students, mental health advanced psychological therapists, people interested in becoming psychiatrists, housing support workers, Exeter University staff and students.

Team work:

2 new people have joined Experts by Experience and spoken at training sessions

5 people facilitating sessions this year.

1 new person has joined in a self-employed capacity

2 people with personal experience of supporting someone or being a 'carer' spoke about their experience supporting a family member on the Lived Experience module this year.

Thank you to Ashley, Andrew and Sarah E who stepped in to provide facilitation and support for sessions that Nicola was not able to cover at the end of the year.

What we've earned:

Experts by Experience training has brought £7,889 into the Bridge this year.

Experts by Experience development:

- Updating our descriptions of the Experts by Experience project
- Experts by Experience training team members – having the opportunity for 1:1 individual reviews with Gemma Budge, Trainee clinical psychologist on placement from Plymouth University
- 5 development meetings: gathering project development ideas as a team, summarised by Gemma. Please see appendix 2

Some of the feedback from participants in Experts by Experience workshops this year:

- Which part of the training was most helpful to you:
 - *Hearing such a wide variety of experiences*
 - *Gaining another perspective, different interpretations of recovery, expanding my knowledge, feelings/ being more open*
- Have you learnt anything new about yourself?
 - *Changed/alterd my perspective on a range of topics – question my own beliefs*
 - *I'm not the only one with a different world view*
 - *That I am capable of making a difference to someone's life*
- *It has been really beneficial to talk openly and frankly about living well with mental health*
- *The environment was enabling and made the sessions more interesting as people questioned things*
- *Because you're not lecturers – students and speakers are more on a level and can ask questions might otherwise not ask*
- *Really enjoyable sessions, very different from typical lectures*
- *I have learnt a wealth of information, meaning, different perspectives, different approaches, shared understanding, shared appreciation*
- *I felt valued and listened to by the experts*
- *Learning about – what is my relationship to my experience e.g. hearing voices*
- *The experiences shared by the Bridge Collective and their approach, which was to help nurture experience in everyone*
- *Respectful, welcoming, non-judgemental*
- *This was by far my favourite module of the course. The lived experience speakers completely change my perspective on voice hearing and self harm in particular*

Greenwood Project

This Project provides access to the physical and mental health benefits of being in woodland and other outdoor environments. It also provides a chance to learn about traditional woodland crafts.

We find that making meals and cooking on our own fire in a woodland clearing, telling stories and making music under the stars and making things by hand from natural materials we collect ourselves, all allow us to see and experience life in a new healing way. It helps us to appreciate and fully value the natural world. We meet in a number of venues around the Devon countryside.

During this year there were 42 Greenwood events including a 2 night camp at Escot and a 2 night residential at Wembworthy. Other activities included regular (usually fortnightly) visits to Escot, use of a new venue at Yeo Vale Wood, visits to the RSPB reserve at Topsham, an evening Bat Walk, presence at the Recovery Camp organised by Working to Recovery at Ivybridge, a riverside picnic in Exeter, and 8 woodland, moorland, coastal and other walks.

The number of people at each event ranged from 3 to 18, usually including 2 paid facilitators. The total number of people involved over the year was about 50 (plus many more who connected with us at the Recovery Camp).

We made new connections as a result of advertising of our events in the Women's Network flyer - several people who met us in this way have continued to take part.

A change for us has been uncertainty about our long established venue at Escot, and changes of personnel and emphasis at Escot, meaning that we are now seeking alternative venues. Escot has offered a rich variety of experiences and given us a warm welcome over many years, with exceptional hospitality and goodwill from Alan Bruford, the former manager of the site, which will be difficult to replace.

Here are some comments from people who have participated in the Greenwood Project over the year:

"I was feeling very low but had volunteered to go to Escot with the Greenwood project and felt committed to this. The effect was remarkable – a small group of us made a fire, then made candles from old ones – great fun and a new skill. We toasted paninis and talked together - hearing about other people's knowledge and experiences of rural Devon, ideas about history and language, lifted me out of myself. Then some of us wandered around the grounds watching and listening to the sights and sounds of birds, flowers and animals, feeling in harmony with people and nature."

“For 15/16 years we have been going to Escot as Greenwood Project with Mind and the Bridge Collective. We have had day visits fortnightly and summer camps in this time. The birds of prey, carp, wild boar and even wolves provide many interests of nature. The organic garden, constant fire with constant kettle and our home produced meals kept us going. Thanks to Alan for making a lot of this possible and with Ji helped to make the Anglo Saxon village a reality.”

“Lovely visit to St Bartholemew's cemetery listening/watching bats.”

The Bridge Collective Newsletter

“Newsletter is really illuminating and rich”

“It’s what connects us all together”

The Bridge Collective has a quarterly newsletter that is posted and emailed to over 150 groups and individuals.

A copy of the newsletter is also posted on our website.

It is also on sale for £1 in The Bridge and a copy is given for free to people who are coming along for the first time.

Many people have contributed to the newsletter this year by writing articles and poems, by sharing recipes and favourite quotes. Over the year there were contributions from 14 named people and 12 anonymous contributions.

Open Afternoons

Open Thursday afternoons are a space for people to make contact with the Bridge and with each other. During this year they were facilitated by members of the Community Development team and stretched capacity led to a change from weekly to monthly opening from December 2016. At the same time we began exploring ways to support volunteer facilitation of this space to make more frequent opening possible in the future.

What the Open Afternoon means to me:

“Enriches my life” - “Different conversations”

“Home from home” - “Spiritual sitting room”

“Peer support with people with shared experience offers “an anchor, a port in a storm”

“An informal space made it possible for me to come”

“Welcoming people” - “Gateway” - “A beginning for things” - “Hub of community”

Open Minds

Open Minds is a peer-support group for people who see, hear or sense things that other people don't (sometimes labelled 'psychosis'.) We meet as an open group on the second Wednesday of the month from 1-2.30 pm. The group is a friendly and supportive environment for sharing experiences. There are two key-holders attached to the group which has helped to ensure that the group has not missed a session over the year. The key-holders participated in Safeguarding training and bi-monthly group supervision over the year.

Approximately 15 people have accessed the group over the year.

Open Minds facilitators were generously supported to attend the ISPS conference in Exeter on 'Therapeutic Relationships' in September 2016.

Feedback includes:

comments that the group 'makes me feel less isolated' and is a place to 'meet other people like me.' It has been described as a 'safe place to go' which helps to build 'hope' and celebrate 'survival'.

Our hopes for the future are focused on ensuring that the group continues in the face of funding pressures on the Bridge.

We would like to have an advertising push which would need an updated poster with new dates which we plan to distribute to local GPs as well as mental health wards.

Rainbowbridge

Rainbowbridge is a peer support group for people who identify as LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans) and are affected by mental health issues. We meet once a month at the Bridge Collective. There are two regular key holders. There have been a total of 15-20 people attending the group over the course of the year. However, it has been difficult to measure the number of people involved as some activities have happened outside of the Bridge Collective space.

Over the last 12 months we have learnt that Rainbowbridge is not always about



activities within the Bridge Collective. In the past, we may have underestimated the impact we have on the wider community. For example, at Exeter Pride 2016 we represented Rainbowbridge on foot (rather than having a stall). By having a walking presence, we were able to see all of the stalls at Pride. We could hand out flyers and start a conversation about mental health and emotional wellbeing with other organisations. We could share information with other local LGBT groups; and network with larger organisations (such as the National Union of Teachers and Devon & Cornwall Police).

One of the biggest challenges that we continue to face is how to increase the number of people at our monthly meetings. We both attend groups outside of the Bridge, and continue to inform others about the Rainbowbridge group. We can only hope that this will generate more interest.

Rachel

Underground Sound

Underground Sound is a weekly drop in music workshop, whereby people can participate - as much or as little as they would like to - in various music based activities. There is space for people to be actively involved, or to observe and socialise. The facilitators offer informal, peer led workshops in song writing, singing, digital music making, recording, mixing ,Dj-ing, and percussion. There are several different instruments on hand, for experienced musicians to use, or for the curious and inspired have a go on – from guitars, electric drumkit, basses and keyboards to banjos and djembes!

The space easily lends itself to forming creative collaborations and ongoing musical projects and goals- such as learning and performing a piece of music or co-writing and recording material. The finished compositions can be showcased to the group, performed at Bridge Collective events, or burned onto disc to be taken away / posted and promoted on social media. This is one of many ways to support and facilitate collaboration, interactive creative process, build confidence and initiate or add to people's musical portfolio. There is a strong feeling of community within the group, a sense of group interest aspiration and care for one another alongside a respect for diversity and individual needs.

Typical number of participants each session- between 10-20

Challenges we face - Challenge of multi- activity management within a small space i.e. – noise and disruption from different activities. People are encouraged to compromise/ offer time slots for their activities. The two rooms are utilised, with the front room unofficially becoming a more acoustic based space.

There has also been some impact from the change of structure in the Bridge and U.S, the uncertainty being felt within the group. We have worked together to acknowledge and address this and there is a renewed sense of ownership and collaboration- people are finding that their strengths and skills are being utilised and appreciated. Some of these are skills that they've learned through participation at U.S (such as digital music making) alongside new or rediscovered interests and knowledge (i.e musical score writing/learning a new instrument).

I hope to increase access to the group, especially with a mind to opening access to women interested in music as I have observed a very big discrepancy in this area in the group, and in music making generally.

I would like to include a more structured singing element to some the sessions and am in dialogue with the group about this. I am looking to collaborate with other groups within the Bridge Collective to do so, supporting community development and inclusivity principles.

I am also researching interest in a community choir as an add on to Underground Sound.

I hope also to bring in sessional workers to provide and facilitate themed workshops- i.e. percussion/ rap/basic instrument making/ song writing and would like to see an Annual Underground Sound programme of quarterly events.

Some feedback from participants:

"I have PTSD, ADHD etc. The project has been a rock of support in my life and an outlet for my creativity, a way to express myself in a positive fashion, have made friends and been able to feel safer because of U.S at the Bridge

Because of all the people who come to Underground Sound each week. Some people travel quite a way to come here. Personally, I benefit from this project and it would leave a gap in my life if it wasn't running. Also, it has the equipment which we can use.

I have some music collaborations which are on the internet and also some CD's which we recorded here. Working together with people and getting to know other people.

The chance to be creative and to mix with different people to share music. Gives me a chance to create and record music and learn and play guitar as a group.

Gives me something to look forward to and do something positive as well as have a nice place to come to"

"They say that hip hops dead but it'll never fade, I rap at underground sounds where dreams are made."

Wholefood Project

The Wholefood Shop has averaged just under £8 worth of sales weekly, an increase on the previous year, with Mike in attendance mostly on a fortnightly basis, due to other commitments. Over the years the Wholefood Shop made 2 orders from - by ensuring we send orders totalling over £200, we can get free delivery, from our suppliers Essentials, in Bristol.

Members can be customers and we also make sure the Greenwood Project/summer camps are well stocked up, not to mention keeping the Bridge well stocked up.

Appendix 2

Developing the Experts by Experience Project - summary

A review of 6 development meetings between 2010-2011, 5 development meetings in 2016 and individual interviews with 6 members of the current Experts by Experience Group, identified many ways in which the project could be developed, as summarised under the following 7 headings:

1. Increasing training and support for existing Experts by Experience Trainers;

Training in administrative, IT, focus group and presentation skills, individual supervision, away day.

2. Increasing training and support for existing Experts by Experience Facilitators;

Training in reflective practice, experiential support, coordinating training, supervision, away day.

3. Reaching new training audiences;

Qualified healthcare professionals, helping business support people with mental health difficulties, carers, mental health service users, police, GPs, schools, colleges, funding to deliver free training, marketing project.

4. Developing structure and content of training;

Developing new workshops e.g mental health awareness, living with bipolar disorder, living with psychosis, developing more dialogic delivery style, delivering course as opposed to 1 off session.

5. New equipment;

Mobile phones, computer and dongle, projector, projection screen.

6. Sharing our work with others;

Conference, training in conducting evaluative research, lived experience database, develop written resources.

7. Expanding capacity;

2nd Experts by Experience Facilitator, working party, collaborations with universities and healthcare professionals in evaluation and training delivery, encouraging new trainers.

In addition, the following issues were identified as important for consideration in developing the Expert's by Experience Project:

1. Capacity;

Ensure any development considers the availability of existing group members to take on further work and also of the broader Bridge Collective Community.

2. Sustainability;

Ensure any development is implemented in a stepped and resourced way in order to achieve meaningful and sustainable development.

3. Values;

Ensure any development is in keeping with the values of the Bridge Collective; inclusions, valuing what people are able to bring, democratic decision making, holding multiple perspectives.

These development ideas were reviewed at a community meeting with current members at the Experts by Experience Group and broader participants of the Bridge Collective in December 2016.

- Increasing training and support for existing Experts by Experience Trainers,
- Increasing training and support for existing Experts by Experience Facilitators and
- Expanding capacity were identified as the three main priorities to take forward in the funding bid.

Appendix 3: Research summary

Below is a summary of the research undertaken by Gemma Budge of Plymouth University along with people at the Bridge.

A link to the full report and other information about the research can be found on the Bridge Collective website at

<http://www.bridgecollective.org.uk/research/>

Research: What Do People Think of the Bridge Collective's democratic approach?

By Gemma Budge, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, **Annie Mitchell**, Research Supervisor, **Terry Rampling**, **Patrick Down** and both **participants** and **stakeholders of the Bridge Collective**.

Introduction

Gemma wanted to do some research with Bridge Collective as part of her training as a clinical psychologist. Gemma asked Bridge Collective participants what they would like the research to be about. At a community meeting in 2015 participants decided they would like the research to find out how the democratic way of working at the Bridge Collective affects people's wellbeing.

The democratic way of working at the Bridge Collective means that everyone can have a say in what happens and vote on the running of the Bridge Collective. It also means that participants get information about the way the Bridge Collective works. It also means that participants can be elected to take on new roles with more responsibilities, like becoming a volunteer or director. The democratic way of working also means that the Bridge Collective has values like everyone being equal and everyone has the freedom to say what they think is best.

What Gemma Did

Gemma ran two focus groups and nine people at the Bridge Collective came. Gemma interviewed two Bridge Collective participants, and five professionals who have worked with the Bridge Collective. Gemma interviewed 7 people in total.

At the interviews and focus groups Gemma asked people questions about the democratic processes at the Bridge Collective. Gemma recorded and wrote down what people said at the focus groups and interviews.

At a community meeting participants also selected 3 documents for Gemma to use in the research. They were “How the Bridge Collective Works”, “Creating a Community”, an article written for Asylum Magazine and “Gathering Views of the Bridge Collective: Survey December 2015”.

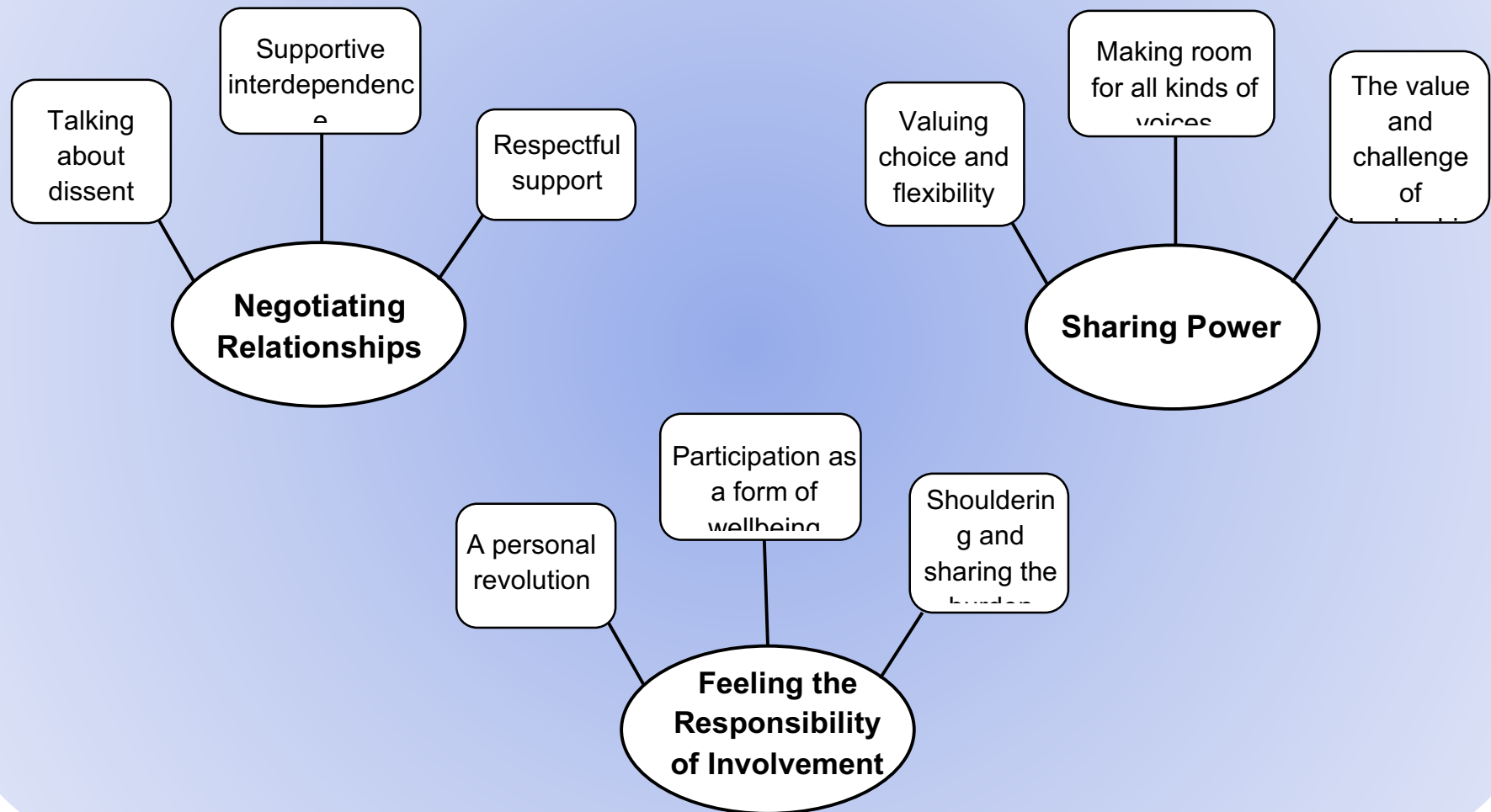
Gemma looked at all of the information she had been given and went through it all looking for patterns in what people had said. The method of analysis is called thematic analysis. Terry and Patrick worked with Gemma to make sense of the information from the focus groups.

Gemma and Annie met with Bridge Collective participants to show them a draft of the analysis in June 2017. 15 people came to this meeting and made comments on the analysis which Gemma used to produce the final research findings.

Results of the Research

Gemma found three main themes from the information she had been given. A theme is an important thing that a lot of different people talk about. All of the themes explained that in the information Gemma gathered people were talking about how the democratic processes at the Bridge Collective made them feel good, but also sometimes challenged them.

You can see these three themes in the diagram below in the bigger ovals. Within each theme there are subthemes, which are smaller parts that make up the bigger theme. The subthemes are in rectangles. Below the diagram of the themes you can find a description of each theme.



Negotiating Relationships

This theme describes how participants have made relationships at the Bridge Collective in which they feel supported and listened to. These relationships contribute to their wellbeing and also to the sense of collective wellbeing in the community. This collective wellbeing means that people look after each other and support each other at difficult times. This theme also talks about how people may feel hurt or unsettled when there are disagreements. They may also find themselves learning from this disagreement.

Here are some things people at the Bridge Collective said that are included in the theme “Negotiating Relationships”:

Claire: *“One of my favourite things at the Bridge is when people are having that conversation... and going oh have you had this? ... and people being able to find a kindred spirit”*

Margaret: *“It's a group of people who get to know each other and who and listen and talk and do things together. A lot of that can come umm, I think people feeling more... I think it enhances people's wellbeing all round.”*

Ruth: *“I was giving, causing benefit to other people and it was, that sort of real change for me and people sort of trusting me and saying the stuff I've done is benefiting them you know, that was so important for me and you know really helpful for my wellbeing”*

Ben: *“It kind of fosters a culture of interdependence, you know rather than independence, where we, we depend on each other, where the dependence... that structure is collectively very supportive.”*

From Community Document 2: *““When going through internal conflict - as inevitably we have done - it has both been deeply painful and hugely empowering to be in a place where talking about dissent and hurt has been the business of the whole community”*

Michael: *“I suppose that's the way it can be a problem, when you want to do it democratically and get everybody on board, but if not everybody wants to be for whatever reason, then it has definitely given us challenges”*

Feeling the Responsibility of Involvement

This theme describes how participants can benefit from participating in the Bridge Collective's democratic processes. Having a say and getting involved in things can give people more confidence and control. Participants may find that getting more involved is a sign of them feeling well. However, sometimes people can feel stressed and overwhelmed by being involved in the Bridge Collective's democratic processes. They may wish other people would get more involved to share the work out.

Here are some things people at the Bridge Collective said that are included in the theme "Feeling the Responsibility of Involvement":

Ralph: *"I think an organisation that actually begins to give people a bit more, I don't know sense kind of taking responsibility and feeling in control, again it's kind of a word that probably is overused over the years, empowered, it makes a huge difference really in terms of people's recovery."*

Mark: *"Also you know my confidence has just grown."*

Community Document 3: *"I found it difficult to speak to people. The Bridge was somewhere I could come and be alongside other people without feeling under pressure to speak. Over time my confidence came back and I started to get more involved."*

Mark: *A few years ago it was just a case of coming in having a coffee, having a chat, listening to what was going on and going away again, going back and forward*

Gemma: *And how is it different now?*

Mark: *Now I actually participate in more and more of the groups. As I say, I'm an actual director and being a director I've got that interest in wanting to know how it works. So I'm always learning and I'm trying to gain the confidence..."*

Ben: *"I get very, very enthusiastic and that I say yes I'll do that and yes I'll do that and that at some point I'll, I'll realise that I've just accepted far too many things and that I'm about to collapse."*

Michelle: *“There is sometimes a sense that amongst those who are democratically engaged in that process, that they would like more people to be more involved in that, but there is an imbalance of participation in that process; and there is a sense of both frustration at their sense of inability to reach out...”*

Sharing Power

This theme describes how participants can benefit from choosing how much they get involved in the Bridge Collective’s democratic processes. This means people are given equal opportunities and it allows them to do things in the way that works best for them. Sometimes it can be difficult to include people in the democratic process when they don’t speak or don’t like meetings. It can also be hard for some people to take on roles with more power, like being a director, even if they would like to.

Here are some things people at the Bridge Collective said that are included in the theme “Feeling the Responsibility of Involvement”:

Chris: *“...if people want to contribute or not in the sense that what you say, it’s just as fine to contribute or not, or what you say is not silly. There’s no silly answer or question and I think it, it gives you possibilities for saying well actually you can sort of relax a bit”*

John: *““That ‘what we can, where we can’ thing, whilst not explicitly stated, is an essential part of the ‘non-structure’ of the Bridge, giving people a relative lack of expectations (and this is important, since expectations lead to pressure and anxiety, and many of us are sensitive and vulnerable to these...”*

Rob: *““The meetings have felt inclusive and very well facilitated in order to try and give as many people as possible a chance to speak and contribute, despite some of the challenges that some of those people might face to do with confidence or anxiety, or the barriers to making a full participation”*

Ben: *“It poses a risk of the loudest voice gets heard, but there is uhh always that understanding that just because somebody hasn't said something it doesn't mean they haven't got an opinion, but it's how, how is that opinion going to be heard? You know operating from a democratic point of view in the meetings.”*

Michael: *“I did I was really sorry I never got to tell my dad about it, he might have been slightly impressed because he was a managing director, but I never got to tell him, it was a shame.”*

Ceri *“I considered being a director and then I dropped out. It seemed too much at the time because I was looking after my mum and I just felt like it was too much pressure at the time which is why I pulled out.”*

What next?

The themes have described how Bridge Collective participants feel about the Bridge Collective's democratic approach. Gemma and members of the Bridge Collective have made a longer version of the research report. The plan is to publish this research to make people more aware of the Bridge Collective and help other people to work in a democratic way. Gemma and Patrick went to Community Psychology Festival in September to talk to people there about the research. Bridge Collective participants met twice following the research to discuss what changes they might like to meet to the way the Bridge Collective works, based on what the research found. Gemma will be continuing to work on the research from her new base in Cardiff and will be in touch with updates. You can still contact her on gemma.budge@plymouth.ac.uk with any questions.

Appendix 3: Bridge Collective C.I.C Frequently Asked Questions (Agreed 7th October 2016)

- **What is the Bridge Collective?**

Our mission statement is: 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 does the Bridge Collective work?**

There is a leaflet in the big green folder ('What we do and how we do it') explaining how the Bridge Collective works as a collective.

The big green folder is beside the bookcase.

- **Can I just turn up?**

Yes, most groups are open to all, but we are not open all the time. We have an open afternoon on a Thursday between 12 and 4 and other groups run at specific times during the week. Bridge Collective activities take place both at our central Exeter site and out and about in Devon.

- **Who is in charge?**

We don't have one person in charge like other organisations. We have a number of directors and hold a monthly community meeting where decisions are made as a collective, there are people who are keyholders who are responsible for opening and closing the Bridge and whilst the Bridge is open. There are people who are facilitators who are responsible for facilitating groups and activities. Everyone is welcome to the monthly community meetings to share in making decisions about how we run as a collective.

- **Do I have to be a member to come to the Bridge Collective? Membership is an opportunity to put your name to support for the Bridge Collective and the aims of the Bridge Collective.**

You don't have to be a member to come to the Bridge or the groups which operate from the Bridge Collective, but to have a vote at members meetings including the annual general meeting you need to be a member.

- **How do I become a member?**

To become a member you will need to fill in a membership form and pay an annual fee of £5. There is a leaflet in the big green folder on becoming a member.

- **Do I have to pay?**

The groups are all free to attend and you will only have to pay for expenses such as travel. Contributions are asked for lunch and drinks with the Greenwood Project. We are always happy to accept donations.

- **How much is the tea and coffee?**

The contribution asked for tea and coffee is 20p and there is a pot to put the money in.

- **How do I make a donation/contribution?**

We have a general donation pot in the office. When we have a visiting speaker, donations towards venue hire and speaker's travelling expenses are sometimes asked. For individual groups look out for the group donation pot eg, to contribute towards art materials.

Can I bring my carer/support worker/dog/imaginary friend/teddy bear? People are welcome to invite their support worker/carer/friend/partner/ family member to most of the Bridge Collective activities. Everyone who attends is invited to participate. Some groups are for people with a shared experience only. If so, please check ahead with the group if you would like to bring a support person with you. We can have dogs at the Bridge Collective, but it is with the agreement of people using the Bridge at that time. The women's art group is a women only space. Imaginary friends and teddy bears are always welcome.

- **Can I bring my child or attend if I am under 18?**

We currently are not set up for children or people under 18 to attend.

- **Is this a support service?**

This isn't a prescribed support service, but we hope that you feel supported in the groups.

- **Can I get 1 to 1 support?**

We don't offer 1 to 1 support. We work around the idea of peer support, community development and community building.

- **What is peer support?**

Peer support is help offered by people with similar experiences and is mutually beneficial to both people involved.

The Bridge Collective offers opportunities for social contact and mutual support.

- **What is community development and community building?**

About building and making something happen together. The opportunity to grow your own contribution, - to take part in a way that works for you, - to have a voice. One way of looking at building community is that everyone who comes through the door, or makes contact online or meets up to go for a walk is participating in making the community.

- **Can I volunteer here?**

From our volunteer policy: At the Bridge, we use the term "volunteer" to describe someone who has made a commitment to do unpaid work that has been identified by the Collective and agreed between the volunteer and the Collective, with a specific role description. This policy is about volunteering in this sense. Many people contribute in an informal way by doing work when they see a need, be it cleaning, making tea, delivering post, or helping to write a policy, without a longer term commitment or agreement. The Bridge welcomes and values this kind of participation.

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. The Bridge is a place where everyone can be both a "provider" and a beneficiary. Volunteers at the Bridge are members of the Bridge community who have taken on a particular role for a period of time. They may also be in many other roles in the Bridge.

The Bridge Collective is a grass-roots organization with ideas for specific voluntary roles growing from collective decisions. If you are interested in collective working, come and see what you'd like to get involved with. A good place to see where we create and share out opportunities for work that supports building the Bridge is the monthly community meeting.

- **Can I become a Director?**

Yes. If you are interested in becoming a director, come to the monthly community meetings to find out if it is a role you would like to do. We ask that you have a chat about what's involved and attend 3 community meetings before putting yourself forward so that you know what it's like. There is a leaflet in the big green folder on becoming a director.

- **How do I develop a new activity/group/event at the Bridge Collective?**

If you have an idea for a new Bridge Collective activity/group/event, find out if other people are interested, check whether your idea fits with the Bridge Collective mission, check are there at least 2 people to initiate 2 people to facilitate? Find out what support is available and what training is needed. (See below).

- **What support and training are available for setting up a new activity/ group/event?**

Bring ideas to the community meeting to begin planning what support is available to a new activity/group/event.

There is opportunity to look at practicalities and training involved e.g. support to new facilitators, finding out about peer support, training in first aid, health and safety, safeguarding checks and safeguarding training, help with admin/ enquiries/advertising, supervision and time for reflection, planning a one off get-together or a series of dates.

- **Can I hire the Bridge Collective for an external group?**

Hiring is sometimes possible depending on at-the-time capacity to support the practicalities of hiring. We are pleased to support local community projects and groups in providing an informal community space to meet when we can.

We do not have a caretaker or a dedicated room bookings facilitator.

We do not hold hirers liability insurance. This means all external groups using the Bridge Collective need to supply a copy of their own Public Liability Insurance. Copies of: insurance certificate, safeguarding, health and safety and complaints policy are required in advance of a booking being confirmed.

- **Where can I smoke?**

By the road (not in the alleyway) and there is a sand tin for butts in the doorway to the Bridge.

- **Can I Borrow Books?**

Yes. There is a red book loan book on the bookshelf with instructions.

Sharing resources and local knowledge Many people at the Bridge know about other organisations and groups. Feel free to bring in leaflets.

- **How often do you pick up post, email and phone messages?**

The central Bridge email bridgecollective@hotmail.co.uk , landline messages Tel:01392 433358 and post box post are picked up on Thursdays. We aim to reply to any message within 2 weeks.

- **How do I contact individual groups and projects at the Bridge Collective?**

For contact details for the individual groups and events: please check activity and group flyers (in the yellow folder) and the activities and groups section on our website <http://www.bridgecollective.org.uk/activities-and-groups/>

- **When is the Bridge Collective open?**

Bridge Collective activities take place both at our central Exeter site and out and about in Devon at a variety of day, evening and weekend times.

If you'd like to come to a Bridge Collective activity please consider having a look on our website. There are details to be found on what we do, weekly and monthly, one off groups, activities, meetings and meet-ups. There is also a calendar which we do our best to keep up to date and current to let everyone know of any changes that might be arising.

Here's the activities page: <http://www.bridgecollective.org.uk/activities-and-groups/>

Here's the calendar: <http://www.bridgecollective.org.uk/calendar/>

