

## **Midgley Community Room : final project report**

### **Key Statistics**

Project contract issued : 21<sup>st</sup> May 2009  
Project completed and final claim made : 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010  
LEADER grant : £53,995.83  
Match funding evidenced : £53,995.83  
Total project cost : £240,000

### **Where is the project?**

Midgley Village, Near Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire

### **Project Background?**

The village, with its associated farms and hamlets, is located between 700 and 1,000 feet up in the Southern Pennines in the Calder Valley. The village had seen rural services decline, its local shop and post office closing in 2001. The access roads are steep, the local bus service is infrequent and there is no direct bus route to the nearest town with a Service Centre, Hebden Bridge This makes it difficult for the disabled, the housebound, unemployed people, mothers with young children, and non-car owners to access shops and other facilities.

In 2001 Midgley village lost its shop and post office when this was converted into a private home. Previously the pub and chapel (which had community rooms) had closed. This left the village with no community facilities of any kind. In 2003, to tackle this situation, villagers got together and set up the Midgley Community Forum, run by volunteers, which was given a wide remit to provide local services, and organise social functions for the benefit of the village. There are still no shopping, or any other facilities, in Midgley apart from those provided by the Association.

The shop and community room have been in existence for nearly 6 years. The shop averages 80 customers per day and is open 48 hours over 6 days. The community room usage is considerable with 25 groups of differing interests benefiting. Villager's needs are obviously being catered for, as the usage over the last 6 years indicates.

### **Project Description**

In 2007 Midgley Community Forum was asked to vacate the premises they used for a volunteer run community room and shop, as the building was to be redeveloped by the owner. 18 months were spent looking for alternative premises until a building, previously an old Co-operative store, came up for sale close to the village centre with the appropriate space and facilities needed.

The Midgley Community Forum raised sufficient funds to purchase the building and refurbish the ground floor, so that the existing community room and village shop could relocate to and operate within it. To help with the refurbishment work the group applied for and received a LEADER grant for the refurbishment of the Community Room.

The works involved;

- Demolition & preparatory works
- Carpentry work
- Joinery works
- Floor, wall and ceiling finishes
- Remedial works to roof
- Electrical installation
- Drainage

- Plumbing
- External works to frontage
- Flooring
- Cooker and heating unit
- Kitchen units and fitting
- Dishwasher
- Fridge/freezer

### **Who's involved?**

The project is being undertaken by the Midgley Community Forum which runs the community room and village events.

Everyone in the village of Midgley is a member of the Forum with 70 active volunteers helping to organise events and run the shop. The ownership of the building is vested in the Midgley Matters Association Ltd, an Industrial & Provident Society to ensure the building is retained in community ownership in perpetuity.

### **Match funding for the project?**

Additional funding was secured from the Green Business Network, Big Lottery, Biffaward, Tudor Trust and a community share issue.

### **How does it support the community?**

Since 2003, the Midgley Community Forum and its Limited Company exists to provide a community facility which will improve villagers involvement in village life, strengthen community understanding, provide a more vibrant and cohesive community and reduce rural disadvantage.

The new building will ensure that Midgley Community Forum's will continue to support the community. The building is owned by the community in perpetuity and can be improved and expanded to give an even better service to the community that supports and runs it.

### **Key successes**

Managing a project of this size and nature, developing a sound business plan and securing the funding required, has been an enormous achievement for a community group.

The project has galvanized community support and interest within the village.

The community share issue raised significant sums towards the building, £52,000 was raised in total.

### **Lessons learnt**

There is a huge investment of time required with projects of this nature. Two retired individuals, in particular, have worked virtually full time on this project over two years to make it happen. Volunteers who also have full time jobs would have great difficulty in managing this.

Keeping the community informed on progress is also key and requires a lot of effort - as does keeping volunteers on board amidst a lot of uncertainty.

A community share issue is not to be undertaken lightly. It required months of work in:

- modifying our constitution to allow a share issue
- obtaining FSA approval,
- consulting with legal advisors on the construction of an offer brochure,
- advertising and issuing share certificates,
- administration of the share register.

Obtaining grant funding in the amounts required for a project of this size has been hugely demanding and requires great reserves of stamina and perseverance.

### **How much grant from the LEADER Programme?**

**Total Project cost : £240,000**

**Total project costs of LEADER funded element : £107991.66** (Leader only supported the community room element of the project, as distinct from the community shop)

**LEADER grant : £53,995.83**

### **Key Outputs**

- Community room retained for a wide variety of community uses in perpetuity providing an anchor in the community for future generations.
- Over 400 households provided with retained local facility : 1040 population (this figure is number of households on newsletter distribution list). This figure does not however capture those who use the facility and attend events who are not from the immediate catchment area.
- Key support services will be located within and operate from the building for the community improving community access to these.
- Ownership of the building increases the motivation of those volunteers who run and manage the facility, knowing that all returns go back directly to the community.
- Sense of place significantly reinforced through pride of ownership and achievement.
- Historical continuum maintained – the building was acquired in 1861 by the fledgling Cooperative society movement. The community ownership re-establishes a linkage with the old cooperative movement which was also central to village life.
- 40 volunteers run the shop and community room. They continue to gain retail experience that are transferrable to the job market
- Stronger community has been built; isolation has been reduced, social networks have been strengthened and community differences harmonised.
- This is an exemplar project – it is a model of a community business which has effectively used a community share issue. As such, a number of other interested communities have been signposted for advice to the management committee.

# Photographic Evidence of the Midgley Community Room Project

Site before works commenced



Volunteers Undertake clearance work following purchase





The room is completed

