**Community Buildings Case Study: The Broomhall Centre**

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this case study is to illustrate the characteristics and impact of a well-managed community building. The study highlights the Broomhall Centre's effective delivery model, financial management, and collaborative efforts with Sheffield City Council, showcasing how these elements contribute to the Centre's success.

1. **Background**

The Broomhall Centre, steeped in local history, was built in 1905 as St Mark’s Mission Room. After financial difficulties, Sheffield City Council purchased the building for community use in 1975, renaming it The Broomspring Centre. In 2002, a new organisation was constituted, and The Broomhall Centre was born, gaining charitable status in 2012.

1. **Delivery Model**

A management agreement provides a collaborative framework between Sheffield City Council and the Broomhall Centre Board of Trustees and has been in place for several years. The agreement is reviewed annually, with the Council providing essential structural repairs, compliance checks, and partial cleaning reimbursements, while the Board oversees daily operations, caretaking, and delivery of services, activities and events.

The management agreement is renewed every 12 months. In the 2023/24 financial year, the Broomhall Centre Board of Trustees contributed over **£82,000** towards running costs and activities (£42k on building running costs, £40k on project running costs). This financial commitment, combined with the support from Sheffield City Council, not only enhances sustainability but also strengthens its capacity to meet the evolving needs of the community.

The Broomhall Centre’s delivery model provides a sustainable, community-led approach that maximises social value and ensures long-term viability. By operating rent-free under a hybrid management agreement with Sheffield City Council—who also cover core building compliance, repairs, and cleaning—the Centre significantly reduces overheads and focuses resources on community service delivery. Strategic grant fundraising, volunteer engagement, and a hands-on Board approach have allowed the Centre to rebound from financial deficit to surplus, even amid challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This model demonstrates how a partnership between local authorities and committed community leadership can result in a vibrant, self-sustaining hub that meets local needs while safeguarding public assets.

1. **Shared Benefits**
2. **Financial Responsibilities**

* **Rent-Free Premises**: The agreement allows the Broomhall Centre to operate rent-free, significantly reducing financial pressure and enabling the Centre to build a revenue stream to run the building and keep rents low for activities that generate social value
* **Utility Costs**: While the Board covers utility costs and other expenses, the Council reimburses part of the cleaning costs, helping to maintain financial sustainability.
* **Diverse funding sources**: the Board successfully secures funding from various sources, including grants, donations, and rental income. This financial diversity helps ensure sustainability and reduces reliance on one funding stream.

1. **Building Maintenance and Repairs**

* **Structural Repairs:** Sheffield City Council retains responsibility for structural repairs, ensuring that major maintenance tasks are handled by the Council. This prevents the Board from incurring high costs associated with significant repairs and confidence to raise money and find volunteers to undertake deep cleaning and decorating.
* **Timely Repairs:** The Council’s commitment to carrying out repairs in a timely manner ensures that the Centre remains operational and safe, minimising disruptions to community activities.
* **Improvements:** The Board has raised a significant amount of external funding for improvements to the building. This has significantly enhanced the functionality, accessibility, and appeal of the Broomhall Centre, making it a more vibrant and inclusive space for the community.

1. **Cleaning and Caretaking**

* **Cleaning Reimbursement:** The Council reimburses the cost of three hours of cleaning per week, along with materials and supplies used for this portion of the cleaning. This support helps maintain a clean and welcoming environment without placing the full financial burden on the Board.
* **Caretaking Arrangements:** The Board is responsible for its own caretaking arrangements, and keyholder responsibility allowing for flexible and efficient management of the Centre’s daily operations. This enables the Centre to be open and available for bookings across the week.

1. **Insurance Coverage**

* **Comprehensive Insurance:** The Board arranges public liability, employers’ liability, and contents insurance, while the Council covers buildings insurance. This division of insurance responsibilities ensures comprehensive coverage without duplicating efforts or costs.

1. **Equipment and Facilities**

* **Fixed Equipment Responsibility:** The Council is responsible for all fixed equipment within the property, such as hot water and heating provision, kitchen extractor fans, entry fob system, fire alarm and hand dryers. This ensures that essential equipment is maintained without additional costs to the Board.
* **Specialist Equipment:** The Board is responsible for any specialist equipment installed, such as the IT and A-V systems, allowing them to manage and maintain equipment specific to their services and activities

1. **A Safe Environment**

* **Compliance Checks:** The Council ensures that all compliance checks are carried out, maintaining records to confirm that the building conforms to current legislation and guidelines.
* **Fire Safety:** The Board is responsible for weekly fire alarm testing and organising fire drills, ensuring ongoing safety and compliance with fire regulations.

1. **Efficient Use of Space**

* **Storage Facilities:** The Board negotiates the allocation of storage facilities to various user groups, ensuring that space is used efficiently and meets the needs of different activities.
* **Flexible Use of Premises:** The Centre is available for use daily across the week, with extended hours possible through appropriate licensing. This flexibility allows for a wide range of activities, services and events to be scheduled throughout the week.

1. **Volunteer Engagement**

* **Leveraging Volunteer Support:** The Centre benefits from a large and dedicated volunteer base, which supports its operations, activities and events. This volunteer involvement reduces staffing costs, expands the number of people reached and enhances community engagement.
* **Empowerment and Skill Development**: By involving community members in its management and activities, the Centre empowers individuals, providing them with opportunities to develop new skills and take on leadership roles.

1. **Improved Service Delivery**

* **Tailored Services**: The Centre can offer services that are directly relevant to the community, such as welfare advice and support, health and wellness workshops, and cultural exchange events.
* **Quick Adaptation**: The Board’s local management enables the Centre to quickly adapt to changing community needs and circumstances, implementing new activities, or adjusting existing ones as required. Local paid workers and volunteers build meaningful relationships on the ground for highly effective and targeted signposting, connecting people to other activities and support.
* **Partnership working**: The Centre collaborates with several organisations, such as Link Learning, Foodcycle, University of Sheffield, Shipshape, St Marks Church and Citizens Advice Sheffield, to deliver activities and services. These partnerships enhance the Centre's capacity to meet community needs and expand its reach.
* **Social and economic benefits**: The Centre's activities contribute to the social and economic well-being of the community. Activities like the Homework Club and Women’s Health sessions provide essential support, improving quality of life and fostering a supportive community environment. The Community Hub Centre (“Welcome Space”) provides a space where residents can come together, share experiences, and build relationships.

Overall, this partnership model promotes the sustainable management of the Broomhall Centre, ensuring its long-term viability and continued service to the community. By clearly defining responsibilities and sharing costs, the management agreement ensures that both Sheffield City Council and the Broomhall Centre Board of Trustees can use their resources efficiently. This collaborative approach maximises the impact of available resources, ensuring the Centre remains a vibrant and accessible hub for community activities and services.

1. **The Broomhall Centre Board of Trustees**

The Broomhall Centres primary objectives are to provide educational, health, and leisure activities in partnership with the local community to meet local needs. It focuses on running a community building that serves as a venue for these activities.

Overall, the Broomhall Centre's success in managing community activities can be attributed to its diverse range of activities, strong community engagement, inclusive environment, effective governance, facility improvements, and sound financial management. These factors have collectively contributed to making the Centre a cornerstone of the Broomhall community. Key success factors include:

* **Diverse Activities and Services**: The Centre offers a wide range of educational, welfare, health, and well-being activities. These include social, musical, cultural, and religious events, as well as a food bank and youth activities. This diversity ensures that the Centre meets the varied needs of the community.
* **Community Engagement**: The Centre actively engages with the local community through regular events and activities. This includes weekly HERB sessions, which not only help maintain the area but also foster a sense of community spirit.
* **Inclusive Environment**: The Centre's constitution emphasises inclusivity, ensuring that all community members, regardless of their background, feel welcome and valued. This inclusive approach has helped build a strong, supportive community network.
* **Effective Governance**: The Centre is managed by a dedicated team of trustees with diverse backgrounds and expertise. Their commitment to the Centre's mission and their local knowledge has been instrumental in tailoring services to meet the community's needs.
* **Facility Improvements**: Over the past five years, the Centre has made significant improvements to its facilities, including energy efficiency upgrades, accessibility enhancements, and the development of outdoor spaces. These improvements have made the Centre a more attractive and functional space for community activities.
* **Financial Management**: The Centre has managed its finances prudently, securing grants and funding for various projects while maintaining a positive balance over several years. This financial stability has enabled the Centre to continue offering valuable services and activities to the community.

**Broomhall Centre Board of Trustees**

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| Dr Jillian Creasy  Local resident, ex-city councillor | Chair |
| Peter Sacker  Local resident, ex-community development worker | Secretary |
| Margeret Phipps  Lives locally, recently retired accountant | Treasurer |
| Dr Maggie Wykes  Local resident, retired university lecturer, previous Broomhall Centre Boad of Trustees Chair | Trustee |
| Myrtle Hamilton  Local resident, Jamaican elder (Miss Mavis), heavily connected to the Broomhall Centre and local community | Trustee |
| Professor Ian Cooke  Link with St Andrews Church | Resigned 25/7/23 |
| Duncan Lennox  Local resident, retired solicitor, member of St Marks Church | Trustee |
| Andrew Woodhead  Local resident, treasurer of Hanover TARA, still connected to Broomhall Centre via the employment project | Resigned 25/7/23 |
| Imran Ahmed  Local resident, ex SCC Officer, senior NHS manager | Trustee |
| Amanda Hamilton  Primary school teacher, daughter of Miss Mavis (above) | Trustee |
| Sausan Sawaf  Broomhall Centre Women’s Health sessions, moved out of the area | Appointed 10/5/22 and Resigned 25/7/23 |
| Tesfa Terferi  Ethiopian Orthodox Priest, caretaker at St Andrews Church | Trustee since 14/12/23 |

**Other Broomhall Centre Volunteers**

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| Sam Finnegan  Assists the Treasurer with billing regular users and attends the monthly Finance and Funding Group | Finance and admin volunteer |
| Maryam Sharpouri  Recently promoted to paid sessional work | Tuesday Women’s Health Session volunteer |
| Rosie Chitty  Lois Herring  Annette Whitely  Karen Oakland | Tuesday Women’s Health Session volunteers |
| Jim Cowley  Vic Lyne  Ikra Bi | English Conversation Group volunteers |
| Pauline Norton  Shaheen Akhtar | Welcome Space volunteers |
| Erika Conchis  Kathy Capper-Parkin | Biofilms project volunteers |
| Kathy Horek-Hallett and Priya Bhagava from Sheffield Community Makers | Women’s Health Sessions, Welcome Space volunteers |
| Tom Dearney  Corina Sandu  Katie Burtenshaw  Lily Stott  All volunteer alongside 6-8 other volunteers every week | Homework Club volunteers |
| Anais Tokley  Recently promoted to paid sessional work | Homework Club volunteer |
| Polly Blacker  Tony Cornah  Organise a band of local residents and many university students for their weekly environmental work and special projects. **Over the year 61 different people contributed over 675 hours of their time**  Of particular note are Hanyae Lin, Yuhao Zhang and Shiya Feng and Lila Peppiatt | HERB volunteers |
| Mary Wilton  Kate Connery  Millie Beck  Assisted by 12 volunteers who sign up to weekly volunteering slots to provide much needed cover | Foodcycle volunteers |
| Around 15 volunteers sign up to weekly volunteering slots to make the foodbank happen | S6 Foodbank |

1. **Challenges**
2. **Reliance on Volunteers**: Supporting and managing volunteers requires constant recruitment and training efforts, which can disrupt continuity of services and activities. Whilst volunteers bring diverse skills, there can occasionally be gaps in specific areas that require professional expertise. This can limit the Centre’s ability to deliver certain activities or manage complex activity programmes. These risks can be mitigated by maintaining paid staff roles to provide comprehensive training and support for volunteers.
3. **Succession Planning**: The Chair of Trustees is due to retire during 2025 the Board will need to take steps to ensure a smooth transition and continued effective governance. The Board will need support to develop a clear succession plan well in advance. They may need to appoint interim leadership to ensure continuity. The current Chair volunteers for at least a day a week and takes a strategic and day to day leadership role.
4. **Strategic Planning**: When the Board is heavily involved in the day-to-day operations of the Broomhall Centre, it can be difficult to allocate sufficient time for longer term strategic planning. The Board could consider delegating more operational responsibilities to staff, establishing clear boundaries between governance and management roles. This can help ensure that the Board remains focused on long term goals while supporting day- to-day operations.
5. **The Future**
6. Longer term lease arrangements: right now, the Board is happy with the current management agreement and has no plans to take on a longer-term lease. However, this is something that they do not rule out in the future.
7. Succession planning: the Board will need external facilitation and support with the planning and successful implementation of new leadership. This will process will include strategic planning.
8. Resource Sharing: there are opportunities to run more activities, but the Broomhall Centre is almost at capacity. Potentially, the Centre could link up with neighbouring community buildings to rent additional space.