



## Introduction

A very warm welcome to the first annual report of the Society's activities in which I will cover our achievements and plans.

Before I go any further, I think it is appropriate to acknowledge that 'things don't just happen'. It has taken selfless commitment, tremendous effort, dedication, passion and team effort to get to where we are today.

We have a terrific team and I would like to say thank you to the Management Committee, both past and present, to members and volunteers and to all those who continue to give freely of their time to help bring this vision to fruition.

The biggest achievement has been to raise enough money to build the shop and café and this is how we did it:

**The idea** started with a pioneering social entrepreneur; Robert Ashton. For many years the walled garden (WG) had been an integral part of the care and treatment of Broadland Clinic (BC) service users. A chance conversation between Robert and a Doctor at the clinic planted the seed of a vision; to bring the WG into community ownership, to build a community owned shop and café and to re-establish the lost link with the BC.

Through Norfolk Pro Help, Norfolk Property Services provided, without cost, initial project designs and costings. A survey to test local opinion was organized by the BC and Parish Council and from the replies received the response was an overwhelming 'yes'. A public meeting was held at Little Plumstead Primary school on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017 from which a steering group of local volunteers was created.

**The Society** was formed once it was clear that the idea was viable. We decided to form a Community Benefit Society. This is a not-for-profit enterprise owned by its members; in essence very similar to a cooperative.

We are registered with the Financial Conduct Authority and incorporated in October 2018. We are also members of The Plunkett Foundation, which has been inspiring and empowering communities since 1919, and who helped us to incorporate. We have used their model rules for our society. These require us to have a Management Committee (MC) and this was created by volunteers from the steering group. The MC meet monthly and now that the project has grown, sub committees have been formed.

**Early funding** totaling £3,000 was received from Broadland District Council, the Norfolk Community Foundation and a local charity as initial seed money to help us get started.

The Power to Change Bright Ideas grant for £15,000 came at the right time to cover Architect fees, survey costs, planning application, legal fees, insurance and marketing. Through Norfolk Pro Help we have received pro bono work for the design of our logo, which the community voted for, and professional help with design services advice. HPFT have generously made meeting rooms and office facilities available for our meetings and have also funded Robert's time.

**The Walled Garden's future** was decided early in 2018 and our Parish Council agreed in principle to receive the freehold. Our Architect, Gary Pearce, completed the design and plans for an ambitious building of nearly 300<sup>m</sup><sup>2</sup> and the grant funding campaign got underway.

**Full planning** application was approved by Broadland District Council in November 2018.

**The Community Shares launch** took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at our Norfolk Day Party and raised £23,250 through 65 members. Advance assurance from HMRC has since been received.

Whilst the MC was encouraged by the share issue response it was clear that as it stood the project was over ambitious. The MC made the decision to downscale (Plan B) and the membership was advised.

**Plan B.** In Spring 2018, National Lottery Grants decided to no longer fund new build projects, and this was a major blow. Disappointing grant application results, together with the amount raised through the community share issue made it difficult to foresee how and when we would be able raise enough capital. Plan B was born; a reduced building of around 100<sup>m</sup><sup>2</sup>, still as a shop and café. It was crafted within the terms and conditions of The Rural Development Leader Program grant to enable an application. The building is now based on a modular build, which is becoming an increasingly popular lower cost type of construction with the benefit of improved energy ratings compared to traditional style construction.

**The Finances** have been achieved through;

**The Build Budget**

Community shares £23,250

The Rural Development Leader Programme £100,000 grant

The Coop Foundation £10,000 grant and £50,000 interest-free 5-year loan

Geoffrey Watling Charity £5,000 grant

A total of £188,250

**Our Parish Council** using CIL receipts, has agreed to cover the cost of repairing the garden walls, and on-going maintenance.

**HPFT** has committed £60,000 to the project and together in the coming weeks we will be determining how this will be used.

**Fundraising Events** held at the May Day Fair, Norfolk Day party, Fireworks Display and school Christmas Fayre have raised £800+.

**Our most recent** grant funding success is from Pocket Parks. We have just heard from them that they have approved a grant of £15,000 , earmarked for use in the garden.

**Our Lease** with the Parish Council has been agreed, for an initial 20 years at a peppercorn rent and we hope to have this completed by the end of March 2019. We have appointed Leathes Prior as our solicitors.

**Society Membership** will be opening to everyone through the issue of Membership Shares. Everyone will have the opportunity to be part of, own, and contribute to the running of the Society. We are now launching Membership Shares based on an annual subscription of £10. All members will enjoy the same terms, conditions and benefits expect that those who own Community Shares will not be required to pay the annual subscription.

**Future Plans** as you can imagine there is a lot to accomplish over the coming months.

**Volunteers** we have received many pledges from people volunteering to work in the shop and café and garden. Over the coming weeks we will be contacting everyone again. Volunteers will be the backbone of making this project a success.

**The Final Design** of the shop and café. Amended plans will be drawn by Gary Pearce and an amended planning application will be submitted.

**The product range** to be offered in the shop; this will have as much emphasis on local supply as possible.

**The Main Garden** initial works utilizing the Pocket Parks Grant.

**Community Shares issue phase 2 SEIS.** Whilst we do have the funding to proceed, the MC is considering a second share issue. We have received several requests since the first share offer closed and we will be putting into place the procedure to accept these requests. Retaining the possibility of renewable energy and of course increasing our financial robustness will influence our decision.

**Grant** applications will continue be made in order to support salary and operational costs.

**And finally, we invite you** to join us as we move into an exciting next phase. If you have enthusiasm and time, experience in forming or running a business, a background in retail, finance or law, and of course helping out in the shop and café or garden, please do come forward. ***Your community project needs you!***

Thank you

Adrian Nagle  
Chair  
Plumstead Community Shop Ltd  
16<sup>th</sup> March 2019