**Minutes of the CVS Peer Network Meeting**

**Thursday 28th November 2024**

Donna Talbot – CVS [donna.talbot@communitycvs.org.uk](mailto:donna.talbot@communitycvs.org.uk)

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Andrew Thornhill – Blackburn Rovers Community Trust – [andrew.thronhill@brfctrust.co.uk](mailto:andrew.thronhill@brfctrust.co.uk)

John McCann – LSSA – [sailissa@aol.com](mailto:sailissa@aol.com)

David Cookson – Lancashire Police - [David.Cookson@lancashire.police.uk](mailto:David.Cookson@lancashire.police.uk)

**Apologies: Bev Ormerod – Neuro Dynamix, Janine Smith – Blackburn College, Alan Scholes – Gecko Games, Laura Davies– NHS Anthony Carr – BwD BC Re: Fresh, Faxi Assi - Lancashire Community Fire and Rescue Service, Glenn Sheader – Galloways, Paul Walker – Bwd Diabetes Support Group, Judith Houghton – Samaritans, Mubashar Khaliq – NSPCC**

**Halima from BwD Food Alliance**

* BwD Food alliance is a cross-partner network – all coming together
* Around Food
  + - * Good Healthy Food
      * Sustainable Food
      * Good Value Food
      * Locally Produced Food
      * Cooking Skills
      * Accessibility
      * Supply
      * Food Support – Food Bank, Food hubs etc. - We are developing an Equity Network made up of those already providing food at crisis point
      * Education in Schools – public health
      * Diabetes and obesity – people are struggling to access healthy wholesome food
      * Food & Climate Change
* We are attempting to change people’s thoughts around food, and we want people to join our mission
* We are working with takeaways to offer healthier options – we don’t want to close businesses don’t we want to work with them
* We are offering business awards – and if you win one the Council will promote your business to quite a broad range of people
* In November 2023 – we won the bronze award for sustainable Food Places Award we are now working towards silver
* We are wanting to bring lots of people together who are already involve with all the areas mentioned
* We are looking at integration – part and parcel – we just need to improve our links
* We want to understand what is going on in BwD – what groups are doing what and where
* We can support the groups with grants etc. – if you have a creative food idea, please come to us and we can help facilitate
* One of the targets for the silver award is collaboration
* Grant available – household support fund – food alliance / network/ you guys deadline tomorrow – simple straightforward application

Q: What is the total you can apply for?

A: £3,000

Q: What is the total pot of money?

A: Its not a fixed budget and the overarching aim is to bring all the groups offering crisis food to come together and save money – picking up, dropping off, storing and distributing etc.

* BwD Food Alliance are not part of BwD BC we are totally independent – we are here to support community groups
* We are hoping to bring everyone together in one central location – together we will be able to apply for more funds
* We are also looking to help reduce food waste a couple of years ago BwD BC did spot checks in peoples bins and 40 % of food is wasted – food that could have been eaten
* The Food Alliance are wanting to encourage better health – through education, cooking and growing – nutrition is important to age etc.
* In January – we will start to discuss and develop the strategy on how we work together to achieve Silver – we will be inviting everyone to come along, and we can start to develop an action plan
* We have goals to ensure that all children learn about food and how to grow it, how to cook it etc. – we are working with public health, BwD BC and Schools

Q: Do you work with the allotments?

A: Yes and no – we have a network of growers and community gardens – but we have lost contact with the allotments, and we are now trying to establish those links

Q: the reason I ask is that my friend owns an allotment and at certain times of year they have a surplus of stock it would be good if you could organise a weekly pick up from the allotments and give the fruit and veg to those who need it

A: Yes, absolutely a great idea and something we will look into

Q: What about sell by dates – they are a tyranny – just a way to sell mor and make more money

A: Yes absolutely – again this comes with education

Q: Are you linked to national food associations?

A: Yes – Soil Association, Sustainable Food Association

Q: Do you have food distribution – creating a model is important

A: Yes, that’s what we want to achieve – we are being careful and supporting the organisations that need food not the individuals – its about collaboration and there is a wide variety of food we don’t want groups to be competitive as this results in those needing the food missing out

[Home - Blackburn with Darwen Food Alliance](https://bwdfoodalliance.org.uk/)

**Dave from Lancashire Police**

* + I am part of the integrated offender team – working with offenders – trying to break the cycle of offending, its not any good for the victims, police, probation and ultimately the offender and their families
  + I worked for the police for 7 years and I also worked as a prison officer for 7 years, so I’ve seen both sides – what works and what flows there are in the system
  + What is the definition of insanity? – Doing the same thing over and over again and getting the same results
  + This is what is happening with offenders and the justice system – people offend- go to prison – get out – reoffend, we need to try a new approach
  + Many offenders have addiction problems, and this leads to offending to pay for the addiction if we just keep putting them back in prison without any interventions the results will be the same
  + So, we are now working with probation, housing, Blackburn Rovers community trust, drug & alcohol services, we want to extend this service by working with lots of other VCSFE organisations to offer a wrap around service for the offenders
  + So, I’m here today to get to know what you guys are doing
  + Many of the offenders are living hand to mouth in terrible housing – HMOS etc they spend their days shop lifting, breaking into homes, stealing cars – these impacts on the victims and we need to change how we deal with the wider issues
  + Neighbourhood crimes costs £18.1 billion per year – and we are dealing with the same people, same address so we are targeting these people
  + We have 3 months to work with the individual and at the end of those 3 months we want to see less victims – less cash – less reoffending
  + We have the carrot – encouraging the individual to interact with the agencies – sort out their housing, health, addiction, finance, benefits and families – we want to sort out the problems to ensure stability and progression – to training, volunteering and ultimately work
  + The stick is that if the individual doesn’t engage, we can have consequences – tags, civil orders, licence conditions can be tightened and finally recall to prison etc
  + We are ultimately paid to protect the public and that’s our priority – it’s a win -win for the individual if they engage, they achieve stability – I can be their best mate or worst enemy
  + We want to encourage change – faster arrests, less victims and less reports
  + If you work with these individuals and would like to become involved with the pathways for change, please email me
  + We do have a referral pathway, and we have monthly meetings – MAC (multi agency conference) and MAP (multi agency practitioner)
  + It does work – we have a 53-yr old male who had been a prolific offender – predominantly burglary engaged – we supported him with his issues and now he is in recovery and working fulltime – he hasn’t reoffended for 2 years.

[David.Cookson@lancashire.police.uk](mailto:David.Cookson@lancashire.police.uk)

**Andrew from Blackburn Rovers Community Trust**

* + I’m working on a new project at the Community Hub which is part of the charity arm of the club – The Community Trust
  + We offer many projects working with children and adults, offering lots of activities
  + We have a project working with veterans
  + We have a full timetable of activities online
  + We have the Mind over matter project which is working with individuals with a mental health diagnosis and referred by their GP
  + We offer football as a hook – for many different groups – women, veterans, older people etc we also offer tea and coffee that enables people to socialise etc

[Blackburn Rovers Community Trust | rovers.co.uk](https://www.rovers.co.uk/community/)

**Sabiha from BwD BC**

* I run the employability network education – for residents 16 and over there’s lots of useful info
* We are hosting an event – 11th/12th and 13th Feb 2025 – if you would like a stall, please let me know – we want lots of different services health and wellbeing – employability etc
* We want to offer services to help the barriers that are stopping the individuals to get into work
* The event is going to be held at Blackburn Leisure Centre -we can accommodate up to 100 stalls
* If you want more info, please email me – [Sabiha.patel@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:Sabiha.patel@blackburn.gov.uk)
* We also have an employer’s forum with nineteen businesses on board

Q: Do you offer training?

A: Yes, we can offer bespoke training

Q: What about adults with disabilities?

A: Yes absolutely – we prioritise SEND and adults with disabilities

Q: Is it just for residents looking for work?

A: It’s for everyone and everything:

* New Direction works with schools 14–16-year-olds
* Adult Learning for 18 plus – short courses, ESOL and functional skills
* National careers service – CV etc
* Employment – Job Clubs CV etc
  + - * + Darwen – Tuesday morning
        + Audley – Tuesday Afternoon
        + Bank Top – Thursday morning
        + Bangor Street – Thursday Afternoon

[Help with employment | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/cost-living-support/help-rising-cost-living/help-employment)

**Latest Peer Network update from Community CVS**

The Next Flying Start Business Network meeting will be held on 16/01/2025, at 9.30am - 12.00 noon - in our Boulevard Centre Conference Room from 9.30am to 12 noon.

The business network is a brand-new monthly in-person peer network for Boost Flying start business support clients. Whether you're a pre-start business entrepreneur or a new business under three years, this provision gives you an opportunity to network.

If you are eager to share industry insights or keen to develop your business idea, these sessions are a fantastic opportunity to forge new connections in business.

To attend the next Flying Start Business Networking Event, please email [Leah.harrison@communitycvs.org.uk](mailto:Leah.harrison@communitycvs.org.uk)   
Alternatively, you can sign up using the link below:

[Boost Flying Start - Business Network | Boost Events](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fboostevents.evolutive.co.uk%2Fevent%2Fdetails%2F1586081%2FBoost-Flying-Start---Business-Network&data=05%7C02%7Cdonna.talbot%40communitycvs.org.uk%7Ce04e9ef5acbb4d034f6408dd15e093c6%7C7877c954457c4a56859c86121884f1ab%7C0%7C0%7C638690777116060554%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=EQm%2FzY48DERKmClyu3GuWWuIb%2Bgqr7Y0Y76wQZp53Ls%3D&reserved=0)

**Next Meeting**

**Thursday 23rd January 2025**

**9:30am – 11:30am**

**The Boulevard Centre**

**45 Railway Road, Blackburn BB1 1EZ**

**For more info, please contact Donna Talbot 01254 583957**

[**Donna.talbot@communitycvs.org.uk**](mailto:Donna.talbot@communitycvs.org.uk)

**Parking is free for 3 hours on Morrisons Carpark**