



Norfolk
Community
Foundation

Community Hot-Spots

So much more than just a warm space

The vision



How we made a difference

In response to the cost of living crisis, we listened to what communities wanted and gave them the resources and freedom to get it done.

The Community Hot-Spot funding was made available to voluntary and community groups across Norfolk, granting £2,000 to enable organisations to open their doors as a focal point for their local communities.

This created a widespread network of open community venues across Norfolk within weeks, giving people the chance to make connections on their doorstep and reduce the pressure on statutory services that are often overwhelmed at this time of year.

We were proud to:

- Plan ahead.
- Bring partners together.
- Work with local communities to deliver local support and make their vision come to life.

A challenging winter

In Norfolk, we face unique challenges posed by rural isolation, older and colder housing, and an ageing population. These factors can combine to create pockets of deprivation - and we have been working to find the right solutions wherever people live in Norfolk.

With a sharp spike in energy prices last winter, we wanted to make sure everyone had a warm space near them where they could meet others to find companionship and support. As ever, working at pace, we brought others together to create on a rapid response programme to proactively address emerging winter needs.

The impact

165+ Community Hot-Spots funded

10,000+ people had a place to go

£332k awarded in total

Cost of less than £30 per head

Community Hot-Spots were valued by all those who attended, whether it was to beat isolation, support their family, or find help they never knew existed.

People went into their local Community Hot-Spot initially just to keep warm, but so many left with something more. They found a welcoming place where they belonged, met neighbours they never knew they had, and discovered support they didn't know was available. Community Hot-Spots offered support that stopped people from needing more serious interventions from other statutory services.

Mental health services continue to be strained in Norfolk. The cost of GP appointment is £42 for 9 minutes, but for just £30 per person for the whole winter, we provided spaces across Norfolk that supported people's wellbeing at a local level. Hot-Spots also signposted people made vulnerable by the rising cost of living to local support, both statutory and voluntary, that could help them through crisis and a long winter.



The Hot-Spots



Hunstanton Town Council,
West Norfolk



Bircham Centre, Reepham,
Broadland



Potter Heigham Parish
Council, North Norfolk



Rollsby Village Hall,
Great Yarmouth



North End Trust, Kings Lynn,
West Norfolk



Dereham Baptist Church,
Breckland



Wymondham Baptist Church,
South Norfolk



St George Colegate
Norwich

April 2022

Energy bills are predicted to double by the end of the year. People who had to choose between heating and eating last year are dreading this winter.

September 2022

Community Hot-Spot fund launches, allowing community groups in Norfolk to apply for £2,000 to take action.

October 2022

Thanks to significant contributions from Norfolk County Council, King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council and Norwich City Council, the idea of Community Hot-Spots was taken from paper to programme.

December 2023

165+ Community Hot-Spots are open across the county. Each is provided with a support pack with useful information on local services.

March 2023

Some Community Hot-Spots, inspired by their success, apply for support from the Love Norfolk Fund to continue their activities into the summer.

Preparing for winter

August 2022

Surviving Winter donations from our regular donors begin to be received.

September 2022

We launch our #DonateTheRebate campaign, asking people to donate their energy bill rebate or winter fuel payment.

Nov 2022

First round of funding released. Over 120 groups begin to offer a warm and welcoming space to their communities. The second round opens.

November 2022

East of England Coop make a significant donation, allowing for more Hot-Spots to be funded.

Our learning

1 Many of the people attending our Community Hot-Spots were looking for connection, friendship and community.

Catton Grove Community Centre, Norwich

The Community Centre in Catton Grove used their Community Hot-Spot funding to open their doors 2 days a week, offering a range of free facilities such as board and card games, TV and DVDs. Over four months, the centre served hundreds of cups of soup and toasted sandwiches.

Case Study

“One of our more regular visitors to our Community Hot-Spot was married couple P and N, both are in their late sixties. Last Autumn, N was diagnosed with rapidly advancing dementia, this has affected their relationship, with P spending a lot more of her time at home caring for N. Coming to the Hot-Spot gave P time to relax, knowing that N was in an environment he felt comfortable with. While N was mainly sleeping in one of our comfier chairs or watching the TV, P spent her time chatting with other visitors to the Hot-Spot



1. Connection

2 Many Community Hot-Spots were used as points of information or supported attendees with referrals to support services.



2. Support

Case Study

“A lady stayed on as they were clearing away and when I was away from the group asked if I knew how to get to citizens advice or a food bank. She had no idea where to go or how to obtain help, stressed she had never been in a situation before without money in her purse. I was able to get through to North Norfolk Food bank who step by step walked us both through how to access practical requirements. They helped this family and got an immediate crisis resolved.

-The Bircham Centre, Broadland

4 Thriving Community Hot-Spots adapted to develop an offer to suit the needs of their community.



4. Adapt

Case Study

“One lady who recently lost her husband and found it very difficult to go out and be with people. Two couples who were coming to the Community Hot-Spot encouraged her to come, promising that it would be only small group of people so she would not feel uncomfortable. She came about the fourth week of the programme and never looked back. By the end she was laughing and joining in with the rest of them.

-Potter Heigham Parish Council, North Norfolk

3 The majority of people that attended the Hot-Spots were older people.



3. Older people

Case Study

“One 80 year old resident who was born and brought up in the village, commented that he had chatted to another resident who he had never met before, even though that person had lived in the village for 23 years, and has now struck up a friendship with him.

-Tilney All Saints Village Hall, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

5 Spaces offering substantial food and refreshments were likely to be better attended .



5. Food

Case Study

“One participant was living in a tent on the beach in freezing temperatures, with no other protection. He is now housed and is in the process of looking for employment. It has been very humbling to see lives turning around for the better.

-Bradwell Pentecostal Elim Pioneer Church, Great Yarmouth

What's next?

Proof it works.

Many groups chose to extend their Hot-Spots into the spring and summer to continue to provide a space where friendships could continue to bloom and activities that has started up could continue.

Case Study

Hanworth and Gunton Memorial Hall in North Norfolk began running a Community Hot-Spot so members of the surrounding villages could access a hot lunch and take part in indoor activities such as carpet bowls or Pilates. One of the activities was a taster session of chair Pilates which proved so beneficial to attendees that the hall continued to part finance it to keep the cost to users at £5. Thanks to additional funding from Norfolk Community Foundation, the Pilates sessions will continue to take place at the Hot-Spot.

“We have never before, as a village community, met so many so regularly. Some residents have joined the get together for the first time after living here for many years. Many said that if they didn't come out to the hub then they would have not spoken to anyone all day, or in some cases most of the week.



Preparing for this winter

This programme showed groups the impact they can have in their communities. Some groups have been able to use their own limited resources to continue the work they started last winter. Others have been able to access additional funding to make this happen.

We know for certain that as the weather turns cold again, Norfolk communities will once more need these spaces to support their communities. We know the benefits Community Hot-Spots bring, and we hope that by convening local support we can once again weave this network of support across Norfolk.

Donors



Every £30 changed a life over winter, from the city to the villages.

Individual donors were critical to enabling this widespread support. Over 100 people chose to donate to our Surviving Winter campaign last year. From those who donated just a few pounds, to those whose generosity stretched to their entire winter fuel payment or beyond; by coming together, we made a real difference to those most in need.

By working together, we achieved so much more. Our vision for this programme also inspired support from local councils and businesses. Norfolk County Council allowed us to reach even more people across the county, boosting what our donors alone could offer. Additional funding from DCMS helped us offer more, and further partnerships with the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, Norwich City Council and East of England Coop meant that we were fortunate to be able to offer additional funding in selected geographies.

Funding from Norwich City Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk meant additional Hot-Spots could open in Norwich and West Norfolk. Similarly, East of England Co-op funded projects near in specific areas.

Case Study

The East of England Co-op donated over £15k to the programme to fund Community Hot-Spots near to their stores. They did this because they wanted to be able to more closely support the spaces they funded with further donations of tea, coffee and biscuits, as well as be able to signpost customers in need to their nearest Hot-Spot.





**Interested by what you've read?
Find out more or get in touch**

-  www.norfolkfoundation.com
-  01603 623958
-  Shinebrighter@norfolkfoundation.com
-  5th Floor St James Mill, Whitefriars, Norwich, NR3 1TN

Cover: Playing for Cake, Sheringham

