

BIRCHWOOD BIG LOCAL ANNUAL REPORT 2020 April 2019 – June 2020



August 2020

Big Local



Contents

1. Introduction from the Chairman	Page 3
2. Our vision	Page 4
3. What is Big Local about?	Page 4
4. Birchwood Big Local Partnership Board	Page 4
5. Birchwood Area Community Land Trust	Page 5
6. Our locally trusted organisation	Page 6
7. The Birchwood Big Local area	Page 6
8. What have we done since the last Annual General Meeting?	Page 7
8.1 Diamond Park	Page 7
8.2 Green Spaces	Page 14
8.3 Jasmin Green	Page 14
8.4 Events	Page 14
8.5 Community Grants	Page 16
8.6 Speed Indicator Devices	Page 16
8.7 Volunteers	Page 17
8.8 Project Manager	Page 17
9. What people have told us	Page 17
10. Covid-19	Page 19
11. Looking forward	Page 20
12. Acknowledgements	Page 20
13. Financial report to June 2020	Page 20

1. Introduction from the Chairman

This report highlights the activities that have been undertaken by Birchwood Big Local since the last Annual General meeting (AGM) in May 2019. It has once again been an exceptionally busy and eventful time, with volunteers taking on new tasks and developing additional skills. Many of the projects we have worked on during this time are highlighted in this report. We were able to hold a number of events prior to lockdown in March 2020 and these were enjoyed by all that attended. Many of these events were funded through an external grant from the National Lottery Awards for All programme which was secured by Birchwood Area Community Land Trust. The regeneration of Diamond Park, which although has not been plain sailing, has been completed in terms of installation of the play areas and has been enjoyed by many families in the local area. We have also, along with everyone, been faced with the global pandemic and the challenges that has created for the Birchwood community. We have worked with schools and other organisations to try and help those most disadvantaged in our community and hope that this has made even a small but positive impact. As a Board, we are committed to work hard to create lasting and positive change in Birchwood, and we look forward to an exciting year ahead. None of the work highlighted in this report could have been achieved without the amazing volunteers that are willing to work hard to make Birchwood's ambitions a reality.

Birchwood Area Community Land Trust have been working tirelessly to progress Jasmin Green Community Housing Scheme and this will continue to be a major project over the coming months. Revenue from the housing development, through a ground rent, will be used to maintain the children's play areas to ensure sustainability in future years. Provision of play areas for children and young people and improvements to the green space will be progressed by Birchwood Big Local over the coming year

Our local trusted organisation, Lincolnshire Co-op, has provided us with excellent financial support and given us additional support and advice when we have needed it. Local Trust and our rep, Gill Hutchinson, have provided us with invaluable assistance and helped to steer us in the right direction. Martin Field, Senior Facilitator representing East Midlands Community Led Housing, has supported and assisted Birchwood Area Community Land Trust for which we are very grateful. Thanks, must also go to our wide range of partners who have all, without exception, given their assistance to help us reach our goals.

The next twelve months will continue to be challenging in terms of Covid-19 and it is as yet unknown how long this will affect us all. You can be assured that Birchwood Big Local will work on your behalf as effectively as possible whatever the situation. We would welcome the participation of more people living in the Birchwood Big Local area. Please come and join us to help make Birchwood an even better place to live.



Eddie Strengiel
Chairman of Birchwood Big Local

2. Our vision

We are a group of enthusiastic, committed volunteers who wish to empower local residents to build a stronger, safer community. We will achieve this by creating an open and inviting Big Local Partnership made up of local residents who will gather and act on the views of the community to create and implement a ten-year plan to achieve this.

In ten years, we want:

- a. Our community to be cleaner, brighter and safer with more people benefiting from our Parks and green spaces
- b. Birchwood Big Local area to be where children and young people thrive by creating more opportunities for them
- c. To create 'a great community', where people look out for and support each other and provide more opportunities for interaction
- d. To raise the aspirations of people living in our community and reduce child and family poverty

3. What is Big Local about?

The neighbourhood of Birchwood was chosen in 2012 as one of the 150 areas across England to benefit from the Big Local programme. The Birchwood Big Local area spans from the A46 Lincoln Relief Road to the West, Doddington Road/industrial estate in the South, farmland in the North and Hartsholme Park to the East.

Big Local is a £200 million Big Lottery funded programme that is managed by Local Trust and its key outcome is to create a lasting change in the local community. The key features that make Big Local different to (and more exciting than) other programmes is that it is entirely community led, building on local talents and aspirations, creating a long term, lasting change using at least £1 million over at least 10 years. Birchwood was one of 150 areas chosen to benefit from this programme.

Big Local has 4 clear outcomes:

- Communities will be better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them
- People will have increased skills and confidence, so that they continue to identify and respond to needs in the future
- The community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises
- People will feel that their area is an even better place to live

4. Birchwood Big Local Partnership Board

The Partnership Board is made up of local residents who are enthusiastic, committed volunteers who wish to empower local residents to build a stronger, safer community. The Partnership Board meets on a monthly or bi-monthly basis with additional meetings as and when required. At the last AGM, 10 Board members were elected and 1 person has been Co-opted as a Board member, namely:

- Eddie Strengiel (Chairman)
- David George (Vice-Chairman)
- Yvonne Griggs
- Wendy Parry
- Justine Rolfe
- Bill Toynton
- Cherie Richards
- Alex Tickner
- Luke Wallace (from March 2019 to December 2019)
- Dave Clarkson (from May 2019 to April 2020)
- Alan Briggs (Co-opted member from October 2019)

Together, they bring many skills, experience, commitment and passion to Birchwood Big Local and its Partnership Board. Regular attendees who provide support include Lincolnshire Co-op who are the locally trusted organisation, Local Trust representative (who manage the Big Local programme), East Midlands Community Led Housing, the Police, Local Councillors and other local organisations.

Currently, there are 4 sub-groups set up and these are Communications, Events, Diamond Park and Green Spaces. The sub groups are made up of some Partnership Board members and other residents who have an interest in the particular theme. All sub groups have some delegated responsibilities. Additionally, working groups are set up as and when required to research particular areas of interest and feed back to the Board for their consideration.

5. Birchwood Area Community Land Trust

Birchwood Area Community Land Trust (BACLT) was established in 2016 to own and lease land and buildings on behalf of Birchwood Big Local and the local community. BACLT hold the lease of the Birchwood Big Local office and own Diamond Park. It is an integral part of Birchwood Big Local and its projects and will play a key role in the future sustainability of the current work and projects of Birchwood Big Local. In Spring 2019, BACLT applied for and were successful in securing a £9,665 grant from National Lotteries Awards for All programme for a programme of events to be held in Diamond Park. Information on the event programme can be found in Section 8.1.3 for Diamond Park.

The major project that BACLT are currently progressing is a Community Led Housing scheme on Jasmin Green. Outline planning permission was granted from City of Lincoln Council in March 2019 and full planning consent was granted in July 2020. The scheme will develop affordable dwellings at Jasmin Green for 49 dwellings, split between 28 accessible bungalows (specifically for people who are elderly or have a disability), 5 dormer-bungalows and 16 terrace houses for families. Revenue from the housing development, through a ground rent, will be used to maintain the children's play areas to ensure sustainability in future years.

6. Our locally trusted organisation

Our locally trusted organisation is Lincolnshire Co-operative Society who have continued to support and assist us. They provide us with a range of support services including managing the finance and providing monthly financial reports, providing expert advice and professional assistance, line managing the Project Manager, and generally supporting and enabling Birchwood Big Local Partnership Board and its projects.

7. The Birchwood Big Local area

The Birchwood Big Local area is situated between the A46 Lincoln Relief Road to the West, Doddington Road/industrial estate in the South, farmland in the North and Hartsholme Park to the East. This area comprises of several neighbourhoods including Birchwood Estate and Doddington Park. The area is split over two political wards – Birchwood and Hartsholme Wards.

The major shopping facilities are found at the Birchwood Centre with other shops located around the area. We also have a library, leisure centre, six infant and / or junior schools, one of which is a special school, several nursery and pre-school facilities, a Children’s Centre, places of worship, 2 health centres, chemists and a frequent bus service. There are many community groups that currently meet in the Birchwood Big Local area, many of which are for children and young people.

The Local Insight Profile identifies that there are 14,247 people living in the Birchwood Big Local area.



8. What we have done since the last Annual General Meeting?

8.1 Diamond Park

Diamond Park changed ownership to BACLT in September 2016. The photograph below shows how the Park looked in July 2017.



Phase 1

As reported in last year's Annual Report, the play equipment for Phase 1 for the younger children was fully installed firstly in October 2018 and the Park re-opened.



Phase 2

In November 2018 we put a tender out to 3 companies and received their designs in January 2019. The preferred design was put out for consultation which resulted in a change in layout. The installation started on 8th April 2019 and the Park was able to be re-opened on 18 May 2019 with all the play equipment installed.



The Park has undergone a major transformation and it is hoped that it will bring many years of enjoyment to families in the Birchwood Big Local area.

8.1.2 Diamond Park Volunteers

From May 2019 to March 2020, 15 gardening sessions were held in the Park and these attracted from between 2 and 25 residents at each session who cleaned up the Park through grass cutting, pruning, clearing overgrown shrubs and plants, weeding, painting, clearing paths and a range of other activities. These volunteers have come from both Lincolnshire Co-op and local residents and have made an incredible and positive difference to the Park and are invaluable to the future sustainability of the Park.

Since re-opening the Park in May 2019, 6 people have acted as keyholders to open and close the Park on a daily basis. Other volunteers carried out daily checks to make sure the Park and its equipment was safe to use. These people are absolutely invaluable as without them, the Park would not be able to be open for use. Currently Diamond Park has 23 registered volunteers and a further 15 people who periodically attend gardening sessions in the Park. This is a massive increase from the last reporting period and very welcome and appreciated.

What has developed since May 2019 is a dedicated team of volunteers who work hard and are committed to keep Diamond Park open and safe for the benefit of local residents. Our very grateful thanks go to this exceptional team.

8.1.3 Diamond Park Events

7 events were held in Diamond Park from May 2019 – March 2020. A further 2 were planned but unfortunately had to be cancelled at very short notice due to extreme weather conditions. The events included the very popular Donkey rides and Petting Farm, Art in the Park, make your own planter, 2 afternoons of Inflatables, an opening event, and an event that created wildlife habitats. 6 of these events were funded by an Awards for All grant secured by BACLT.

The total attendance at the 8 events was between 1500 and 1650 which was fantastic.

A) Diamond Park opening event on 18 May 2019

Organised at very short notice, around 250 people attended to enjoy the play equipment, a children's entertainer and a free lucky dip, drinks, sweets, biscuits and cakes

B) Make your own planter event on 27 May 2019



This event, funded by an Awards for All grant, was very popular with excellent feedback. Around 200 people attended and made and took home planters to brighten up their house or garden. Young people had the opportunity to decorate pots with waterproof stickers and this proved to be a real hit.

**Brilliant
event**

**Please
do this
again**

C) Inflatables event 29 June 2019

Approximately 300 people came along to enjoy the bouncy castle, giant slide and bouncy boxing on a sweltering hot day. The event, funded by Awards for All, was again very popular with requests to hold this event again.

D) Donkey rides and petting farm event 7 August 2019

Without doubt, this Awards for All funded event was by far the most popular event of the year in Diamond Park with approximately 550 people attending. Children, young people and adults all enjoyed seeing and petting the animals – please see some photographs below.



E) Art in the Park event 17 August 2019

This event, attended by up to 150 people, provided graffiti and other art opportunities lead by a specialist company called Graffwerk based in Leicester. Although numbers were lower than normal, this could be due to the publicity going out later than normal. Those attending enjoyed the session and some great artwork was produced for them to take home.

F) Inflatables event 31 August 2019

A giant slide, bouncy boxing, gladiator duel, obstacle course and a bouncy castle were provided by Bouncetastic and located outside the Park. The inflatables all proved to be popular again with the up to 200 children and young people that attended. Unfortunately, due to heavy rain, the event had to be abandoned after 1 hour.

G) Autumn and Spring Planting events

Due to extreme weather conditions, unfortunately both these planned events had to be cancelled at short notice.

H) Diamond Park goes wild event Creating wildlife habitats 14 March 2020

This event was focused on encouraging a variety of creatures in the Park by creating wildlife habitats. Due to the need for most of the activities to be supervised, it was agreed to limit the numbers attending to those who had volunteered and supported the Park over the past 12 months. 60 people were invited and 30 attended. Because of the emerging issues from Coronavirus Covid-19, many people made the decision not to attend. This event was led by

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and their expertise and enthusiasm was a grateful addition to the event.

Activities included the following:

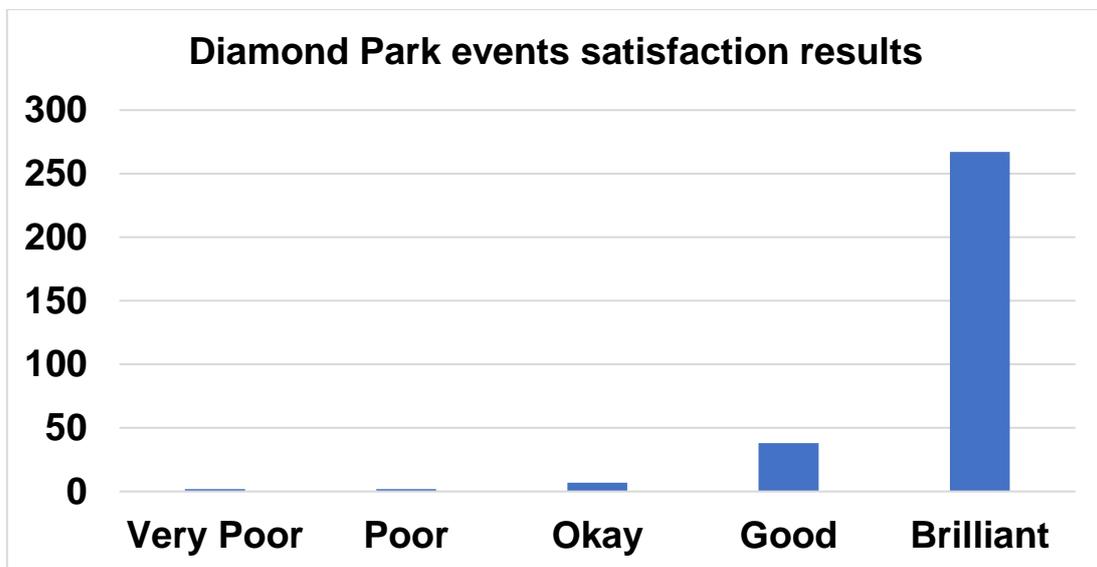
- Filling and installing multiple bird feeders
- Making hanging bird feeders from apples, sunflower seeds and suet blocks
- Making hanging insect houses using empty tin cans, pine cones and twigs
- Making an insect hotel from wood and turf
- Making a hedgehog house from loose twigs and leaves
- Sowing wildflower seeds in a newly prepared strip

Participants made hanging insect houses and apple feeders for the Park but also made more to take home and put in their own gardens.



I) Satisfaction surveys for all events

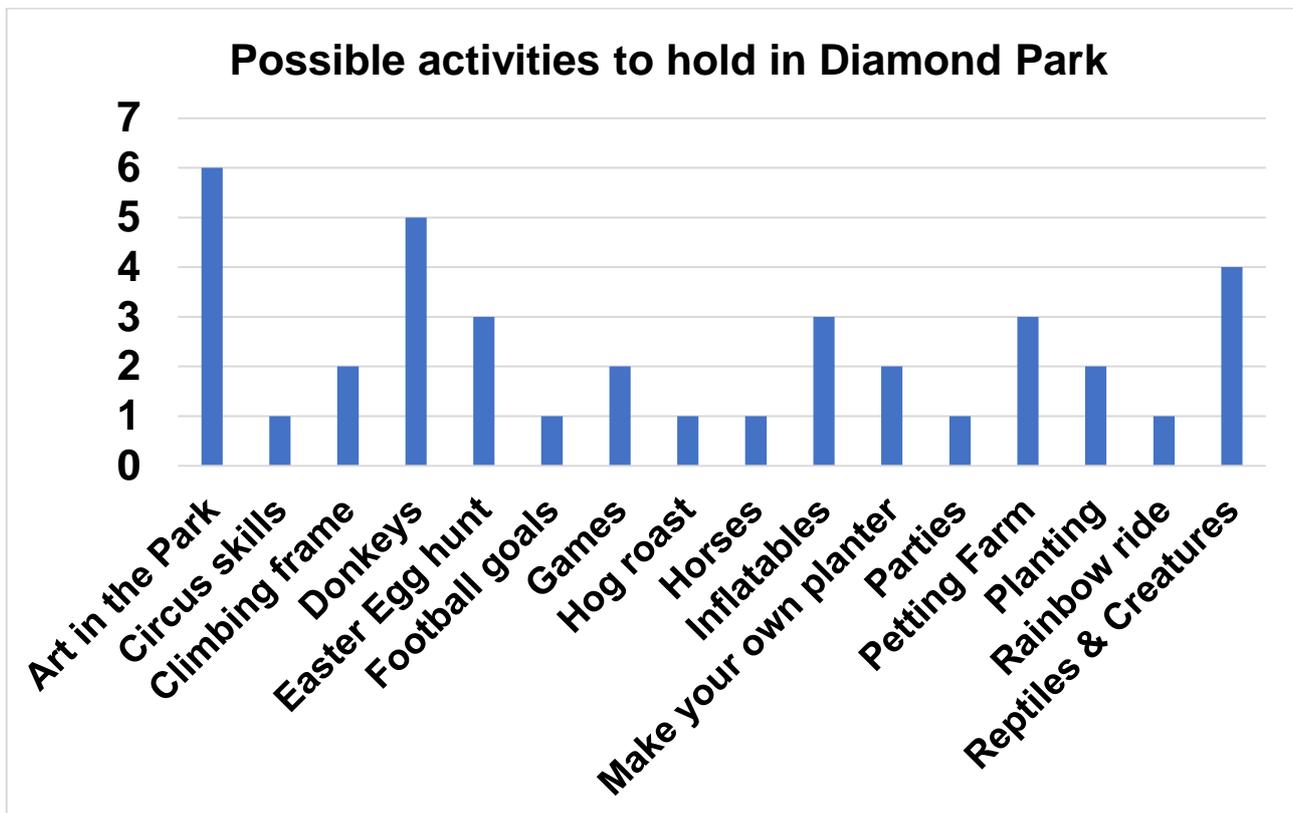
Satisfaction surveys were carried out, where possible, at these events to gauge the popularity and whether these should be repeated and in general the responses were very positive. The overall responses are shown below.



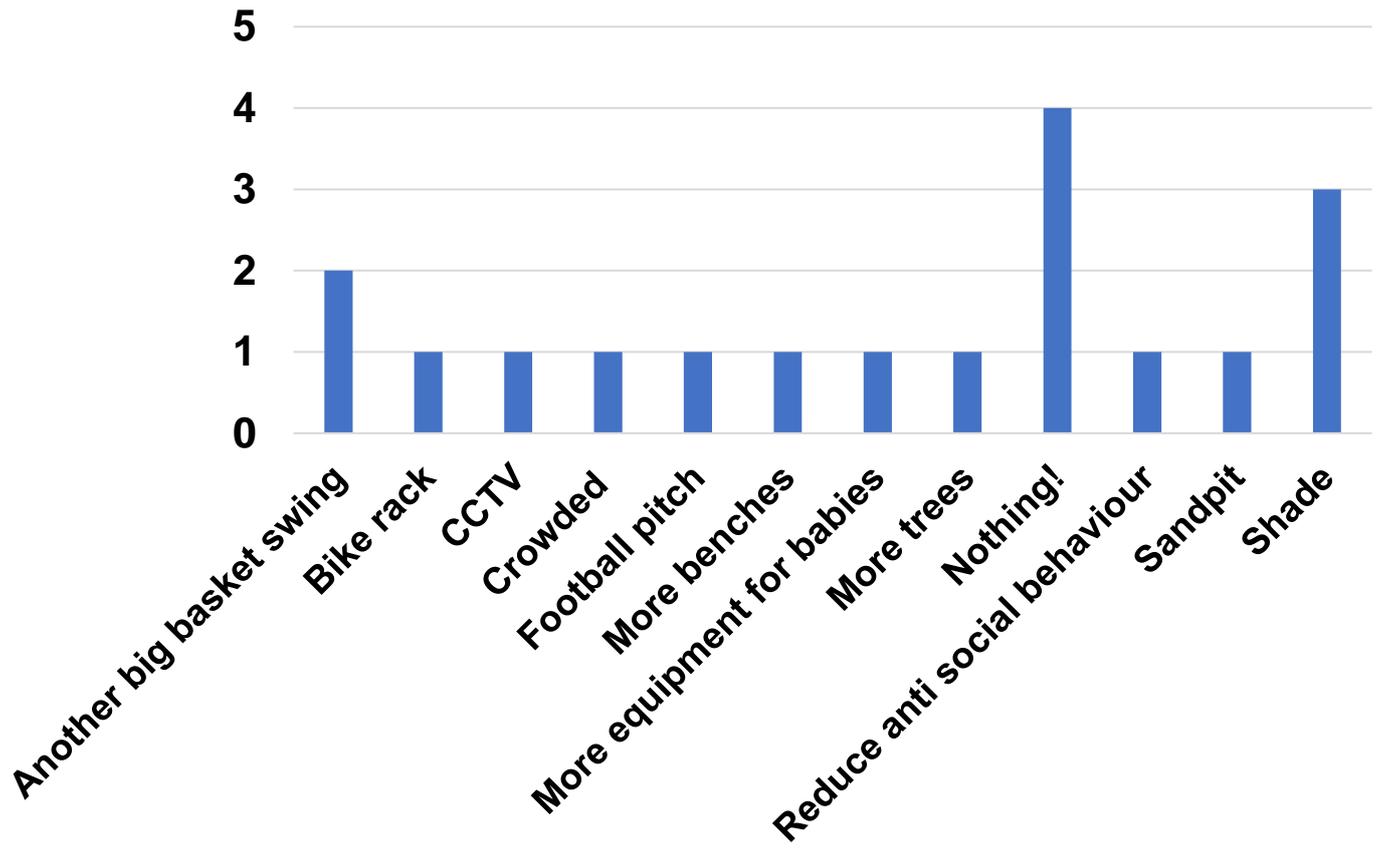
Again, it must be stressed that without willing and dedicated volunteers to organise, manage and run these events, they would not happen.

8.1.4 Consultation

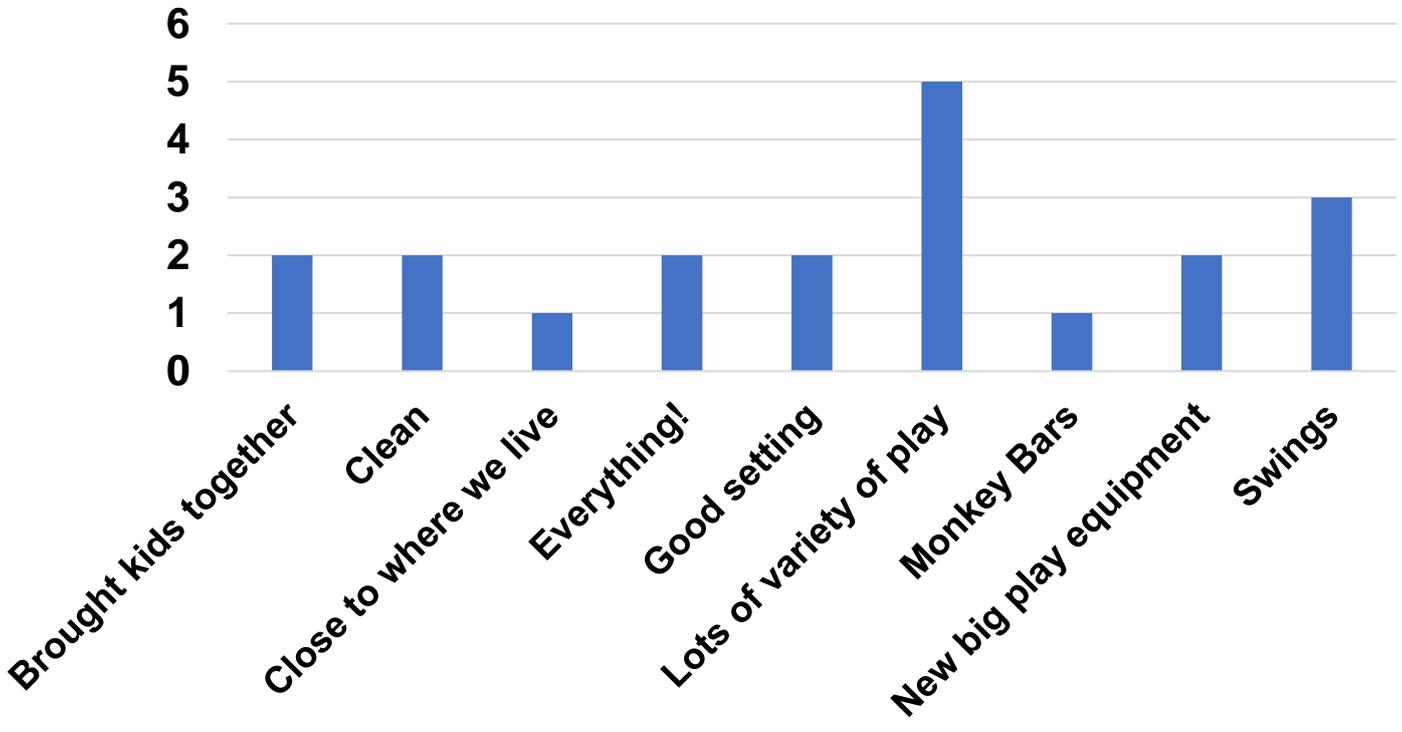
Where possible, we undertook some consultation at several events to find out in a little more detail what people would like to see take place in the future and the results are shown below. At some events, it was not possible to carry this out as volunteers were busy managing the event itself.



What improvements would you like in Diamond Park?



What do you like about Diamond Park?



8.2 Green Spaces

8.2.1 Benches



People have told us that additional benches are needed, and 3 benches were installed along Birchwood Avenue and 1 on Woodfield Avenue.

8.2.2 Litter picks in partnership

Through a partnership between City Councillors, the Police, Lincolnshire Co-op, Birchwood Neighbourhood Board, Birchwood Big Local and local residents, a number of litter picks took place between May and October 2019 in Birchwood, mainly on Jasmin Green. This has resulted in the area being much cleaner.

8.3 Jasmin Green

Considerable work has taken place since the last Annual report between Birchwood Area Community Land Trust, City of Lincoln Council senior officers, East Midlands Community Led Housing on the development on Jasmin Green for a housing scheme. The purpose of this housing project is to provide an income to improve and maintain an area of open space in perpetuity, including provision of play equipment. Full planning consent has been granted for the housing and work will now take place on development of the open space in terms of play and environmental improvements.

8.4 Events

We have organised and held several community events including the following:

8.4.1 Birchwood Big Local AGM 8 May 2019

This provided an opportunity for residents to hear about achievements and challenges over the previous year, to find out more about future plans and to elect Board members. 22 people attended this meeting.

8.4.2 Science Boffins event 29 May 2019



This event was attended by 42 young people over 3 sessions which had to be pre-booked. This was an event unlike any other we have held and we were interested to find out what people thought. The Science Boffin, Rita, was extremely enthusiastic and the children and young people appeared to enjoy that.

8.4.3 Meet a Creature event 23 October 2019

Unexpectedly, this event was one of the most challenging we have provided. It proved to be exceptionally popular and although 150 people were able to see and some of these handle the creatures, up to 100 people were unfortunately turned away due to the maximum numbers allowed in the hall. If we were to run this again, we would look to hold this in an alternative way to avoid disappointing people.



8.4.4 Entertainment event 23 November 2019

79 people attended this event with activities provided including a Children's Entertainer (Adrian, "Feet First"), Puppet shows, Face Painting, Crafts including Christmas crafts, and free Party bags handed out. This has become an annual event that has been provided by Birchwood Big Local for the last 4 years and is clearly welcomed by the local residents that attend.



8.4.5 Puppet Fun day 21 February 2020

Around 70 people attended this event and took part in Puppet making, Puppet shows, magic tricks and general Arts and crafts. Free goody bags were given to all those attending. This was our first event to be held in the Breakthrough Centre and the venue worked perfectly for us.



8.4.6 Other events

We supported, both financially and in terms of volunteers, a Halloween event held by Ignite Church on 31 October 2019.

Without all the support from a wide range of volunteers and partners, these events could not have taken place and been the success that they were. Huge thanks go to everyone involved in making these enjoyable events take place. Thank you to you all.

8.5 Community grants

Birchwood Big Local set up a community grants scheme that allows local groups to apply for up to £500 towards a project that meets agreed criteria. Up to June 2020, 34 grants have been awarded and a total of £18,807.53 awarded to local groups for the benefit of the local community. Since the last Annual General meeting, 13 grants were awarded totalling £9,820.77. Over the past 18 months, flexibility in the £500 limit has been applied to help support local organisations providing services that contribute towards the Birchwood Big Local priorities, highlighted in section 2.

8.6 Speed Indicator Devices (SID)

Residents have told us that speeding is an issue in Birchwood. In November 2019, 2 Speed Indicator Devices were installed on Woodfield Avenue with the capability to collect data on speeds and times of vehicles passing by. As these are located near to a school and a Park, the decision was made to install devices with a happy / angry face. These complement the 2 previously

installed on Birchwood Avenue. All 4 of the installed devices appear to be making a positive impact in terms of reducing vehicular speeds. It should be noted that these do not record the actual vehicle, simply the speed and time. Lincolnshire County Council have been very supportive with this project and they analyse the data collected and provide regular reports to Birchwood Big Local. As these have proved to be effective, it has been agreed to investigate and potentially fund and install a further 2 devices in another area in the near future.

8.7 Volunteers

Birchwood Big Local could not operate without its willing and committed volunteers. All the achievements are attributable to the work and effort of these volunteers. Support has been provided through training sessions and workshops, conferences, seminars and networking with other Big Local organisations that have benefited Birchwood Big Local and the individual. More volunteers are always needed and welcome, particularly for maintaining and keeping Diamond Park safe and open for use which will be crucial to the long-term sustainability of the Park.

It is estimated that from April 2019 to March 2020, the total number of volunteer hours was at least 4,790 and is probably significantly higher given that most volunteers underestimate the number of hours they commit to their volunteering. In terms of social investment, using the average “wage” for a volunteer at £13 per hour (based on Big Lottery rates¹), the number of volunteer hours equals a social investment of £62,170. This is a significant increase on the hours reported in the last annual report, namely an additional 1,363 hours which equates to £17,719 in terms of social investment.

8.8 Project Manager

The Project Manager, Ruth Farningham, provides support for all Big Local volunteers, the Board, it's sub groups and to all the current projects.

A major part of the time for the Ruth, and for the Big Local volunteers, over the past 15 months has been focused on Diamond Park, all the events and identifying and supporting new volunteers.

Moving forward, it is our intention that Ruth will continue to support progression and development of ongoing projects, concentrate on identifying and securing additional funding for us, and encouraging greater community involvement in our work and projects.

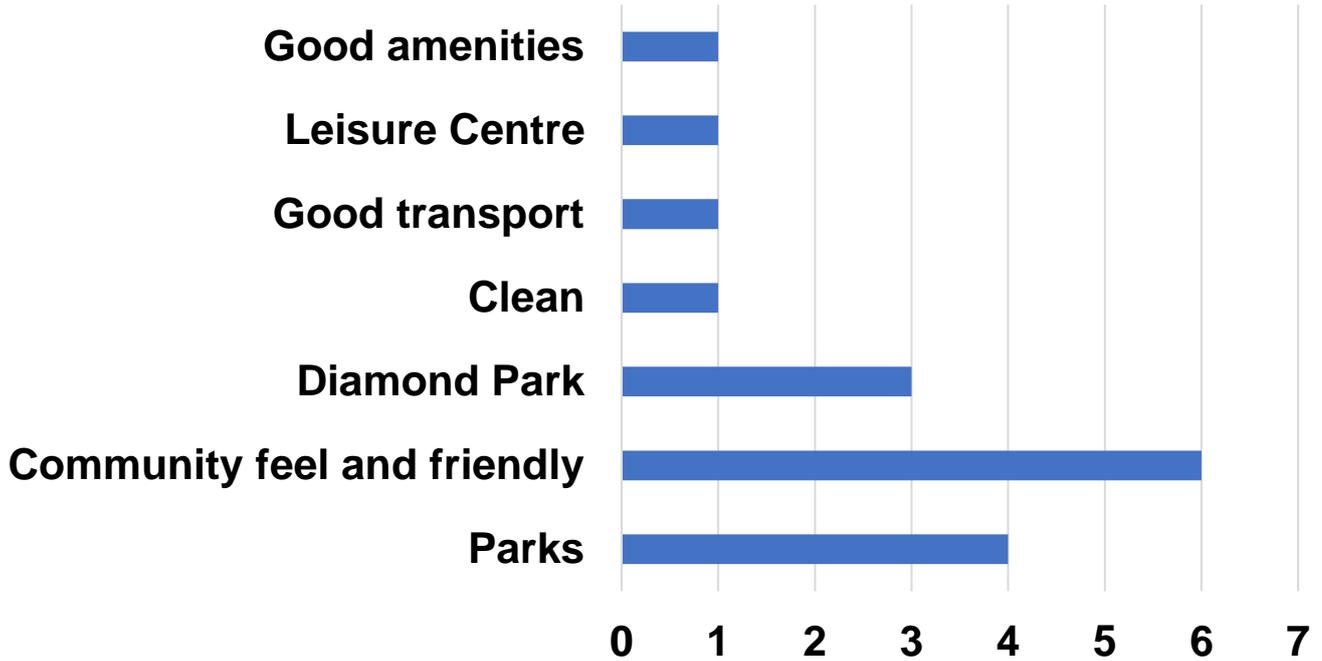
9 What people have told us

Consultation took place at several of the events held in Diamond Park and the results are shown in section 8.1.4 above. These results, along with previous consultations, helped to provide information for activities that would be popular in the future.

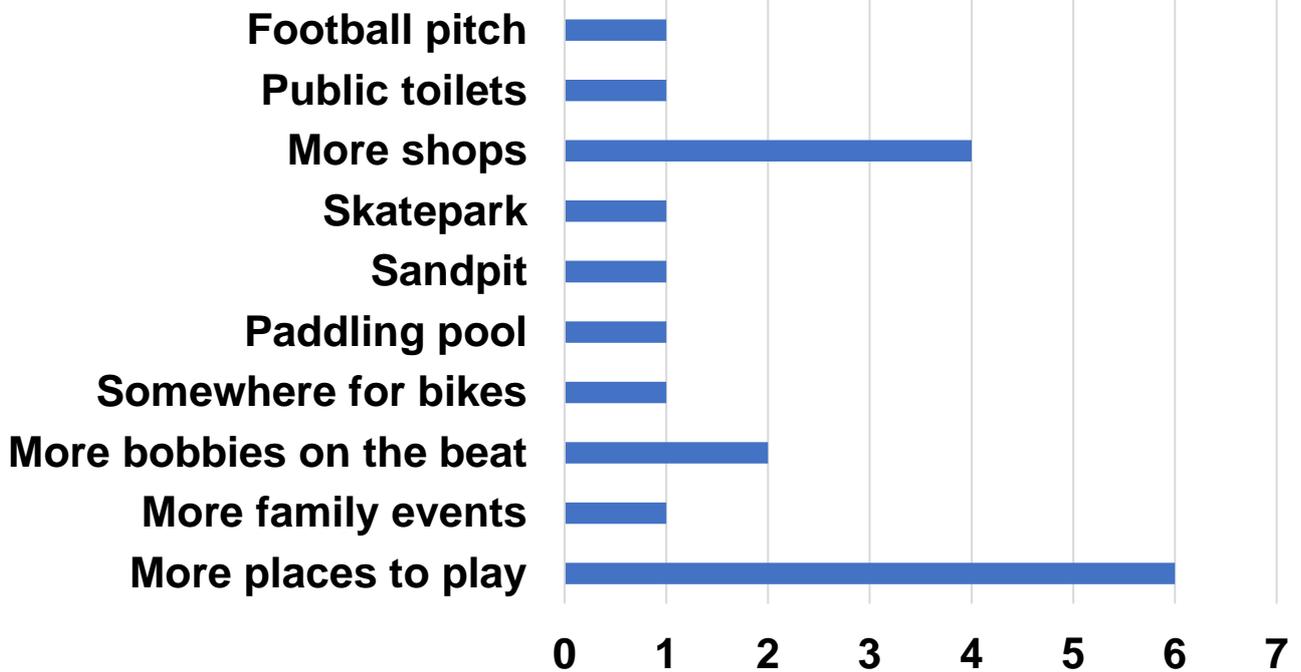
At the Inflatables event held on 29 June 2019, people were asked what they liked about Birchwood and what improvements they would like to see, and the results are shown below.

¹ Skilled labour - £150 a day (for example – administrative work, carpentry or leading a guided walk), Unskilled labour - £50 a day (for example – clearing a site or working as a steward at an event)

What do you like about Birchwood?



What improvements can you think of for Birchwood?



10 Covid-19

Covid-19 has had an immense impact on every aspect of people's lives, in a way that has not been experienced before by most members of our communities. Birchwood Big Local is no different and since March 2020, has developed new ways of working. Meetings are currently held via Zoom and many projects have been put on hold as they cannot be progressed under the government guidelines on staying safe. However, Jasmin Green Housing development continues to be progressed at a rapid pace with significant levels of work being carried out by Birchwood Area Community Land Trust, Diamond Park projects are starting to be progressed as some restrictions lessen, new projects are emerging due to the crisis that are being implemented and support has been provided to some of the most disadvantaged in the area.

In the 14 weeks from mid-March to the end of June 2020, the following support has been provided. Very grateful thanks go to the schools and Life Church for assisting in getting this support to those in need.

Date	What	Number of Beneficiaries	Number that are Vulnerable	£
23-Mar-20	Donation to Foodbank	1050	1,050	£5,000.00
03-Apr-20	activity packs to children	280	80	£749.49
15-Apr-20	activity packs to children	72	72	£594.29
25-Jun-20	activity packs to children	280	80	£1,238.53
26-Jun-20	Transition books to children	60	60	£262.96
		1742	1342	£7,845.27

Feedback from parents and the schools was fabulous including these direct quotes:

- Thank you for all your support over the last few months and for providing these activity packs for our children
- your organisation has been so supportive during this difficult time
- All parents and children were very appreciative of these resources, a few children even sat on the door step and began colouring while we were still talking to the parents
- I cannot believe how very generous and the Big Local have been and thank you on behalf of the staff, Governors and families
- Would like to say a big thank you from me and my little girl for the gift bag of crayons, stickers, paper etc. One very happy little girl

It is anticipated that additional support will be provided whilst this pandemic is with us and impacting on people's lives.

11 Looking Forward

The speed at which these projects can be progressed will be partly dependent on the impact that the current pandemic will have on services and ability to safely take these forward but Birchwood Big Local are working proactively to continue to work on behalf of the Birchwood Big Local community as fully as possible.

Projects that will be progressed in the coming months include:

- Jasmin Green housing project
- Consultation and development of plans and decisions on what should be installed in terms of play on Jasmin Green
- Consultation and development of environmental improvements on Jasmin Green
- Working towards re-opening of Diamond Park if this can be done safely
- Working to progress a range of projects within the Park including installing storage for garden tools
- Working towards making the Birchwood Big Local office Covid secure and re-opening
- Carrying out a survey to assess the impact that Covid-19 has had on the Birchwood Big Local community
- Explore the feasibility of installing an additional 2 Speed Indicator Devices
- Develop a Legacy statement and financial forecast up to the end of the Birchwood Big Local programme
- Develop a new Big Local plan to take us to the end of the programme
- React and respond to emerging issues within our community

It will, we are sure, be another busy year, although very different, but we hope that you will help us celebrate all that is good about Birchwood and help us to make lasting change.

12. Acknowledgements

Our thanks go to everyone who has been involved in Birchwood Big Local over the past year or so. Many people have contributed considerable time and effort to help make Birchwood an even better place to live and for this we are very grateful. We also want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported and assisted us over the past year including our fantastic partners. We look forward to building stronger partnerships with local organisations over the next 12 months.

13 Financial report

The report below highlights the details of the allocated budget up to June 2020 for projects progressed during 2019 and 2020, the spend against that budget and the remaining budget. All budgets were approved by Local Trust in January 2018 through development of a 3-year plan.

ACCOUNTS TO 30TH JUNE 2020

	Budget Feb- Dec 20	Spend	Budget Remaining	Budget Total
Melbourne Community park	25,000.00	-	25,000.00	25,000.00
Jasmin Green - housing	55,000.00	45,229.00	9,771.00	55,000.00
Jasmin Green - green spaces	290,000.00	-	290,000.00	290,000.00
Diamond Park	101,000.00	54,275.48	46,724.52	101,000.00
Green Spaces	26,000.00	3,307.95	22,692.05	26,000.00
Birchwood Area Community Land Trust	36,000.00	3,321.50	32,678.50	36,000.00
Outreach and Engagement	83,000.00	41,218.18	41,781.82	83,000.00
Tackling Poverty and Aspirations	20,000.00	7,162.72	12,837.28	20,000.00
Partnership Costs	244,500.00	127,670.67	116,829.33	244,500.00
Contingency	21,000.00	-	21,000.00	21,000.00
	901,500.00	282,185.50	619,314.50	901,500.00
Contribution to support grant admin and partnership running costs	45,075.00	14,109.28	30,965.72	45,075.00
	946,575.00	296,294.78	650,280.22	946,575.00
Community Champions	603.57	-	603.57	
Community Champions - Diamond Park	3,221.59		3,221.59	
	950,400.16	296,294.78	654,105.38	