



**BIRCHWOOD
BIG LOCAL**

Birchwood Big Local Annual Report 2021



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Foreword

This last year has been challenging for everyone on so many different levels. In times of need it has been inspiring to see the compassion and kindness of so many people within our communities, helping people through loss, grief, ill health, financial hardships, isolation and loneliness to name just a few. It is hoped that 2022 will be a better year for everyone.

I have been privileged to be the Chairman of Birchwood Big Local for many years and to be part of a group of people whose passion, motivation, hard work and at times sheer determination to succeed has been a pleasure. We have welcomed new members on the Partnership, new volunteers to help deliver our projects and each and every one, new and old, bring their own unique skills and qualities to help Birchwood flourish.

We have continued to press ahead with our plans for Jasmin Green and 2022 should be the year we can finally start to progress our ideas and projects.

The last year has seen us introduced to “Zoom” which has enabled us to carry on meeting, planning and developing projects throughout lockdowns.

We have been able to contribute towards digital exclusion by purchase of some laptops to a local Junior School. We have provided activity packs to the most vulnerable children in our community and have supported the local Foodbank through donations.

We look forward to a brighter New Year and one where we can meet and engage in person and if you would like to join this wonderful group of people, please get in touch.

Eddie Strenziel, Chairman of Birchwood Big Local

About Big Local

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 key 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

Big Local was established with a number of core key features that make it different from other programmes. It is:

- *Long term* – providing certainty and continuity, over 10-15 years
- *Resident-led* – working directly with individuals living, working, studying and playing in areas rather than through organisations; building confidence and capacity amongst those wanting to make a difference to their community and their local area
- *Non-prescriptive* – enabling residents to spend on their own terms and in their own time, on the projects they judge to be most important to them
- *Patient and non-judgemental* – giving communities the time and opportunity to learn, make mistakes, resolve disagreements and overcome challenges for themselves, on their way to achieving their ambitions
- *Accompanied by flexible and responsive support* – to help communities to build the confidence and capability to make the most of the opportunities available to them, whilst not constraining their own ambition and initiative

About Birchwood Big Local

We are a group of people who are passionate about engaging and involving local people, listening to what is important to them and using this information to shape projects that will benefit our community.

Birchwood Big Local Partnership Board

The Partnership Board, which is made up of local residents, was endorsed in November 2014. The Board is a group of enthusiastic, committed volunteers who wish to empower local residents to build a stronger, safer community. The Partnership Board have met monthly or bi-monthly since then with additional meetings as and when required. There are currently 8 Board members and 2 co-opted members, many of whom have been involved from the start of the Big Local journey which started in 2012.

Current Board members are:

- Eddie Strengiel (Chairman)
- Bill Toynton (Vice-Chair)
- Yvonne Griggs
- Wendy Parry
- Justine Rolfe
- Alex Tickner
- Brian Main
- Alan Briggs
- Jill Draycott (Co-opted November 2021)
- Sandra Cowley (Co-opted November 2021)

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, the Police, Local Councillors and others.

Currently, there are 3 sub-groups set up and these are Communications, Green Spaces and Diamond Park. The sub groups are made up of some Partnership Board members and other residents who have an interest in the particular theme.

The Board recognise the importance of encouraging new members to join and help support and develop projects and they will continue to recruit new members over the coming years.

Our priorities

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

Our Locally Trusted Organisation

Our locally trusted organisation is Lincolnshire Co-operative Society who have supported and assisted us over the past 6 years. They have their head office in Lincoln, and have a team of staff we can, and do, call upon for support.

They manage and monitor all financial matters relating to Big Local funds and offer guidance and support to ensure guidelines and procedures are adhered to. They also provide a wealth of advice and support from their specialist staff which is invaluable.

Our Legacy

A cleaner and safer community through provision of Speed Indicator devices and Environmental improvements

A place where more young people benefit from new play provision by installation of play facilities on Jasmin Green

A community that is socially connected and supportive of each other through delivery of existing and future projects

A community with increased affordable housing provision for the elderly on Jasmin Green

A community benefiting from improved parks and green spaces through environmental improvements and the sustainability of Diamond Park

Our achievements

3 Community grants have been awarded to local groups. The total amount awarded was £1,390. Grants of up to £500 are available to local groups to apply for. An application form can be found by following the link on our website at <https://birchwoodbiglocal.co.uk/community-grants>

In May, we provided over 350 activity packs to vulnerable children, distributed through the local primary schools

We held a Donkey and Petting Farm event in Diamond Park in September which was enjoyed by all who attended. It was lovely to be out and meeting people again on a sunny autumn day!



As the Speed Indicator Devices we previously installed have proven successful at reducing speeding in Birchwood and possibly saved lives, we installed 4 new Speed Indicator Devices, 2 on Woodfield Avenue and 2 on Fulmar Road.

During September, we spoke to 180 local people asking them their views on a range of subjects and we thank everyone for taking the time to do so. Your opinions are important to us and will help us to plan for the next few years – thank you!

Our response to Covid

Many within our community, like many others, were badly affected by the pandemic and as a group, Birchwood Big Local wanted to help, even if in a small way. The pandemic caused us challenges in terms of project delivery which resulted in a number of planned events being cancelled and more importantly the closure of Diamond Park for nearly 18 months. The decision to close the Park was taken after undertaking an in depth Covid risk assessment which identified risks that could not be mitigated. This decision was supported by residents. Following significant work from a fantastic team of volunteers, the Park re-opened in August 2021.

- Made financial donations to the local foodbank to support vulnerable people during COVID-19. It is estimated that in excess of 5,500 were helped over a period of a year.
- Carried on meeting as a Board virtually to continue to progress projects and make decisions to benefit Birchwood
- Carried out a survey to find out how Covid had impacted local residents. This was carried out through SurveyMonkey and was promoted through our social media pages
- We continued our local community grants programme throughout Covid and awarded community grants to a number of local community groups including support to our local Brownie and Rainbows groups and to local Junior Football teams.
- Kept in touch through Facebook and our website with local news and information.
- Funded activity packs to the most vulnerable children in our community. This was run through some of the local schools and nurseries and more than 380 children benefitted from this scheme
- Purchased laptops for one of our primary Schools to assist digitally excluded children

The table below shows the numbers of people helped through our Covid support activities from March 2020 to May 2021

Date	What	Number Beneficiaries	Number Vulnerable	£
23-Mar-20	Foodbank *	4500	4500	£5,000.00
03-Apr-20	Activity packs	280	80	£749.49
15-Apr-20	Activity packs	72	72	£594.29
25-Jun-20	Activity packs	280	80	£1,238.53
26-Jun-20	Transition books	60	60	£262.96
01-Oct-20	Laptops	8	8	£3,600.00
11-May-21	Activity packs	280	80	£1,334.87
11-May-21	Activity packs	72	72	£592.83
	TOTAL	5552	4952	£13,372.97

* Based on 15 people per day for 60 weeks

The next steps

We have ambitious plans over the next 4 years not least of which is continuing to progress our plans for Jasmin Green which will provide affordable housing for the over 55's and sustainable play facilities for young people. The range of initiatives we plan to take forward are shown below.

Support and provide training to existing and new volunteers
Hold and administer meetings to agree projects and priorities

Support and help to sustain Birchwood Area Community Land Trust who own Diamond Park on behalf of Birchwood Big Local and the Birchwood community

Keep residents updated on activities and projects through articles and publications, social media, networks, and the website

Provide Community Grants for local community groups

Keep making improvements to Diamond Park including implementation of a range of projects
Support and encourage existing and new volunteers

Hold, support or assist with activities and events held in Birchwood

Make environmental improvements
Install more litter bins and Speed Indicator Devices

Support Birchwood Foodbank

Subject to agreements and permissions being given, install play facilities, benches, picnic tables, litter bins and make environmental improvements on Jasmin Green

During the Autumn of 2021, following community consultation, we developed our new plan which will lead us to the end of the Big Local Programme in March 2026. This is currently with Local Trust for assessment

Conclusion

Guided by the priorities we established in consultation with our residents, Birchwood Big Local continues to address the needs and challenges of our community. We continue to look for new projects that will make lasting change in Birchwood.

We have aspired to far greater goals than we ever first imagined, and we continue to look ahead to the next challenge.

None of the work we carry out would be possible without the amazing and wonderful team of volunteers that make up Birchwood Big Local. Without their drive, passion, commitment, dedication and sheer hard work, none of this would have happened.

We hope you will come along and join us in the rest of the journey.

With thanks

Birchwood Big Local Partnership Board

 BirchwoodBigLocal

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Financial report to August 2021

	Budget Feb- Nov 21	Spend	Budget Remaining	Budget Total
Melbourne Community park		-	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	54,633.76	46,366.24	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	4,624.01	31,375.99	36,000.00
Outreach and Engagement	83,000.00	46,371.27	36,628.73	83,000.00
Tackling Poverty and Aspirations	20,000.00	13,314.65	6,685.35	20,000.00
Partnership Costs	244,500.00	183,042.61	61,457.39	244,500.00
Contingency	21,000.00	-	21,000.00	21,000.00
	901,500.00	350,523.25	550,976.75	901,500.00
Contribution to support grant admin and partnership running costs	45,075.00	17,526.16	27,548.84	45,075.00
	946,575.00	368,049.41	578,525.59	946,575.00
Community Champions	603.57	-	603.57	
Community Champions - Diamond Park	3,221.59		3,221.59	
	950,400.16	368,049.41	582,350.75	