



Birchwood Big Local Annual Report 2022



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Foreword

We could all agree that the recovery from Covid has been slow and most people are still very cautious at meeting face to face. We at Birchwood Big Local recognising this are still holding most of our meeting via Zoom.

Throughout all the challenges this last year has brought, we have been working away at bringing lasting change to many aspects of the life of our Birchwood Big Local Area.

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 further improvements to Diamond Park, and our project on Jasmin Green. This coming 2023 should be the year we can finally start to see much of what we have planned come into being.

We look forward to a brighter New Year and one where we can meet and engage where possible in person. If you want to see lasting improvements to our area and would like to join this wonderful group of people, please get in touch.

Eddie Strengiel, 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. Working together to achieve this the Partnership Board have met monthly or bi-monthly since then with additional meetings as and when required. There are currently 11 Board members and 5 co-opted members who will stand for election at our next AGM, many of whom have been involved from the start of the Big Local journey in 2012.

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 5 sub-groups set up, these are Communications, Green Spaces, Jasmin Green Amenity Area, Community Engagement and Diamond Park. The sub groups are made up of 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 Locally Trusted Organisation

Our locally trusted organisation is Lincolnshire Co-operative Society who have supported and assisted us over the past 7 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 priorities

By the end of the 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 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

Community Grants

In 2022 A number of Community Grants have been awarded to local groups. The total amount awarded was £1,762. 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>

Birchwood Foodbank

During 2022 we supported our local Food Bank with funding to purchase those extra special items that people who are struggling financially need.

In Diamond Park:

Volunteering events – Diamond Park is maintained and managed by local volunteers who regularly hold volunteering events where volunteers help to spruce up the park, making it the great place it is for children to play and adults to relax.

Queens Jubilee - We held a free Queens Jubilee event in June with music – Face Painting – Puppets – Crafts –and Fancy Dress attended by over 300 people.

Donkey and Petting Farm - A free Donkey and Petting Farm event in October which drew around 400 people, included Face Painting – Crafts and Party Bags was enjoyed by all who attended..



Christmas Event - A well-attended free event at the Birchwood Library Breakthrough Centre., with Face Painting – Crafts and Refreshments



Speed Indicator Devices

As the Speed Indicator Devices we previously installed have proven so successful at reducing speeding in the Birchwood area and have probably saved lives, we are planning to install 2 new Speed Indicator

Devices near the schools on Woodfield Avenue.

The next steps

We have ambitious plans over the next 3 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 a number of community events and activities across the Birchwood Big Local area

Make environmental improvements

Install more litter bins and Speed Indicator Devices

Support Birchwood Foodbank

Install play facilities, benches, picnic tables, litter bins and make environmental improvements on Jasmin Green

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 hundreds of hours each year, contributed by our 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

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Local Trust | Big Local

Financial report to December 2022

		Budget May - Dec 22	Spend	Budget Remaining	Budget Total
Admin and Operations		6,675.00	2,171.91	4,503.09	27,710.00
Birchwood Area Community Land Trust		2,690.00	1,030.79	1,659.21	16,605.00
Communications Sub Group		2,500.00	80.14	2,419.86	10,000.00
Community Grants		2,500.00	1,762.00	738.00	10,000.00
Diamond Park - Operations, Maintenance and Projects		46,500.00	699.69	45,800.31	66,000.00
Diamond Park - Volunteer Support & Feasibility		600.00	31.12	568.88	12,500.00
Events		2,500.00	363.11	2,136.89	10,000.00
Green Spaces		10,000.00	-	10,000.00	60,000.00
Jasmin Green - Environmental Improvements		-	-	0.00	50,000.00
Jasmin Green - Maintenance		-	-	0.00	16,000.00
Jasmin Green - Play area		60,000.00	-	60,000.00	260,000.00
Project Worker		9,767.00	-	9,767.00	52,500.00
Tackling poverty		2,500.00	-	2,500.00	10,000.00
Contingency		-	-	0.00	6,257.00
		146,232.00	6,138.76	140,093.24	607,572.00
Contribution to support grant admin and partnership running costs		7,311.60	306.94	7,004.66	30,378.60
		153,543.60	6,445.70	147,097.90	637,950.60
Community Champions		603.57	-	603.57	
Community Champions - Diamond Park		3,221.59		3,221.59	
		157,368.76	6,445.70	150,923.06	

