

Community Spaces



WELCOME

How to set up a community space and
best support those who use it

Websearch: [Huntingdonshire Community Spaces](#)

Foreword

Welcome to our guide to setting up and running a Community Space, which was written by our Communities team at Huntingdonshire District Council in response to requests from local people.

The last few years have been tough for a lot of us, and it can feel like we are bouncing from one crisis to the next. It's also been a time when the word 'community' has resonated more than ever. It was groups of neighbours, local community organisations and small charities that provided the first line of defence to support people in need through the pandemic. At HDC we quickly realised that the best way we could support people was to do so in conjunction with these hyper-local community networks. So when energy costs and food bills soared in 2022, we knew that our local communities would want to step up once again.

Warm Spaces was a grassroots concept that swept the nation in just a few short weeks. Community buildings, libraries, church rooms and cafés opened their doors to anyone who needed some warmth - not just in temperature, but also a friendly environment where they could relax and socialise, take part in group activities, find a sympathetic ear and perhaps some practical support. Our role at HDC was purely an enabling one. We provided advice, a light-touch framework, small grants and publicity to help get these Warm Spaces set up and thriving. In the winter of 2022-23 we worked with 41 Warm Spaces across Huntingdonshire, of which 36 continued into the summer months.

Following conversations with their organisers, we've renamed them Community Spaces. The focus is still on a friendly, welcoming environment, but we're also exploring ways to help these spaces - and the people who run them - to support those in need. Each one will be different, and you will know better than anyone what the people in your street, hamlet, village or town will need. This guide (and the resources it links to) are intended to help the existing Community Spaces continue their great work, as well as giving some advice for anyone who'd like to set up a new one.

We hope you find it useful.
Any comments or suggestions - I'd love to hear from you.

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Community Spaces



So what's a community space?
It's a location (physical or virtual) that is for the use, interaction and engagement of a community

They play a crucial role in giving a local area a sense of belonging and shared identity amongst residents.

Members of that community can come together, share experiences, collaborate or participate in various activities.



They can take various forms from social to recreational to educational.

Setting up a Community Space

Don't create extra work for yourself!

Start by checking out what's in your local area already - there may already be a space nearby that you can join up with, help out or direct your users to.

You can check what's already in your area by using the mapping tools below



[HDC: Community Space Locations](#)

[Warm Welcome Spaces](#)

Getting Started



What will go on at your space? Coffee mornings, lunch clubs, kids activities, exercise classes?

Different things have different requirements.

Is the space right for what you want?

Involve your local community!

Get input on what people would like to see and do in your space.

Plan, conduct surveys, host informal meetings.

Collaborate with local businesses and organisations - they can offer resources, financial contributions or volunteers for your space.

Create a supportive and inclusive atmosphere.

Know your target audience but make sure it is accessible and comfortable for everyone.

Where will your space be?

Choose a central and accessible location that really resonates with your community.

Plan regular events catering to the interests of the community.

Try different things to draw people in:
coffee mornings, lunches, games afternoons, talks and workshops, community clean-up days, events based on different cultural celebrations.

Safety measures - these include the use of adequate lighting, correct fire procedures and establishing clear guidelines for usage to ensure everyone stays safe.

Volunteers share the load and give sense of ownership and pride in the community.

Advertise your volunteering opportunities at

www.volunteercambs.org.uk

Consider the potential financial impact of operating or opening longer hours (e.g. utility costs)

Support of up to £500 to help keep your space open may be available through HDC's Community Chest.

For see eligibility criteria and make an application search 'HDC Grants.'

Setup: Key Resources



Must Haves



Optional

	WHAT?	WHERE?
	COMMUNITY SPACES REGISTRATION FORM	<u>HDC WEBSITE</u>
	FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT	SEARCH GOV.UK 'FIRE SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE'
	BUILDINGS RISK ASSESSMENT	SEARCH ONLINE FOR MANY FREE OPTIONS AVAILABLE
	FIXED WIRE TEST RECORDS	YOUR BUILDING SHOULD ALREADY HAVE ONE. CONTACT US IF YOU DON'T
	PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE	YOUR BUILDING SHOULD ALREADY HAVE THIS, CHECK ONLINE FOR PRICE COMPARISONS IF NOT
	GAS TESTING FOR YOUR FACILITY	SEARCH: GAS SAFE REGISTER
	FOOD LEVEL 2 HYGIENE CERTIFICATE (IF PREPARING FOOD)	SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE INFORMATION
	COMMUNITY CHEST FUNDING	<u>SEARCH FOR 'GRANTS' ON THE HDC WEBSITE</u>

Food Hygiene

Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate

If you are a group looking to provide food on a regular basis, you will need to register as a food business, guidance for which is on the Food Standard's Agency website.

Food business operators must have had suitable training in food safety and hygiene and we would recommend that someone has a Level 2 Award in Food Hygiene.

More information and advice about providing food at community venues can be found via the Food Standards Agency.



Make Every Contact Count

Many people who will be using your community space could do with a bit of help. But they may not ask for that help. And asking them about their personal circumstances can be a bit daunting. This combination leads to lost opportunities.

Making Every Contact Count training helps your staff and volunteers develop the skills and confidence to talk to people about their wellbeing.

For online course dates
Email: residentadvice@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Support One Stop Shop

WeareHuntingdonshire

If someone needs help and you're unsure what to do, use:

<https://www.wearehuntingdonshire.org>

You can:

- Use a series of simple prompt questions to identify the best support for the resident
- Signpost the resident to the self-service area (site is smartphone friendly)
- Make a referral to HDC's Resident Advice & Information Team

Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund (HSF) helps people experiencing financial hardship to pay for food and household energy bills. Your organisation could become a trusted partner issuing awards to people you are supporting. The process is designed to be quick and simple.

For more information email
residentadvice@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Other Useful Links:

[HDC Community Chest](#)

Search: '[HDC Grants](#)'

[Council Tax, Housing and other benefits](#)

Search: '[HDC Benefits](#)'

[HDC Housing, Homeless, Risk of Homelessness](#)

Search: '[HDC Housing](#)'

[HDC Domestic Abuse Advice and Information](#)

Search: 'Huntingdonshire Domestic Abuse'

[Hunts Forum](#)

An organisation that supports, develops and connects community groups and clubs, registered charities, community interest companies, social enterprises and town and parish councils.

Search: 'Hunts forum'

[Safeguarding Training](#)

A range of 20-minute briefings (presentations with audio) covering a number of locally identified safeguarding issues and what actions to take.

Search: [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#)/

WeareHuntingdonshire

During Covid, HDC contacted 1 in 6 vulnerable residents, asking if assistance was needed.

This identified who was really struggling: those on benefits, those on lower incomes missing thresholds for help and those on zero-hour contracts.

December 2022 - HDC launches its Resident Advice and Information team who contact and assist vulnerable residents identified by professional referrals.

HDC facilitates the running of warm spaces through community chest grants.

Hands-off approach designed allowing autonomy for each community space and with sustainability in mind.

HDC are now able to offer meaningful referrals and connections, designed to prevent residents entering crisis.

NEXT STEP: Linking users of community spaces with the support they need through [WeAreHuntingdonshire.org](https://www.WeAreHuntingdonshire.org)