Dear Colleagues and esteemed friends of Central West,

It was our absolute joy and privilege to host you for the first of the spring/summer Local Community Partnership Evening meetings. It was an inspiring and tender evening discovering the hidden gems in the form of people, projects and spaces on your doorstep. Thank you to our wonderful Co-Chair Carol Trower for leading the meeting. The role of a Co-Chair is a voluntary role, that is taken on by those who are passionate and involved in their local communities. We recognise your work and service to your local community so want to say thank you. Thank you Mariusz from the Clocktower Cafe for hiring us the space. The Clocktower is a popular meeting place that embraces the community in all forms, Mariusz is a keen community player who welcomes groups and partnerships from the community. For more about the Clocktower Cafe events and contact, [here.](https://www.facebook.com/clocktowercafecroydon/?ref=pages_you_manage)

**Local Community Partnerships – The journey so far**

Local Community Partnerships started to be outworked in 2020. The growing need for the joint up forces and resources of social care, primary care, wellbeing services, mental health and hospitals was recognized. The work of healthy communities together under One Croydon alliance invited the council and Croydon Voluntary Action on a journey of devolving funds, localising action for change all lead by the resident voice. The result, the Local Community Partnership meetings. We split Croydon into six geographical areas to localize the action needed as identified by the residents. The focus and funding of the health and wellbeing services is focused on the work of prevention and prevention works at its best in community. Croydon Voluntary Action have embraced the ways of Asset Based Community Development for the last decade and have seen the invaluable and sustainable results of that way of working. ABCD is looking at what’s strong instead of what's wrong, it’s looking at what gifts and talents we possess to bring be the solution that is needed putting people at the centre of their change. For more on ABCD click [here.](https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/) From the Local Community Partnership meetings, we have managed to attain a wave of funding for each locality to forge a partnership and drive the change on their local priorities. The bids were entered, and successful partnerships have been underway carrying out that work, as well as identifying further priorities to address. For this area ‘Our Space’ the building owned by disability Croydon won the bid. Our Space has multiple groups meeting their including; Mencap, Autisum groups, Hubs for all community, bereavement support, Men and mental health and the refugee community. The onsite assets include a cafe, gym and recording studios. For more on Our space and what’s on [here.](https://www.disabilitycroydon.org.uk/)

This is ambitious work and with all transparency we are taking commissioners on this journey with us. This work centres on partnership, trust and accountability. We have seen and continue to see the limitless work that can be achieved in community and invite you all on that journey with us. For more about Croydon Voluntary Action and the Local Community Partnerships/ Community Plans, [here](https://cvalive.org.uk/empowering-the-community/networks/local-community-partnerships/).

**Community Hubs**

We heard particularly from Emmanuel Church Community Hub and the incredible work they are doing. Over 1000 people pass through the hub each week. It is run by volunteers and supported financially by church members. It’s an inclusive hub that caters for mental health struggles, refugees, office space for work from home residents, private counselling rooms, exercise for the over 50’s and story time with the local primary school. Many community groups use the space and it’s a great space to get a free hot lunch. For an insight to the brilliant work Emmanuel host [here.](https://croydon.simplyconnect.uk/providers/bd4f9660-4d52-11ed-beaf-2dae8c6e01e7/emmanuel-church)

We heard from Anne an active contributor to the Emmanuel Hub who has taken lead of creative activities that are embracing women from Hong Kong bringing them together and building their language skills. This week the women from Hong Kong will be making the lunch for everyone at the hub. These change stories are the result of this type of work, and we want to hear more about them and celebrate the good things that are happening in community. Other hubs in the area include ‘All walks of life’ hub run by Sara on Fridays in ‘Our Space 10-12pm.

We heard from James Moore the Community Facilitator who oversees the work of the hubs in the South of the borough. James spoke to the many themes that have brought division into the locality such as youth violence, cost of living crisis, isolation, inequalities of many kinds. James highlighted the importance of holding space for the community to come together and start to bridge that divide and how the hubs in many cases are the space for that to happen. For a wider view on the work of hubs [here.](https://cvalive.org.uk/empowering-the-community/networks/local-community-partnerships/one-croydon-community-hubs/)

**What Did you Learn and What will you do?**

Through our networking we captured some insights of new connections that had been made and new partnership opportunities. Some examples of those potential partnership and work to be continued are:

· CVA have learnt about Aurelia art studios the work they do and how to assist in promoting them.

· St Christophers look to partner with the North West Local community partnership and attend their young people's career fair on the 16th August in Trundle Gardens.

· Health watch and Emmanuel are going to partner and look at outreach opportunities.

· Volunteer Centre Croydon and the local social services team are going to look at older people / later life provisions.

**Library update**

 Thank you to Joan reed for attending and updating us on the consultation process for the potential closure of four libraries in Croydon: Bradmoore Green, Broad Green, Sanderstead and Shirley. The reasoning behind these potential closures is due to a lack of use, it has not been cost effective to fully man the libraries and keep them open at full time hours. The central library's staff have been maning on rotation different libraries across the borough on different days of the week. The money that could be saved from closing these four libraries could be reinvested to create a more community centred service. The proposal is to have six library hubs and 3 community hubs with an outreach service to better support the community and take the library to the community where possible instead. This is a hot topic and not a light decision with a ten-week consultation period underway the opportunity for resident voice to shape that decision is being strongly considered. We await to hear what the outcome will be, but we look to support how best we can embed the outworking of those decisions to keep community connected.

We have one more day for everyone to send through their feedback on the survey and all the information is here. The survey closes Friday 19th 11:59pm: <https://www.getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/libraries-services-consultation>

**Local gems**

We invited a handful of Local gems to present the work that they are doing in the community and how to partner with the work they are doing.

- **Aurelia Art Studios**, for exhibition space, work space email Alex: aureliaartstudiosuk@gmail.com to attend the POW –play on words open mic night see flyer attached.

- **Skibabble**- a new open mic night launching in Croydon at the Clocktower to attend/ perform, see flyer attached.

- **Exhibition / Gallery space at Clocktower cafe**, contact curator John Reeve: reeve100@gmail.com

- **Croydon Museum**- to see the rewind exhibition or get involved, support their fundraising [here](https://museumofcroydon.com/)

- Bereavement course starting 3rd June at [Emmanuel Church](https://croydon.simplyconnect.uk/activities/6142e8c0-551b-11ed-b773-15329970809b/bereavement-support-bereavement-journey-course?post_code=Croydon&distance=30&page=1&limit=1000&f=1&CategoryID=1&ServiceID=43)

- Change Grow live- for Recovery advise, support and training particularly Naloxone training please contact Terry: Terry.Heywood@cgl.org.uk

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Special thanks to Lee Campbell for sharing your visual art and vulnerability with us, it was a joy to be impacted by your gift.

Thank you again for coming, great things are happening in Central West Croydon especially around connectivity and creativity. We hope to see you at the next meeting Thursday 5th Sept, 10am -12 pm please book to assist our catering.

Warm wishes Sarah, Andrew and Carol

*With thanks to Chloe for organising and the notes*

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CVA Resource Centre

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