

1 LYME REGIS DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Date established	1998
Region	South West
Employees	3 (14 part time in trading subsidiaries)
Structure	Company limited by guarantee and charity
Annabel Jackson Associates Ltd role	We evaluated the Rural Community Enterprise Challenge Fund for the Esmee Fairbairn Progress between November 2007 and July 2011

1.1 Background on the Trust

Lyme Regis Development Trust was formed in 1998 following a Planning for Real community consultation and planning exercise.

The Trust has four strands of work:

- Community involvement: managing community consultation and planning for the area, acting as a community anchor organisation for local voluntary and community sector organisations, and running a community resource centre.
- Social inclusion: helping to create affordable housing, a children's centre and other local projects.
- Learning and training: operating a youth café and advice centre (InSPARation), a community learning centre (LymeNET), and other vocational projects.
- Economic regeneration: running a fossil festival, and developing a field studies centre, cultural quarter and managed workspace.

The Trust has a lean structure, composed of one director and two administrators (one at the start of the programme). It often works through providing vision and facilitation for projects and then spinning them off as separate enterprises.

1.2 The social enterprise

The social enterprises considered at the beginning of the programme were a community kitchen, field study centre, managed workspace, and eBay charity shop. The target was for the Trust to cover its core costs of £60,000 per year by the end of the programme.

1.3 Planned capacity building

The specific organisational development aims identified in the baseline evaluation were:

- Rebalancing social and financial pressures: strengthening the resources for, commitment to, and internal links to, social enterprise.
- Strengthening the staff resourcing of the Trust e.g. introducing working groups.

- Strengthen the branding and profile of the Trust.
- Improving risk management.
- Increasing earned income and reduce dependency on core funders.
- Improving the website.
- Strengthening evaluation.

1.4 Support

The Trust has received other support apart from the EF grant:

- A Big Lottery Fund grant of £233,000 for LymeNET and a credit union.
- A DTA health check.
- DTA mentoring through Community Builders.
- A project manager through Community Builders.
- £50,000 capital and £10,000 a year revenue funding from Lyme Regis Town Council for the Hub.
- £15,000 from Locality to participate in their Libraries of the Future programme.

1.5 Capacity building

The EF funding allowed Marcus to spend 70% of his time on social enterprises.

In 2011 the Trust bought the former Lyme Regis Boys Club with a £60,000 grant from the Dorset County Council Youth Service through the Woodroffe School extended schools programme. The Trust is carrying out consultation and building work to transform it into a modern youth club. Consultation involved a part time worker talking to more than a thousand people through public meetings, questionnaires and individual consultation, over a period of four months. The name for the centre, The Hub, was selected by a panel of young people from a list of 89 suggestions made by participants. The consultation process has generated a list of preferred uses and contacts with many people wanting to support the centre through volunteering or fund raising. In the first couple of months the Hub raised £20,000 through local fund raising. The Hub has been selected by the Big Lottery's Jubilee People's Millions to be one of six regional finalists in a television contest to win £60,000 which the Trust would spend on providing disabled access to the building. Young people have taken responsibility to mobilise young people to generate support through Facebook and Twitter. This included a flashmob publicity event that broke the world record for the most people singing a song in the round, with 410 people participating, and widespread regional media coverage.

Also in 2011, the Trust acquired and refurbished a Georgian terraced house in the centre of Lyme Regis, Monmouth House. This provides low cost accommodation as well as generating £7,000-£10,000 per annum in income for the Trust. Once The Hub is up and running, the Trust will be able to turn its current youth café, 18 Church Street, into more housing.

The Trust helped secure £200,000 towards the refurbishment of the local Malthouse from the SWRDA, with an overall cost of £300,000. A mezzanine was installed, and the festival team located in there, so providing a dedicated cultural development company.

The initial proposal for a community kitchen in the St Michaels Business Centre was superseded because of the withdrawal of the partner, Bridport Food and Land Trust, feedback that the location was not ideal and costings that showed that serviced offices would give a higher cost benefit.

In 2010 the Trust won a three year £233,000 Big Lottery grant through Reaching Communities for a community learning centre and a credit union.

The field studies centre is a large scale project which has taken time to develop. The capital



requirement is some £5-7m. £13,000 has been spent so far on consultancy fees to test the ideas. In 2010 the Trust ran a joint project with the National History Museum which involved delivering 12 courses on life and earth sciences over a period of six weeks, with marketing through the Field Studies Council. This pilot was very successful and in 2010 the Trust signed an MOU with the National History Museum and the Field Studies Council with the objective of facilitating the

delivery and operations of the field studies centre. Further evidence in favour of the project comes from the attendance at the Fossil festival in 2011: some 14,000 people. The Trust is negotiating with UNESCO to make the project a flagship scheme leading a network of 68 international geological world heritage sites in the world.

In 2009 the Trust raised £154,000 for the fossil festival, in partnership with the Higher Education Regional Development Association. This includes a contribution of £7,000 per annum to the Trust.

The Trust is continuing work on the planned extension of St Michaels Business Centre, where it is based. The Trust has planning permission and ownership: SWRDA transferred their 37.56% interest to the Trust. The Trust won a grant of £20,000 from Community Builders for a feasibility study, with the expectation that it could submit an application for grant and loan funding. The Trust also applied to the SWRDA for £171,000 funding through Rural Development Programme for England, Access 3 (social and community enterprise), and raised £30,000 from Lankelly Chase. However despite the SWRDA application being positively assessed its progress has been held up in the funds transfer to Defra and the Trust is still awaiting a decision as to whether they will be able to proceed.

In 2011 the County Council announced the closure of the library in Lyme Regis. The Trust has long been interested in the synergies between the library and its learning centre and so has put a proposition to the County Council for a 'service transformation prototyping project', collocating the library with its learning centre. This would involve the Trust, through its partner, Magna Housing Association, building affordable housing on the library site, demolishing the

1960s prefab which is the library building, so generating the funds for the relocation and continued operation. The Trust is one of three trusts nationally working on Locality's Libraries of the Future programme, to look at how knowledge in the local community can be used to create digital products as assets.

This work on social enterprise has been underpinned by changes to internal systems such as an induction pack for new trustees, office processes and a risk assessment system, as well as improvements to the website.

The profile of the Trust is higher, in part through media coverage for Marcus. He won citizen of the year from the local newspaper in 2011.

1.6 Learning

Marcus suggests the following lessons:

"Strategic planning needs to recognise that often opportunities come along in an unpredictable way and you need to be flexible enough to response."

"Everything takes longer to happen than you would like. "

"The Trust is dependent on its trustees but there is a limit to what you can ask of them."

Much of the Trust's work is behind the scenes, so it does not always receive recognition. The individual projects, some of which are spun off, have separate identifies and the public might identify them with the Trust.

"Partnership working can only ever go as fast as the slowest partner."

"The Government's policy of Big Society provides opportunities for development trusts."

"We thrive on chaos. The more chaotic it is the more opportunities for us."