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# Brunswick Enterprise Hub

## Project final evaluation May 2013

Advantage West Midlands and Warwick District Council  
Brunswick Enterprise Hub-Leamington CUP  
Project reference number: DP/RD7003A (C-AWM\_141)

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## Contents

Executive summary .....	4
Project overview: background and context .....	5
Project management.....	6
Objectives.....	6
Outcomes.....	7
Measurable outputs.....	7
Funding overview .....	9
Project timescales .....	10
Evidence of need.....	10
Monitoring and reporting .....	11
Other funding sources .....	12
Community Enterprise Officer (CEO) .....	13
Employment Club.....	14
Community awareness-raising.....	18
Survey key findings.....	19
Conclusions .....	24
References .....	25

## Executive summary

The Brunswick Enterprise Zone project had two component parts:

- i. a capital project involving the creation of a dedicated "enterprise zone" within the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre, a busy local community health and well-being centre – this involved building an extension to the building – and equipping the Zone;
- ii. a revenue project which provided funding for a new post of Community Enterprise Officer (CEO) whose role was to promote enterprise, raise the profile of the Social Enterprise business model, and to advise and support local people wishing to start their own business.

The project had as its strategic objective the creation of an "enterprise culture" as a means of tackling problems in the most deprived areas of the Local Authority. By providing free access to expertise, information and advice, it was envisaged that more local people would start up their own business as a way out of unemployment and employment instability.

The project was developed and managed by Warwick District Council as part of a cluster of projects designed to "uplift" the economic environment of more deprived areas of the local authority area – principally south Leamington (Old Town) – Brunswick and part of Willes wards; the project also operated in other areas of the District notably north Leamington (Crown ward) and parts of Warwick.

The project was to run for 5 years from the start of the building works in Spring 2008 through to March 31, 2013, the final point for the achievement and reporting of agreed outputs and milestones and for submission of final claims to the funding body. As of April 2013 the project had achieved its contracted outputs, and all funding claims and progress reports had been submitted.

Approaching the official end-point of the project over 20 new businesses had been started, of which approximately half had been in operation for more than 12 months.

Surveys undertaken at various intervals throughout the project's lifetime provide evidence of a high level of satisfaction with the quality of service received by individual clients who had engaged with the project through contact with the CEO.

The legacy of the project lies in

- the establishment of successful small local businesses operating in the creative, environmental, IT, consultancy and design sectors.
- the creation of Employment Clubs in two of the most deprived wards of the District which continue to assist local people to find work, and are supported by private-sector funders;
- enhanced facilities of the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre which are now used as meeting and training areas;

## Project overview: background and context

The Brunswick Enterprise Hub was one of a cluster of projects developed and managed by Warwick District Council, designed to encourage economic regeneration of the area known as Old Town, Leamington Spa. Collectively the projects - Althorpe Enterprise Hub (AEH), Court Street Creative Arches (CSCA) and Brunswick Enterprise Hub) are known as the CUP Programme (Creating Uplift Provision). All three projects were officially launched in September and October 2009.

In the interlude between the funding approval and the start of the project it was decided to refer to the project locally as the **Brunswick Enterprise Zone** (to avoid confusion with its sister project the Althorpe Enterprise Hub).

In 2010 following the establishment of the first of two local Employment Clubs, the project became known as the **Brunswick Enterprise and Employment Zone (BEEZ)** – this is the project title used in this report.

The principal aim of the project was to offer pre-start business advice, social enterprise awareness and employment advice and training, in partnership with other specialist agencies (for example Business Link), in order to increase the capacity of local people to start and succeed in their own business. This was seen as a possible way out of unemployment following redundancy and the decline in the manufacturing industries which traditionally employed people from these localities.

In March 2008 public and private funding amounting to approximately £433,000 was secured to refurbish and extend an existing community facility - the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre (BHLC), and to provide office and IT equipment. The bulk of the funding (87%) was provided by Advantage West Midlands, the Regional Development Agency for the West Midlands.

After March 31, 2012, AWM ceased to exist, along with all 9 RDAs, following the change of Government in the General Election of 2010. Ownership of the project was as a result transferred to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to which all monitoring reports relating to the project were now directed.

The funding enabled the creation of a dedicated "community enterprise zone" within the refurbished community health and wellbeing centre, with the aim of raising awareness of enterprise – and social enterprise - and self-employment among the users of the Centre and the wider community. At the same time the BHLC underwent a significant internal rearrangement and refurbishment in order to improve the facilities available.

Following a temporary closure of the Healthy Living Centre to allow the building works to proceed, the Centre re-opened to the public in July 2009, and the BEZ project was officially launched on October 3, 2009 at the BHLC official opening attended by over 300 people.

The new post of Community Enterprise Officer (CEO) was specifically created to deliver the Brunswick Enterprise Zone project. Initially intended to be a part-time post, additional revenue funding was secured which enabled the position to be advertised as a full-time, 2-year appointment and with a remit to promote enterprise beyond the immediate locality of the project.

## Project management

The project is an integral part of Warwick District Council's overarching CUP programme (see above): three economic regeneration projects which are managed by the Council's Enterprise Development Manager and the Business Enterprise Manager based at the Althorpe Enterprise Hub.

The projects are situated in close proximity in the Old Town locality of Leamington Spa, delivering a range of outputs focussing on promoting enterprise, support for new business start-ups and early stage businesses, job creation, individual skills improvement and SME growth. The projects are responding to the needs of residents and the business community in the south Leamington area, and more widely in the Warwick District geographic area overall.

The Business Enterprise Manager has devised and implemented a universal reporting system and spreadsheet which tracks the projects' financial claims, outputs and milestones. This spreadsheet is used to record data, identify those outputs that can be reported according to the definitions, and to indicate where outputs have previously been reported. The spreadsheet uses filters to enable the efficient gathering of data and ensures that outputs are not double-counted.

The Community Enterprise Officer, who while in post was the principal officer initiating and managing project activities, reported to the Council's Enterprise Development Manager. The CEO maintained personal client records and records of users of project services – these are now held securely at the Althorpe Enterprise Hub.

The Jobs Clubs, the remaining active element of the project, are the responsibility of the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre management, which employs and supervises the Jobs Club advisors and volunteers, and maintains a system for collecting data on the number of individuals accessing its services, the number of registered members, their ethnicity, age and Ward area of residence.

## Objectives

The objectives of the project were set out in the Funding Agreement (Contract) with Advantage West Midlands as follows:

- *to provide a sustainable way of continuing the economic regeneration of Leamington Old Town through development of an enterprise culture: raising skills levels, aspirations and living standards amongst the local community.*
- *to engage people from the more deprived community of Brunswick in accessing new enterprise skills and job opportunities presented within the growing technologies and creative industries (especially arts, media and design) in and around Leamington Spa.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> AWM – WDC Brunswick Enterprise Hub, Standard Funding Agreement, March 2008, p.21

## Outcomes

The main outcomes of the project were set out as follows in the funding contract. The table below shows progress against anticipated outcomes.

Anticipated project outcomes	Progress against project outcomes
<i>entrepreneurial activity amongst the Brunswick community should increase, demonstrate sustainable growth and attract investment</i>	Focussing on individuals from the CV31 area, by means of referrals and co-operation with JobCentre Plus, Business Link, Chamber of Commerce and Princes Trust, the CEO saw approximately 200 clients leading to at least 11 new businesses created and still operating after 12+ months
<i>the community of Brunswick and Old Town will be actively engaged in the growth of new industry sectors and businesses moving into Old Town and the District</i>	New businesses and social enterprises are operating in the creative and technology sectors, e.g. IT systems design; web design; marketing consultancy; photography; local history archive resource; jewellery making & hand-made furniture, and community project delivery
<i>this will be done by providing local company information in the Enterprise Hub [Zone] and by arranging networking events and surgeries to promote the needs of, and opportunities within, the new sectors</i>	A dedicated "enterprise zone" was created with IT stations, meeting space, seminar and training/workshop venue; close by the Althorpe Enterprise Hub is a base for new business networking opportunities e.g. regular networking lunches; & was the location of office premises & facilities offered as part of the WDC Enterprise Grant scheme to 6 start-up businesses

## Measurable outputs

The table below shows the reported outputs at the approximate mid-point (Q4 2010-11, March 31, 2011). By this point in the life of the project excellent progress had been made in achieving the contracted outputs.

A report to Warwick District Council's Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee of June 2011 noted that in fact 23 new businesses had been established by this time. Only three of these had been reported to the funding body however: in order to meet the output definition, businesses need to have survived for a 12-month period from creation (see below).

In the course of Q4 2012-3 a survey of businesses confirmed that at least 11 businesses were still operating 12 months after being established.

Brunswick Enterprise Zone Summary of outputs			
Output definition	Contracted outputs	Achieved by project mid-point	Achieved by project end 31.03.13
Job creation: New Jobs created	14 <sup>2</sup>	14	14
Business Creation: Actual at 12 months	11	3	11
<b>Additional (non-contracted) output:</b>			
Individuals assisted to get a job <sup>3</sup>	0	121	256

**Note on AWM output definitions and output rescheduling:**

**Jobs created:** new jobs are considered to be created when a new company is registered and starts business and/or takes on an additional member of staff to fill a newly-created post. A survey of new businesses conducted in February 2013 suggested that most of the new businesses are operating as sole traders with a small percentage sustaining 2 jobs.

**Businesses created and surviving 12 months:** In a note to the funding body AWM in April 2011, in the context of a review of all enterprise project output targets, the Business Enterprise Manager anticipated a likely increase in the number of new businesses created & surviving 12 months which the project could achieve; this estimation was attributed to the job of the CEO being made full-time for the first two years of the project, rather than the 0.5FTE contracted in 2008 - thus enabling more support for local business creation throughout the District than was originally envisaged.

**Individuals assisted to get a job:** a potential for capturing and reporting an extra, non- contracted output was indentified and incorporated into a revised output schedule from April 2011, namely *Individuals assisted into a job*.

The output records the number of individuals in receipt of employment (job-search) assistance, not the number actually obtaining a job (see table above). This has been achieved through the activities of the Community Enterprise Officer (CEO) and the Employment Clubs operating in Brunswick and Lillington.

Although not included as part of the original funding conditions, it was decided to record evidence of the activity in order to maintain a record of the support being provided to local people to help them find jobs.

<sup>2</sup> Total no. contracted was originally 11 but was revised upwards in 2011 as part of a review of all Enterprise Projects' output schedules

<sup>3</sup> Output was not specified in funding contract – these output figures are derived from the employment support activities of the Employment Clubs



## Funding overview

Funding source		2008 contract  £	2008 contract % contribution	Final AWM claim 2010 (accounting for contract variations) £
AWM/ERDF <sup>4</sup>	<b>Total</b>	<b>374,562</b>	<b>87 %</b>	<b>393,411</b>
	of which Capital	319,563		341,982
	Revenue	54,999		51,429 <sup>5</sup>
Match funding	<b>Total</b>	<b>57,994</b>	13%	
	of which public capital	5,500		
	public revenue	15,846		
	Private capital			
	Private revenue	36,648		
Total		<b>432,556</b>	100 %	

The extension (70 sq m) designated for the enterprise zone consisted of a room suitable for training, interviews and meetings; an area equipped with six computer workstations available for short-term hire, and an office which was the base for the Community Enterprise Officer (CEO). This area was leased to Warwick District Council by the owners of the BHLC for a "peppercorn rent" for the lifetime of the project.

The intention was originally to provide easy-access lettable desk space for new start-up businesses. These were to be made available to all business types but in particular to pre-start technology and creative industry businesses, social enterprises and women's enterprises within the local community.

In fact it soon became apparent that there was very little demand for such a facility; this has been attributed to the dramatic rise, since the project funding bid was submitted in 2007, in private ownership of personal computers and laptops, as well as access to the internet, with the result that individuals who wished to set up a business could do so fairly easily from their own home.

As a consequence of, and in response to the "credit crunch" and onset of recession in 2008-9, there followed a greater emphasis on offering employment advice and assisting local people to find jobs; the project's name was then changed to Brunswick Enterprise and Employment Zone to reflect the type of services being offered.

<sup>4</sup> AWM capital funding covered construction costs, professional fees and loose equipment; AWM revenue funding covered project establishment and part of the salary of the Community Enterprise Office (CEO).

<sup>5</sup> AWM revenue funding was less than originally agreed due to the timing of the appointment of the CEO.

## Project timescales

Event	Date
Project start date / funding approval	11 March 2008
Construction period	November 2008 – April 2009
Community Enterprise Officer in post	April 2009 – November 2011
Project official launch	October 2009
Employment Club established in Brunswick	July 2010
Employment Club established in Lillington	June 2012
Funding and project delivery completion	31 March 2012
Physical completion date (end of project)	31 March 2013
Project evaluation	March -April 2013
Final monitoring report to HCA	May 2013

## Evidence of need

The specific objective of the project was to promote enterprise within the local community of Old Town, an area where opportunities for employment were decreasing as a result of the closure of traditional industries of manufacturing and assembly.

*According to the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation, there are two Super-Output Areas (SOAs) in the locality ranked within the top 20-30% most deprived SOAs nationally. These are both in the Brunswick area of South Leamington. Deprivation linked to education, skills and training appears to be a particular issue in the South Leamington area, with six SOAs ranked within the top 30% most deprived SOAs in England on this measure.<sup>6</sup>*

The Business Case for the Enterprise Zone noted that Brunswick Ward had a high level of economically inactive people, with 54.8% of the working population in work (compared with 64.7% in work for Warwick District as a whole).

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<sup>6</sup> Warwickshire Observatory, South Leamington Locality Profile 2011, p. 5

In 2006, surveys were conducted in the Brunswick and Lillington areas specifically to gauge local awareness of and attitudes towards self-employment or running a business. The key findings of the 2006 survey (130 responses) were as follows:

- Two-thirds of respondents cited lack of finance as one of the problems associated with starting a business
- 77 % cited fear of getting into debt or adding to existing debt
- 45 % cited the difficulty of becoming self-sufficient, i.e. coming off a wage or benefits
- Fear of failure was seen as a disincentive for 49% of respondents

The project was a good "fit" with the then West Midlands Economic Strategy developed by AWM which aimed, among other things to:

- develop a diverse and dynamic business base
- improve enterprise performance
- promote a skilful region by developing an enterprise and entrepreneurship culture
- regenerate communities by "linking opportunity to need"

At the same time the project ethos was in line with the objectives of the then Government's Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) which aimed to:

*'release the economic and productivity potential of the most deprived local areas across the country through enterprise and investment – thereby boosting local incomes and employment opportunities and building sustainable communities'.<sup>7</sup>*

In its Sustainable Community Strategy document (2009-2026) the Warwick Partnership noted:

*"... the district's affluence does mask some significant inequalities in terms of health, income and skills. There have been a considerable number of targeted interventions in the Brunswick and Crown wards in Leamington in recent years and significant improvements made in narrowing the gaps. Such targeted efforts are now being expanded to take in some of the estates in Warwick where pockets of deprivation exist."<sup>8</sup>*

## Monitoring and reporting

Systems for monitoring and reporting both financial and output information were established by the Council's Enterprise Team in conjunction with the centralised Finance Department of Warwick District Council – the accountable body and lead partner in the delivery of the project.

Officers of the Enterprise Team manage financial and output-recording systems for all the Council's economic regeneration projects, based at the Althorpe Enterprise Hub. Client files were maintained by the CEO once he was in post.

The project has been the subject of regular monitoring visits by Advantage West Midlands project officers. Following the transfer of the project to the Homes and Communities Agency an officer has been assigned to the project and maintains regular contact with the Business Enterprise Manager.

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<sup>7</sup> National Evaluation of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative – Final Report December 2010; AMION Consulting / Department for Communities and Local Government

<sup>8</sup> A Shared Vision: Warwick District's Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026, The Warwick Partnership

Regular reports to the Council's Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee have ensured that elected Warwick District Council members have been kept fully informed of the project's costs, development and progress at all stages.

The project has therefore been monitored in all aspects since its inception and there is grounds for confidence that the records are maintained securely, the reporting systems are transparent and conform with the specific requirements of the funders, and the Local Authority's internal and external auditors.

### Other funding sources

- Local Strategic Partnership Narrowing the Gap Fund; £33,000 to contribute to the salary of the CEO, enabling the post to be offered as 2 years full time and to extend the project to other areas of need within Warwick District. The amount included a small sum towards the cost of marketing the service throughout the District.
- WDC Enterprise Grant –Valued at £1,000 i.e. £500 cash grant available by application for business start-up costs, plus £500 worth of "bronze subscription" level use of the office facilities at the Althorpe Enterprise Hub.

A total of 6 start-up grants were awarded through an application process, with the selection of successful candidates carried out by a panel consisting of the CEO and an elected member of Warwick District Council.

- Illuminate Social Enterprise: A grant of £4,000 was obtained from Social Enterprise West Midlands, the purpose of which was to market and promote the idea of social enterprise, raising awareness of the business model, examples and opportunities.

Part of this funding was spent on marketing and promotion of a free social enterprise "Business Ideas" workshop which was held at the BHLC in November 2009 delivered by Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency.

## Community Enterprise Officer (CEO)

The role of the Community Enterprise Officer (CEO) was to raise the profile of enterprise throughout Warwick District, with emphasis on support for women's enterprise and social enterprise; to provide signposting and start-up business advice for local entrepreneurs, promote the creation of social enterprises within targeted communities, offer advice and information, training, workshops and one to one mentoring – all free of charge to the client.

A sum of £28,000 AWM revenue funding was included in the project funding bid specifically to fund the costs of the new post of Community Enterprise Officer (CEO). It was intended that this post would be part time (0.5% FTE) and initially be funded by AWM for two years and then a further two years by Warwick District Council.

An opportunity arose following the AWM funding award to bid for additional funding from the Local Strategic Partnership Warwick Partnerships' "Narrowing the Gap" fund. This funding was distributed among 6 key District-wide projects in 2009/10. An extra £33,000 was secured, allowing the CEO post to be advertised as full-time for 2 years and providing a small marketing budget.

The Narrowing the Gap funding enabled the CEO to promote enterprise in other hard-pressed communities of the local authority as well as in Brunswick, particularly Lillington (Crown Ward), Warwick North and Warwick West Wards where it was thought important to provide enterprise promotion and support.

Ian Kirkwood, who came from a career in banking as a business and commercial manager, was in the end employed from April 2009 to the end of November 2011 when he left to take up another post within the District Council.

Examples of typical CEO activity (as reported to the Local Strategic Partnership in November 2009):<sup>9</sup>

- Referring clients onto Business Link training modules
- Holding weekly drop-in sessions at three local community centres across the District
- Seeing clients by appointment
- Promoting the project through posters and leaflets in community centres, One Stop Shops, Libraries, CAVA offices, and community notice boards
- Attending Community Forums and other events "to network and promote the role and services"
- Establishing links with University of Warwick Students Union to provide support for enterprise among the 4000 + students resident in South Leamington

Over the lifetime of the project the provision of business advice and support by other organisations underwent a period of change and disruption, with many services of this nature being withdrawn or restructured.

A key partner providing such support and help was Business Link, which ceased "one to one" advice from November 2011 with the closure of its West Midlands operations. This and other services became on-line only, targeted at specific sectors, with decreasing possibilities of talking to an advisor face to face. Following the reduction in one-to-one services available locally from Business Link, from April 2010 the CEO was the sole employee providing new business advice, support and development.

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<sup>9</sup> Project activity report, Narrowing the Gap Progress to Date, November 2009

The presence of an officer whose time was freely available in community locations, with expertise in banking, finance and business, was therefore a unique and highly effective feature of the project. The benefits of this personal approach may be seen in appreciative comments made by clients in various surveys (see below).

Early in the life of the project a working relationship was established with the Leamington Job Centre Plus to refer clients to the CEO if they expressed an interest in starting a business, and also with Business Link West Midlands to exchange information & make referrals about individuals seeking business advice.

As the project developed the CEO was instrumental in liaising with the local Job Centre Plus to provide a localised jobs search facility at the BHLC, and ultimately in establishing a successful Jobs Club based at the Healthy Living Centre in response to the needs of the community.

Advantage West Midlands and Local Strategic Partnership revenue funding for the Community Enterprise Officer post finished on 31st March 2011; however contributions from Brunswick Healthy Living Centre and Warwick District Council enabled the contract of employment to be extended for a further 7 months.

The South Leamington Community Forum Newsletter reported in January 2012 on the departure of the CEO to another post:

*For the last two years [the CEO] has been based at Brunswick Healthy Living Centre and has been instrumental in developing business support in the area and in the development of the Brunswick Employment club. This club now provides weekly support and advice in the Ward and is soon to expand into North Leamington.*

*While South Leamington will miss Ian and his enthusiasm and great partnership approach of getting people talking to each other and developing a "do-it approach," we wish him well in his new role and we are confident his links in our area will remain strong.<sup>10</sup>*

## Employment Club

Although not envisaged as part of the BEZ project, the Employment Club evolved in response to the economic downturn from 2008, and became an unforeseen outcome of the project. The additional resources being put into help with job-finding resulted in the project being re-named the Brunswick Enterprise and Employment Zone (BEEZ).

As a means of getting in touch with local unemployed people, the CEO in November 2009 had initiated an arrangement with Job Centre Plus (JCP) whereby the Leamington Job Centre referred unemployed persons living in the target areas area to him for additional support and information on starting a business, with referrals being made from April 2010.

As a result of the relationship established with JCP, employment advisers were subsequently deployed into Warwickshire Direct Offices in Warwick and Kenilworth on a 6-month trial basis from July 2010. These were local "one stop shops" where people could access District and County Council services in one location.

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<sup>10</sup> "Behind the Scenes" South Leamington Community Forum Newsletter, Jan 16, 2012, p. 2

The pilot ceased in March 2011 and was not continued due to changes in the way the Department for Works and Pensions now operates, i.e. by providing employment support through private third party employment advisers.

Behind the creation of the Jobs Club was the realisation that there remained very limited entitlement to support from Job Centre Plus for people who had been out of work for less than 6 months. Feedback from both the North [Lillington] and South[Brunswick] Leamington Community Forums emphasised that the deprived areas of the District needed a Jobs Club to fill this perceived gap in the JCP service.

*The South Leamington & Whitnash locality's unemployment rate of 3.3%, as measured by the proportion of the working age population claiming Job-Seekers Allowance, was well above the County rate of 2.6%.<sup>11</sup>*

With financial support from the South Leamington Community Forum, the Narrowing the Gap budget, and Brunswick Healthy Living Centre (BHLC) the Brunswick Employment Club was established in July 2010 as a joint venture with BHLC, and managed by the CEO.

In the annual BHLC Trustees Report 2010-11 (to March 31, 2011) the need for the service was identified as a symptom of the current economic situation:

*"with the economic downturn many clients [of BHLC] were accessing the internet cafe computers for job search. With the introduction of [Warwickshire County Council] library fees for such use, a growing community need was emerging. After further investigation and working with the Warwick District Community Enterprise Officer, it was clear a new approach to seeking employment was needed."<sup>12</sup>*

After one year of operation (to July 2011), approx 120 people were registered as members, and 24 had reportedly found jobs through the Club.<sup>13</sup>

At the December 2011 BHLC AGM it was reported that the Employment Club was the fastest-growing service at the Centre. The Job Advisor and a team of volunteers had assisted over 250 people during that time, and there was anecdotal evidence of 47 recorded successes in club members finding jobs.

Analysis of registered members of the Club showed that 60% were from the more deprived areas of the District (Clarendon, Crown, Warwick West and Willes) with the majority of users from Brunswick ward.<sup>14</sup>

In the following year's Trustees Report (year ending 31 March 2012) it was noted that

*"The employment club has proved highly successful and funding has been secured via Warwick District Council and Morrison's supermarket development [on the former Ford Foundry site in Leamington] for two years 2012-14. During the year there were 1477 visits from 216 clients with approximately 50 people finding employment. "*

<sup>11</sup> Warwickshire Observatory South Leamington Locality Profile 2011, p.5

<sup>12</sup> BHLC Trustees report 2010-11, p. 6

<sup>13</sup> Report to Warwick District Council's Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, June 7, 2011, "Progress Report on Enterprise Projects" p. 5

<sup>14</sup> Report to AGM, December 8, 2011

The additional 2 years' funding for the Brunswick Employment Club was obtained through a Section 106 Agreement on the development of the former Ford foundry site - the "Leamington Gateway" - by Trilogy Developers and Morrison's supermarket. Under the Agreement Morrisons provided £16,000 per annum for two years funding all the overhead costs of the Club including the Jobs Club advisors salary. Morrisons also made use of the facilities at the BHLC as a base for the recruitment of staff to its new supermarket, which opened in April 2013.

In January 2013 the Leamington Courier reported

*Trilogy [Developers of the site] and Morrisons [supermarket] are currently working with the Brunswick [Healthy Living] Centre with the objective of identifying candidates for jobs in the new foodstore and are contributors toward their Job Club<sup>15</sup>.*

In February 2013 further private-sector funding was secured as part of another site development in Leamington, towards the sustainability of the Brunswick Jobs Club, the Leamington Observer reporting

*As part of the planning application, the developer Deeley Group is supporting the Brunswick Job Club which[ .... ]provides local people with help and advice in finding work.<sup>16</sup>*

Additionally a 3-year funded project to establish and run a second Club in North Leamington had been secured "by working in partnership with the Crown Consortium".<sup>17</sup>

The Crown Routes Consortium<sup>18</sup>, which included among its partnership the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre, was formed to bid for funding to deliver certain community voluntary services on behalf of the Local Authority; the Consortium's successful tender included the proposal to extend the Jobs Club into Crown Ward, Lillington in North Leamington.

At this second location in Lillington, which began to operate in June 2012, a weekly four-hour session is provided by a paid employment adviser supported by a team of locally recruited volunteers, the same model as for Brunswick Jobs Club. A user commented in June 2012:

*"The [North Leamington] jobs club is a welcome addition in Crown [Ward], it's local and is available to all, previously the only other jobs club was at the Healthy Living Centre off Brunswick Street at the bottom of town".<sup>19</sup>*

Comments from a survey of Jobs Club users included the following:

*The facilities and support at Brunswick were and are very helpful especially as job hunting requires a computer.  
Very helpful to be able to access the internet as many employers require you to contact them via email now.*

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.leamingtoncourier.co.uk/news/local/new-plan-for-former-ford-site-causes-council-concern-1-4513514>

<sup>16</sup> Leamington Observer, February 14, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> BHLC Ltd Report of the Trustees to March 31, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> The partners were The CHAIN, Lillington Youth Centre, The Community Centre, The Lillington Childrens Centre and the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in <http://crownlibdems.mycouncillor.org.uk/2012/06/01/north-leamington-employment-club/>



*Helen [Employment Adviser] helped me very much. She created my CV and helped me to fill in my application forms whenever I got stuck.*

Clients wishing to access the Club firstly register and receive a registration pack. Membership entitles clients to a 1:1 appointment with the employment advisor, free use of the computer stations to carry out job searches, a personal email account and a free printing/photocopying service.

A team of Jobs Club volunteers assists users who require help to improve their IT skills, conduct and save on-line job searches, create and upload CVs and save personal data. Two sessions per week are currently offered, with the pc stations observed being used to capacity on a number of occasions.

The Jobs Club / Employment Club / Works Club format was in line with Government thinking after the 2010 General Election:

*The main aim of Work Clubs is to help people make the most of local knowledge and resources to help unemployed people in their communities gain employment. They will empower local communities and encourage people to work together to offer additional support to the unemployed.*

*Work Clubs will provide unemployed people with a place to meet and exchange skills, find opportunities, make contacts, share experiences and receive support to help them in their return to work.<sup>20</sup>*

### **User profiles of the Employment Clubs**

Data collection for Employment Club membership and attendance for the period April 2012-January 2013 revealed the following user profile information for each Club:

#### **Brunswick Employment Club:**

- 200 registered members
- 1332 visits recorded
- 21 jobs secured (confirmed)
- 65% of clients lived in Brunswick, Clarendon, Crown, Warwick West or Willes wards

#### **Lillington Employment Club:**

- 87 registered members
- 279 visits recorded
- 11 jobs secured (confirmed)
- 74.2% of clients lived in Crown, Manor and Warwick West wards<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Department of Work and Pensions website <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/adviser/updates/work-clubs/> updated January 2012

<sup>21</sup> Brunswick Healthy Living Centre Monitoring and Evaluation, April 2012-February 2013

## Community awareness-raising

The project was the subject of a creative piece of community drama facilitated by local theatre group Heartbreak Productions in 2010 in partnership with local radio station BBC Coventry & Warwickshire.

Heartbreak were commissioned to create a piece of community theatre exploring the themes of enterprise, redundancy and unemployment, to raise awareness of these issues in the local community, while raising the profile of the project.

"Forum theatre" – of which this was an example, is described as

*A [...] medium for engaging community groups in solution-focussed dialogue about some of the issues that affect them[. ...] The community audience is invited to pause the performance and bring their own ideas and suggestions to change the course of actions and work towards resolving the situation<sup>22</sup>.*

The resulting drama "*Just the Job*" was performed at the BHLC by Heartbreak Productions and hosted by BBC Coventry and Warwickshire in March 2010.

The drama was developed by Heartbreak following encounters with local people who had been made redundant. Based on these peoples' stories, actors devised a collection of scenarios and scenes which were pared down to create the short play. The audience were invited to offer suggestions and advice on how the main character could improve his situation.

*"The play was absolutely fantastic, looking at the different angles and approaches."*  
(Audience member's comment).

It took the form of four short radio drama episodes – these were actually broadcast on BBC Coventry and Warwickshire during April 2010 as part of a weeklong series of Brunswick –based events, produced in partnership with BBC local radio. The radio drama subsequently won a Bronze award at the BBC Local Radio Gillard Awards in November 2010.

A promotional DVD was also produced, focussing on a sample of success stories – i.e. individuals who had gone through the process of starting their own business. It also showcased the facilities and services of the other Enterprise Projects available to new businesses.

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<sup>22</sup> Heartbreak Productions website <http://www.heartbreakproductions.co.uk/>

## Survey key findings

*"Regular surveys amongst the community will record the effectiveness of the project."<sup>23</sup>*

Over the lifetime of the project the following surveys have been conducted – the findings of which are summarised below.

**October 2009:** a survey was carried out over a 10-day period by Heartbreak Productions, a locally-based theatre company. The survey was intended to gauge local awareness of the BHLC, its services, and awareness of the new BEZ facilities now available there. Those surveyed were also asked if they wanted to take part in a short film/drama. The information was used in the creation of a piece of community theatre on the issues of redundancy, unemployment and enterprise creation (see above).

The survey was conducted in the Leamington Spa postal code areas CV31 and CV32 in locations including Clemens St, High St and the Asda supermarket; 180 responses were received and analysed.

### Key findings

#### October 2009 survey

19% were unemployed

48% had thought about starting their own business

57% had no idea where to access relevant information

79% had not heard of the Brunswick Enterprise Zone

20% were interested in receiving support and training of the kind available at the BHLC

20% of those who had considered starting a business said that they would need help with business planning

The data revealed that a high percentage of those surveyed were not aware of the existence of the BHLC or its place within the community or of the enterprise services available there. It is worth noting that the survey was conducted only 6 months into the tenure of the CEO and soon after the official launch of the project, and was therefore timely in raising awareness and informing people of what was available who might otherwise not know.

The findings also suggest that users of the BHLC are drawn from the immediate local area, and/or are referred there by other agencies, for example GPs for access to PCT services, or by Job Centre Plus.

The survey concluded that

*"With 36.5% wanting to receive more information about Brunswick [sic] and 20% interested in receiving ongoing support and training, there is obviously an opportunity for the Enterprise scheme to have a marked effect among the people of Old Town."<sup>24</sup>*

<sup>23</sup> Advantage West Midlands Funding Agreement, March 2008, p. 21

<sup>24</sup> Conclusion, Survey data analysis, October 2009

**September 2011:** a client satisfaction survey was conducted by the CEO two months before leaving the post.

Clients who had received one-to-one advice & support from the CEO up to September 2011 were asked the following questions:

- Were you satisfied with the timescale between contacting the CEO and meeting him?
- Were you satisfied with the information you received?
- Were you satisfied with the Community Enterprise Officer's knowledge?
- Were you satisfied that all your questions were answered?
- Were you satisfied that the information and assistance provided by the Community Enterprise Service enabled you to reach your decision as to whether to start your own business or not?
- Were you satisfied that you felt more confident in reaching your decision after accessing the Community Enterprise service?
- Were you sufficiently satisfied to recommend the Community Enterprise service to others?

Analysis of the 21 responses (rated on a scale from very unsatisfied to very satisfied) showed that 95% of respondent described themselves as satisfied or very satisfied with the service received.

In a follow-up question clients seen by the CEO between September 2009-September 2011 were asked to state whether they had subsequently started their business, were still thinking about it, or had decided against it – the responses were as follows:

<b>Started a new business</b>	<b>Thinking about starting a business</b>	<b>Decided not to proceed with starting a business</b>
<b>43%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>5%</b>

The additional comments received in several of the survey responses reveal that a significant number of the respondents felt that they had benefited from high-quality support and expertise and had particularly appreciated the one-to-one contact with the Community Enterprise Officer.

### Sample comments from Community Enterprise Officer clients:

*Setting up in business is a costly and worrying affair and Ian was my first point of contact - I was very grateful for his considered and formative responses to my 1000 questions. He gave me the guidance I needed to transform my photography business concept into a reality and without the support and advice from Ian, I don't think I would have gone through with the business as it was all too scary!*

*The services offered by the [Althorpe] Enterprise Hub as well are fantastic and to be able to hire a desk space, a meeting room, or a self contained office for a minimum of 3 months is a wonderful resource and understands that the team knows what new businesses are looking for when they start out.*

*I have recommended the services to other start-up businesses and I know if and when I come to start up my next business, Ian and his team will be my first point of contact. Thanks again for all the help and support.*

*I found the community enterprise service incredibly useful and I am pleased to see that such a facility exists.*

*It is incredibly useful to be able to speak with another experienced professional about matters such as finance, risk, premises etc and to be able to make an informed decision about whether to start in business and if so, how.*

*... things have been going really well so far. We've definitely come a long way since our early tentative talks with you but that's where it all began, so thanks for getting our ball rolling*

### Survey of new business clients, February 2013

As part of the final project evaluation a survey of former clients and new businesses was conducted.

Five businesses responded to a short survey available on-line in February 2013 (a response rate of 33% of the 15 businesses contacted directly via client email records).

#### **Key findings**

- new businesses were operating in the creative, IT, website design, marketing, consultancy and environmental sectors
- the majority of the new businesses responding employed 1 - 2 people
- clients had accessed the project in a number of different ways, e. g. referral from Job Centre Plus, having seen leaflet or poster, or following a meeting with the CEO
- The average length of time the businesses had been operating was 26 months.
- Women's enterprises and a social enterprise were among the respondents.

## Survey analysis

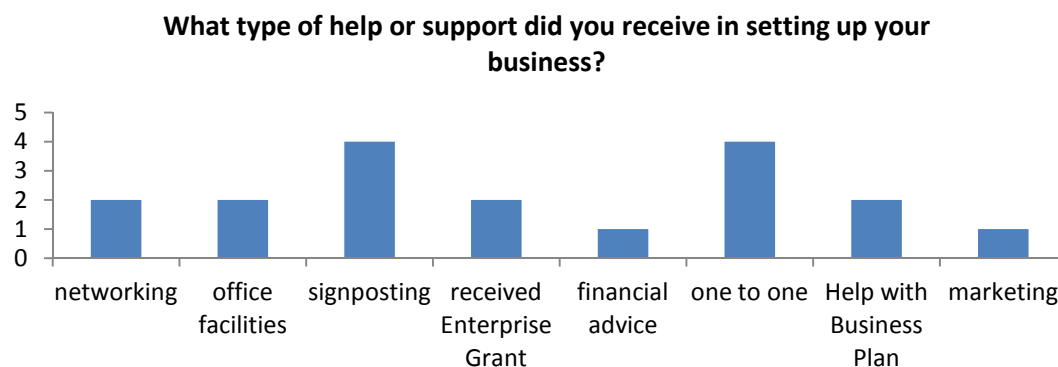
### Accessing the project

The response to the question: *How did you come into contact with the project?*, shows that people became aware of the project in a variety of ways:



### Range of help / support obtained

In response to the question: *What type of help or support did you receive in setting up your business?*, the responses (below) show that the clients had accessed a range of different types of available assistance.



When asked ***What do you think might have improved your experience of the project and the process of establishing your business – what could have been done better?***, responses included the following (sample):

- "A couple of sessions helping to set up accounting systems specific for my business - excel worksheets. "
- "Use of a long term business address (I live in a rented flat so this is difficult for me). "
- "Ability to refer for further help with 3rd Party sector-dedicated helplines/forums."
- "More follow up or support at the time of set up although I understood Ian's job was not funded beyond 2011."

One new business confirmed the benefit of attending the regular Networking Lunches for local businesses, which include speakers on relevant topics:

- *"We have since attended the Althorpe Enterprise Hub for networking events which have been most useful."*

### ***Client satisfaction levels***

In response to the question: *how satisfied were you with the quality of support you received?* 80% of respondents stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the support they had received; only one respondent stated they were not very satisfied – while acknowledging that they had first contacted the project in its very early days.

### ***Business Profile***

Of the businesses responding, two were run by women and one was a social enterprise – a Community Interest Company. One was a male/female partnership. The small sample may be indicative of the project's success in encouraging the development of women's enterprise and social enterprises.

### ***Summary***

The responses from the February 2013 survey suggests that overall those individual entrepreneurs who engaged with the project and took advantage of the free services (not least the CEO's time and knowledge) which were available to them, felt they had benefited from the experience as part of the process of setting up their business.

The small number of responses, while not statistically significant, provides anecdotal evidence to support this. However it may also be true that those clients who had the most positive engagement with the project and whose businesses continued to thrive tended to be those who replied to the survey.

## Conclusions

- With its focus on enterprise as a local response to redundancy, unemployment or under-employment, the project could be said to have pre-empted the Government announcement in January 2011 of the creation of "Enterprise Clubs", described on the Department for Work and Pensions website as follows:

*[Enterprise Clubs] will empower local communities and encourage people to work together to offer additional support to unemployed people who are interested in becoming self-employed. They will also help local communities to become more prosperous by encouraging private sector growth. Enterprise Clubs will provide unemployed people interested in self-employment with a place to meet and exchange skills, make contacts, share experiences, receive support and encourage each other to work through their business ideas.<sup>25</sup>*

- The creation of a dedicated space within a busy local community facility, providing access to computers, areas for training and group work, with an experienced enterprise officer on hand to advise and signpost would-be entrepreneurs, (and with availability of start-up business premises and networking opportunities nearby at the Althorpe Enterprise Hub) - anticipated this Government initiative by more than 2 years.
- With the ending of the project what remains is the physical extension of the BHLC and the availability of additional meeting and training spaces for community use in that location which continues to be well-used.
- The legacy of the project is to be found in the two well-attended locally-based Employment Clubs which operate for the benefit of the communities in Brunswick and Lillington - areas of Leamington where the need for support for job-finding is greatest.
- At the time of writing, one-to-one mentoring was available locally as part of a WDC Business Start-up Support Programme, run in partnership with the Coventry & Warks Chamber of Commerce and the Althorpe Enterprise Hub.
- The CEO's expertise in business, finance and the enterprise sector, and (not least) the free service available to his clients, was very much appreciated in several of the comments made by individuals who had regular contact with him throughout the process - often complex and not without pitfalls - of setting up in business.
- The effectiveness of the CEO in working collaboratively with other agencies, for example JobCentre Plus, is reflected in the number of new small businesses which started up during the period.

*I found you to be one of the most helpful local authority/enterprise advisers I've ever run into when I've been running my own businesses. Your background in banking is invaluable and you really understand the problems small businesses face at start-up. The advice you gave me was far superior to any I've ever had at Business Link or other such organisations. I am very grateful for the practical advice and help you have offered me. I also have good words to say about your easy but organised manner and good people skills.<sup>26</sup>*

<sup>25</sup> Department of Work and Pensions website <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/adviser/updates/enterprise-clubs/> updated January 2012

<sup>26</sup> CEO client's response to a questionnaire, June 2011



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