

**Edinburgh Community Buildings Network**  
**1<sup>st</sup> September 2021, 11am-1pm**

**Location:** Via Zoom

1. **Welcome and background:** Lorraine explained that there had been one previous meeting by zoom, during which a theme was proposed for this meeting to share learning about the challenges of re-opening our buildings following pandemic closures.
2. **Introductions and what we want to get out of the meeting**

**Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation(s)</b>	<b>Role / organisation</b>
Natalie Kelly	Arthur Conan Doyle Centre	Events Co-ordinator. Mind body spirit centre in West End (artists, musicians, therapies).
Murdo MacDonald	Church of Scotland	
Claire Ritchie	Eric Liddell Centre	Therapist
Julie Carter	Eric Liddell Centre	Operations Manager – got a
Chloe Lyth	The Salisbury Centre	Office Administrator
Lorraine Prince	The Salisbury Centre	Centre Manager

**3. Exploring our current challenges and potential solutions**

We discussed the main challenges we were facing with re-opening, shared what we'd already tried and our learning so far, and considered potential solutions.

Participant reluctance

- Encouraging people back when they are apprehensive. A blended model has been working. Summer is quiet anyway.
- People have been missing being in person but low uptake when offered. Being unsure whether to return to offering in-person.
- How to let people know it's safe.
- People being 'zoomed out'.
- Why are people not coming in? Media? Living with somebody vulnerable? Not believing it is safe?
- Feeling averse to being around people. Social anxiety, new habits. Will attitudes stay different?
- Low turnouts frustrating when we've put in lots of work.

Participant Diversity

- Working with 45+ age group, includes increased vulnerability, those with dementia.
- Taster sessions worked well at first then waned. More success with niche groups and audiences that are less worried about covid. Leaning into our uniqueness.
- People are travelling less into and across the city. Discouraged by lack of parking, looking closer to home. Convenience of online. Cost and carbon impact of travel. We are all needing to connect more to our LOCALITIES. Potential future theme?
- How to attract support, and people across age ranges and social classes?

Impact on room hires and income

- Distancing leads to reduced Room Capacities. Affects room bookings.
- Room hirers unsure whether to book: offered provisional bookings. Case by case cancellations. Being flexible for long term customers to keep the relationship.
- Impact of workload and staffing of cancelled and moved bookings as well as lost income. Beginning to re-instate cancellation policies.
- Lower footfall in café, etc. Lost tea room volunteers. Not busy enough to re-open. Small team. Food waste.

- Looking for funding, e.g. Crowd funding. Some had received useful Adapt and Thrive grant for Covid-related measures.

#### Staffing issues

Difficulty integrating new staff who started during pandemic into organizational culture. Not knowing each other well.

- Uncertainty of Test and Trace pings. Responsibilities such as additional childcare.
- Differing boundaries and attitudes, including to vaccines. How to approach this with staff? Some guidance online from HR legal sources.
- Misinformation, e.g. on social media. Approaching conversations gently.

#### Practical measures

- Needing clear processes E.g. for when people have symptoms. One building had introduced thermal cameras. Track and Trace Check in Codes.
- Risk mitigation: sanitizer, one way systems. Pull up Perspex banners (hard Perspex can make it hard to hear).
- Needing to look different to give visible reassurance as we return to in person and indoor.
- Should we ask people to show lateral flow tests when they attend? Nobody had tried this yet. Risk of ostracizing some attendees.
- Organisational policies and guidelines for attendees. **Lorraine and Julie offered to share theirs.**

#### 4. Next steps

We would be keen to meet in person when we can.

#### Potential future meeting topics:

- Ecological sustainability and energy efficiency.
- Locality.
- Income generation.

Date of next meeting TBC.