

Edinburgh Community Buildings Network
8th March 2021 - 14:00-16:00

Location: Via Zoom

1. **Welcome and background**
2. **Introductions**

Attendees:

Name	Organisation(s)	Current Offer
Francesco Benvenuti	The Salisbury Centre	Garden
Lorraine Prince	The Salisbury Centre	
Jean-Matthieu Gaunand	1. SCCAN 2. ELREC	1. Activities and support with events, networking, opportunities, skills swaps. 2. has small space for food, panel discussions, etc.
Amy Cornock	SCCAN	
Christina Hinds	EVOC	Capacity building, guidance, training, fun
Lucy Schofield		Lives in an old shop, ad hoc events, tool library, Sunday socials, trying to engage locally, matched local walks.
Jennifer Elliot	Action Party and Portobello Town Hall	Experience of solar panels and right to buy. Fogging kit. Willing to share.
Natalie Kelly	Arthur Conan Doyle Centre	Beautiful Building, working on getting outdoor space up to scratch. Online workshops and talks (more than when open). Includes spiritual, psychic and mediumship. Some big rooms. Office and art studio space.
Scott Canevy	Arthur Conan Doyle Centre	Physically closed. Online events. Rooms when open. Tea room and (soon) outdoor space.
Louisa	1. Bhruama Kumaris 2. Inner Space, Dalry Road	1. Raj yoga meditation centre. International organisation. Development courses. Positive thinking and self-esteem. 2. for courses and access to bigger space within building. Using zoom.
Will Golding	1. Bridgend Farmhouse 2. Craigmillar Thistle. 3. Scottish Government Community Land Ownership Strategic Group.	1. South East Edinburgh. Bike workshop. Woodwork, outdoor event space, mindfulness garden, 2. Facilities. Outdoor gym space. Can be used for workshops. 3. Useful to hear others' experiences. Happy to be contacted.
Ian Shaw	Dalry 193 Centre Hub	Keen for space to be used for community development.
Julie Carter	Eric Liddell Centre	Lunch delivery service. 6 rooms usually rented out. Office space.
Daniel Fisher	Greyfriars Charteris Centre.	Closed for accessible refurb.
Helene van der Ploeg	Space Hub	Outside space, food provision, digital resources
Johannah Carrie	Transition Edinburgh	Members of SCCAN and EVOC. Don't have building. Do connect and communicate. Clean heat group. Heat networks in city. Hub projects Edinburgh Community Solar co-op. If South Facing Roof.
Jayne Saywell	1. Washouse Party 2. Portobello Central	1. Hall with stage, sound system, pull down projector, community cinema. 2. Re-opening of Portobello Town Hall.

What people wanted to get out of the meeting:

- New connections , hear from different experiences and how people have adapted
- Reassurance, sense of what others are doing seems to be a lack of information and support
- My main objective is to build a network of community centres to share knowledge and a united front where that's useful
- Coordinating resources to build community connectedness and resilience coming out of Covid

- Sow the seeds for resilience!
- I would like to see how others are doing
- Connect with others in the same situation

Shared challenges

These had been gathered via the registration form and we did a poll, showing very similar shared challenges:

- Uncertainty, difficulty planning, delayed/cancelled activities. (100%)
- Loss of income from room hire (75%)
- Needing to close the building (67%)
- Cost of adapting the building/service to be Covid-safe (67%)
- Confusion around which guidance applies (67%)
- Difficulty engaging people remotely (digital exclusion, zoom fatigue) (58%)
- Impact on mental health / wellbeing (50%)
- Difficult feelings (such as fear, anger, helplessness, frustration, pressure, isolation). (50%)

Also mentioned in the meeting:

- Staffing/HR challenges
- IT challenges.

3. Seeds of hope and sharing learning from the pandemic

Attendees were asked: "what have you tried that's succeeded?", and "what have been the opportunities and silver linings?". The following were discussed:

- Getting to know neighbours. Distanced walks. Learning about different people's ways of coping. Connecting to local neighbourhood.
- Use of outdoor spaces as useful space for connection face to face and something to look forward to.
- Inspired to set up their tiny outdoor area set up for the summer so that it can be used.
- Absent friends event (good life, good grief, good death).
- Getting familiar with different guidelines.
- Working with social work department for family meetings.
- Plans for cleaning including before and after use, leaving materials in place. Hirer responsibility. Terminology "decontamination" or "sanitising" because not 'dirty'.
- Use of (flexible) furlough scheme.
- Use of QR codes for signing in and out of the building. Useful if re-open to the public. Holds up to 5000 contact details.
- Breathing space to work on development, e.g. structure and governance, booking systems ready for re-opening.
- Connecting internationally in a way that we couldn't before. Broader range of attendees.
- No travel and accommodation costs for speakers and workshop leaders from around the world.
- Digital platform for online space has expanded community, how to sustain?
- Increased numbers registering in some cases, e.g. weekly meditation and women's group.

4. What are we if we aren't a physical space? (e.g. if closed for Covid).

Francesco led us in a guided visualization exercise to help us explore what are the key threads of community and how we still support our communities.

open a door and find a community... What do you see, hear, feel? What are the qualities and interactions that make this a 'community'? How do you know it's a community? What's happening there? What are people doing?

Participants shared their experiences verbally and in the chat:

- Warmth, sense of safety, belonging, welcome
- Fulfilment, worthwhile activity, sharing and supporting, helping
- Helping each other in small and simple ways.
- Listening, talking, discussion, moving between small groups.
- Noisy, warm feeling, sounds, laughter, chat.

- Difference, conflict, diverse, tolerance, welcoming
- Intergenerational environment, family or neighbourhood interlinked
- Bonding through shared goals and tasks, building trust, play, people know each other
- Connection to nature, organic
- Eating, sharing food
- Focal point
- "A busy building full of lots of activity, people doing yoga, drinking tea together, making music, hugging, laughing, smiling. a group gardening outside. Communicating with each other through lots of ways.",
- "Whilst everyone was an individual there is a sense of individual needs being met naturally by being in that space with others"
- "Sailing a ship, creating a garden" with a shared directionality
- "A sense of joy, connection, music, food , diversity, families."

5. How can we connect and support each other going forward?

Mapping our resources and sources of support:

EVOC: Christina explained that they can offer technical support, board responsibilities and support with conflict, resolving difficulties that stem from avoiding difficult conversations. Not HR advisors but can talk boards through their responsibilities and signpost. Also networks and forums. Mental health providers, knowledge sharing, peer support, disability, children and families, older people, local forums by area. Any questions on running of organisation. Membership available. Several present spoke of their positive experiences getting support as members of EVOC.

SCCAN: Jean-Matthieu explained that SCCAN is a network of regional networks to support and help communities of interest or regional communities come together around themes such as waste, energy, transport. Shared links for What Next Summit and event on becoming more inclusive. Membership organisation for organisations and individuals. Participatory model – members shape things. Invites all to become members to meet like-minded organisations. Focus on climate action. Training, events, networking opportunities. Involve members in decision making. To become members: <https://www.scottishcommunitiescan.org.uk/join-us/>
info@scottishcommunitiescan.org.uk

Salisbury Centre: events organizer, can offer a 'space' for organisations with similar ethos, and help promote. Contact events@salisburycentre.org

Next steps and Future topics:

- Mapping our value for communities and the need for face to face connection – valuing and engaging communities.
- Is what we had before acceptable? Do we want to go back to 'normal'?
- Developing resilience
- Overcoming wariness and celebrating connection.
- What is our offer? How are we integrating and becoming more visible to our community?
- Community development principles.
- Tool for speaking to government and large institutions about our role in active communities and reducing isolation.
- Importance of empowering people. Inspirational stories.
- Resistance to zoom. Use each other's spaces. Make it fun!

Agreed: to meet again, every few months, in person when possible, rotating host. Themed sessions so people can come to the ones most relevant. Particular interest for the following two timely topics:

- o Support each other to understand implications of changing Covid guidance as we emerge from lockdown.

- Environmental efficiency measures (especially in run up to COP26). Showcase organisation to host when possible to do in person? Transition Edinburgh can input to this. Acknowledge emerging climate action hubs.