

Doncaster West Development Trust

“Working alongside local people to deliver a more sustainable future within communities”

Annual Report 2016

The last year has been one of significant change and progress for Doncaster West Development Trust (DWDT). Here we provide an overview of our various projects to raise awareness of the services we provide to local communities and how our support could benefit you.

DWDT Projects

Money Matters

Additional Lottery funding secured this much-needed project for three more years enabling us to provide a broader service in line with the ongoing demand for financial advice and guidance. It continued to meet the widespread need for one-to-one support and also delivered group advice sessions and training of partner agencies in order to broaden the overall provision of debt support and money mentoring in Doncaster.

Money Matters will support 1,200 individuals and deliver regular group advice sessions until June 2019.

Shortly after the Lottery grant was awarded, money advisors Lynn Clarkson and Joanne Rhodes joined the team to work alongside Sharon Smith who took on the additional role of Training and Supervision Manager. During the first six months of the newly funded project, 165 people received one-to-one support and the project was on track to meet its annual target by the end of 2016. This was a particularly impressive achievement given that essential induction sessions and training of new staff had to be carried out alongside client caseloads.

The Hot Chocolate Lounge

The award of a three-year grant from the Big Lottery Fund enabled us to set up and launch a brand new project - the Hot Chocolate Lounge in Grays Court, Denaby.



The project was designed to provide a community hub, café and training venue to tackle social isolation, address skills shortages and enhance the local environment.

It involved major refurbishment of a disused shop unit which was transformed into a stylish and welcoming café that attracted local interest well before opening day.

It also created three new jobs; manager Libby Carl and baristas; Joanne Patton and Shannon Reeder (pictured below).

The café uses mainly local suppliers and serves a wide selection of light meals, sweet and savoury snacks and refreshments including luxury Belgian hot chocolate.

The long-awaited opening of the Hot Chocolate Lounge in September was celebrated with an all-day event featuring music, magic tricks and food samples. It attracted a steady stream of visitors throughout the day and the business has built up a strong customer base ever since, consistently exceeding sales targets and tempting customers with new menu items and special offers.

It ended 2016 and its first quarter of trading by achieving a five-star food hygiene rating – the highest grade available – and receiving its first glowing review on Trip Advisor.



Creating Change

This three-year project supports people with mental health issues exacerbated by debt and money worries, often dealing with very complex cases. June 2016 marked the end of its second year during which we engaged with 346 clients, exceeding our two-year target. Throughout the year, the number of new clients regularly increased month on month illustrating the ongoing need for dedicated support for vulnerable clients.

We also started working with inmates at Doncaster prisons after requests from resettlement workers and began to make regular visits, focusing on the largest and most central of the town's three prisons, where we support both inmates and their families at various stages of a custodial sentence. These clients suffer high levels of anxiety and depression as a result of their sentences and evaluation has shown that our support and interventions ease their concerns and improve their wellbeing and stress levels.

The chief practical outcomes of the project were that clients took steps to address debt issues, improved their money management/budgeting skills and experienced improved wellbeing and reduced anxiety as a direct result of engaging with the service.

Towards the end of 2016, we started work on another bid to the Henry Smith Charity, which funds Creating Change, to apply for a three-year grant for a benefits advisor after identifying a significant gap in provision for this much-needed type of support.

Talent Match

This Lottery-funded project aims to address youth unemployment and skills shortages among people aged 18 to 24 who are not in work, training or education. It supports clients across the Doncaster borough with a focus on the 'hotspot' areas of Conisbrough, Denaby and Mexborough.

It remains a challenging project with a high number of missed appointments in 2016. However, the Talent Match coaches still managed to exceed several targets including clients undertaking basic skills training, entering formal education and securing work placements, apprenticeships and employment – all crucial project outcomes.

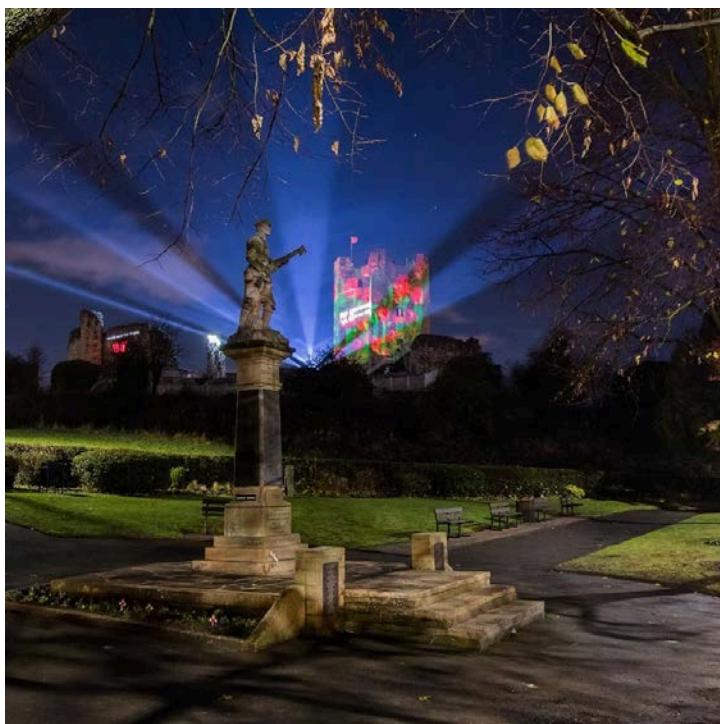


Further links were forged with local training providers and the coaches continued to find innovative ways to engage with young people. For example, ten clients attended a one-day taster course at Kingswood activity centre where they tackled demanding outdoor pursuits to boost their skills and confidence. The initiative was so successful that every participant signed up for a longer residential visit.

The year ended with three of our clients (pictured above) winning prizes at the Annual Talent Match Awards ceremony.

Micro-grants

DWDT secured a contract to administer and distribute micro-grants to community groups in Conisbrough and Denaby. The contract is part of an initiative spearheaded by Well North/Well Doncaster – a Public Health England project which aims to improve health and wellbeing in towns and villages.



Grant applications are considered by a decision-making panel of local residents because they know the areas and their priorities. A range of projects have been supported including a huge poppy display illuminating Conisbrough Castle (pictured left) which attracted national attention as well as local crowds, vintage tea parties to combat loneliness, band uniforms and sports facility improvements.

Volunteer Conisbrough and Denaby

DWDT won a 12-month Doncaster Council contract to provide a Volunteer Co-ordination Service in Conisbrough and Denaby, which is also a Well North/Well Doncaster initiative. The service began in September and aims to address identified local needs and match people to placements in order to benefit individuals, organisations and their local communities as a whole.



The project, which created two new jobs, relies heavily on successful community engagement along with knowledge and awareness of other local resources in order to find volunteer and training opportunities and to signpost or refer people where appropriate.

The project is based at Your Place in Denaby and has a remit to engage with 150 individuals and 20 organisations. In its first quarter, it was on track to meet these targets. It also hosted community events and introduced training provision to support volunteers and organisations.

Job Club

Limited resources to provide employment support led to our weekly Job Club at the Terrace being available without tutor or volunteer support towards the end of the year. People were still able to access our computers to use the Universal Jobmatch website and attend CV appointments with a National Careers Advisor. A small grant secured via the Big Lottery Fund enabled us to offer more tailored employment support and plans were then made to transfer the service to Your Place early in 2017.

DWDT Office Move

A major decision to move premises was taken by DWDT in 2016 based on various factors including the increasing maintenance responsibilities and general upkeep of The Terrace



Training Centre. Research was carried out and new offices were earmarked at Mexborough Business Centre (pictured) to serve as an administrative base for the organisation. It was decided that the Talent Match project team would share the Your Place building in Denaby with Volunteer Conisbrough and Denaby staff for their day-to-day work while regularly touching base with colleagues in Mexborough and using the centre's meeting room and other facilities as needed.

The latter part of the year was spent preparing for the move which was arranged for March 2017. The Terrace was home to DWDT for 24 years so clearing the building and safeguarding all business files and equipment was a huge task involving a lot of time and effort that continued well in to the new year.

Contact us

To find out more about our work and the services we offer please browse our website and Facebook page for news and information or get in touch with us by phone or email:

Telephone: 01709 866466

Email: info@dwdt.org.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/Doncaster-West-Development-Trust-715772058511086/>

You can also keep up to date with events and activities at The Hot Chocolate Lounge via its website and Facebook page:

www.thehotchocolatelounge.co.uk/

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/HotChocLounge1/>

