

CASE STUDY

Working with Development in Social Enterprise

Three Trees community centre

Meeting the needs and aspirations of local people



Key Facts

Mission: To be locally run, locally owned and locally led, serving the Chelmsley Wood community

Business challenge: To raise £650k to renovate Three Trees community centre and secure its long-term sustainability

Established: 1970

Legal structure: Company Ltd by Guarantee and registered charity

www.threetreescentre.org.uk

"We clicked with Dave immediately. His depth of knowledge on social enterprise, extensive experience and contacts, have delivered an excellent business plan, directly improving our chances of securing lottery funding for the Three Trees centre."

Neil Roberts, Reverend
Chelmsley Wood Baptist Church

In urgent need of repair and upgrade, the Three Trees community centre has been serving Chelmsley Wood residents, young and old, for over four decades.

As part of its plans to raise £650k to modernise the building, Chelmsley Wood Baptist Church commissioned Development in Social Enterprise CIC (DISE) to produce a business plan that would not only determine the viability of various income generation ideas for the Centre, but also form part of a bid to the Big Lottery for much needed capital investment.

While working with the Church to prepare its funding application, Alan Crawford, Funding Officer at Solihull Sustain, identified the need for professional help with business planning. "We had no hesitation in recommending Dave Lane, Chief Executive of DISE for the work. The brief included a thorough assessment of several business ideas including a community café, managed workspace, venue hire, and a community garden project," says Alan. With the Centre still in use, and momentum for investment gathering pace, the business plan was an urgent piece of work that required completion within a matter of weeks.

"After our initial meeting with Dave, he began to explore our plans in detail, identifying potential problems, making suggestions on how to improve use of the building to maximise income but also advising on ways to reduce our environmental impact," says Neil Roberts, Reverend at Chelmsley Wood Baptist Church. "He kept us involved in the process and regularly sent work through for us to comment on, always on time, knowing that keeping to schedule was really important to us," adds Neil.

"Dave is honest, reliable, good value for money and creative in his thinking. We've already signposted other local organisations to him, confident they will receive expert advice gained through years of experience in supporting social enterprises and voluntary organisations to trade sustainably," says Alan.

With the business plan complete, Alan and Neil were able to improve the quality of the funding proposal and move one step closer towards developing Three Trees as a local community enterprise, offering a range of high quality services and facilities for many future generations to come.

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