



PRIDE IN PLACE

LED BY YOU – BACKED BY UK GOVERNMENT

Workshop facilitators



Charlie Fox, Big Local Area Advisor

Setting up and making plans

Charlie has over twenty years' experience working in the not-for-profit sector, focussing on community and organisational development.

With a proven track record of supporting grassroots community action, building partnerships and capacity, managing competing priorities, project design, delivery and management, staff and volunteer management and effective communication with diverse stakeholders. Since setting up Starlings Support, Charlie has offered consultancy support to a range of organisations; building on experiences in communities to work with these organisations to think creatively about their activities, identifying opportunities and developing partnerships to strengthen their impact on the communities they support and to address challenges in a positive and confident manner.

Charlie has worked with the Big Local programme since 2013, supporting 4 Big Local areas in the role of Locally Trusted Organisation (LTO). More recently she has supported additional Big Local areas in the role of Big Local advisor, facilitating effective relationships and systems to enable areas to close well. Her involvement with Big Local partnerships has reinforced her belief that meaningful change must be locally driven and locally owned, underpinning her commitment to local leadership and agency.



Dan Crowe, 3ni

Building strong partnerships - local authority perspective

Dan is director of 3ni, a new social value partnership, recently spun-out from Local Trust. 3ni brings together policy, practice, and the latest research and cutting-edge data and diagnostic tools to support local government and public sector partners to work with disadvantaged communities to transform neighbourhoods across the country. It also hosts the national network for neighbourhood improvement, sharing next and best practices to support community-led regeneration.

He incubated 3ni at Local Trust, where he previously led the policy team, in particular on the work and research programme for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for 'left behind' neighbourhoods, advocating for a Community Wealth Fund, and making the case for C4, the ESRC-funded Centre for Collaboration in Community Connectedness. Dan has a background in local and regional government, working for the elected Mayors of London and in the north east of England, in regeneration policy at the Homes and Communities Agency, and for the think tanks Localis, New Europe, The Young Foundation, and Collaborate.

He has been an elected leader in the British co-operative movement, serving as Vice-President of the Co-operative Group where he led on the creation of its community strategy and as a trustee of the Co-operative Foundation. He is a Fellow of the RSA.

Becky Dryer, Dover City Council

Building strong partnerships - local authority perspective

Becky Dyer is the Community Development Manager at Dover District Council. She has been at the local authority for nearly 10 years, she started as a Community Development Officer & have managed the team for nearly 5 years. Becky has a strategic responsibility for leisure & the Events Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) process.

Her background before joining the local authority was in sports development. She has a passion for communities, and developing, strategies, themes & projects that can support communities to; build community cohesion, offer them new skills, ensure they are listened too and, most importantly enjoy the environment whole heartedly that they reside in.



John Angell, Dover Big Local

Building strong partnerships - local authority perspective

John's background is in retailing and he worked in and managed his property and jewellery business across Kent for fifty years from Dover where he was born. He worked in the town Centre of Dover during this time and seen all the problems at first hand. The challenges faced by Dover are very complex and more acute than in the other town centre areas his business covered in Maidstone, Tonbridge and Folkestone. John has also been active in the voluntary sector in Dover for over 40 years with the Town Team, Big Local and Rotary and was made a Freeman of Dover by the Town Council.

John started his voluntary work in Dover with the Rotary Club of Dover as the Chairman of Community Services a post he held for many years being awarded the Paul Harris fellowship for his dedication to the support of local charities.

When the Dover Town Team was formed in 2012

John became Chairman and despite not gaining any 'Mary Portas' funding the team worked tirelessly to gain £2.5 million in grant funding from the Coastal Communities Fund to improve and develop the Dover Market Square area with Dover District Council. This project was delivered on time and on budget. John was on the project board as Chairman of the Town Team and the development was opened in August 2022.



Rachel Rowney, Local Trust

Looking ahead: legacy in 2036 and beyond

Rachel oversees the operations of Local Trust, leading the staff team and working closely with the board on strategy and governance. Rachel joined Local Trust in 2012, originally as a programme manager, and joined the senior leadership team in 2016.

Previously, Rachel worked as a consultant and researcher at Shared Intelligence, where she worked on neighbourhood renewal, community engagement, and social housing projects. At the same time, she was also a programme manager for the National Association for Neighbourhood Management, where she designed and delivered learning and networking programmes. Before this, Rachel worked for Croydon Council.

Mark Pepper, Ambition Lawrence Weston

Looking ahead: legacy in 2036 and beyond

Mark Pepper is a lifelong resident of a housing estate on the outskirts of North Bristol, called Lawrence Weston. Mark is a father of 4 and grandfather of 5, whose family all reside in the Lawrence Weston area. Lawrence Weston is home to 7,000 residents sharing 3,200 units of accommodation in an area suffering from High levels of deprivation, and other issues, including historic lack of outside investment and funding.

Mark has over 30 years of working experience based in Lawrence Weston, including, community development, Youth work, and Social Care (family early intervention and prevention), in both, private and public sector organisations.

Marks current role is CEO for the grassroots charity and company limited by guarantee, Development Trust, that is Ambition Lawrence Weston.

Set up and managed by Mark and other local residents in 2012, Ambition Lawrence Weston Development Trusts main aim is the regeneration of the area by way of delivering the residents written and designed Community Climate Plan, “Declaring Our Caring”.

Mark is also the Chairperson for the Lawrence Weston Planning Forum and was instrumental in the delivery of the areas Neighbourhood Development Plan and Design Statement, adopted in 2017.



Yasamin Alttahir, Involve

Inclusive partnerships and decision making

Yasamin Alttahir is the Director of Advocacy and Communications. She has two decades of senior leadership experience in international diplomacy, crisis management, and strategic communications across conflict and post-conflict settings.

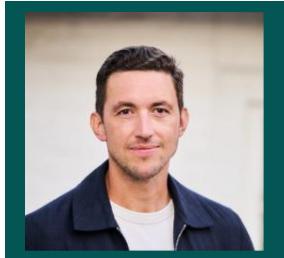
As Associate Director at the Open Society Foundations, she led global crisis-response programming across multiple countries and advised heads of state and multilateral bodies, including the UN, NATO, and the AU, on global threats to democracy. Her UK government experience spans strategic roles at the Cabinet Office, FCDO, and DEFRA, where she managed cross-government coordination on democratic resilience in Eastern Europe, countered state-sponsored disinformation during the Ukraine conflict, and led major policy initiatives, including COP26 Nature Day.

Shaheen Warren, Power to Change

Building strong partnerships - community/third sector perspectives

Shaheen provides leadership to our Practice and Innovation work, focused on developing partnerships to catalyse our future impact. She works at the intersection of policy and practice innovation, regularly convening partners at local, regional and national level to work alongside community businesses—improving outcomes for people and places and generating insights to influence policy.

She brings extensive experience in service design, community engagement and public sector reform, with a focus on building more inclusive and sustainable local economies. She believes in meaningful collaboration at the local level and is passionate about creating the conditions for communities to take power and shape their futures.



Dr Geraud de Ville de Goyet, Barking and Dagenham Giving

Building strong partnerships - community/third sector perspectives

Dr Geraud de Ville de Goyet is Chief Executive of Barking and Dagenham Giving, a place-based infrastructure organisation creating opportunities for enterprise, collaboration and local participation across Barking and Dagenham. He has led the development of several new participatory funding programmes, including a £2 million investment fund designed entirely by local residents. Previously, he spent 10 years working in policy and advocacy at both international and local levels, focusing on nature conservation, climate change, social justice and community development. He holds a PhD in International Development from the Open University.

Geraud also holds a number of non-executive and advisory roles. He sits on the board of Centre for London, Barking Enterprise Centre CIC, and the Industry Advisory Board for the Sustainable Build Environments, Energy and Resources BSc and MEng at UCL's Bartlett School of Environment, Energy and Resources (BSEER).

Laura Fisher, Local Trust



Practical approaches to measuring success

Laura has worked in Local Trust's research team since summer 2019. She led on the Measuring Change support offer which matched evaluation specialists with Big Local partnerships and plays a key role in gathering the achievements and learning from Big Local areas as part of the Learning from Big Local project.

Before joining Local Trust, Laura worked at London Youth, a membership and advocacy organisation for youth organisations across London. Here, she was involved in programme evaluation and a variety of research projects, including a report on young people and communities.



Jack Loughnane, Local Trust

Practical approaches to measuring success

Jack has worked at Local Trust since August 2023 as a senior researcher. He leads on a range of projects including the Partnership Reviews and Partnership Member Surveys.



Jack's background is in social psychology. Before joining Local Trust, Jack completed his PhD in the University of Limerick, Ireland which was funded by the Irish Research Council. His research utilises advanced quantitative research methods and he has previously taught analysis and research methods at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.



Sandra Meadows MBE, NAVCA

Providing the support infrastructure

Sandra has worked in the VCSE sector as a CEO, staff member, volunteer and as a board member for over 30 years. This includes many years as CEO of a NAVCA member and a voluntary trustee for a range of organisations - all focused on improving lives and communities.

She brings knowledge and expertise in strategic and organisational development, innovation, business transformation and cross sector collaboration and partnership. Her experience also extends to enterprise development and social investment. As an EDI consultant and equalities advocate, she is passionate about increasing diversity within Boards and teams. A Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts and supporter of emerging artists, Sandra enjoys live theatre, music and dance whenever possible.



Asma Aziz, Slough CVS

Providing the support infrastructure

As CEO of Slough CVS, and trustee of NAVCA I am driven by a deep passion for empowering people and strengthening communities. I find it incredibly rewarding to help shape and grow non-clinical, community-led services that improve health, wellbeing, and opportunity for all.

My journey began as a Social Worker at Leicester Royal Infirmary and has taken me through roles with Birmingham Housing, Gloucester City Council, RBWM, and several charitable organisations in the UK and abroad. These experiences have given me a genuine understanding of the challenges people face and the power of collaboration in creating change. I have also led national Home Office initiatives and contributed to international UNICEF and UNESCO programmes—work that has deepened my commitment to inclusion, equity, and opportunity. Every day, I feel inspired by the incredible voluntary partners we work with, breaking down cultural barriers, reducing health inequalities, and helping communities come together and truly flourish.



Meena Khalisi, Community Calm



Providing the support infrastructure

Meena is a Healthcare Consultant specialising in integrative and community-based health, specialising in Ayurveda (India's holistic system of medicine), Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Yoga Therapy. Her work aligns with NHS priorities on prevention, early intervention, and reducing health inequalities, supporting patients alongside existing healthcare pathways. She began her career at the BBC Newsroom and later worked in New York City as a Broadcast Operations Manager for NBC Universal.

Meena is the Founder of Community Calm (est. 2024), a not-for-profit delivering green social prescribing wellbeing programmes supporting NHS teams. Community Calm operates across animal-assisted therapy settings, nature reserves, and community wellbeing gardens, supporting underserved populations through structured, non-clinical interventions that reduce pressure on statutory services. Meena's work will inform future PhD research into mental health outcomes and the role of green spaces in recovery and prevention.

Nick Gardham, Centre for Participation and Action

Supporting wider community involvement in plans and decisions

Nick is Co-Founder of the Centre for Participation and Action and CEO of Community Organisers. Over the last 15 years Nick has led and supported the training of 1000s of people in community organising since 2015 as well as working with Government, Public Bodies, Trusts and Foundations and Voluntary Sector Organisations to design and deliver programmes that deliver meaningful participation and engagement. He began his career as a Teach First teacher before moving into direct community work which saw him working on the ground in many communities across the UK and Europe. Nick has secured millions in funding for community organising and asset based approaches.

Though his work Nick has led supported the development of several national campaigns including the #OperationWifi campaign and the Cost of Living Alliance that have united the network at community organisers and built alliances with 100s of organisations.



Alongside Nick's work on the ground he has served as an advisor to various Government departments, Trusts and Community Foundations. Most recently, Nick serves as a co-convenor of the Humanity Project. A national movement to seed 'assembly culture' into neighbourhoods bringing 1000s of people together to listen, deliberate, decide together the future of their places.



Moussa Amine, Haringey Community Food Network

Supporting wider community involvement in plans and decisions

Moussa Amine Sylla is a highly experienced Community Organiser, Trainer, and Facilitator with over a decade of expertise in empowering diverse communities across Tottenham and North London. His work is deeply rooted in grassroots organising, relationship-building, and enabling communities to design and lead their own solutions to social and economic challenges.

Throughout his career, Moussa has worked extensively with vulnerable young people, individuals with lived experience of the criminal justice system, and migrant communities, equipping them with leadership skills and supporting community-led economic development initiatives that transform lives and strengthen neighbourhoods.

As co-founder of the Haringey Community Food Network (HCFN), Moussa helped build a coalition of 52 local food projects working collaboratively to tackle food insecurity across the borough. Under his leadership, the network has mobilised over 350 volunteers, enhanced community resilience, and improved coordination during times of crisis. His approach combines strategic organising with a commitment to social justice, ensuring that those most affected by inequality have a voice and agency in driving change.



David Moynihan, Locality

Investing in community buildings

David is a leader in the community sector with 25 years' experience of working with and supporting communities – including in national charities, social enterprises, local authorities, within international contexts and in academia. He is Head of Services at Locality, a national infrastructure organisation, and manages a team of consultants operating throughout England, primarily to support community ventures to be stronger and more successful.



He has a strong track record in providing leadership and technical support to community organisations, including building powerful movements and networks, developing strategies and business plans, testing new business models, building frameworks for social impact, maximising diverse streams of fundraising and income, taking on assets and community-led housing, strengthening accountability and governance, deploying crisis support and business continuity, tackling injustices and supporting equalities and supporting methods and systems for community engagement, co-design and volunteering.

He successfully led and delivered a national and London-wide programmes including 'Community Spaces at Risk' (GLA), 'Community Improvement Districts' (Power to Change) and 'Community Enabler Fund' (MHCLG). Previously, he worked at a senior level in local government, for third sector organisations and in business – supporting policy/strategy, leading teams, undertaking research and led programmes, covering a range of areas including regeneration/local economies, housing, social enterprise/voluntary sector, health and care, connected communities, arts/cultures, skills, youth people, welfare to work, community development, volunteering and community safety. Internationally, he has supported community ventures in Berlin, Seoul, New York City, Brno and Tralee. He also, last year, presented to the [House of Lords select Committee](#) on the role of communities to revitalise the high street.

David Alhquist, Locality

Investing in community buildings



Dave is the Development Manager for London for Locality, the network for community organisations helping them be strong and successful. His work includes consultancy for public sector clients and providing business advice to community businesses through all stages of development with specialisms in Governance and social value. He leads several London wide programmes and was a key consultant in the Locality-led Bright Ideas Fund. Dave has over 15 years of experience in the social enterprise and business support sectors.

He has led on the setting up and leadership of two social enterprises and on organisational change programmes for two more, as well as successfully delivering programmes of organisational change and partnership development. His experience also includes managing an asset as a CEO of a community hub and several non-executive roles, including currently as a Director of Key Fund.



Paulette Singer, Our Yard

Investing in community buildings

Paulette is co-founder and director of Our Yard at Clitterhouse Farm. She has a strong background in Community Organising, Art of Hosting and facilitating community-led research. An experienced project manager with a background of working in the homeless sector, delivering on ESF, Local and Central Government contracts focussed on training, employment, community engagement and participatory hosting practices. Paulette has a keen interest in innovative social businesses and their role within communities to support individual and collective power.

After founding Clitterhouse Farm Project, Paulette began her community organising training on the West Hendon estate, where she experienced firsthand the importance of connected communities. She was able to transfer her community organising training over to her work at Clitterhouse Farm and sees the art of 'listening' as crucial for community engagement and fundamental to the success of the farm project and indeed the success of every thriving community. Beyond her work at Clitterhouse Farm, she champions the role of communities in reclaiming ownership and management of land and buildings and sees this grassroots asset-based community work as a crucial step towards rebuilding communities at a local level and reigniting local democracy.



Ezra Gill, Local Trust

Meaningful resident leadership in decision making about resources

Ezra plays a key role in supporting Big Local partnerships across London and the South, alongside coordinating wider legacy work and sharing learning from the Big Local programme. Before joining Local Trust, Ezra worked for a Big Local partnership in West London.



Angela Fields, PEACH CIC

Meaningful resident leadership in decision making about resources

Angela Fields served as Chair of PEACH Big Local in Custom House, Newham, and now leads PEACH CIC as a Director, carrying the partnership's legacy forward.

Carl Adams, former Big Local Area Advisor

Meaningful resident leadership in decision making about resources

Carl Adams has supported Big Local partnerships across London and the South East, first as a Big Local Rep and later as an Area Advisor. Involved in the programme since the start, Carl brings a wealth of experience in empowering communities.