

# No 32

# Olympic Way

# High Wycombe



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## Background and Introduction

This report is presented to Home Group to document a substantial period of collaborative youth and community work, delivered in partnership with Mama Bee Group at the Olympic Way estate in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

Mama Bee Group was awarded a contract to work with the young people of Olympic Way in a three-phase movement, utilising the Home Group office space at number 32 Olympic Way to engage with the community.

As this report will highlight there have been issues along the way that created limitations to the original planned phases for the project. Work has been successful and has led to engaging sessions for the children and young people of the estate and enabled Mama Bee practitioners to evaluate further engagement needs within the community.

The original plans were to run three-phases of work for Olympic Way, culminating in an art-based project devised by the young people. However, it was quickly established that the community needed to be brought together before any work could be carried out and that there was a need to hear their voices before they would be actively engaging in a structured project.

Through feedback to the Home Group team it was agreed that Mama Bee would continue with the three phases, but in a more general youth work method to gain trust and understanding from the residents at Olympic Way.

# Project Phases



## Phase One – Outreach work

### **October – December 2018**

The Mama Bee youth work team took to the streets of Olympic Way and surrounding area to find where children and young people were gathering. The aim was to be a visual representation of Home Group's efforts at giving Olympic Way their own voice, and to share opportunity for the children and young people to have a space to engage in positive activities in their community.

The team met with residents, parents, children, young people as well as local businesses such as the library and café to spread the word about what was happening on Olympic Way.

Leaflets were sent to all house (that could be accessed) and the Home Group office team helped by sending out an email to all residents informing them of the club and also a welcome event to be held in November.

The youth work team would arrive for a session and if no young people came, they would head out into the community to encourage them to come to the session and take part.





November event welcoming the community to No 32

**PLEASE NOTE** During this phase of outreach work there was a significant safeguarding concern that was reported to the appropriate authorities. The incident is known to Home Group and will not be detailed in this report. This did have an impact on the relationship building work between Mama Bee practitioners and young people in the community.

## Phase Two – Session-based work

### **January 2019 – August 2019**

After the Christmas break the Mama Bee team came back together to start running participatory youth work sessions, using the designated space at No 32 and also continuing to encourage any resident young people to come along. If the young people were not attending the sessions, then the youth work team would go out into the community to find them and encourage them to come and explore the space at No 32 and take part in activities.

Sessions included making pancakes, playing games, taking part in feedback and reflection sessions as well as planning for events to recruit new members to the group and support the community.

There were several events run by the group which were well attended by all generations across the estate.

As part of the youth work element, the young people were supported in helping to create and fill the timeline wall, created using images of the houses and community before the development. The young people started to talk about their personal journeys about moving around and how they missed having '*somewhere to go*' that was just for them.

Each session reflected back on the group contract, which was devised by the young people to ensure everyone was treated fairly and equally. The group also had the opportunity to come and chat to the youth work team about what has been happening in their lives and how they felt about the community they lived in.

After a few weeks there was a core group of young people who went on to create a 'happiness board' after taking pictures around the estate of what they felt were positive elements. They worked for several weeks on this project, taking the pictures and then using them to collage the piece of work on the front page of this report.



## Phase three – Detached work

### **August 2019 – October 2019**

During the summer and after the community event, the Mama Bee youth work team took to the streets of Olympic Way again but this time without a building to encourage the young people to connected with. The space at No 32 had been quite quickly returned to the housing stock for a new family to move in to.

This led to meetings in the park and (with consent) escorting the young people to the local library to find out what else they could engage with on a more permanent level.

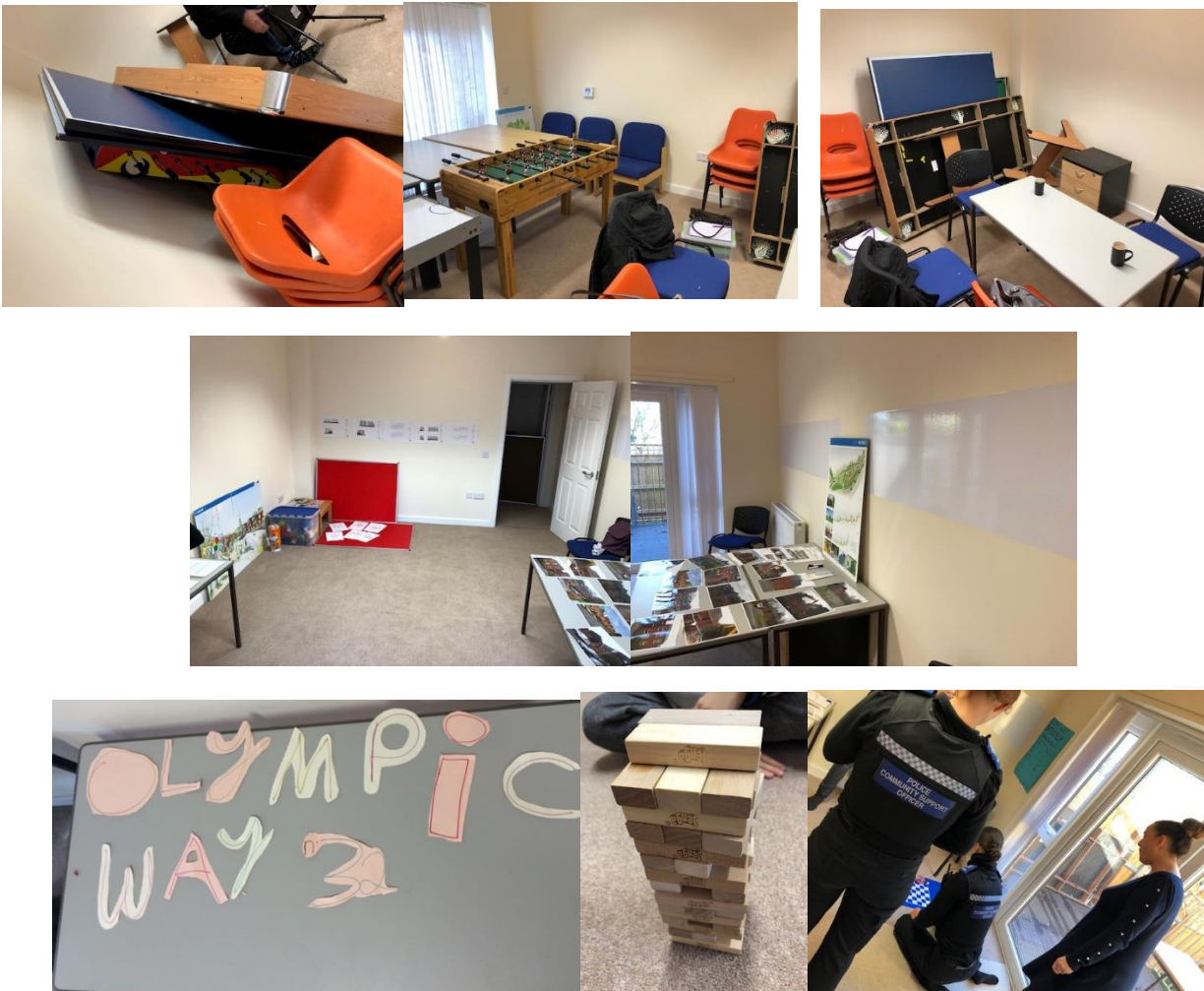
As highlighted in the future for young people section of this report, the young people have also been given information about opportunities for them to engage with post- Mama Bee interventions as part of this phase of detached work.

Even in the rain the young people were keen to meet and talk with Mama Bee practitioners who continued to support them through challenging and engaging conversations.

# Outcomes

## **1. Having access to No 32 has given the young people somewhere to go that was their space.**

When Mama Bee took on the space it was being used to store equipment and with the support of Home Group it was transformed into a safe, comfortable and engaging space for the young people.



Through positive engagement with the local PCSOs, No 32 was also helping to bridge the gap between young people and the police.

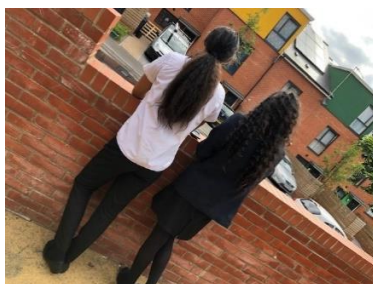


## **2. Having No 32 subsequently enabled scope for voluntary experience for young people living on the estate.**

Two young women started to attend the project asking for support with their Duke of Edinburgh Award. One of the young women asked if she could volunteer with the project to gain this section of her accreditation. The youth work team was able to facilitate this and in September, one of the workers was able to sign off the young woman's volunteering section of the award.

## **3. Having No 32 subsequently enabled young people to talk about their estate and have their voices heard about what mattered to them in the area.**

The young people who engaged with the sessions were able to reflect on their journeys to the estate and to discuss their hopes and dreams for the future.



## **4. Having No 32 enabled the young people to plan, deliver and evaluate events for their whole community**

As will be outlined below, the young people were given the opportunity to develop their skills of organisation and communication to deliver three events for themselves and their neighbours.

## No 32 Events

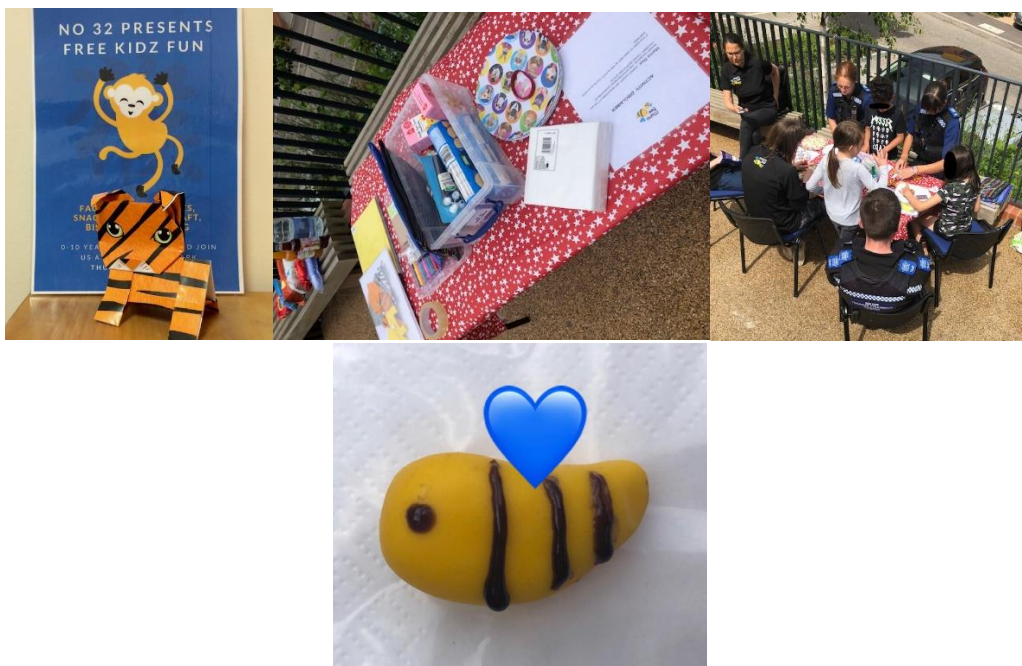
As part of being involved in No 32, the young people planned and delivered events for their community.

Their first one was **'Hop to It'** which was a community litter pick where community members and young people came together to pick up the litter in and around their homes. Using the Easter Holidays as the theme, the group borrowed equipment from the Chiltern Rangers and collected a dozen bags of rubbish. They finished the event with Easter treats and vegan cupcakes thanks to Khepera CiC.



The second event was a **'Free Kidz Fun'** No 32 Community Family Event for the whole community in May. This was the first event the young people had full control over what was planned for the day.

The group discussed planning the event, compiled lists for the equipment they needed, made the posters for the event, practised the arts and crafts and then delivered the event on the day. They offered face painting, biscuit decorating, arts and crafts and were on the recruitment drive for new members.



During the summer holidays the No 32 group took on their most ambitious event! **'No 32 Summer Community Event'** held on August 29<sup>th</sup>. The young people supported by a boxing coach, face painter, catering provider, the Mama Bee team and Home Group, were able to organise a fun and connective event. Again, they had made a poster and this time hand delivered them to their neighbours. They also developed a survey which they then asked to everyone who attended (and wanted to answer) so they could get an idea of what the community felt about No 32. They supported the face painting; they went door knocking to personally invite people to come and encouraged everyone to take part. It was a great success with residents of all ages taking part and congratulating the young people on their work.





## **Future for the young people**

All the young people participating in the No 32 project have all been supported by the Mama Bee team and encouraged to find alternative youth work provision in the area:

They were taken to Micklefield library to meet Nicola who runs BOOMMFutures, a youth group that allows young people to have their voices heard. They found out how the group ran, when it met and how they could get involved if they wished.

- They have been invited to be part of a youth group known as Foodie Friday and will be attending their Halloween event on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019.
- They have been told about Wycombe Youth Action and advised to check out their website for local events
- There is an option for Mama Bee Group to deliver a events-based project which will facilitate six community events across the year – separated proposal to submit to Home Group.



## Recommendations

After carrying out ongoing research with young people and other residents of Olympic Way, and more specifically during the No 32 summer event (Appendix 1), the community fed back that having a community events-based project would interest them and suit their needs best.

100% of respondents agreed that the way forward was for No 32 to move away from the in-house youth sessions where a few numbers were attending and instead seek to co-facilitate an event-based project with young people providing regular and diverse events that would meet the needs of all the community.

During Mama Bee's time with No 32 and the Olympic Way residents, it is estimated less than 15% of the children and young people were engaged in the in-house youth sessions, compared to events where that rose to more than 30% with all ages also engaging, leading to an intergenerational effect at the site.

When compiling this report, Mama Bee practitioners spoke to parents of the children who attended the sessions and those who did not.

Of those who came, parents felt their children were 'getting a lot from it' by 'having somewhere to go' but those who did not allow their children to come said 'I don't want my kids hanging around with *those* kids'.

When exploring this feedback, the youth work team also observed many children and young people not coming to the office space, or engaging with the phase three detached work. The conclusion of the team was that the children and young people were not coming along due to the perceived behaviours and dynamics within the group that was engaging in the project. A full community events-based project could contribute to addressing these issues of perceived stereotypes of other community members.

## Information about Mama Bee

Mama Bee Group is a non-profit organisation created in March 2017 by Amber Preen, a qualified youth and community practitioner BA (Hons).

Mama Bee provides specialist services for young people and communities to tackle a range of social issues.

Mama Bee has a unique and collaborative approach in designing projects with young people that are an effective and innovative way of capturing the needs and ideas of participants.

The group has more than ten years' experience in meaningful participation and engagement and worked within a local authority setting (Buckinghamshire County Council Youth Service) for many years and engaged with hundreds of young people during that time.

All Mama Bee courses are young person led, this means the participants take control of the content and structure of the courses with the facilitators. This leads to more productive engagement and a sense of ownership for learning and development.

For more information about Mama Bee – [www.mamabee.org.uk](http://www.mamabee.org.uk)

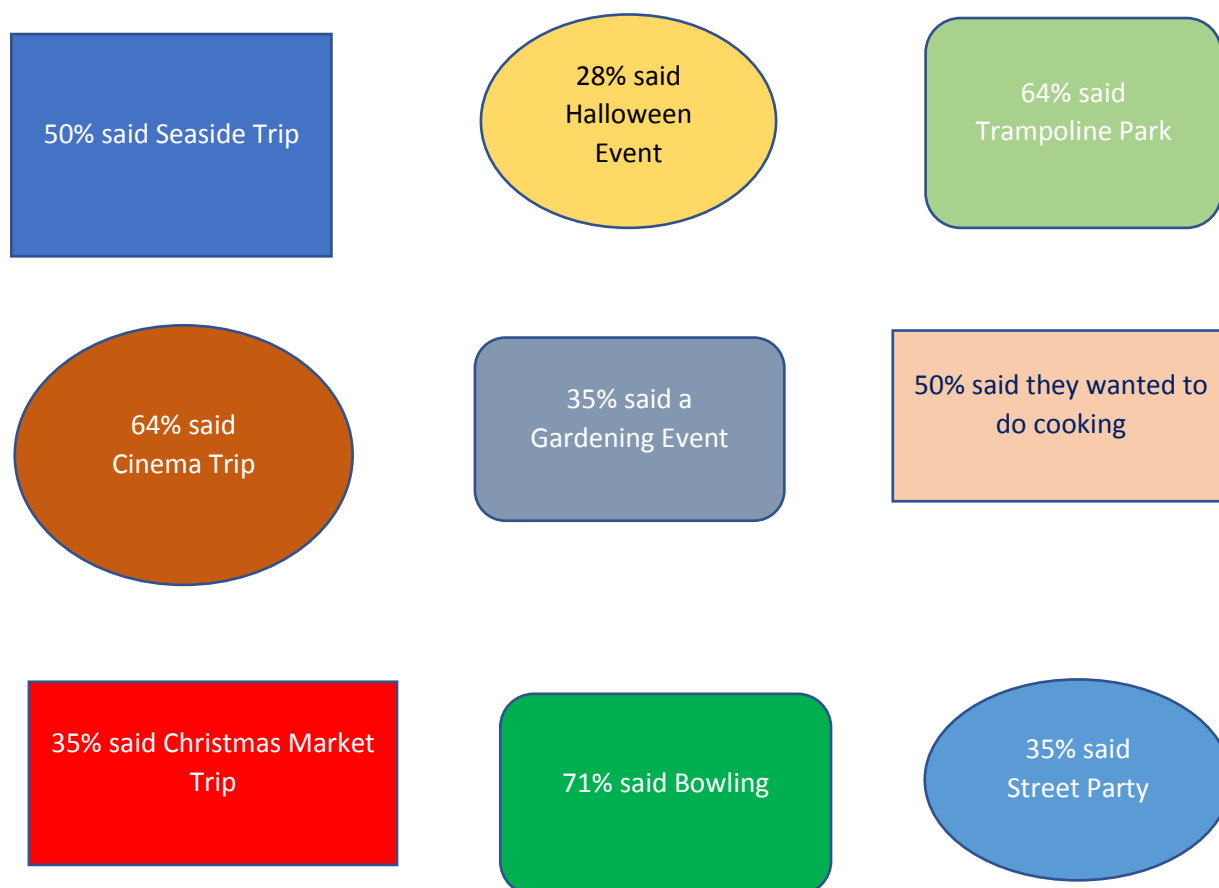
Amber Preen 07904 705220

## Appendix One

### Survey results from Summer Event 2019

When asked what did the residents think changing No 32 to an events based provision – 100% said yes.

#### Ideas of events:



Other ideas:

- Trip to Rush
- Disco
- First Aid sessions
- Road Safety sessions
- Christmas party
- Steel Band
- Egg Hunt

The main factors for people not attending any of the above events would be down to:

- Lack of knowledge of event
- Lack of money to pay for event
- Not being able to get there (transport)

Those who took part in the young people's survey were keen to see more being done for the whole estate with a key focus on giving the young people somewhere to go – especially since the reporting of the safeguarding concern which led to the halt of some activities that some young people were engaging in.