

# Could working with the Park Life team help you make a greater impact on your project?

The team behind Park Life Heavitree have been working in and around a large Urban park in Exeter, Devon for the last 14 years and we've learnt a thing or two along the way. Drawing from our expertise, contacts and time 'on the front line', we can work creatively and collaboratively with you to support you in your journey, working both to challenge your assumptions and support you in crucial decision making.

Our experience tells us that there are 4 phases to consider - all of which require a multitude of skills and abilities:

1. **Planning and Strategy** - *why are you even deciding to do this and how can you address community specific needs?*
2. **Funding Sources** - *if your project needs funding, it's important to think carefully about who might be a good source of funding and what the best approaches might be*
3. **Project Delivery** - *running a project is never easy!*
4. **Project review and impact assessment** - *it's important to look back on what you've achieved and evaluate your impact in the local community and beyond.*

The following outlines the various areas and activities that you should consider across a project.

## Phase 1: Planning and Strategy

Area	Activities
Community Needs Assessment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify the specific needs of the community that the project will address.</li> <li>● Conduct surveys, interviews, and community forums to gather input to help share the project</li> </ul>
Develop a Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Theory of Change is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.</li> </ul>
Create defined project objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clearly define the goals and objectives of the project.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure alignment with the identified needs of the community.</li> </ul>
Site / location selection (as appropriate):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and select a suitable location for the venue.</li> <li>• Consider accessibility, local regulations and community preferences.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Engagement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and action a plan to involve key stakeholders, including community members, local authorities and potential users.</li> <li>• Establish partnerships with other organisations that share similar goals.</li> </ul>
Build Volunteering Plan and Strategy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a cohesive volunteer based plan - exploring how your organisation can benefit from volunteers and approaches to gain volunteers</li> </ul>
Budget Planning:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with your team and chosen contractors to develop a detailed budget that includes construction costs, permits, and contingency funds and sustainability techniques</li> <li>• Explore potential cost-saving measures without compromising quality.</li> </ul>
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce you to the right people in the right organisations to help you move the project forward</li> <li>• Help you find the change makers and community organisers in your geographic area or field of interest - networking is key to the success of these projects</li> </ul>

## Phase 2: Funding sources

Area	Activities
Case for Support:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with you to develop your “Case for Support” document. The essential document to start the fundraising process. <i>Who are you? What do you want to do? Why is it needed? Who are you working with? What impact will it have when it's up and running?</i></li> </ul>

Grant Applications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and apply for relevant grants from government bodies, foundations, and private organisations.</li> <li>• Ensure alignment between grant requirements and project objectives.</li> </ul>
Corporate sponsorship:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support building a network of local business who may be interested in sponsoring the project or forging a further partnership with your organisation</li> <li>• Develop a strategy to work in collaboration with local businesses to exchange promotional / financial benefits</li> </ul>
Community Fundraising:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support you in setting up fundraising events within the community.</li> <li>• Utilise crowdfunding platforms to engage a broader audience.</li> </ul>
Central and Local Government Funding:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore government funding programmes at the local, regional and national levels.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with any grant application procedures and deadlines.</li> </ul>
Bid Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and action individual bid strategy for each grant / bid required</li> </ul>
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make connections and introduce you to the right people and funding circles to move your project forward</li> </ul>

## Phase 3: Project Delivery

Area	Activities
Construction Management:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support your team in hiring a reputable construction team (including architects) with demonstrable experience in delivering successful community projects.</li> <li>• Implement a construction management plan to ensure quality and timelines are met.</li> </ul>
Community Involvement in Construction:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for community members to participate in the construction process.</li> <li>• Host open houses or tours to keep the community</li> </ul>

	<p>informed and engaged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage local filmmaking, photography and media teams to document the progress if required</li> <li>● Create social media, website and external media content</li> </ul>
Sustainability Measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Incorporate environmentally friendly practices in the construction and operation of the venue.</li> <li>● Explore renewable energy sources and waste reduction initiatives.</li> </ul>
Programming and Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with your team to develop a diverse range of programmes and activities for the venue.</li> <li>● Collaborate with local groups to ensure inclusivity and relevance.</li> <li>● Introduce 'space management' techniques and tools to allow you to maximise the potential income of the space</li> </ul>

## Phase 4: Review and Impact assessment

Area	Activities
Impact assessment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluate the social and economic impact of the community venue on the local area.</li> <li>● Collect feedback from users and stakeholders to measure success against objectives.</li> </ul>
Financial Review:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct a thorough financial review to assess budget adherence and identify any variances.</li> <li>● Analyse revenue streams and explore opportunities for financial (non grant based) sustainability.</li> </ul>
Adaptation and improvement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify areas for improvement based on the project review.</li> <li>● Develop strategies for ongoing maintenance and upgrades to meet changing community needs.</li> </ul>
Documentation and Reporting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Compile a comprehensive report detailing the entire project lifecycle.</li> <li>● Share the outcomes, lessons learned and best practices with the community and relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>