



Latest News

www.makeithappenbirkenhead.co.uk | May 2023



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A Place of Contribution



Nourish to Flourish Project:

We've had a great start to the year for our Nourish to Flourish project, with 141 people coming into Place of Contribution for our Tuesday sessions! We've had all sorts of activities including tie dying with clothes donated to our community shop, potting of seedlings and small spider plants, making draft excluders from recycled fabrics, decorating our community hub windows, health literacy workshops and the renovating of an artificial cherry blossom tree!



The tree has been a great example of the 'Give and Gain' model we use at Make It Happen. By working with a local events company, Package Hire Events Wirral, we have been able to save the tree for their business, which reduces waste, and they very kindly donated a set of glue guns to our hub. The cherry on top is that we will be able to borrow the tree and its sister for our community events and occasions in the future!

We had United Utilities come in to talk about saving water and money, and we've promoted Nourish to Flourish at a Mental Health event in Hoylake and a Health Fayre in Rock Ferry, to name just a couple of visits. It's been great to get out and meet people, talk about the environment and the impact it has on our health. We've also had some great consultations about the Birkenhead Regeneration projects, getting our community planters onto Market Street and coming up with many great community led ideas for activities, such as litter picking along the Dock Branch railway! Nourish to Flourish has always focused on our local community and environment, so it's been wonderful to hear people really getting passionate about where they live and what they would like to see changed for the better.

Place of Contribution



Place of Contribution is a National Lottery funded vibrant community hub. Acting as a community anchor - here to answer the needs, aspirations, ideas & hopes of our community.

Digital Skills



We have partnered with TechKnow Wirral to bring Digital Skills sessions to our community hub, supporting with tech struggles and teaching new skills

Nourish to Flourish



Nourish to Flourish strives for a cleaner and more attractive town, creative upcycling and recycling attitudes in the community and developing the skills of our volunteers.



Health Literacy & NHS Health Checks:

Our Health Checks in the Community have been going really well this year, with over 20 people coming along for a free Cardio and Diabetes risk assessment at Place of Contribution. It's always good to talk about your health and we've been delighted to have the opportunity to take the time to listen. We've also had One Wirral CIC come in to talk about GP access on the Wirral and how our community thinks it could be improved in a digital way. This led to a great group session where we thought about ways in which the current system could be more accessible and understandable for people, which has contributed to the business case of the Health Checks being continued in the community.

To learn more about our activity sessions, social supermarket or community hub - take a look at our website: www.makeithappenbirkenhead.co.uk or follow us on social media

Community Cooking:

We've been cooking up a storm every Friday in Place of Contribution with our Community Cooking sessions. A little while ago we produced our first community cookbook, full of tasty, low cost meals with lots of options for vegetarians too. We cook with what people might have in their kitchens at home, and recently got an air fryer to help us show people how to use them and the energy saving benefits they offer! Each week we show the community how to prepare food safely and cook on a budget, the sessions are free and everyone is welcome to come and take part! We've been asked, do we do desserts? We absolutely do!



A word from our CEO:

As spring arrives, there is no better time for our newsletter to hit your doormat. What has been going on within Make It Happen I hear you ask! Well...

Christmas just gone was something our team put a lot of effort into, with the shop remaining open throughout the festive period. We also decided to open up our Place of Contribution community space for Christmas Day, hosting dinner for 18 people as well as providing over 30 hot meals to community members who turned up on the day. We also supported a local housing project with food to reduce the pressure on them.

Community members were so happy with the offer and engagement and there were lots of friendships formed and memories made.

The new year gave us an opportunity to undertake some recruitment, welcoming some new team members who bring a number of skills to provide more activities in Place of Contribution and enhance the offer at our Community Shop.

We have been busy behind the scenes too with a full revamp of the shop at 72 Market Street, and have also had a local business renovate the basement of 34 Argyle Street into a safe, accessible, bright space - enabling Make It Happen to receive more donations, space to sort and use creatively.

Our aims for this year are to continue providing a Community Shop with 'Pay as you Feel' clothing, growing our Social Supermarket, and have a bigger and better volunteering offer using our 'Give and Gain' model.

I do want to take this opportunity to remind community members that during this cost of living crisis we are here and we are very creative with how we ensure people have a dignified experience, especially around access to food or clothing and doing exchanges or time given in volunteering to assist people.



Creative Corner

The benefits of creating and making art have been proven time and again, but what we love at Place of Contribution is creating while being mindful of the environment, reducing waste and creating from scrap materials. We've loved creating all sorts of things from draft excluders to positive self-image mirrors! A recurring theme we noticed during our sessions was community members doubting their creative and artistic skills! So we spent some time this year allowing ourselves to be creative in unconventional ways, not only to enhance our creative skills, but to help us enjoy the process rather than focus on the end result. We spent time making drawings without looking (hilarious but massively useful in increasing focus and observation), painting with cake scrapers (quick and therapeutic but promotes mindfulness and enjoyment of the process) and other such activities. We've had a lot of fun around creativity this year, but more importantly it's been a year of creative freedom, mindful enjoyment, and self-belief.



Creative Writing

Creative writing is a wonderful form of self-expression, and is a very popular activity at Place of Contribution, but what happens when you're hit with the dreaded writers' block? We spent a few sessions this year exploring writers' block and ways to overcome it and enjoy writing without the pressure. To aid our writing process we explored creative aids such as story cubes (which resulted in stories about magic monks, teenage pirates, travelling women and more!) and pick 'n' mix stories (picking 6 random words from a book and using them to inspire our writing) among others. As a result of this, we noticed an increased confidence in writing among community members and an increased enjoyment of the writing process all round. We couldn't have asked for a better result!

Who are Make It Happen?

Our name is the golden thread of the work that we do and the logo is the shape of a fingerprint, this shows that everyone has a stake in our community and can leave a fingerprint.

Make It Happen.

Our aim:

"A sustainable model for community regeneration built on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principles; building confidence, recognising, encouraging and mobilising community assets."

Our values:

Real

We celebrate possibilities and opportunities, rather than focusing on issues and problems. We are original, emboldening and supporting our community to build resilience and confidence, promoting real influence and change.

Engaging

We use inspiring language to encourage our community to engage and feel empowered. We challenge stereotypes, recognise individual assets and capture stories of community impact.

Respectful

We treat people with care, consideration and respect at all times. We are people with vision, believing in new ideas and being a catalyst for community achievement. This doesn't just apply to the 'big stuff' - we value the little details of everyday life.

Dock Branch Park - Regeneration



Some of you living in and around Birkenhead may have had the chance in the last few months to see some of the plans for the new **Dock Branch Park** being planned as part of the 'green corridor' leading up from Woodside Ferries into the heart of Birkenhead. Make It Happen and the Nourish to Flourish project have had a busy time talking to the Council and master planning team about community consultation, all to help make sure that local voices are heard and local people are involved every step of the way. It's been great to get up to BirkenEd's Place, run by Placed on Borough Pavement, for a few events and consultations on the project, even getting involved with judging their brilliant photography competition! We are also delighted to have accepted a place on the Dock Branch Community Panel, where we will strive to bring everyone's opinions to the table, from local businesses to community members and heritage groups, and will do our best to translate some of the more technical language into something people can visualise. The plans are all very encouraging, including a new neighbourhood of mixed housing alongside the new park, and a regeneration of the parallel Argyle Street, which we hope will help make the area an attractive place for people to visit, live and work!

BIRKENED'S PLACE

8-10 Borough Pavement | Grange Precinct | Birkenhead

Earlier this year, Cathy Palmer from Wirral Borough Council led us on a guided tour of the Dock Branch railway cutting, allowing us to film the experience and create a video tour of the space to share with our community and local businesses, and this has been very well received. We have passed on lots of your thoughts and ideas to the artist group who are developing concepts for the Haymarket Tunnel space, to create something that attracts people and celebrates a biodiversity revolution in Birkenhead. Biodiversity is going to be a key feature throughout the Dock Branch Park, but we've also heard great ideas from the community, from a graffiti street art wall to a boating pond with Cammell Laird ships. In May, Make It Happen will be helping out with some of the clean-up work that needs doing down on the rails, going on a litter picking odyssey with our Nourish to Flourish group!

You are invited to the
Make It Happen
AGM

DATE: Thursday 8th June 2023
TIME: 4pm - 6pm
PLACE: BirkenEd's Place
 8-10 Borough Pavement
 Grange Precinct
 Birkenhead

Disabled access
 Light refreshments
 All welcome

MAKE IT HAPPEN

BIRKENED'S PLACE

AGM - come and join us!

This year, our AGM will be held on Thursday 8th June from 4pm - 6pm at BirkenEd's Place on Borough Pavement. After lots of positive feedback from our last AGM, we are opening the meeting to everyone once again this year so please feel free to come along and find out more about what Make It Happen has been doing over the last year. The venue is fully accessible and there will be light refreshments available too - scan the QR code with your phone camera and click the link that appears to reserve your spot - we can't wait to share our year!



scan me

Digital Skills

We have partnered with **TechKnow Wirral** to bring Digital Skills sessions to our Place of Contribution. We are living in an increasingly digital age and with so many services being moved online, we don't want anyone to be left behind. The aim of the project is to support the community with any tech struggles, help to use devices, online services and bridging the digital gap as much as possible. So far, we have supported participants with a wide range of topics including WhatsApp, messaging, notifications, device settings, liaising with online services, word processing, flash drives, emails and attachments and lots more! We've even created a whole computer basics course for those who wish to follow a structured plan and learn specific skills! It's been lovely to see the increase in confidence and to watch community members supporting each other and answering each others questions! If you would like any digital support, come along on Friday mornings from 10am until 12pm, grab a biscuit and a brew and we can answer any questions you may have about navigating digital life.



Birthday vibes!

4th February was our 4th birthday, and it was a real treat to see so many community members come down to celebrate with a little party in Place of Contribution and to enjoy the cake and company!

As great as it was to have a little party, hearing people sharing stories about Make It Happen and making new friends on the day were the real highlights. We're looking forward to this next year full of hope, optimism and oodles of community inspired ideas!

Thank you to everyone who helped make the day special for all of us, its a blessing seeing you all each and every week.

Special thanks went to Lunch & Judy for an extra special birthday buffet and to Café Aroma for the incredible cake decoration! We do love our local businesses!

Happy Birthday!

We're celebrating our 4th birthday...

and we would love for you to join us for laughter, fun, food and drinks!

Saturday 4th February
 1pm - 3pm
 at Place of Contribution
 34 Argyle Street, CH41 6AE

Want to talk to us? For general enquiries call us on 0151 306 4840, for questions about our projects or activities call 07875 692142 or 07458 301082 or for more information about volunteering with us, call 07458 302051

Why Volunteer - what's in it for me?

As someone who has volunteered my time for many different organisations for the past 25 years my reply would be so much more than you may think and according to a government survey - 19 million other people in the UK would probably agree with me!

The main reasons people chose to volunteer were 'to make things better' and the cause was personally important to them. Other reasons included a specific need in the local community, making new friends and learning new skills. Volunteers talked about improved physical and mental wellbeing, increased confidence and the positive feeling of giving something back.

Interestingly some of the barriers to volunteering that were mentioned were that they had never thought about it, they did not know of any groups that needed help or they were not the right age.

Let's start by saying there is no 'right age' for volunteering! I have been volunteering since my mid 30s and have met some wonderful people of all ages and have definitely benefited from spending time with them. Starting something new can be scary, especially when you walk into a new place not knowing what to do or knowing anyone there. Every journey starts with a single step, and most organisations that need volunteers are very welcoming and approachable - and very quickly you feel more confident and start to learn new skills.

Finding an organisation that has a cause that is important to you will immediately connect you to people who feel the same as you, and you'll soon be making new friends and feeling that you really are putting something back.

If you would like to try some volunteering yourself, Make It Happen can't operate without the support of people like you and we would welcome your support; we are on your doorstep! We are a friendly and approachable bunch who support our local community with passion and respect - and we don't care about your age!

For an application form, or just a chat about volunteering with us, give us a call on 0151 306 4840 or send an email to admin@makeithappenbirkenhead.co.uk and we will be in touch - we look forward to hearing from you!

You're always welcome to pop in and see us at 72 Market Street too!



We are always on the lookout for new ways of giving back to our wonderful volunteer team, they are indispensable! We are planning some team building and fun days over the coming months - watch this space!



“Every Friday from 12pm, we meet to prepare and cook a meal as a group. The emphasis is on cooking “with” as opposed to cooking “for”.

Everyone is encouraged to prepare and chop the ingredients and we aim to produce a nutritious, healthy and economical meal. Each session includes details of the ingredients, and their importance in creating a balanced meal to always include protein, carbohydrate and vitamins. Emphasis is placed on creating a tasty meal with the cheapest of ingredients (using chicken thighs instead of breast, or using packs of bacon pieces, for example). Advice is offered on various cooking methods, for example we recently showed how to prepare fresh salmon in a microwave. We finish by eating together and everyone enjoys cooking and eating as a group.

The amazing benefits of community cooking group were recognised by a community member who recently said: **“I don't think people recognise the wonderful benefits of the Community Cooking session at Place of Contribution and how it brings people together. I live on my own and cook microwave meals for one. Preparing and eating meals together creates a family atmosphere that I miss on other days of the week. Thank you so much.”**

~ R
Community Cooking Volunteer

Volunteer Stories

The Five Ways to Wellbeing

Volunteers' Week
1st-7th June

“

I love volunteering at Make It Happen because I feel appreciated and welcomed. The customers are super and I like to chat with them, love getting a bargain too. There's a family atmosphere even though not family... if that makes sense! Made some great friends with staff and customers. So all in all, what's not to like. Thanks for being there.

”

~ H
Volunteer & Customer

Our volunteers get plenty of additional opportunities to learn too, several of the team have completed First Aid at Work with Bee Wirral, including our wonderful model here, John! Many of the team have also completed their Food Hygiene training too.

We recognise how important it is to not only keep our own stock and premises clean and hygienic to the highest standards, but how important it is to be able to offer accurate, reliable advice to our community members around best before dates, use by dates and display until dates.

It's also great to be able to offer advice on food storage, preparation and reheating, both at the till in our shop on Market Street and at our Community Cooking sessions on Friday afternoons in our Place of Contribution!



“

I think I am the longest serving volunteer, 3 and half years now! I joined because I had lost my husband and needed to gain some confidence in myself and the working environment as I had cared for my husband for many years. As others have said, I have made many friends with both volunteers and customers and feel respected by the young volunteers. We all have a good laugh and it makes for a good working environment.

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~ D
Volunteer Team Member

“

My volunteer journey began at Make It Happen, I've had lots of encouragement from the team and have completed my food hygiene training. I like giving my time to help others, which gives me a sense of wellbeing.

”

~ M
Volunteer Team Member

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My volunteering journey began when I lost my job a few years back, and I started to help out with the digital marketing for a local community organisation. I suffer with mental health issues and I find going out and being around people difficult, so it was great to be able to help out from home without pressure. I enjoy creating visuals and I now help out other VCFSE sector organisations too. After a few years of carrying out voluntary tasks I was lucky enough to be given a part time job at the organisation - this has given me more independence and I am now running a two hour session each week, teaching digital skills to the community. I feel very lucky to do the job I do - I enjoy it, it takes some pressure off the organisation and hopefully makes a difference - I invested my time voluntarily and in return the organisation has invested in me by employing me.

~ K

Volunteer & Team Member

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We have been volunteering as part of a college placement, since October and March respectively. We enjoy volunteering as we love helping people and getting involved in activities like crafts and cooking with the community. We also like helping people in the social supermarket and community shop getting their food and clothes and stuff they need.

It's good meeting different people from the community. We are both trained to use the till, health and safety and we have also learned about the importance of policies and procedures to ensure the safety of everyone. In our first week we helped a lady who was feeling a bit down and explained everything we do at our community hub and she left feeling a lot happier than when she came in, it is very rewarding.

~ K & R

College students on placement

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I'd started following Make It Happen on Facebook not long ago so I was aware of the great work they do. I had taken up Window Art at Christmas but when the new year came there was little call for art on windows. So I reached out to a few businesses offering reduced or free window art. I private messaged Amy from Make It Happen and offered to create something on their windows. I spent a day at the shop and covered their two main windows with images for Valentines Day. I was so impressed with how popular the shop was and just how lovely and friendly the staff and volunteers are! It's very clear that all the people at Make It Happen are important in how the shop is run, there's no obvious hierarchy everyone is treated as equals. The customers are treated with respect and dignity and everyone is made to feel welcome. I particularly like how the staff are encouraged to make conversations with customers, be it asking about their plans for the day or starting conversations about the weather, pricing of food items or opinions of clothes. Nothing is too much for anyone!!

~ G

Volunteer Team Member

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**A Place
of Contribution**



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Supporting Make It Happen

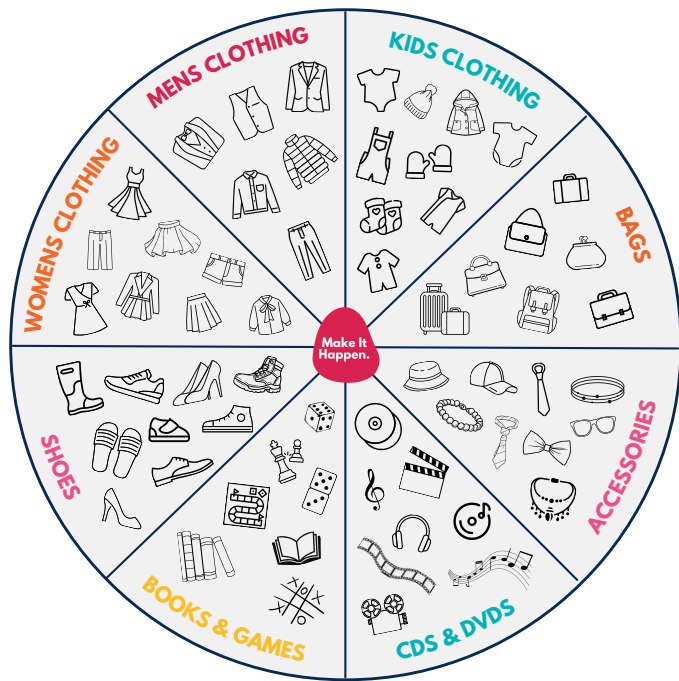
Make It Happen Community Shop is based at 72 Market Street in Birkenhead, offering 'Pay as you Feel' clothing, shoes, accessories and more. We couldn't run without the kind donations from our community. We are committed to providing a dignified retail experience to everyone and are proud of our 'Give & Gain' model that ensures everyone is able to access what they need. We also have our Place of Contribution at 34 Argyle Street, a community hub providing a safe space for the community to take part in activity sessions and make new friends, with food and drinks always available!

If you're having a spring clean, please keep Make It Happen in mind for any donations you may have.

Donations can be dropped off at our shop or we can arrange collection at a time that is convenient for you - just give us a call on 0151 306 4840.

What we can accept:

Get involved:



Do you have some free time?

- Would you like to meet new people and make new friends?
- Would you like to support your local community?
- Have you retired but still want to keep busy?
- Do you like to organise things?
- Do you have skills a busy community shop needs?

Answered yes to one or more of the above questions?

Then please consider the benefits of volunteering with Make It Happen...

...there are opportunities for new volunteers like you now!

We are a friendly bunch from all walks of life - why not pop down and see what we do? If you like what you see, you can pick up an application form at the same time!

Find us at 72 Market Street, Birkenhead, CH41 5BT

Give us a call on 0151 306 4840

Or check out our website: makeithappenbirkenhead.co.uk

Thank You!



With thanks to:



funded through

