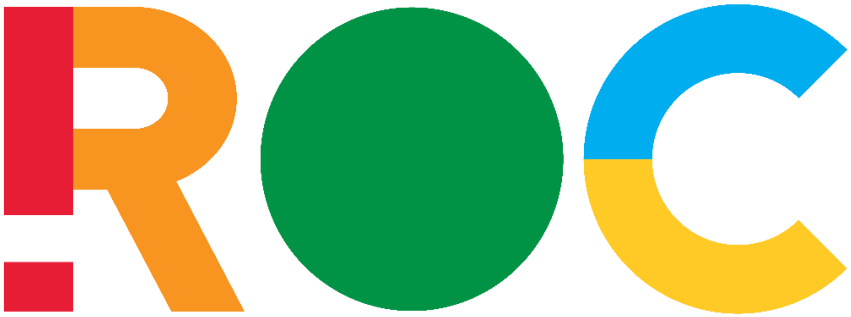


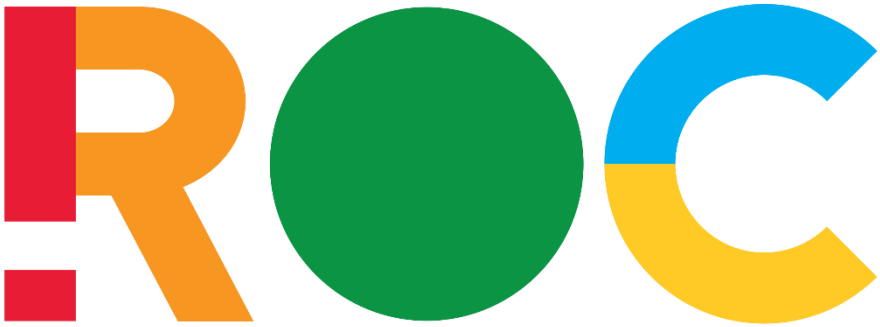
conversation

Canterbury

info@roc.uk.com

The FUSE, Warburton Lane, Manchester M31 4BU

www.roc.uk.com



REDEEMING OUR COMMUNITIES

Redeeming Our Communities is a national charity founded in 2004 with over 150 projects across the UK. ROC's main aim is to bring about community transformation by creating strategic partnerships between statutory agencies, volunteer groups, churches and faith groups. These partnerships form new volunteer-led projects that address a variety of social needs.

This partnership approach has seen huge improvements to community wellbeing including support for families, the alleviation of loneliness and isolation many elderly people face, crime and anti-social behaviour reduction and improved opportunities and fresh hope for young people.

ROC brings together community groups, churches, the police, the fire service, local authorities and voluntary agencies to encourage them to work together in positive partnerships for practical 'on the ground' change. As a result, statutory agencies have improved access to the support of community groups, and thousands of volunteers are enabled to better serve the needs of their community.

Foreword

by Debra Green OBE

The ROC Conversation Canterbury took place on March 7th when 120 people came together to discuss their community. Our guests included the Lord Mayor, Councillor Rosemary Doyle and the Lady Mayoress, Jenny Yonge.

We were pleased to hear from Detective Inspector Vicki Tyler Kent Police, Tessa Ivory AGE UK Canterbury, Doug Rattray Safer Neighbourhoods and Richard Caplan Necessary Furniture. There is so much happening in Canterbury that is worth celebrating. Many great ideas were generated during the evening and people are clearly passionate about the Canterbury community.

Having a conversation is a great first step, but it needs to lead to action if community change is to be achieved. A local Action Group is being formed to move things forward, and what is particularly encouraging is that an incredible 51 people have offered their time and skills to the community by joining this Action Group. We're confident and excited that real progress will be made in Canterbury.

It was an amazing evening. A team of over 30 came together to serve guests and we have to make special mention of the refreshments provided which have set a new standard for future ROC Conversations! On behalf of the ROC team and myself a sincere thank you for the amazing hospitality and friendship shown to us by Canterbury. Congratulations to Andrew Fitzgerald and Stephen Flower from Canterbury Baptist who hosted us and to the local organising team on a job well done.

Debra

Debra Green, Founder

Redeeming Our Communities

Story on Twitter

CELEBRATING THE GOOD

Celebrate the Good

A key element of a ROC Conversation is that we don't just focus on needs, we appreciate the value of recognising and celebrating the good things already taking place in the community, and just as importantly, we take time out to thank and encourage the relevant people in attendance for the often great and undervalued work they do.

It was great to see how much is happening in Canterbury as the post-it notes completely covered the maps with details of various projects, clubs and regular events. We know that there are many lists of 'who is doing what' but there is a need to share that information more widely. As one delegate noted on the feedback form ***"communication and networking are so important".*** More information in the following table feedback section.

TABLE FEEDBACK

Table Feedback

This exercise is at the core of every ROC Conversation. It presents an opportunity for you to share your thoughts about the needs of the community and work together with the rest of your group to pool ideas and discover the potential resources and skills available to support solutions.

This was achieved by working through 3 exploratory questions:

Feedback Summary

Top 5 community gaps

Youth

Mental Health

Students

Families

Homelessness

Needs raised more than once

Community venues

Lack Community Cohesion

Lack of Volunteers

Addictions

Refugees

Lack of Services

Lack of Access to Services

Funding

Social Isolation

Disability Provision

Unemployment

Communication

Affordable Housing

Other issues mentioned

Fly tipping / Underpasses / School parking / Churches working together

This section identifies the most common community issues raised throughout the evening. The top five issues accounted for 49% of all issues raised.

We reference the excellent 'Canterbury District Customer and Community Profile: People, Places, Prosperity' report (August 2017) which provides additional detailed information on many of these issues and can be accessed by following this report link.

Youth Provision

Although the top issue raised was 'youth' it encompassed nine specific concerns.

The first two were the lack of youth activities in the community and linked to that, lack of venues, facilities and paid workers. The 'Celebrate the Good' mapping exercise suggested there is plenty already happening for young people. Perhaps more is needed or that which is desired doesn't take place in the right area at the optimum time. Greater awareness of existing facilities is clearly an issue (see 'Communication' below). It's possible that the activities available are not those that young people wish to see. The only reliable way to find out is to **ask the young people**!

The third youth issue was Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) which is perhaps more understandable if the youth activities are not meeting the need. Does the activity take place at the time of greatest need? Tackling ASB is not the only reason for youth activity, but we know from experience that most youth

groups are not open on a Friday night when ASB is often most problematic.

Issues with social media and drugs were of equal concern. **Kent County Council website** (www.kent.gov.uk) is a good place to start to find professional help with drug addiction.

Mentoring and role models; life skills; mental health and the disenfranchisement of youth / lack of a voice were the final issues. We suggest that the Acton Group **create a sub-group** to look specifically at the youth issues raised. There may be opportunity to **develop a youth ROC Conversation** to enable the young people to share their views and also engage them in becoming part of the solution to the problem.

Mental Health

As well as showing up as a key issue in the ROC Conversation the statistics in the 'Canterbury District Customer and Community Profile' (August 2017) para1.8 (p20), suggest that hospital admissions due to self-harm and alcohol related self-harm are above the national average. Mental Health covers a whole range of issues – some of which may require professional involvement – raising awareness of the issue and **being a community that accepts and supports those with mental health issues** (reducing the stigma) is a first step which everyone can be involved in.

Within every community (and many families) are those who suffer with dementia and Canterbury area has the highest number of residents suffering with dementia of any district in Kent (a figure that is estimated to increase). There are **many experienced organisations** that can provide organised activities, support for carers and help developing dementia friendly communities (e.g. East Kent Independent Dementia Support http://www.ekids.org.uk/; AGE UK Dementia Outreach Service www.ageuk.org.uk/canterbury; Dementia Action Alliance www.dementiaaction.org.uk and Dementia Friendly Kent http://dementiafriendlykent.org.uk/).

We recommend that as a first step, the Action Group **map the organisations already providing mental health support** and **raise awareness of how volunteers can support them**.

The following three issues – Students, Families and Homelessness - were equally ranked during the Conversation.

Students

The three Universities together welcome approximately 30,000 students to study in Canterbury. The feedback throughout the Conversation was not about problems caused by the students but how the community could support students and how they might be encouraged to be more engaged in community life.

The Universities do have existing programmes where students volunteer their time and experience in community activity (**contact the Universities' Students Unions to invite their participation**). With a very full student programme there is the challenge of enticing students into the wider community. We suggest the Action Group **form a 'student sub-group'**, invite a representative from each of the student bodies to join them and discuss how the community can support the students and how the students can support the community. There is clearly a large, energetic and talented group of students who could offer much to their adopted community during their University course. Equally, there is there is the opportunity for existing community groups to ensure that students are aware of and welcomed at their activities. An individual student can feel lost and isolated even amongst a large active student body in a friendly community. The challenge for the Action Group is to **ensure those students hear about the community activities** and support available to them.

Families

This category was largely concerned with support for families rather than family breakdown.

Single and young parent families were a particular cause for concern with a recognition that help and support is available, but that many still need additional help.

There are organisations and venues in Canterbury who can signpost families to support or provide direct support. A good starting point is **Kent Family Support Framework** (http://www.kelsi.org.uk), **a free information and signposting service** for families with children, young people and professionals working with them (contact email: earlyhelp@kent.gov.uk)

Once again we recommend **mapping what is already available** and supporting them by making their services as widely known as possible (see 'lack of Communication' for some ideas around this).

In addition, we suggest the Action Group consider the **ROC Family Mentoring** programme, where volunteers are trained to mentor a local family giving one hour a week of their time for 26 weeks (usually spread over 12 months).

This simple support can help prevent struggling families from becoming in crisis or even breaking down completely (www.roc.uk.com/roc-mentors).

Homelessness

It is interesting that Homelessness is one of the top 5 issues raised during the Conversation (this echoes the Residents of Canterbury who determined the level of street homelessness 6th of the 27 things that most needed improving). There is clearly a social unease but we need to be careful in defining 'homelessness'.

Street homelessness is estimated at 36 people rough sleeping (Rough Sleeping in England: Autumn 2017 report) or 0.55 people per 1,000 households); this figure is a reduction on the previous three years. For comparison, this is the same number of people 'street homeless' as the City of London where the rough sleeping rate / 1000 households is 7.08 (due to the City of London having fewer residential properties).

Street homelessness is a complicated social issue - but for the estimated 36 people living on the streets, it's a very real and practical issue. This group are a relatively small proportion of homeless households – other households may have access to temporary accommodation but a lack of settled accommodation. The effect on these 'hidden homeless' can be equally as devastating as for rough sleepers – particularly for children who live in homeless households – the disruption of changing schools, communities and address details has a huge impact on health and well-being.

Existing charities (e.g. Catching Lives www.catchinglives.org) already provide a fantastic service to those who are street homeless and those who are vulnerably housed. At ROC we know the power of partnership and we strongly suggest **those who wish to help the homeless do so through an existing charity**. Let's not re-invent the wheel and end up fighting for the limited resources; instead let's all do what we can to support those most in need.

Lack of Communication

At every ROC Conversation 'Communication' is raised as an issue and it's easy to understand why. The volunteers are generally so busy running their own activities they rarely have time to see what's going on around them or tell others about what they're doing.

The Action Group have been provided with all the data from the Conversation – including the details of who offered to do what – so if you volunteered your time or skills expect to be contacted.

There is also the need to ensure that people know what already exists, when and where it takes place and who to contact for more information.

We're really excited that as a result of a ROC Conversation and thanks to the support of Jaki Bent (CEO & Founder of 'If Everyone Cares') we are exploring a new way of working in partnership to **put every community project in Canterbury on the map** – live and easily accessible online in one place.

Our aim is to effectively produce an online version of our 'Celebrate the Good' mapping exercise so **click on www.ododow.org and add your details** for free.

A specific issue raised was improving communication between the community voluntary sector and the statutory services working in the community. Ideas included **producing a directory** (print and online) for use by statutory and voluntary groups and including in the directory any assets which could be shared (from buildings to projectors to sports equipment) to enable a quick start up for new groups.

The positive benefits of sharing good news was reported – we started by Celebrating the Good … how can you continue doing so?

We suggest the Action Group **establish a local community Facebook page** through which funding opportunities, resources, training opportunities, activities and community events can be shared. In addition to being a powerful tool to help boost community networking and communication, the Facebook page can also be utilised as a 'volunteer matching' facility whereby volunteers can offer their expertise and connect with existing projects or available facilities.

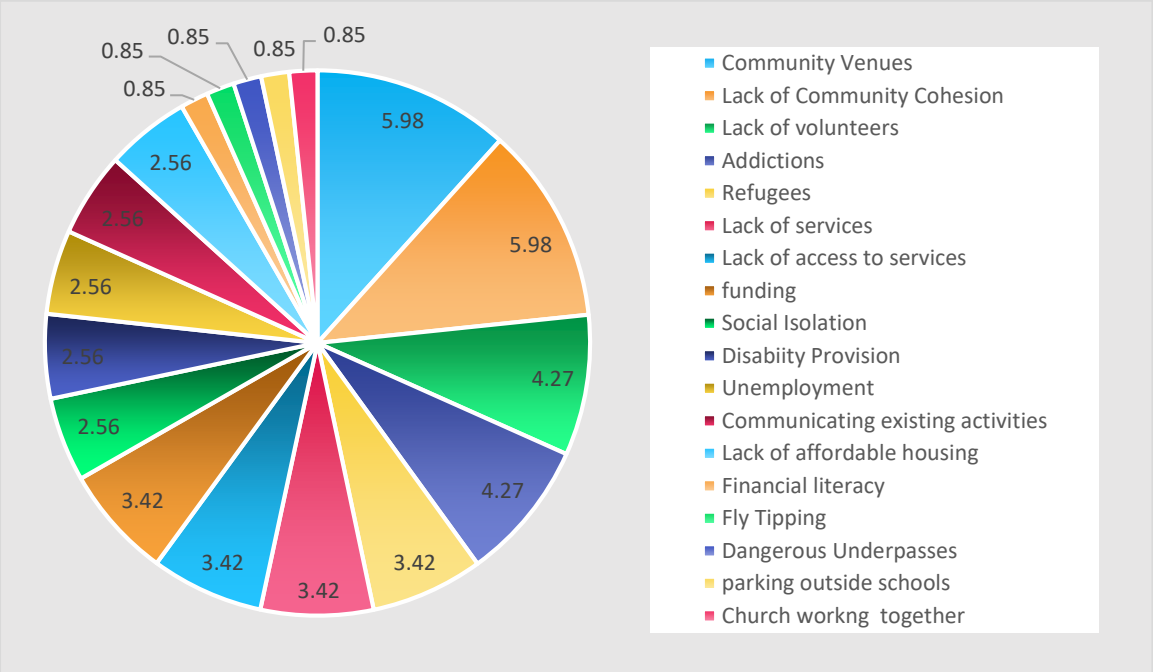
The example post opposite is about a community development project in Marple. The network

was set up as a result of a ROC Conversation and now connects over 1900 community members and volunteers.

Please consider connecting with your Action Group and becoming part of the solution to one of the top issues raised on the evening.

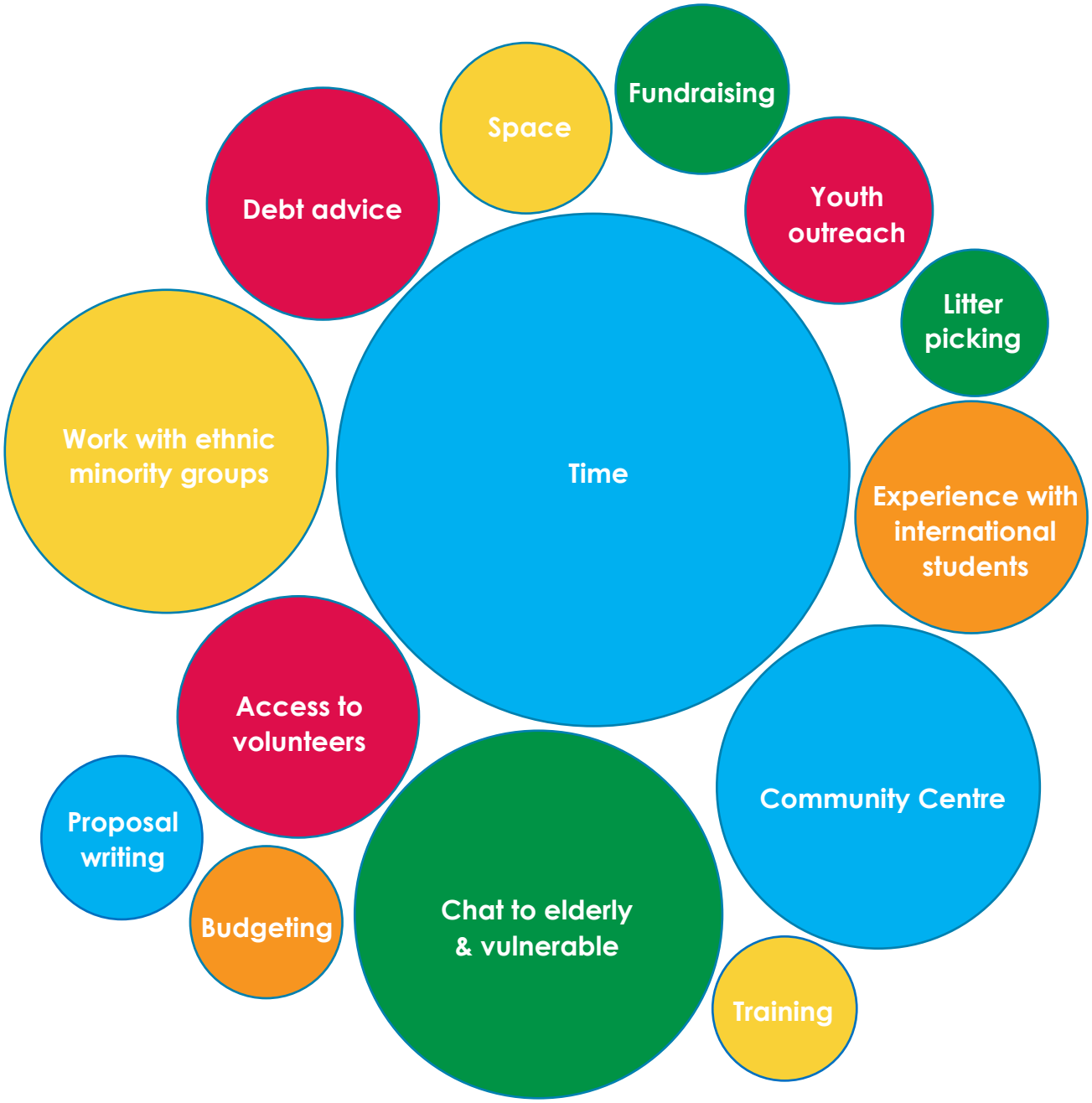
Other Needs

The chart below details the other subjects which were raised during table discussions. They account for 51% of the total issues raised and individually range from community venues and lack of community cohesion (6% each) to parking outside schools and churches working together (each 0.85%). Many of these issues related to the 'top 5' e.g. Youth – includes lack of volunteers, lack of services, funding. From observing other Action Groups around the UK, we recommend that you concentrate on the 'Top 5' – setting up sub-groups for each issue.



Skills & Resources

Below is a visual representation of the available skills and resources offered up on the evening as part of the final feedback exercise.



NEXT STEPS

Action Group

It's vital to keep the momentum going following a ROC Conversation and the first step in achieving this is through the formation of a local Action Group.

The Action Group plays a big part in helping turn conversations into actual results by continuing to connect a willing network of people passionate about transforming their community.

As we've already seen from the needs analysis and skills mapping, there is a lot of need, but equally a lot of willing resources and skillsets within the community.

By working together, you can not only help meet that need – but also support and encourage each other, pool resources and share ideas.

All the raw data collected from the evening will be passed over to the Action Group to help review the needs and potental solutions in further detail.

Thank you for the overwhelming number of people who have already expressed an interest in being part of the Action Group, you will be contacted by Stephen Flowers, the group leader in the coming weeks regarding details of the follow up meeting.

hubmanager@canterburybaptistchurch.org.uk

If you have a particular skill to offer, or represent a specific community group or agency and are interested in being part of the Action Group, but didn't indicate this on the feedback form, then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Community Action – 101 Great Ideas

We hope the ROC Conversation has inspired you to explore ways in which you could serve your community. To help, we've put this list together of 101 ideas in the hope that it will act as a catalyst to encourage people of goodwill to come together to work for safer, kinder communities.

As with any community work, we'd encourage you to start by finding out what's already happening in your area and seeing how you can support and complement existing good work.

YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES

1. Battle of the bands
2. Run outdoor activities for youth in a local park over the summer
3. Toy exchange
4. Run a dad & kid's club
5. Hold a pre-school breakfast club
6. Organise an after-school homework club
7. Set up a mums and tots group
8. Host a parenting course
9. Set up training schemes for young people e.g. life skills, IT, CV writing
10. Offer practical help to lone parents
11. Collect baby equipment/toys to donate to new parents with limited resources
12. Hold an autism-friendly youth club with opportunity for 'carer coffee time'
13. Organise a free child tutor service
14. Set up an art class for children with special needs
15. Set up a detached youth team
16. Set up a help-out scheme for children and young adults with disabilities
17. Set up a volunteering competition for local young people

ELDERLY

18. Organise a tea dance for elderly members of the community
19. Coffee and cake morning for the elderly
20. Sing at a local nursing home
21. Read letters & newspapers to residents at a local nursing home
22. Make phone visits with the elderly
23. Nursing home nail & beauty bar
24. Deliver meals to elderly residents
25. Become a dementia-friendly community
26. Free transport service for those unable to drive
27. Support a hospital visiting team
28. Ironing service
29. Ask a local school to write letters for elderly residents
30. Offer computer servicing and assistance
31. Offer help with social media

ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURE

32. Clear up overgrown gardens
33. Clean up graffiti
34. Litter pick at your local park
35. Tree planting
36. Tidy up local allotments
37. Tidy up your local park
38. Paint local fences/gates
39. Clear up alleys or stairwells
40. Paint a mural
41. Set up a recycling unit
42. Set up a community vegetable garden
43. Clear up a fly-tipping location
44. Repair damage caused by vandalism
45. Start a 'friends of' for your local park
46. Offer transport and hands in moving large items to recycling centres

HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

47. Hand out care packages to homeless people
48. Open a soup kitchen
49. Make sandwiches for a local homeless shelter
50. Deliver essential food parcels
51. Offer breakfast, shower and laundry for homeless people
52. Speak to your local foodbank and see how you can help
53. Run a CV writing workshop to help people return to work
54. Host a Christmas dinner for the homeless

COMMUNITY BUILDING

55. Organise a day of kindness e.g. help out in shops, busking, giving out flowers
56. Gather local community groups to exhibit at a community fair
57. Free car wash
58. Hold a summer festival – hog roast, bouncy castle, market stall, crafts and music
59. Host a marriage course
60. Set up a 'time-bank' where people can offer services in exchange for hours back
61. Host a community BBQ
62. Hold a street party
63. Put on a street theatre production
64. Open a community shop e.g. second hand children's clothes
65. Produce a community newsletter
66. Set up a community radio
67. Offer to collect groceries for those unable to in the community
68. Regular community quiz night
69. Set up a book-exchange

70. Knit & natter group
71. Arrange to meet in a coffee shop and get to know your neighbours
72. Create a welcome pack for new residents to the community
73. Set up a 'Random Acts of Kindness' group
74. Organise a community treasure hunt
75. Organise a 'thank you' event for local volunteers
76. Plan a community cultural awareness day
77. Organise a community choir
78. Create a community website or Facebook page
79. Start a neighbourhood crime watch program
80. Turn a local café into a community games room for an afternoon each week
81. Carry out a survey in your area to see where the need is
82. Create a short film about what's already going on in your community
83. Set up a temporary 'street café' offering free food
84. Provide hot drinks to morning commuters
85. Set up a free cinema club
86. Organise a local photography exhibition of your community
87. Organise a basic car maintenance workshop

HEALTH & WELLBEING

88. Arrange a weekly ramble
89. Offer a healthy eating course
90. Health awareness campaign in partnership with a local GP surgery
91. Set up a transportation service to a local doctor's surgery
92. Provide soft or hot drinks outside nightclubs
93. Organise basic reading & writing classes for adults
94. Provide work placement or internship opportunities

SEASONAL

95. Wrap Christmas presents in the local shopping centre
96. Set up a collection point for a Christmas toy appeal
97. Host an Easter egg hunt for local disadvantaged children
98. Adopt a family at Christmas and buy gifts & toys for them
99. Organise a bonfire party
100. Hold a community carol concert
101. Decorate a community Christmas tree

ROC Programme & Projects

We hope our list of 101 great ideas will inspire you to find small ways of making a big difference. However, once you've started small you'll be amazed how quickly you'll be encouraged to go even bigger.

Take a look at some of our programmes below and if you're interested in learning how a particular ROC project may be a fit for your community, please contact us.

ROC Café

A ROC café is a safe, fun place where young people can come and build relationships with each other and receive support from positive adult role models. Regular activities generally include sports, drama, art, crafts and indoor games which help improve confidence and self-esteem.

A ROC Café is usually open one night a week as an after-school or evening club depending on when there is the greatest need, which is often at the weekend. It is run by local volunteers in partnership with local agencies such as the Police, Fire and Rescue Service and the local Council.

ROC Community Mentoring

ROC community mentoring, in partnership with Coach, is a scheme which enables and supports organisations in the delivery of a community strengthening programme. It aims to empower disadvantaged young people and families and build resilience in individuals through one-to-one mentoring.

ROC Restore

ROC Restore is a form of Restorative Justice (RJ) undertaken by volunteer community members. It is the process of bringing together parties involved in cases of low level crime and conflict into a facilitated meeting. In this meeting trained volunteers use restorative approaches to agree on a course of action to repair the harm for those involved. ROC Restore's aim is to reduce conflict and re-offending and to make communities safer.

ROC Restore was recently awarded the Restorative Service Quality Mark; this demonstrates that we're committed to providing a safe and effective project for the benefit of the community.

ROC Centre

A ROC Centre is a community hub which houses a number of projects under one roof. The Centre is locally owned and locally managed with the support of our experienced team at ROC HQ.

REDEEMING OUR COMMUNITIES

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