



COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

Two themes at the forefront of how the programme has been developed

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

One of the biggest challenges in progressing the Town Development Programme (TDP) has been managing the diverse personalities and relationships involved. In many instances, we have played a discreet mediation role to ensure smooth collaboration whilst always remembering that most individuals around the table are volunteers, giving their time to support the town's goals.

When there is a unified approach and a shared vision across the towns, competition for funding and resources decreases. This alignment provides the opportunity to engage, inform, and support a cooperative environment.

The benefits of collaborative working and clear communication channels cannot be overstated. They enable a more cohesive approach and create an openness to explore joint opportunities, which ultimately leads to greater outcomes for the towns.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

Halesworth Marketing Advisory Group

A member of the towns team sits on the group which aims to bring in more visitors to support the local economy.

Direct actions taken include the employment of a Town Marketing Coordinator by Halesworth Town Council, and the development of new branding for the Town which includes a new website and social media presence.

East Suffolk Line Community Rail Partnership

The towns team have acted as a conduit to allow town stakeholders to build connections with the Community Rail Partnership Officer.

This resulted in several joint initiatives centred around promoting the towns and their Christmas events along the East Suffolk Line and reaching them by train as well as inclusive/accessible travel.

WI-FI NEWSLETTERS PROMOTE EAST SUFFOLK TOWNS

East Suffolk Council's roll out of free wi-fi for town centres across the district presented a unique opportunity for the council to share information directly with residents and visitors alike.

Anyone connecting to the wi-fi can opt in to receive a newsletter highlighting what's going on in the town they visited or where they live.

Given the flexibility and scope of such a project, the results have been a pleasing blend of marketing messages all designed to encourage people to use the town centres and support local events, with the goal of boosting the local economy and drive footfall to our town centres.

The Town Development Team took over the management of these newsletters late in 2024 and is now working closely with town councils, businesses and community groups to spread the word about what's on and where to go.

Events are an important part of the content, but we also like to shine a light on new shops opening, the delivery of projects that enhance the town centres or initiatives such as trails and special offers which all help drive footfall, dwell and spend.



BUNGAY STAKEHOLDERS

CASE STUDY

Collaboration and communication to achieve the best outcomes for the town are the guiding principles of the Bungay Stakeholder Group

Picture by Mary Doggett @ETT Photography

COLLABORATION FOR COMMUNITY GROWTH

The formation of the Bungay Stakeholder Group has created an opportunity for support to be provided in a coordinated manner, allowing groups to work together more effectively by pooling ideas, assets, and resources.

Now in its third year, the group includes representatives from a wide range of local organisations: the Town Council, Bungay Events and Business Association, the Fisher Theatre, Bungay Library, Bungay Community Support, cultural groups, heritage representatives and both District and County Councillors.

Facilitated by ESC's Town Development Team, the group meets every six weeks to discuss progress and share updates. The group has set its own objectives around communication and collaboration to ensure cohesive action across various sectors.

In addition to the regular core meetings, the group has dedicated some sessions to hearing from other community members, including emergency services and local schools.

This broader approach fosters even more joined-up working within the community. It also helps promote volunteer opportunities and encourages the sharing of best practices and expertise across town projects.

The success of this collaborative approach has demonstrated that, with the right appetite for cooperation and the necessary mechanisms in place, the outcomes can be highly beneficial.

Inspired by this success, the team is now exploring how this model—or similar initiatives—can be replicated and rolled out in other towns across the district.

BUNGAY LIFE MAGAZINE: SPREADING THE WORD

- In the early stages of the Stakeholder Group, a desire to launch a community magazine became apparent and with further discussion became a major priority.
- The ambition was to deliver a printed newsletter directly to 3,000 homes in and around Bungay. This recognised the fact that not all people are online and that the demographic of the town and surrounding villages may welcome a printed resource.
- The content is a mixture of news from the Town Council, community groups and sports clubs, as well as a back page devoted to a comprehensive what's on guide to promote the many events, markets and festivals that take place throughout the year. The business association use it to promote local independent shops, while campaigners have found it a useful tool to spread the word about their activities.
- The magazine was part funded by the Town Council with support from District and County Councillors. The first five editions were co-ordinated by a member of the Towns Team, who is now in the process of handing over to Town Council staff.