



## **Ambition Kitchen Project**

**August 2017**

### **Background and outline of the project**

As a charitable organisation, Gateshead Older People's Assembly supports older people (50+) across Gateshead in a number of ways. The projects undertaken by the Assembly and the services it provides are guided by the organisation's Strategic Delivery Plan, which was driven by the charity's trustees, themselves older people from Gateshead.

Our Strategic Delivery Plan is underpinned by nine strategic objectives:

- 1. Increase older people's knowledge of issues affecting them**
- 2. Be the voice of older people in Gateshead**
- 3. Reduce loneliness and isolation for older people in Gateshead**
- 4. Increase opportunities for older people to live fuller lives**
- 5. Improve the health and wellbeing of older people in Gateshead**
- 6. Reduce the number of falls suffered by older people across Gateshead**
- 7. Build stronger networks to support older people across Gateshead**
- 8. Increase opportunities for older people to participate in wider society**
- 9. Increase community safety and awareness of safeguarding issues**

These objectives are not mutually exclusive and the Assembly's management aims to meet at least three of these objectives with every project it undertakes. The Ambition Kitchen project meets objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8.

The Ambition Kitchen project was a volunteer-led crowdfunding community improvement project based on the successful Detroit Soup project. From March to August 2017, Gateshead Older People's Assembly hosted a series of six events designed to celebrate and support the innovation and enthusiasm of Gateshead's residents as well as the rich cultural heritage of the volunteers at our community café, The Cosy Crow.

Each month, The Cosy Crow hosted an event at which individuals were invited to present proposals in support of community improvement projects or local groups in need of support (financial or otherwise). Café customers then enjoyed lunch while discussing the projects. They voted for the project they felt would be of the most benefit to the community. The winning project received the takings from the day – a minimum donation of £2 per person was suggested.

The food served at each event was prepared according to a theme. As our café volunteers come from a variety of countries, meals were served reflecting popular foods from Zimbabwe, Italy, the United States, England, and Congo-Brazzaville.

When planning Ambition Kitchen, our hope was that it would become an event to which our community looked forward, where people of all ages came together to enjoy each other's company as well as contribute to making their neighbours' good ideas become a reality. We also hoped that the beneficiaries would be spread across the borough of Gateshead.

## Do you have an idea to improve life in Gateshead? We can help!

**What it is:** Ambition Kitchen is a volunteer-led community improvement project. Gateshead Older People's Assembly will host a series of six events across 2017 to celebrate and support the innovation and enthusiasm of Gateshead's residents.



### How it works:

- £2 suggested entry donation
- Presenters share ideas for improving life in Gateshead
- Audience asks up to 4 questions of each presenter
- Everyone enjoys a hot, homemade meal and discusses presentations
- Audience votes for the idea they find most worthwhile
- Winner gets the day's takings to put toward their idea along with support from the Assembly

To submit your community improvement idea or to learn more about Ambition Kitchen, please contact  
Lola on  
0191 438 1721 or  
lola@gatesheadopa.org.uk

The next Ambition Kitchen event is:

**9 March, 2-4 pm**

**Cosy Crow Community Cafe  
Deckham Village Hall**



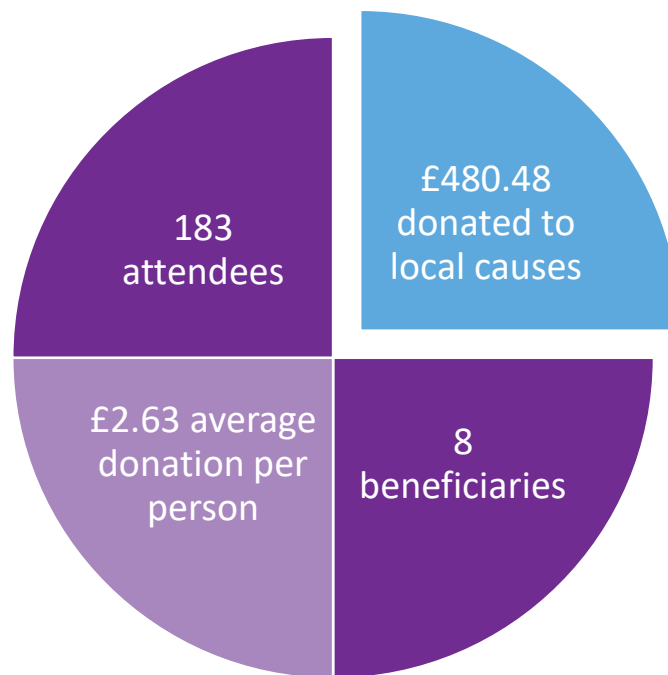
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## Participation and outcomes

Initially, we planned to hold our Ambition Kitchen events on an evening, but found that many people assumed they would be held during the day as that is when our community café is open. We decided to try holding our first event in the Cosy Crow on a Thursday afternoon during regular opening times and found that this drew a larger crowd than usual. The second event was also held during the day and attracted more people, many of whom had never visited the café, so we decided to hold all of the events during the day during Cosy Crow opening hours.

Attendance grew with each event, resulting in:



One beneficiary was chosen at each of the first five events. The final event drew the largest crowd and the most donations, so it was decided that the three nominated beneficiaries at the August event would share the donations equally.

The winning beneficiaries were:



Generally speaking, we feel very positive about our Ambition Kitchen project. We did not have a large number of applications each month, so there was not always a need

to shortlist applications, though we did research the nominated causes to ensure the funds would be used appropriately.

If we were to run Ambition Kitchen again, we would focus on marketing the events differently. We relied heavily on social media and word of mouth, but we found that these seemed to limit our reach to the northern half of our borough. We did see a rise in participation over the school holidays when more grandparents/parents and children could attend together, with August being our largest event. More than anything, we suspect that time is an important factor. Ambition Kitchen grew in popularity as time passed and word of mouth spread, so it may be that we would see a larger number of applications each month if the project were to have more time to become established in the community.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing delight at the opportunity to learn about and offer support to local good causes.

Feedback from the winning projects/charities has been very positive and several were pleasantly surprised when they received their donations as they were they had been nominated.



## **Legacy**

Holding our Ambition Kitchen project in our pay-what-you-can community café brought the café to the attention of many new customers, approximately one dozen of who have continued to attend on a regular basis.

While we will no longer be holding official Ambition Kitchen events, the spirit of the project will carry on into the future. Moving forward, we have decided to continue making a monthly donation from our community café's takings to a local charity or good cause.

Many thanks to the Big Lottery Fund for enabling this project.



For further information, please contact Lola McPartland – [lola@gatesheadopa.org.uk](mailto:lola@gatesheadopa.org.uk)