

## **1. Introduction**

Bude-Stratton Community Project (BSCP) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), Charity No. 1172752. Originally founded as an unincorporated charity in 1995, the CIO was established in 2017. BSCP owns and manages Neetside Community Centre (Neetside) for the benefit, wellbeing, education and enrichment of the local community and its environs in North Cornwall.

The Centre provides serviced, competitively priced spaces for hire and supports the facilitation of vital public health services, counselling, advice forums and self-help groups as well as voluntary groups, community groups and statutory agencies.

With 17 rooms available, it provides a base for over 50 different organisations and individuals under one roof in North Cornwall and provides a unique opportunity for organisations to support and refer to each other with ease.

The purpose of this plan is to review current operations and achievements, the context in which Neetside operates and the potential impact of external changes, which may affect Neetside. It has been drafted by the Centre Manager with support and input from staff and Trustees who attended a Strategic Planning Workshop in October 2021. The plan sets out the strategic priorities for the BSCP for the next 3 years.

## **2. Vision, Mission and Values**

### *Vision*

Our vision is for a thriving local community with Neetside Community Centre at its heart.

### *Mission*

Neetside Community Centre provides well serviced spaces for hire supporting organisations and individuals for the benefit, well-being, education, social welfare and enrichment of the local community and its environs in North Cornwall.

Neetside thrives on the diversity of our community and strives to be an actively inclusive setting for all, with the needs of our community at the heart of everything it does.

### *Our Values are:*

1. to have an open-door policy, welcoming everyone irrespective of race, gender, religion, ability or lifestyle choice.
2. to provide safe and welcoming spaces.
3. to foster good communication.
4. to provide value for money.
5. to have the trust of our visitors and stakeholders.
6. to value our Employees, Volunteers, Trustees, Hirers and Visitors.
7. to have an effective and well-informed Trustee Board and staff team.
8. to be innovative in delivering our services and always considering ways to improve them.
9. to work in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the environment.

Our values have been drawn from the discussion at the Trustee and Staff strategic planning workshop held in July 2018 and were discussed and reaffirmed in October 2021. Both staff and Trustees are committed to the values held by BSCP.

### **3. Organisational Background**

In 1994 a steering committee was formed made up of representatives from Citizens Advice, The Samaritans, Bude and Stratton Town Council, Cornwall Youth Service and CHATS (a local counselling group), the group had identified and subsequently purchased a building (Neetside) for community use. After fundraising £250,000, the building was renovated, and Neetside Community Centre was opened by HRH Princess Anne in 1996.

Originally the building provided a space predominately for the delivery of Citizens Advice and Bude Youth Service. As funding and statutory plans have changed over the years the Trustees have supported further internal alterations to accommodate a wider range of activities, including NHS and health provision. As such, the provision has greatly expanded and up until 2019/20 the Centre hosted over 55 different organisations. At the time of writing the Centre provides a permanent base for:

Age Concern Bude (Charity)  
Seetec PLUSS (Employment Charity)  
Bude Area Toy Library (Charity)  
The Women's Centre (Charity)  
Action Coach (Private – Business Support)

In addition to those permanently based here, many organisations and individuals hire regularly – weekly or monthly including; We are With You (Charity), North Devon Audiology (NHS), South Devon Osteopaths (NHS), Orthotics (NHS), AAA Screening (NHS), Lip Reading (Charity), Cornwall Hospice Care (Charity), The Bude Society of Friends – Quakers (Charity), Street Pastors (Charity), Careers South West (Employment Referral Agency) and Probation (Government). There are also many organisations or sole traders who hire us on an 'As and When' basis including several independent counsellors, well-being practitioners and training providers.

The building is open to the public and staffed, weekdays 9-5pm. It is not staffed when it is used at weekends by Bude Society of Friends, Street Pastors and the Toy Library, which are either closed groups (not open to the public) or based in a self-contained part of the building.

Neetside has a central location in Bude, near to a main bus stop and car parking, but not directly within the hustle and bustle of the town Centre. Surrounded by the River Neet on one side and the historic Bude canal on the other, a community orchard, doctors' surgery, church and war memorial on the other, it is a peaceful and accessible haven.

The area covered by Bude-Stratton Community Project corresponds with the Bude Community Network Area, as defined by Cornwall Council. That is the civil parishes of: Bude-Stratton, Jacobstow, Kilkhampton, Launcells, Marhamchurch, Morwenstow, North Tamerton, Poundstock, St Gennys, Week St Mary and Whitstone. However, our visitor survey shows that people travel from Padstow, Wadebridge and Holsworthy to access the services within the Centre.

In 2019, the population of the Bude Community Network Area was estimated to be 18,225.<sup>i</sup> In our last survey, carried out in 2019/20 Neetside Community Centre averaged approx. 8000 visitors through its doors annually. They were seeking support, advice and attending appointments or drop in sessions. The majority, 90%, live within 30 minutes of Neetside.

Hire fees in 2021/22 remain at between £18 -£20 per half day and £35 - £38 per full day. This year the fee for sole traders was increased to £6 per hour, bringing all hirers into line with one fee rate. It remained £10 per hour for organisations. Permanent room hire rates are based on room sizes and number of staff using. It is worth noting that, with the exception of the hourly rate, the hire fees have not increased since 2017.

In 2017/18 the turnover of BSCP was £77,965, in 2018/19 it was £88,179, in 2019/20 it was £86,338 (which included £8,325 project funding). In 2020/21 room hire income was £33,402 but total income was £61,844 supported by furlough and Covid-19 business grants.

The reserves policy is reviewed annually by Trustees. It includes allocated funds for 6 months of operating costs should the project be wound down, redundancy fees and an agreed programme of large-scale building works. In total, the money invested in 2021/22 stands at: £163,245, of which the 2021/22 Reserves policy requires £72,130 to be set aside.

At the time of writing there are 11 Trustees, including a Chair, Vice Chair and Minutes Secretary. Currently 2 Trustees take the Lead on Health and Safety, 1 on Human Resources matters and 1 on the building. The Treasurer role is currently vacant and 2 Trustees are sharing this responsibility between day to day operating budget and investments. 3 Trustees sit on the staffing committee, which reports back to the main Trustee meetings. In addition, 2 trustees sit on additional project working groups including the Social Action Fund and the Youth Feasibility Study/Bude Voices Partnership. Several of the Trustees are also historically connected with the building e.g. through working/volunteering at Citizens Advice when it was based at Neetside.

The Trustees have a wealth of experience and knowledge coming from various working backgrounds including; finance, legal, education, public sector and business and many have been involved in the project since its inception. From January 2022, all of them bar 4 are retired, 4 are male and 7 are women. All but 3 have served as Trustees for over 5 years.

Neetside is run by a small staff team of 4: a manager, 2 administrators and a caretaker, all part time, the longest serving having been here since 2014. The staff have a range of skills and knowledge, including: fundraising, engineering, SAGE programme and excellent people skills. At the time of writing only 3 of the staff roles are filled. The staffing structure has been reviewed by the Trustees and it is planned that the Assistant Administrator role will be increased from 9 hours per week to 12 hours and will include marketing and promotion administration. In addition the manager hours will reduce from 25 hours to 21 to accommodate this.

#### **4. Context**

##### *Local*

Based in Bude, North Cornwall, Neetside is situated in a beautiful place to live and grow up. However, its rugged coastal landscape and location in the county leaves it remote and isolated. The area lacks infrastructure that other parts of the country consider the norm. Transport links,

bus, railway and roads are basic and often don't link up. All three main hospitals are over an hour away and many other similar services are at a distance, which proves difficult, especially for the frail and vulnerable. Most statutory agencies' or support organisations' main offices are based in larger regional centres such as Bodmin, Truro or Liskeard, to which access for North Cornwall residents can be impossible due to transport infrastructure, age, lack of money, childcare issues, time spent traveling. Hence the necessity for organisations such as Age Concern, We Are With You, PLUSS, NHS outreach provision to be in Bude.

The population has grown considerably in the last few years and since Neetside was established in 1996, with three major housing estates (Pathfields, Cavanna and Binhamy) built in the last 20 years, including a retail park and two supermarkets. In addition, coming out of the first Covid-19 lockdown, there has been a huge increase in people moving from cities to the countryside. Bude has seen a massive increase in house prices, a surge of new families of all ages moving to the area and now a severe lack of private rental accommodation.

There are several community-based venues, village and/or church halls, in the surrounding areas. In addition, in Bude itself there is:

- The Parkhouse Centre, a town council owned building which offers a range of spaces from meeting rooms to a theatre space, next to a main car park.
- Bude Tourist Information offers a medium sized room and hot desking spaces next to a main carpark, in the centre of town.
- The Falcon, privately owned, one of Bude's biggest hotels, with a function room for groups and societies to hire and off-street parking and base for many Bude societies.
- The Venue, offering several large spaces and home to a variety of groups, next to a large carpark near the main retail site.
- Rosie's Café at Crooklets, offers space for talks etc. for many voluntary, community groups.

Compared to these spaces, Neetside offers 17 rooms which are a range of sizes. However our largest spaces can only accommodate up to 30 people seated theatre style and aren't appropriate for dance classes or in depth art or craft activities. It's important we understand what our hirers needs are so we can match our rooms or indeed signpost them to a venue that suits their needs better.

In recent years, Bude has seen the development of several key community initiatives, many of which have been nationally recognised including:

- The 2-minute Foundation
- Refill – reusing plastic water bottles
- Bude Coastal Community Team
- Bude Climate Partnership - awarded a £250,000 community fund grant in 2019/20 via BCCT.
- Bude Community Alliance
- Transition Bude
- A Greener Bude – umbrella movement for several Bude initiatives.(now defunct)
- Revived – Bude Chamber of Commerce
- Bude Friends of the Earth Biodiversity Trail and community orchard

- Blend – a youth collective
- The Pearl Exchange – activities, mental health support for 18 – 30 year olds.
- Morsbags – recycled material made into shopping bags
- Connect Bude – community group lobbying for the Train Network to return to North Cornwall, which has succeeded in reopening the line from Okehampton to Exeter.
- Bude Refugee Group

Many of the initiatives developed with environmental objectives support the improvement of the lives of the local communities either directly by creating a nicer space to live or indirectly by encouraging tourism and supporting the local economy. Bude Climate Partnership, of which Neetside is a partner, have used their funding to commission several feasibility studies, including the possibility of establishing a Library of Things and the possibility of an Environmental Hub, aimed at providing support for the local community, individuals and businesses, to improve their carbon footprint. At the time of writing, the studies are at proposal stage, but it is hoped the hub may have a physical presence either in the form of space, pop up or a vehicle.

In 2021, Bude Community Alliance led a campaign to encourage the community to vote in the town council elections, resulting in 11 new councillors being elected. The council is aiming to be more community focused and all councillors have been given lead roles ranging from mental health to early years education.

Across the country Covid-19 has had a huge impact on communities. Bude's rural location has exacerbated the impact as many services, charitable or statutory have had to reduce their support offer in Bude. This is due either to financial difficulties, lack of staff or because staff have been redistributed to support Covid-19 services, or due to restrictions in place, and many have not returned. The costs of Covid to local authorities are also beginning to make an impact, leading to further cuts in statutory social support. This is on top of 10 years reduced services due to the economic climate, and at a time when the cost of living is increasing.

This can be borne out through the increased activity of Bude Food Bank, who have expanded their service to include debt support through Christians Against Poverty. In addition, the Social Action Fund, set up by BSCP, BCCT and BSCT (Bude and Stratton Christians Together) raised just over £10,000 and was oversubscribed for applications from local organisations.

Positively, volunteers drawn from the community have come to the fore in Bude, and at the height of lockdown a local person, now the Mayor, established Bude Quarantine Support Group, which distributed information, and established a volunteer programme to deliver shopping and ensure those most vulnerable were contacted. As people have reassessed their lives, their jobs and how they work, the increase in desire to volunteer has continued and this has been highlighted in a recent Cornwall Council needs assessment survey for Bude.

### *Regional*

Recent years have seen an increase in communities and community groups working and volunteering and acting for themselves supported by changes in law which have enabled community asset transfer and easier governance models.

There are several organisations in the South West developing interesting and innovative directions who are working in the same sector as Neetside, listed below. Like Neetside, their buildings too locked down as per government guidelines because of the Covid Pandemic. Not being solely reliant on Hirers as their main income meant they may have been better placed to pivot their offer e.g. having a diverse range of activities, outdoor space, external funding and able to designate themselves as 'key workers'. Having said that, they may not have been able to claim as much furlough support for staff salaries.

*Newquay Community Orchard* is made up of woodlands, meadows, a growing space, 2 amphitheatres, a canteen, co-worker space, maker space and 5-acre orchard. They have a team of up to 15 staff and are managed by Urban Biodiversity, a Community Interest Company based in Cornwall. It aims to provide a green social space for people to gather, meet, play and learn, encouraging a sustainable community that works for each other, put an end to social deprivation and provide a fair chance in life for all. Where possible, they support the local economy. They provide work and volunteering opportunities, including apprenticeships, educational activities for schools and colleges, mental health therapy and support local economy. They also run community workshops and in 2020 established a Community Supported Agriculture veg box scheme, growing local food for local people, supporting the increased awareness of food supply chains raised through Covid.

*Treverbyn Community Hall* provides venue hire and meeting rooms for everyone to use and enjoy. It has a main hall and 3 meeting rooms, alongside a community garden and green space and 'the heath', all of which can be hired. The Hall also hosts a wide variety of classes and groups for all ages and abilities to enjoy, from Walking for Health to Art for All to Messy Mites and regular lunches and social coffee mornings. It is a registered charity, run by the local community for the benefit of all and offers a cafe, public library and community garden. In 2020 it started a community larder scheme, which during covid-19 began delivering food out to the local community and continues to do so. It has between 5-6 members of staff. Treverbyn has branded itself as 'the hall' and has a well-designed and engaging website and newsletter. Although it hires out spaces all the activities, clubs, groups hosted are promoted as part of the Centre making it feel very inclusive and very much a community centre.

The *Ockment Centre*, based in Okehampton, has 10 rooms for hire of various sizes, many of which are for 30 – 40 people but up to 120 for the main hall. They are used for a variety of reasons from meetings, to birthday parties. They host various exercise and art classes and sessions aimed at young children e.g. moo music. They also host citizens advice, a job club, support groups. The Ockment Centre is an independent registered charity and a Company Limited by guarantee.

### *National*

Nationally 2019 – 2021 have been dominated by 3 major themes, Brexit, climate change and Covid-19. As such governmental community strategy has in the main been in reaction to the global pandemic. The 3 issues have magnified the gap between the rich and the poor, as those living in deprived areas tend to be those more affected by price increases, loss of employment, lack of and reducing statutory support, weather events and higher death or serious illness rates from Covid.

Brexit has only impacted Neetside Community Centre in small ways so far e.g. delayed supplies. Longer term it will mean the reduction of EU funding over the next year or so, much of which Cornwall benefited from. This in turn may affect some of Neetside's hirers who are funded through ESF funded projects e.g. PLUSS, We Are With You. At this point we await to see if any similar UK funding replaces previously EU funded contracts e.g. through the Levelling Up government strategy.

Climate change has featured heavily nationally. Firstly through the impact of lockdown, the lack of transport on the roads, airplanes in the sky and the heightened awareness of nature and access to the countryside. Then, in late 2021 the UK hosted COP26, the global climate conference, the aim of which was to keep alive the hope of limiting the rise in global temperature to 1.5C. As a community building, supporting many of our vulnerable residents, it is vital that we consider our own impact on the environment, from our investments through to our suppliers and energy use.

Covid-19 has had a direct impact on the country. National lockdowns, social distancing, the 'work from home' recommendation and reduced numbers able to meet such as 'rule of 6', has reduced the ability for people to meet face to face, reduced organisations' and community groups' ability to fundraise, reduced staffing and in some instances caused organisations or community groups to close. In addition, many public sector roles were seconded to the NHS delivery of vaccination programmes, or working on Covid-19 rules, or staff have worked from home since March 2020 and still are as current government advice is to work from home if possible. Many organisations have moved to on-line support and meetings, only meeting face to face if their business or service necessitates. The move to online has proved complex with lack of broadband in rural areas like Bude, with homeworking, home schooling all demanding Internet or IT access.

Brexit and Covid combined have also led to shortages in the labour market, with many sectors experiencing staff shortages either due to visa issues, lack of skills and what appears to be a national trend of people rethinking their lives, working part time, shorter hours or changing careers entirely. The financial news is currently dominated by increased cost of living and rising energy costs and Food banks have seen increased demand over the last year.

The positive side of Covid, Climate Change and Brexit has not only been the increase in volunteering and awareness of volunteering across the country, but also the increase in creative and new ways of designing, delivering and thinking about business, services, and customer/clients' needs. An example of this is the rise of the online meeting and the diversification of many businesses.

## **5. Current Situation**

Since 2019/20 the Trustees and Staff have worked together to achieve a number of key tasks. These include:

- Recruited 3 new Trustees
- All staff job descriptions reviewed
- Established Facebook and Instagram social media pages for Neetside.
- Established a quarterly newsletter for Hirers
- Launched a new Neetside Community Centre website
- Developed a Volunteer Policy

- Developed an Environmental Policy
- Begun recording occupancy rates
- Two rooms refurbished as counselling rooms
- A number of rooms redecorated including the meeting room
- Ground floor ladies toilets refurbished
- End gable coping stones and roof lead repaired
- Established Bude Repair Café with community volunteers, attracting 20-30 items for repair each month pre-covid.
- Held an open day attracting approx. 120 people
- Commissioned and launched Young People's Feasibility Study funded by £8,300 award from National Lottery
- Fundraised over £10,000 in partnership with BCCT and BSCT to establish Bude Social Action Fund, which awarded funding to 13 local community groups for projects.
- Partnered with BCCT and BSCT to develop an online community diary – ongoing.
- Partnered with Cornwall Council and BSTC on Bude Needs Assessment Survey and Action Plan – ongoing

In addition, the following policies and procedures have been reviewed in the light of Covid-19.

- Salary Policy
- Health and Safety Policy and Procedures
- Lone Working Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Reserves Policy



## SWOT

The SWOT analysis below summarises areas of strengths and weaknesses, any opportunities and threats for BSCP. It was developed by the staff and Trustees at the Strategic Planning workshop.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSCP owns building which is in good repair.</li> <li>• Building maintenance plan in place</li> <li>• Location of building within Bude and car parking nearby.</li> <li>• Value for money and competitive with other venues</li> <li>• Proactive and personal approach of Staff</li> <li>• Strong ethos and values upheld by staff and Trustees</li> <li>• 17 different size rooms – different offer to competitors</li> <li>• Excellent Covid-19 safety procedures in place – a safe space</li> <li>• Well established Hirers and new Hirers on board since Covid-19/lockdowns</li> <li>• Mix of permanent and As and When Hirers</li> <li>• Good partnership working with local community organisations – BCCT, BSTC, Cornwall Council</li> <li>• New Website and social media structure in place</li> <li>• Good communication link with Hirers via Newsletter</li> <li>• Breadth of Trustees experience and knowledge</li> <li>• 3 new Trustees on board</li> <li>• Good engagement in fundraising – public and funding bodies</li> <li>• Neetside called upon to represent ‘community’ in various meetings/projects/partnerships</li> <li>• Quality of staff and local knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not proactive in seeking Hirers</li> <li>• Not proactive in encouraging local community use.</li> <li>• Role of Trustee Treasurer vacant</li> <li>• Some décor still to be updated.</li> <li>• Main office/reception layout could be more welcoming and provide better support for staff when lone working</li> <li>• 5 permanent Hirers currently in place, (pre covid was 7)</li> <li>• Lack of staff/trustee knowledge – social/digital media</li> <li>• Recent lack of volunteer involvement due to Covid-19</li> <li>• Wi-Fi Infrastructure outdated and impacting Hirers use</li> <li>• Young people and families not really catered for</li> <li>• No reason for public to come to building unless for an appointment, specific event or seeking advice</li> <li>• No cyber review/plan in place</li> <li>• Lack of presence during lockdown, as staff furloughed and building having to close down.</li> <li>• Main income through hire which makes pivoting or diversify business without building difficult.</li> <li>• Lack of profile in local community</li> <li>• Misconception of building – council/NHS/doctor owned</li> <li>• Small number of parking spaces for Hirers’ use.</li> <li>• No large indoor space and no outdoor space</li> <li>• New branding still to be implemented</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership work and collaboration with local groups e.g. Climate Action Partnership, Transition Bude, Bude FoE, Torridge and Tav Volunteer Service (TTVS), One Bude</li> <li>• Better Social media engagement/presence.</li> <li>• Deliver our own programme of activities/events.</li> <li>• Attending community meetings representing local community.</li> <li>• Act as an umbrella for the promotion of programmes running at Neetside e.g. yoga/ job clubs/veg box scheme/mindfulness –promoting the activities at Neetside, increasing attendance and therefore hire income.</li> <li>• Funding for programmes – e.g. Community Fund</li> <li>• Partner in Social Action Fund round 2</li> <li>• Partner in online Community Diary</li> <li>• Partner in group working on Young Peoples’ project</li> <li>• Large network of current users to be utilised.</li> <li>• Government’s levelling up agenda</li> <li>• New people moved to the area – potential volunteers</li> <li>• Hire fees have not increased since 2017.</li> <li>• ‘Blow our own trumpet’ about what we do</li> <li>• Environmental Policy encouraging sustainable and resilient practices – e.g. bike racking installed to encourage cycling to the Centre.</li> <li>• Library of Things – extension of Repair Café</li> <li>• Pop Up Community Café – potential income, volunteer roles and increased footfall</li> <li>• Bude Environmental hub – links to Neetside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent or regular hirers leaving due to cuts in funding or different service delivery due to Covid-19</li> <li>• Further impact of Covid or another pandemic – lockdowns, funding/unstable economy/general business ‘jumpiness’ at the unknown.</li> <li>• Rising costs – energy, building/repair supplies, sundries, fuel and food shortages.</li> <li>• Current labour shortage – people changing work patterns since Covid-19, potentially affects staff vacancies, Hirers’ ability to staff services.</li> <li>• Other initiatives, locally and nationally, competing for social media presence, marketing space, public awareness</li> <li>• Environmental Agency work on the river flood defences. (longer term – positive impact) short term – parking and confusion for Hirers and Clients</li> <li>• Projected annual flood levels in 2050 maps show sea will rise covering the land where Neetside currently sits.</li> <li>• Summer Season – huge number of visitors to town. Increased parking and congestion. Clients and Hirers delayed reaching Neetside at hire/appointment time.</li> <li>• Other community hubs being established – environmental, food bank plus, young people’s building</li> </ul>

Except for project funding, all income comes from hire fees. Until March 2020, and the first country wide lockdown and work from home rule, this business model worked well with little direct advertising, promotion or competition. Hirers have returned after Covid-19, but they are hiring with less frequency. 2 permanent hirers have left, one has reviewed and reduced their hire from us, one has changed room and slightly increased hire rate and a new hirer has joined us. We currently have 5 permanent hirers. For a short period we saw an increase in hirers wanting to hire for a longer term e.g. 2-4 months, but not permanently and also one off hirers – e.g. on holiday with family here but needing to continue working. We have also seen an increase in the hourly hire – mainly for counsellors. Although positive, this does not replace the significant drop in both permanent and ‘as and when’ hire volume.

In the first instance we need to be proactive in seeking and securing Hirers, old and new. We should reconnect with current and previous Hirers, reminding them of Neetside’s presence and what we can offer their organisation, including the opportunity for permanent space in the building. We should research and contact potential projects or organisations in the area that require space. We should expand our reach to new groups and organisations who may require hire facilities by working in partnership with other organisations and groups to raise our profile.

Hire fees have not been increased since 2017 and with increased costs and inflation, it is now a good time to review and increase hire fees. Many of our hirers are sole traders or charities and may not be able to afford an increase in hire fees, at the expense of their service being delivered.

A review and possible diversification of income streams should help to strengthen Neetside’s core income whilst reducing the financial risk to the future. External funding is one of the alternative sources of income that should be explored, ideally supporting core costs such as maintenance and staffing. Many funders offer only project-based funding which may be suitable to fund activities that Neetside could co-ordinate, including rental of the space as project costs, or funding support for those hiring the space. Although Neetside’s good financial reserves may reduce our ability to achieve funding success – this should still be explored. Other opportunities to fundraise or receive donations should also be explored, for example, donation boxes, donations button on the website or social media, attending or organising fundraising events and crowdfunding. Staff and Trustees have experience of this which should be utilised.

Over the last 18 months, expenditure has been monitored and reduced carefully. This should be continued, with large expenditure areas reviewed. This includes our biggest expense - staffing. Currently the post of Administration Assistant is vacant, a saving of approx. £400 per month or 75% of the monthly income from a room hired out permanently. The staffing structure has recently been reviewed by the staffing subcommittee with the aim of increasing the hours of the administration assistant to include marketing and promotion and reducing the manager hours, creating a slight saving but hopefully increasing potential hire income through promotion. Whilst this post is vacant it is also an opportunity to explore utilising volunteers for some roles including meeting and greeting, inputting databases, marketing and ambassadorial roles.

Although Neetside has become more involved in community life through partnership working and projects we remain a passive organisation, waiting for Hirers to contact us, in part due to Covid and in part due to lack of staff time. In addition, the ongoing impact of Covid i.e. risk assessments and government requirements have meant marketing has not been prioritised.

We have a large client/hirer base, individuals and organisations and have begun to communicate with our clients through a digital newsletter. However, we recognise that we do not utilise this network enough to promote the Centre. Our promotional leaflets were designed and printed in house, but since Covid we have not updated or distributed and have not reviewed their effectiveness or purpose.

A new website has been launched and although much clearer and more professional we are not yet taking full advantage of its functions such as the events' calendar. We have 527 page likes and 182 Instagram followers, with staff adding posts ad hoc and at least weekly, but with no clear social media direction. We have also not taken advantage of utilising digital resources on a day to day basis e.g. encouraging Hirers to physically visit and look round, when our website, social media or virtual visits e.g. via zoom could provide potential hirers with tours of the building, or moving bookings online and freeing up staff time spent on administration.

Training, some basic promotion, an increase in social media, staff or volunteer time spent prioritising marketing, alongside reconnecting with previous and current Hirers and research into potential new hirers should help to increase occupancy rates and therefore hire income. Alongside this, an awareness of any cyber susceptibilities should be considered.

Covid has also reduced our ability to host groups or hold activities or events including our own e.g. Repair Café, Bude Together or open days. Although not income generating, activities such as this increase Neetside's profile within the local community. It also cements our contribution to the local community, making us a much more attractive offer for Hirers to connect to.

Covid permitting, we should reinstate and expand our activities such as piloting our own volunteer led café or a workshop programme linked to our aims. This could offer opportunities for our Hirers' clients e.g. work experience; enable us to access external funding; increases our volunteer reach and potentially leads to new or renewed hire.

Partnership working and increasing our network by attending community meetings has given Neetside a greater presence. Neetside is now often invited to be involved in community discussions, including the Town Team, Bude Community Area Network Panel and Bude Needs Assessment. This enables Neetside to be aware of local projects, concerns and opportunities and on occasion, it has resulted in organisations hiring us and most recently funding towards staff costs from a partnership bid. Continuing to work on the online community diary, the young people's project and the social action fund, as well as looking for other opportunities for partnership working will substantiate Neetside's presence and ensure we remain closely linked to the people in the community.

Having established Bude Repair café in partnership with a community volunteer, Neetside has partnered in the Bude Climate Action partnership. Currently a feasibility study on the potential for an environmental hub is being produced, with the aim of gaining further funding to support its establishment. A second feasibility study is looking at the potential for a Library of Things in Bude, a natural extension to Repair Café. Both these potential projects have been discussed with Trustees as they have the potential to be housed at or co-ordinated by Neetside. Adversely they also may develop in other venues or establish new venues to house them. In which case it is important that Neetside maintains links with the projects and continues to be part of the future partnership.

Neetsides volunteers have had a much reduced role over the last 18 months, with Repair Café and Neetside Knitters unable to operate. However the recent Bude Needs Assessment survey, combined with the growth in volunteers supporting the quarantine group, has shown that there is a desire and awareness from the community to volunteer. At the launch of the Young People's Feasibility study, participants questioned why there was no one place to find out about or advertise volunteer opportunities. This may be an opportunity for Neetside to develop a volunteer bureau, which potentially could hire a space within the building. In turn, this could expand Neetside's current volunteer roles and it is possible that Neetside's volunteers would be able to support a continued community presence should further lockdowns be enforced.

Part of the reserves policy ringfences money for an agreed programme of building works, including flat roof renewal, window frame repairs and repainting, railings, guttering and bargeboard renewal. These repair works have been identified as part of the building survey carried out in 2019 and alongside regular maintenance work are an important part of ensuring continued bookings and attracting new Hirers.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the age of our current Wi-Fi infrastructure. Hirers on holiday or restricted by rural broadband limitations have hired our spaces to use online meeting spaces such as zoom have found the Internet frequently dropped out. The speed and width of our connection are able to provide appropriate capacity. However the infrastructure supporting the Wi-Fi throughout the building is out of date. The upgrade of this will provide a better service for our Hirers, offers us a promotion opportunity, and provides a platform for us to expand our digital offer – virtual tours, online booking etc.

3 new Trustees have joined the board in the last 2 years bringing renewed energy and expertise and supporting Trustee succession planning. Currently the role of Treasurer is being temporarily shared by 2 Trustees. Our financial policy and procedures, reserves policy, management monitoring, reserves and investments are robust, the expertise of a Treasurer would support budget setting at an unsettled time and when the incomes streams could be expanded. In addition, our current financial software should be reviewed and this could be in line with an online booking system, automatically producing invoices.

As Neetside's involvement in external projects has expanded so has the Trustees' involvement in them. Alongside lead trustees for health and safety, investments and finance and human resources, Trustees are also sitting on working groups leading on community projects, such as Bude Social Action Fund and Bude Voices Partnership (Young People's Feasibility Study). This expands the reach of Neetside and could be utilised further by increasing the profile of our Trustees.

All our policies have been recently reviewed in the light of Covid-19 and a process for this continuing is in place. The recently approved Environmental Policy and subsequent audit will enable the organisation to become more sustainable whilst supporting the local economy and community and strengthening our own resilience. This might include a transport policy e.g. installing bike racks to encourage staff and Hirers to cycle to the Centre or providing clearer public transport information to and from the venue instead of assuming attendance is by car, as well as purchasing from local suppliers to keep money in the local economy, reducing plastic and choosing green energy suppliers.

We also need to continue the work done to date by capturing statistics and setting benchmarks, as well as developing a business continuity plan looking at potential scenarios.

## **6. Aims/Core purposes**

1. To be the first choice of venue for those planning activities, events, training and meetings etc.
2. To influence, support, connect and partner other likeminded organisations and individuals to benefit the local community.
3. To develop a programme of activities that increases the community's participation in civic life.
4. To be an effective and sustainable organisation.

## Strategic Action Plan 2022 - 25

1.To be the first choice of venue for those planning activities, events, training and meetings etc.					
Action	Progress	Responsible Person	Budget and Resources Required	Year	Deadline
Recruit staff/volunteer to support marketing and promotion.		M	22/23 budget ongoing	22/23	April 22
Upgrade Wi-Fi Infrastructure and include as part of promotion.		M	£2000	22/23	April 22
Contact past Hirers to remind them of Neetside's offer		M	£0	22/23	June 22
Hirers' survey developed for those new to Neetside and current clients.		M	NA	22/23	June 22
Utilise the quarterly Hirers' email to promote Hirers, our Trustees, our projects, our offer.		M/A	NA	22/23	July 22
Establish a timetable of regular promotion via social media		M/A	NA	22/23	July 22
Get Neetside Website up to date and updated regularly		M/A	NA	22/23	July 22
Produce and distribute 500 new leaflets		M/A	£500	22/23	Sept 22
Produce 25 year celebration publication		Trustees	£1000	22/23	Sept 22
Utilise digital offer to develop virtual tours etc.		M	NA – tbc	23/24	April 23
Develop a bank of images, digital resources to promote Neetside – including people.		M/A	£500	23/24	March 24
Explore and if appropriate develop an online booking system for Hirers.		M/A	£350	23/24	March 24

**2. To influence, support, connect and partner other likeminded organisations and individuals to benefit the local community.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Budget and Resources Required</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Re-establish Bude Together twice yearly community event		T/M	NA	22/23	May 22
Re-establish a Bude Repair Café once a month held at the Centre.		M/A/C	Repair Café reserves	22/23	May 22
Develop a quarterly online newsletter or blog post for general public – via social media/website (similar content to Hirers' email but not as tailored)		M/A	NA	22/23	Sept 22
Establish an annual Open Day for Hirers and public		M/A/Vol	£200	22/23	Nov 22
Host a Neetside Gala dinner to celebrate 25 years.		T/M/A	£1000 plus sponsorship	22/23	Dec 22
Pilot a Volunteer Bureau		M/Volunteer	External funding	22/23	March 23
Host an annual meeting/summit of Bude community, voluntary and charitable organisations to share good practice, look at potential funding, network etc.		T/M/A	£300	23/24	Sept 23

**3. To develop a programme of activities that increases the community's participation in civic life.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Budget and Resources Required</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Increase Neetside Knitters presence and numbers		M/A/Vol	NA/External funding	22/23	Aug 22
Establish an online community diary and directory in partnership with BCCT and community volunteer			Funded by Lottery Community Fund monies held by BCCT £1778 funding for BSCP	22/23 and 24/25	
Support Bude Voices' Young People's project – initially take over café, longer term youth worker, youth space.		M/Trustee working group	Staff and Trustee time	22/23 ongoing	
Participate in town/local/national events such as: Queen's Jubilee, Heritage Open Days		All	Staff and volunteer time	22/23 ongoing	
Develop a programme of workshops co-ordinated by Neetside.		M/A	Cost neutral – only run if cover costs	23/24	April 23
Pilot a pop up volunteer led cafe		M	£200	23/24	Sept 23

<b>4.To be an effective and sustainable organisation.</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Budget and Resources Required</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Review Hire Prices (part of 22/23 budget)		M	NA	22/23	April 2022
Staff training – fire safety, cyber awareness, first aid, mental first aid		M	Staff time and £800	22/23	Sept 2022
Recruit Treasurer Trustee		Trustees	NA	22/23	Oct 22
Undertake a fundraising event/activity e.g. coffee morning, Crowdfunder, donation scheme		M/A	Staff time	22/23	Nov 22
Explore income through donations		M	NA	22/23	Feb 23
Explore new finance software options (linked with online booking?)		M	£500	22/23	March 23
Complete environmental audit and action plan year 1		M/A/C	NA	22/23	March 23
Review potential volunteer roles at Neetside and recruit volunteers		M/A	NA	23/24	July 23
Complete redecoration of remaining rooms – new woodwork, review furniture, furnishings.		M/C	2022/23 - £1000 (hours/paint)	23/24	Sept 23
Complete agreed building works from condition report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flat roofs</li> <li>- Fascia boards</li> <li>- Window frames</li> <li>- Railings</li> <li>- Guttering</li> </ul>		M	External contractor Reserves £tbc	22-24	March 2024
Replace end of life flat roofs with roof garden in partnership with Bude Friends of the Earth.		T/M	Reserves – replace flat roofs. External Funding	23/24	March 2024



## 7. Finance

The table below shows the actual income and expenditure from 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 to date (December 2022) alongside the 2021/22 budget.

	ACTUAL 2018/19	ACTUAL 2019/20	ACTUAL 2020/21	YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL DEC 2021 (21/22)	BUDGET 2021/22
<b>INCOME</b>					
Total Rents:	86,863.50	76,844.50	33,402.80	42,116.00	69,780
TOTAL INCOME, including donations, investments, grants and other	88,197.14	86,338.52	61,844.16	71,739.53	70,530.00
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Utilities	5,600.80	5,985.42	3,074.30	2,229.65	6,200.00
Office	2,333.01	1,794.23	1,394.42	1,562.20	1,440.00
Establishment Cost	6,901.95	8,708.11	6,848.57	8,137.38	8,175.35
Buildings	13,035.62	8,302.02	15,007.34	5,653.71	1,632.00
Staff	47,211.42	46,972.02	43,259.60	33,751.90	51,498.27
Other - Activities, projects misc	74.00	1,709.50	5,538.36	1,590.17	600.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	77,580.80	74,625.30	77,010.59	53,825.01	70,469.62
PROFIT / LOSS	10,616.34	11,713.22	-15,166.43	17,914.52	60.38

This table gives us the opportunity to compare income and expenditure over 3 full years and 9 months of the current budget year. In March 2020, the Covid pandemic meant that venues, including Neetside, were closed from 23<sup>rd</sup> March onwards. Although only a week, it had an impact on the 2019/20 end of year figures and the entirety of 2020/21.

Prior to Covid-19 the average annual income hovered around £70-75k, with the exception in 2018/19 when income was higher than average by approx. £10k. The impact of Covid and the building closure can clearly be seen in 2020/21 in both the income and in some of the expenditure such as electricity. 2021/22 has continued to see reduced hire income, both due to covid restrictions and the impact covid has had on groups and organisations and the way they now operate.

Alongside hire income there has been an increase in grants received. In 2019/20, BSCP received funding from the National Lottery to produce a feasibility study focused on Young People in Bude and the surrounding area. BSCP also received government Covid-19 business grants and qualified to receive furlough support for up to 80% of staff wages. Qualification for the receipt of these grants was based on the building being closed and reduced staffing. In addition, BSCP insurance included business interruption from infectious diseases and in 2021/22 a claim amount was agreed.

In terms of expenditure, the insurance claim doubled our policy costs. We currently have a fixed price for our gas and electricity until September 2023. However, utilities costs are increasing rapidly. Spikes in expenditure can be seen for cleaning. This has been due to long term staff sickness and more recently increased costs to support the more rigorous levels of cleaning required due to Covid. Staffing is the biggest expenditure. Although some savings have been made due to the Admin Assistant post remaining vacant. Maintenance contracts e.g. lift service, fire alarm inspection and service ensure health and safety standards are maintained and although some service contracts have been reduced many need to continue.

Further work to the building is planned in the next couple of years and it is anticipated this expenditure will be drawn from the Reserves budget, as most of the work left to do is major refurbishment already agreed by Trustees.

In year 1 of the action plan, 2022/23, £6,000 spend is estimated to be included within the budget. This includes £2,000 Wi-Fi Infrastructure upgrade which was originally anticipated to be paid in 2021/22. In Year 2 of the action plan, 2023/34, £2,350 spend is estimated to be included within the budget.

## 8. Risk Management

	Potential Risk	Type of Risk	Control Measures
1	Loss of Hirers – e.g. due to cuts in funding, enforced closure or building not meeting their requirements.	Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (AP) New Hirers survey</li> <li>• Monthly budget monitoring.</li> <li>• Maintain healthy reserves – 6 months operating costs</li> <li>• (AP) Programme of building improvements</li> <li>• Networking/referral opportunities for Hirers.</li> <li>• (AP) Improvement of Wi-Fi infrastructure</li> <li>• (AP) Increased Networking/Attend Community Meetings.</li> <li>• (AP) Programme of activities to reach more in the community.</li> <li>• (AP) Expand income diversification – grants, fundraising.</li> <li>• (AP) Establish basic promotional materials including social media programme.</li> </ul>
2	Lack of Trustee Treasurer	Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment plan in place.</li> <li>• (AP) Increased Networking.</li> </ul>
3	Increased competition for Hire, Charitable causes	Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> <li>• Excellent customer service</li> <li>• Good communication with current Hirers, including understanding their requirements.</li> <li>• (AP) Increased programme of activities.</li> </ul>
4	Age of building and repairs required	Financial Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building condition survey completed with action plan of works in place.</li> </ul>
5	Loss of building – fire/flood	Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire Risk and Health and Safety Assessment undertaken annually</li> <li>• Building Valuation carried out in 2018.</li> <li>• Asset register maintained annually</li> <li>• Insurance in place.</li> <li>• Reserves fund in place.</li> <li>• Good relationship with Environment Agency.</li> <li>• (AP) staff training plan in place</li> </ul>
6	Loss of staff or staff illness	Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lone working policy/Health and Safety Policy in place</li> <li>• Other staff, external companies and Trustees able to provide short term cover</li> <li>• Clear job descriptions, contracts, appraisal system and policies in place.</li> <li>• Trustees' ethos of wellbeing.</li> <li>• Competitive salaries in place</li> <li>• Staff Training Plan in place</li> <li>• Staff involvement in strategic plan development.</li> </ul>

**Key:**

(AP) = See Action Plan.

**9. Monitoring and Evaluation.**

The budget is monitored monthly, the action plan monitored quarterly and the measures annually and reported at Trustee meetings via the Manager's report or as a separate agenda item. The last 2 years have greatly reduced our ability to collect and establish benchmarks.

1. To be the first choice of venue for those planning activities, events, training and meetings etc.

- New Hirers' Survey – monitor % of organisations who chose us as first choice venue annually
- Conversion rates – those who enquired turned into Hire bookings monitor % of enquiries that converted to a hire annually
- Number of new hire 'regular' or 'as and when' organisations compared per annum.

2. To influence, support, connect and partner other likeminded organisations and individuals to benefit the local community.

- Attend 4 x community /other orgs meetings every annum, recorded via Manager's Report

3. To develop a programme of activities that increases the community's participation in civic life.

- Numbers attending a Neetside activity per annum recorded by staff at events/activities and reported via Manager's Report.

4. To be an effective and sustainable organisation.

- Establish base line occupancy percentage/number of hours.
- 1000 people/organisations following Neetside on Facebook by March 2024
- 100 volunteer hours per annum recorded through volunteer time sheets and reported quarterly via Manager's report.
- Establish annual visitor numbers and benchmark

Last updated 13/06/2022MC/CH

Approved January 2022

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<sup>i</sup> GWELL – The community prosperity and wellbeing plan for the Bude area, produced by BSTC, October 2021. <https://www.bude-stratton.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/13.1-GWELL-Part-1-FINAL.pdf>