



# **Social Impact Report and Annual Review 2022 - 2023**

**Dwellbeing Shieldfield is a Community Benefit Society  
Society Number: 8571**

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## **Introduction**

As a newly formed Community Benefit Society this is our second Impact Report. In this report we share with you the purpose of Dwellbeing and the difference we want to make in Shieldfield. We outline our activities over the last year and the impact of these for local people.

## **The difference we want to make . . .**

The aim of Dwellbeing Shieldfield is for community members to play an active role in shaping the life of Shieldfield. Our vision is for the people of Shieldfield to share knowledge about the issues and challenges affecting our neighbourhood and to work collectively to find alternative ways of organising, learning and living together. Through these actions we embrace a joyful community spirit that can lead Shieldfield (and other neighbourhoods like it) towards self-reliance, interdependence and flourishing.

## **Our Activities**

Our activities are delivered through three programmes:

- 1) 'Flourishing Together' is about education, community cohesion and social activity.
- 2) 'Shieling Programme' aims to make the area a better, greener, and safer place to live.
- 3) The 'Youth Programme' creates a space for young people to come together in the place where they live, build new friendships, develop key life skills, try new opportunities and explore ways of thinking and doing things together.

All our activities and inclusive approach to delivery enable people to come together in the place where they live, to form new connections, to be creative, develop their skills and talents and to share alternative futures for themselves and others.

By working in this way, we aim to empower individuals and the community, build skills and confidence, and increase social connection and community involvement. In turn we hope to make Shieldfield a better place to live, work and play.

## What makes Dwellbeing Shieldfield different?

We see all our members as equal and able to influence the activities and development of the organisation. We have created our structure with the purpose of building leaders, creating a sense of community, a sense of empowerment and the opportunity to empower others.

Recent feedback from members identified the key difference Dwellbeing makes is the opportunity it gives people from across the community to connect and to influence and make a difference for the good of others and the area.

“Dwellbeing allows neighbours to connect”

“It’s about gathering together, sharing, learning from each other, building confidence and sharing ideas where English speaking is low.”

“Young people can connect and look forward”

“Dwellbeing supports people to meet each other, to get out of their houses and get involved.”

“It’s not run by “employees” - it’s neighbour for neighbour power.”



## **Working in partnership**

A number of socially responsive organisations operate from the local shops on Wretham Place in Shieldfield. In addition to working with these organisations Dwellbeing has contributed to bringing together the wider network of local organisations on a regular basis to share information and work to address challenges for the local community.

We deliver activities in partnership with Shieldfield Art Works (SAW) and the NewBridge Project. We also work closely with the Shieldfield Forum Community Cafe, the Star and Shadow Cinema, Harper Perry Architects, local councillors, the local authority and local universities.

## **Governance and Structure**

Our governance, working groups and worker structures are all 'flat'. Our Stewards are elected from the membership and include local residents and people who work in the area.

The Shieling Working Group and the Youth Working Group inform the Stewards activities. In turn the membership can inform the organisation directly through our activities or through involvement with the Working Groups. We behave in a participatory and democratic manner, supporting residents to become active citizens with the opportunity to influence local policy and improvements in the local environment. Currently we employ just over the equivalent of 2 full time workers and have 24 volunteers who help deliver our activities.

During this year we had our first birthday as a Community Benefit Society. It was a busy year as we developed activities and new workers joined us and some moved on. The team received an Engagement and Place Award from Newcastle University which was great recognition for the organisation. We ended the year with 66 members and with support from Connected Voice the Stewards started the process of regular meetings and established a worker member support group. Stewards also worked to help deliver activities across the community. Our activities are open to members and non-members and many of our activities benefit the whole community of Shieldfield.

## 2022 - 2023 - What we did

### Flourishing Together

Education, Community  
Cohesion and Social Activity

7 Visits

7 Community Events -

15 Friday morning walks

20 Social gatherings

Over the year our members visited a number of community, cultural and arts venues across the area including Southwick REACH, The Auckland Project, Exhibitions at SAW, the Baltic and Northumbria University. They got involved in a bag printing workshop and a number of local celebrations, including the Shieldfield Cup mini football tournament. We co-hosted the Do It Ourselves Archive workshop and then had the symbolic hand-over of the Archive to Dwellbeing at a party in November 2022. Members then went on to be active in the 100 people project recording our experiences of life in Shieldfield.

We also hosted geography students on placement, gave a presentation about being a newly formed community-led organisation and another one to Social Justice in the North East about the Shieling concept. Throughout the year our regular Friday walks took us to places such as Heaton Park, Exhibition Park and the Quayside and our Monday morning get togethers continued, with an additional coffee gathering being added to to the Friday walk from January 2023.



## **Shieling Programme**

Cultivating connection to land and the local area  
Making Shieldfield a better, greener and safer place to live

**5 Shieling Working Group meetings**  
**2 Publications**  
**Exhibition Display - How we live now**  
**3 Festivals**  
**Housing Workshop**  
**Community Litter Pick**

**Shieldfield Growers (*in partnership with Shieldfield Art Works*)**

**Weekly growing sessions**  
**2 Trips to other gardens**  
**Shieldfield Grows - shared meal**

The Shieling Working Group, who are local people interested in improving the public spaces around Shieldfield had five meetings during the year looking at issues such as biodiverse bin storage, creating a low traffic neighbourhood and developing a community seedbank. We published 'Shieldfield: A Strategic Plan' at an event attended by around 45 people and launched our Community Planning Companion. We also took part in an exhibition showing a collection of our work over the last five years, exploring residents' relationship with the changing landscape of Shieldfield. The litter-pick and meadow care bonanza in February was the beginnings of our, now, regular Neighbourhood Care Walks.

The Shieldfield Growers is undertaken in partnership with SAW and in addition to the weekly growing sessions there was a trip to Granton Community Gardens in Edinburgh. The year was punctuated by regular celebrations with the growers planting garlic at the the winter solstice and then harvesting of the crop at the summer solstice. These events were accompanied by community celebrations giving us the opportunity to reflected on patterns of rest and renewal. We also celebrated the end of the growing season with a Harvest Festival.



## **Youth Programme**

Designed with young people from the area and delivered in partnership with NewBridge Project the Youth Programme creates a safe space for young people to play and learn together and make new connections.

*In partnership with NewBridge Project*

**Weekly sessions for under 10's and over 10's**

**4 Trips**

**Easter Band Camp**

**Bookshelf Project**

**Photography Project**

**Halloween Party**

**Reimagining the MUGA workshop**

During the year we continued to build our activities with young people, providing opportunities for them to get to know and understand each other and to think about the future and how it might look in Shieldfield. By the end of the year 45 young people a week were accessing the activities. This also helped parents and carers build connections and share friendship.

The regular weekly sessions (for young people aged 7 to 18) were provided throughout the year, with a new Youth Worker joining us in November. During the holidays there was an Easter Band Camp, a trip to the Ouseburn Farm, a Photography Project, Halloween party and a workshop to reimagine the MUGA.

The young people also created 'The Bookshelf', a library of children and young adult books that visiting family and young people can use! 'The Bookshelf' idea was developed and planned with our Youth Working Group and the shelf is made up of pre-loved and donated books!



## And the difference it makes . . .

- Time spent sharing stories, experiences and skills
- People are united in common activities and interests
- Having a laugh together and enjoying each others company
- People feeling valued and making a contribution
- Individual and collective empowerment
- Learning together - Improving skills and confidence
- Improved social connection and sense of belonging
- Improved access to activities and resources in the local area
- Improved urban environment and understanding of nature and environmental issues
- Improved spaces for community interaction
- Young people coming together in the place where they live, building friendships and being active in decisions about the youth programme
- Community members playing a more active role in shaping life in Shieldfield
- The community feeling included, connected and heard





Our activities and the difference we make would not be possible without the support of our funders and delivery partners and we are very grateful to them.

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**Our delivery partners:** Shieldfield Art Works (SAW) and the NewBridge Project

