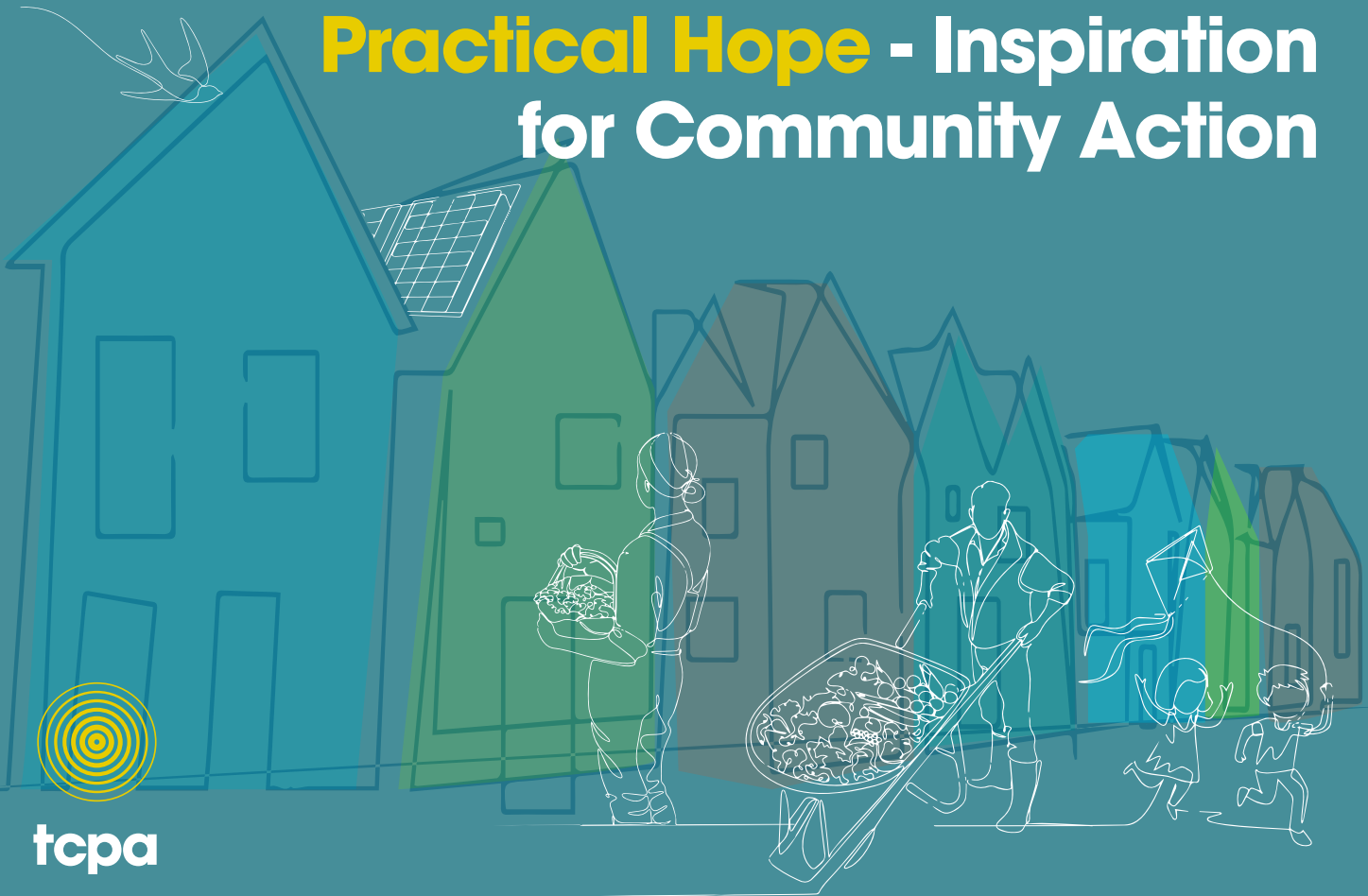


Practical Hope - Inspiration for Community Action



tcpa



Community-led
regenerating
South Bank

Creating affordable housing
and learning opportunities
for South Bank Residents.

1. Introduction

Community action is transforming neighbourhoods across the country, helping to deliver places where everyone can lead a healthy, fulfilling life.

The Garden City Principles represent the TCPA's ideas on the mixture of ingredients needed to create healthy, thriving places and communities. They are a distillation of the key elements that have made the Garden City model of development so successful, articulated for a 21st century context. The Principles touch upon everything from equitable local economies, vibrant and inclusive social and cultural spaces, to the restoration of nature and the sustainability of our planet. To make a difference to people's lives, we need to make these ideas a reality.

From the cost-of-living crisis to poor health, and changing climate, there are a lot of pressures on people, our homes and our wider communities. At times, this can make achieving change feel overwhelming.

The power of community action is one of the strongest remedies to addressing these problems. Across the world, there are countless examples of community organisations who are already working together to enact practical solutions to local challenges from hunger and housing to climate

change. Change is not easy. While there are a range of challenges facing communities trying to put their ideas into action, support is out there. Change for the better is possible!

This pamphlet includes case studies from communities already working on amazing projects embracing Garden City Principles in a variety of contexts. We hope these examples will inspire anyone interested in making change happen in their local community, from using food as a catalyst for connection to creating skills and knowledge sharing networks. The case studies also contain practical advice and lessons to help community groups, both new and established, succeed.

It includes:

- Practical advice from community projects across England.
- Principles for success.
- Funding opportunities.
- Links to other organisations and sources of further information and support.

Case Study One: Incredible Edible Leeds, West Yorkshire.

Building kind, confident, connected communities through food growing.

About Incredible Edible Leeds

Part of the wider Incredible Edible Movement, Incredible Edible Leeds is a community group working to use food as the catalyst for change and to bring the local community together. Incredible Edible Leeds started as a group in Garforth, East Leeds, in 2019. In 2024, there are over 20 groups working across the city on their own Incredible Edible projects.

How is Incredible Edible Leeds making a difference?

One of the main projects Incredible Edible Leeds runs is its public edible beds which can be found across the city. The edible beds aim to educate people on where their food comes from and provide a free and sustainable source of healthy food. At the core of Incredible Edible's work is the aim of re-establishing people's connection with nature and the food they eat to create healthier, happier, and more connected communities.

How did they do it?

Incredible Edible Leeds originated from an idea in Garforth to use local grass verges to grow food. In 2019, Dan Robinson hosted a community meeting, which led to the formation of a committee to identify the next steps. Launched during lockdown, local people became aware of Incredible Edible Leeds as they reconnected to their local areas during their lockdown walks and wanted to know how they could do something similar in their area. By 2021, several other Incredible Edible Groups were working in Leeds and in 2022, Incredible Edible Leeds was established as a community interest company (CIC).

**Check out the full case study
on the TCPA website:**





Incredible Edible Leeds's advice for new community projects

- Just do it!
- Be bold, brave, and ambitious.
- Don't wait for permission.

'Incredible Edible Leeds came about due to the community's pride in the city.'

Dan Robinson, Volunteer & Director, Incredible Edible Leeds

'Interest in Incredible Edible Leeds happened organically. People came across our work while going on walks during lockdown and wanted to get involved in their area.'

Dan Robinson, Volunteer & Director, Incredible Edible Leeds



Case Study Two: Transition Town Totnes, Devon.

Reimagining community resilience through everyday actions.

About Transition Towns Totnes

Transition Town Totnes was founded in 2005 in response to concerns about peak oil, climate change, and economic uncertainty. The work of Transition Town Totnes is holistic in nature, ranging from reimagining the local economy to food growing.

How is Transition Town Totnes making a difference?

Transition Town Totnes' work is focused on running projects that make Totnes resilient and allowing the town and the people who live there to thrive. For instance, Transition Streets is a self-led community project, where six to eight households meet in their homes to explore the practical action they can take on a personal and community level on issues ranging from travel to food.

How did they do it?

By working at the community level, Transition Town Totnes bridges a gap between individual action (which is limited) and government action (which is slow) and have real opportunities to implement practical and solution-based approaches to a range of issues. Transition Town Totnes has faced challenges relating to funding, timescales and, differing opinions among stakeholders. However, engaging with the local community is critical to making the work of Transition Town Totnes a success.

**Check out the full case study
on the TCPA website:**



Transition Town Totnes' advice for new community projects

- Look at what else is going on in your community. Find the gaps.
- Don't reinvent the wheel.
- Be strategic! Do what you can with the resources and capacity you have.
- Set key milestones for the change you are trying to achieve.
- Celebrate the wins.

'People have to see the change you are making happen in the community.'

Guy Erlacher-Downing, Coordinator, Transition Town Totnes



'Transition Streets is about being solution-focused and practical. It is about making the benefits feel tangible and the process easy to engage with.'

Guy Erlacher-Downing, Coordinator, Transition Town Totnes

Case Study Three: Brighton Energy Coop, East Sussex.

Working to lower costs, reduce carbon footprints, and achieve energy security.

About Brighton Energy Coop

Brighton Energy Coop was founded in 2010. Focused on solar energy, Brighton Energy Coop owns 5MW of roof-mounted solar arrays and has worked on over 126 solar projects in the Brighton area. Brighton Energy Coop has a membership of over 750 people.

How is Brighton Energy Coop making a difference?

Brighton Energy Coop works to enable the transition to community-owned renewable energy, which is an essential step in tackling the climate crisis, creating higher levels of energy security, and reducing energy costs, making the local area more resilient in the long term. Furthermore, its community outreach via schools helps to prepare and equip the next generation for the societal transformations taking place over the next century.

How did they do it?

The first several years of the energy coop were focused on building the organisation up, including fundraising and building its staff team. Brighton Energy Coop solar systems are funded by its membership. Periodically, it opens a share or bond offer and invites members of the community to invest. To date, around 700 members have invested £4.5 million. The coop's members then receive a return on their investment of at least 5%. Brighton Energy Coop has found that there has been consistent interest from the local community in investing in community energy, and it has had existing shareholders reinvest.

**Check out the full case study
on the TCPA website:**



Brighton Energy Coop's advice for new community projects

- If you're motivated and passionate about your work, it can keep you going, but you need to be tenacious.
- Secure upfront investment, as voluntary effort can only take you so far.



'Like anything, somebody gives you a break and then if you've proved yourself, you get to do a bigger project with them or use them as a reference for the next site.'

Damian Tow, Co-Founder & Secretary, Brighton Energy Coop

'We need a very different way of thinking about it. Don't use the existing mindset to try to achieve something that you're not going to achieve in the business-as-usual timeframe.'

Damian Tow, Co-Founder & Secretary, Brighton Energy Coop

Case Study Four: TimeBank Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire.

Creating a caring, supportive and reciprocal local economy.

About TimeBank Hull

TimeBank Hull was founded in 2012 as a response to the impact of austerity on the local community. Timebanking is a mechanism that enables people to share skills, knowledge, and support through the exchange of time. At present, TimeBank Hull has around 1,000 members.

How is TimeBank Hull making a difference?

TimeBank Hull works to reimagine the status quo and create a slower, cyclical, and more personable economy. Timebanking provides a space for individuals in the community to meet and learn from one another. People are at the heart of TimeBank Hull's work, it aims to give its members a sense of belonging, worth, and agency within the wider community.

How did they do it?

TimeBank Hull was established as a company limited by guarantee; this structure was chosen as it is relatively simple to set up. Grants from organisations such as the

National Lottery, local authorities, and some EU funding mainly fund the work of the TimeBank. Central to Timebank Hull's work are opportunities for its members and the wider community to come together in person and support one another, including new members in-person induction. TimeBank Hull's physical presence at Marfleet Community Centre allows it to host a range of in-person events, often linked with food, such as the community feasts, which help to provide opportunities for socialising as well as sharing knowledge and skills. It is evident from the testimonials of people in the network that Timebank Hull has had a tangible impact on the community.

**Check out the full case study
on the TCPA website:**



TimeBank Hull's advice for new community projects

- Just do it!
- Figure out the goal you are working towards and work backwards to uncover the steps you need to take to achieve the end goal.



'What I say timebanking is about is unlocking the abundance that's hidden ... and what you're doing when you're talking to people is you're looking at what's strong rather than what's wrong... what do you love?'

Kate MacDonald, Founder, TimeBank Hull

'Being a member of TimeBank enabled me to quickly get established in the city and involved with a number of community organisations and events.'

TimeBank Hull member testimonial

Case Study Five: Civic Square, Birmingham.

Community-led transformation and retrofitting for climate change.

About Civic Square

Civic Square is a community group working in Ladywood in inner-city Birmingham. The aim of Civic Square is to enable community-led transformation and transition. It is about reimagining how people can live in a different, more sustainable, and resilient way, as well as retrofitting their existing places and spaces in a manner that ensures community participation and ownership.

How is Civic Square making a difference?

Civic Square works to make a difference by reimagining its local economies, democracies and relationship with nature in a way that betters the lives of people and the planet. This is achieved by organising at the scale of people and ensuring its work is participatory, with the benefits (including money and assets) remaining in the community's hands. But importantly, its work extends beyond people and incorporates the ecological health of the Ladywood neighborhood, including working on retrofitting public spaces for the impact of climate change.

How did they do it?

Civic Square has evolved over the course of the last decade, originating from the TED x Brum movement before transiting into Impact Hub Birmingham and then into Civic Square in 2020. It took ten years and a significant amount of work for Civic Square to get to where it is now.

Civic Square is currently facing the major challenge of the compulsory purchase of the Ladywood Estate, which will affect over 1,000 households and will cause significant displacement within the local community. Yet, Civic Square's work demonstrates the value of working in the community, including the chance to work with people who have a massive amount of generational knowledge and wisdom. Working in and with the community is incredibly transformative, not only for the community but also for the community group itself.

**Check out the full case study
on the TCPA website:**



Civic Square's advice for new community projects

- Go where the energy is.
- Follow the needs of the community.
- Build trust and relationships, and everything else will follow.



'Our job is to create the bridge between the everyday entry points, from a cup of tea to a sewing group, all the way through to getting involved in our most complex redesigning the economy work...'

Imandeep Kaur, Co-Founder & Director, Civic Square

'There is an incredible amount of wisdom, knowledge, experience and proximity to the real impacts of complex challenges at the neighbourhood scale.'

Imandeep Kaur, Co-Founder & Director, Civic Square

Case Study Six: South Bank Community Land Trust, North Yorkshire.

Breathing life back into disused housing and restoring community pride.

About South Bank Community Land Trust (CLT)

South Bank Community Land Trust (CLT) was set up by the local community in 2019. The focus of South Bank CLT is bringing back disused/derelict housing for use by local residents. The aim of the South Bank CLT is to secure affordable housing for local people in perpetuity and ensure that the CLT's work ripples out into the surrounding community.

How is South Bank CLT making a difference?

South Bank CLT provides a holistic approach to bettering the local community. By focusing on tackling the number of empty properties in the area, it hopes to reinvigorate a sense of ownership in the area and attract investment in the town. However, its work goes beyond securing affordable housing in perpetuity; it also partnered with Redcar and Cleveland College to identify local training and employment opportunities in their projects and has set up an Eco-Shop to provide affordable food to local people struggling with the rising cost of living.

How did they do it?

Residents were concerned about the number of empty properties and absent landlords, so they formed a local steering group to try to find a solution. The steering group decided that establishing a CLT was the best course of action. The local council, through Section 106 agreements for affordable housing contributions, had funds available to support the startup of a local CLT. Then, through a registered provider, Thirteen Group, South Bank CLT received £110,000 of funding from Homes England and Redcar and Cleveland Council to purchase and refurbish its first five houses. More recently, with the support of the local authority and Thirteen Group, it became one of only two CLT to be awarded Levelling Up Funding, where it was awarded £411,000 to buy and renovate an additional five properties.

**Check out the full case study
on the TCPA website:**



Helping regenerate
South Bank
We are creating affordable housing,
employment and training opportunities
South Bank Residents

South Bank CLT's advice for new community projects

- You need someone with a vision and who is willing to take on a leadership role.
- Networking is essential; connections with other professionals can be beneficial.
- You need a succession plan in place to ensure continuity.



'The Eco Shop, I think proved that we were there to benefit the community, not just to bring houses back into use. So, people saw the heart in the community and therefore they will want to be part of it.'

Michael Janes, Director, South Bank CLT

'A lot of the problems in South Bank are where they've been promised a lot, but nothing's ever turned up. So, when we got the five homes all done, we wanted a celebration event ... and we can say, hand on heart, this is a good news story.'

Michael Janes, Director, South Bank CLT

3. Principles for success

As these case studies aim to highlight, community groups across England are doing incredible work to improve their local area and people's lives. The following key lessons set out what helps groups to succeed.

- 1. A team of people with a complementary mixture of experience and skills** - Specialist skills and knowledge related to the projects being carried out by the group (e.g., gardening in the case of Incredible Edible, or knowledge of community energy for Brighton Energy Coop), people with the communication and networking skills that spread and start to embed the vision from day one and those who can keep the organisation running on a day-to-day basis, including legal, bid writing and finance. Many people can offer more than one of these in the early days until capacity increases.
- 2. Networking with other local community groups and stakeholders** - It is important to make connections with others across the local community to share knowledge and develop critical mass but also to work with others from outside your sector who share your values and principles, as collaboration is increasingly important.
- 3. Creating opportunities for community togetherness** - Events and access to community facilities can play an important role in bringing people together and getting them to buy into the work that you are doing.
- 4. Rooted in the local community** - It is important to give local people opportunities to have a say in the decisions that affect the places they call home: open meetings, easy access, and welcoming communications.
- 5. Access to resources** - Groups need reliable and easy access to skills, community facilities, and funding. Shared assets, tool libraries, and online resources will already be out there. They need only be tapped into.
- 6. Passion, enthusiasm and energy** - It is not easy. And there will probably be many challenges. So, passion, enthusiasm, energy and a sense of humour are a must!



Practical Hope: Inspiration for Community Action – online resource

To view the full Practical Hope: Inspiration for Community Action resource, including links to **funding opportunities** and other useful information and organisations, please scan the QR code or visit the TCPA's website www.tcpa.org.uk.





Equitable

Sharing land values for community benefit.

Visionary and collaborative

Strong vision, leadership and community-participation.

Nurtured

Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.

Genuinely affordable

Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.

Accessible for all

Integrated and convenient walking and wheeling routes and public transport systems.

Vibrant and inclusive

Culturally diverse, energising, sociable neighbourhoods.

Landscape-led, climate resilient

Development that enhances the natural environment and addresses climate change.

Designed to marry town and country

Places that enhance people's health and wellbeing.

Local employment

A wide range of local jobs.



Garden City Principles

Nurturing communities and the environment



Practical Hope

**Inspiration for
Community Action**

Practical Hope: Inspiration for Community Action

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