



UNIVERSITY OF  
LIVERPOOL

Heseltine Institute  
for Public Policy,  
Practice and Place



# L30'S MILLION BIG LOCAL: CONNECTORSHIP IN ACTION

## EVALUATION REPORT

October 2025

# Contents

Introduction ..... 4

Context and background ..... 6

L30’s Million Big Local ..... 6

L30 Community Centre ..... 6

Asset-based approach..... 6

The connector roles ..... 7

Evaluation method and approach..... 8

Ripple effects mapping workshops..... 8

Observations and interviews..... 10

Data analysis..... 10

Connectorship in action: the ripple effects model ..... 14

Summary of findings..... 14

What have been the changes in the community? ..... 16

Increased capacity ..... 16

Increased connectivity ..... 22

Increased commonality ..... 26

How have the connectors supported these changes? ..... 30

Supporting capacity..... 30

Supporting connectivity..... 34

Supporting commonality..... 38

A day in the life ..... 42

What have been the conditions for change? ..... 44

Conclusions ..... 46

Recommendations ..... 50

Appendix 1: Workshop questions and answers

DOI: 10.17638/03193845

Version 3, October 2025

Authors

Joanna Hayes and Sue Jarvis, Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place, University of Liverpool.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to the L30’s Million Big Local partnership, Sam Moon, the research participants and the Netherton community. All images courtesy of L30’s Million Big Local partnership.

# Introduction

This evaluative case study focuses on two connector roles funded by L30's Million partnership: a Community Builder and a Health and Wellbeing Connector. It has been undertaken by the University of Liverpool's Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place, with the aim of understanding how and why these roles have been effective. It has been funded by the University of Liverpool's Policy Support Fund.

The Heseltine Institute worked closely with L30's Million partnership throughout, first developing the ripple effects model to illustrate the impact of the connectors and then collecting evidence to test the model. This report describes the model, highlights key outcomes and how the roles have contributed, and explores what the conditions for change have been.



Figure 1: Location of L30's Million Big Local area within Liverpool City Region

# Context and background

## L30's Million Big Local

Big Local has been a programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and administered by Local Trust, through which 150 communities across England each received grants of at least £1 million over 10 years or more, to enable them to create lasting change in their neighbourhoods. As well as being long-term, Big Local aimed to be resident-led, non-prescriptive, responsive and flexible.<sup>1</sup>

L30's Million is a Big Local partnership run by volunteers who live and work in Netherton. The L30's Million area is part of St Oswald ward in Netherton. It was awarded Big Local funding in 2014.

The area is situated on the outskirts of the Liverpool urban area, in the borough of Sefton. Its housing is mainly on estates built from the 1950s onwards. Its assets include community centres, churches, a shopping centre, a library and leisure centre, and lots of green space including the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

L30's Million has funded numerous activities, supporting events and groups for young people and families, enhancements to the local environment, addiction rehabilitation services, jobs and training support, and benefits and debt advice. It has also invested in local community assets, including churches and a boxing club.

## L30 Community Centre

L30 Community Centre has provided a base for L30's Million and many of its activities. Managed by registered charity, Fun4Kidz, and situated in the Sefton estate in Netherton, the Centre is a busy environment where activities can be accessed every day, from social activities to fitness classes, to the community pantry, warm space and a range of support. Its mission statement is: 'A place where people enjoy being together'.

## Asset-based approach

Over time, L30's Million developed an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach, having recognised from its research and experience that something different was needed. The area had received various neighbourhood-based funding over the years, including Single Regeneration Budget and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, but was still experiencing significant inequality across measures such as income, education and health.<sup>2</sup>

An asset-based approach mobilises people and organisations to come together to realise and develop their strengths, in contrast to a deficit-based approach that focuses on identifying and servicing needs.<sup>3</sup>

The L30's Million vision is for Netherton to be 'a safe, clean environment, full of active citizens making decisions together and controlling their own assets'. In working towards this vision, the partnership has

drawn on ABCD resources including the work of Cormac Russell and John McKnight, who describe 'connectorship' as the context in which active citizenship can emerge.<sup>4</sup>

The partnership's vision and approach have been supported by Local Trust and Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside, which since 2021 has been the 'locally trusted organisation' (LTO) for L30's Million, administering the funding on behalf of Local Trust.

## The connector roles

During the Covid pandemic, L30's Million provided vital funding for L30 Community Centre to be able to keep its services running and to support community members struggling with illness, job loss and isolation. This was delivered by the postholders in two key 'connector' roles it funded, hosted by L30 Community Centre: a Community Builder and a Health and Wellbeing Connector. For L30's Million, having developed its asset-based approach, these roles were an opportunity to put it into practice.

### Community Builder

The Community Builder was appointed in 2021, with the post funded by L30's Million and hosted by L30 Community Centre. Reflecting the L30's Million vision, there are three areas of work: people, environment, and places.

The Community Builder is tasked with creating opportunities for residents to connect with others who have similar interests and passions, and supporting them to generate, shape and deliver ideas for change within the community. This has included supporting people and organisations to apply for funding from L30's Million. They liaise with Big Local, through Local Trust and the LTO, and with Sefton Council, to ensure relevant guidelines are followed. They facilitate investment in parks and green spaces, linking between the community and service providers, and supporting people to improve their local environment. They work alongside local institutions and associations to make local assets available

for community use and to build community involvement in decision making.

### Health and Wellbeing Connector

The Health and Wellbeing Connector is a role commissioned and funded by L30's Million from 2020 onwards. It grew out of a street exercise project that happened during the Covid pandemic. The partnership saw the difference it made, bringing exercise out of the usual gym environment and offering people a more accessible way to look after their mental and physical health. They decided to fund a long-term role, continuing exercise classes and providing additional time to flexibly support people with their overall wellbeing.

As the pandemic progressed and social distancing guidelines changed, the classes switched between indoors, outdoors and online. As society opened back up, it became clear that many people were finding it difficult to return to previous levels of social contact. A health and wellbeing room was set up alongside the weekly community pantry at L30 Community Centre, initially to support community members to shop at the pantry and evolving into a health and wellbeing morning attracting a wide range of people. A range of regular health and wellbeing activities are now offered, both outdoors and at different community venues, and the Health and Wellbeing Connector continues to provide flexible additional support, such as maintaining text contact with exercise class members currently unable to attend, or exploring ways to wellbeing in one-to-one conversations.

# Evaluation method and approach

We worked closely with L30's Million partnership to first develop a model to illustrate the impact of the connectors and then to collect evidence to test the model. The process is summarised in the table on p. 9, with further detail on key elements below.

## Ripple effects mapping workshops

Ripple effects mapping (REM) is a technique that has previously been used in North America to evaluate community-based programmes.<sup>5</sup> More recently, the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration in the West of England has developed the technique for use in public health. They describe it as a 'participatory, qualitative method that can capture the wider (intended and unintended) impacts of a project or programme'.<sup>6</sup> They describe its four underpinning principles: it draws upon the concept of appreciative inquiry; it takes a participatory approach; it uses interactive group interviewing and reflection; it uses mind mapping to visualise the impacts.<sup>7</sup>

L30's Million suggested using REM within the case study because it fits well with their ABCD approach. We worked with L30's Million and a facilitator practised in the use of REM to plan and deliver two workshops. Our shared aim was to centre the experiences of community members by using the ripple effects maps they created to develop a model for how change had

taken place, which we could explore further through observations and interviews.

The workshops took place on the same day, one in the afternoon and one in the evening to enable a wide range of participants. Guided by the facilitator, the workshops began with participants talking to each other about their involvement with L30's Million and the connectors. Question prompts included: What has been a highlight of your involvement? What are you proud of? What made this achievement possible? Were there any unexpected impacts? What connections – new or deepened – did you make as a result? Appendix 1 contains a list of the responses.

Each person then wrote out their own story on a series of sticky notes, from the initial involvement to all the things that happened as a result, and then any wider impacts. One-by-one, they told their stories as the notes were placed on a large map and connecting arrows were drawn to show how one thing led to another. There were two groups at the afternoon workshop so, in all, three maps were created. See p. 11 for an example.

**The ripple effects mapping was a powerful, empowering and emotional process, as people shared details of changes in their organisations or in their personal lives. It was empowering for people to tell their stories. Through this process, they realised the journeys they had been on and relationships within the group were deepened.**

| Time period        | What we did                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 2025       | <b>Planning:</b> We met with L30's Million partnership to agree the approach we would take and the timescales for completion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| February 2025      | <b>Workshops:</b> We worked with the partnership and with facilitator Sam Moon to hold ripple effects mapping workshops. 25 community members participated, including the postholders. 21 people told their stories of how the postholders had contributed to changes in their lives and in the community, and the ripple effects of those changes. Afterwards, we met with partnership members and Groundwork to carry out initial analysis of the 3 ripple effects maps that had been created at the workshops, to develop a theory of change based on a ripple effects model. |
| January–April 2025 | <b>Observations:</b> A researcher from the Heseltine Institute spent time with the postholders at L30 Community Centre and in the neighbourhood, observing them in their day-to-day work and participating in activities including litter picking, exercise classes, Wednesday Walkabout, and wildflower planting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| March–May 2025     | <b>Interviews:</b> We had in-depth one-to-one discussions with 15 people including the 2 postholders, 2 partnership members, 2 local councillors, 8 other people who lived or worked in the L30's Million area, and the partnership's LTO contact.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| May–June 2025      | <b>Analysis:</b> Through analysis of the data from the workshops, observations and interviews, in collaboration with the partnership, we tested and adapted the ripple effects model.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| July 2025          | <b>Reporting:</b> We produced this report and a summary report to communicate the findings of the case study.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

Following the workshops, we carried out some initial analysis, using colour coding to show initial events, direct effects and wider effects, and to indicate whether the main impact was on an individual, their friends and family, an organisation, or the wider community. The paper maps were digitised using mapping software. Figure 2 shows one of the maps.

From the workshops, we could begin to see the positive changes that had rippled out from the work of the connectors and how these changes led to individuals and organisations having their own impact on others.

## Observations and interviews

The next stage of the study was to look more closely at how the connectors carried out their work and how it impacted on individuals and organisations, through a series of observations and interviews.

A researcher spent time with the connectors over a 3-month period, seeing them at work, participating in some of their activities both at L30 Community Centre and out and about in Netherton, and recording observations about their methods and approaches.

During this time, the researcher also carried out 15 interviews, which were one-to-one, face-to-face discussions. They were a way of hearing more detail on some of the stories from the workshops and including community members who had not taken part, as well as bringing in a wider perspective from the connectors themselves, partnership members (including the Chief Executive of L30 Community Centre, who oversees the work of the connectors), local councillors, and the partnership's contact in Groundwork, who have worked closely with the partnership as their LTO (locally trusted organisation, or accountable body for the Big Local funding).

Like the workshops, the interviews took an appreciative inquiry approach. They were semi-structured discussions incorporating questions on stories, values, wishes and vision, with the aims of reflecting on successes and strengths, drawing out motivations, revealing

areas for development, and thinking about how to create a positive future.<sup>8</sup>

## Data analysis

The primary data sources were the ripple effects maps and responses to the warm-up questions, observation records, and interview transcripts. Analysis was carried out by two researchers using a template process to iteratively identify themes and sub-themes.<sup>9</sup> Initial findings were discussed with L30's Million partnership and were refined by further analysis. They are described in the following sections of this report.

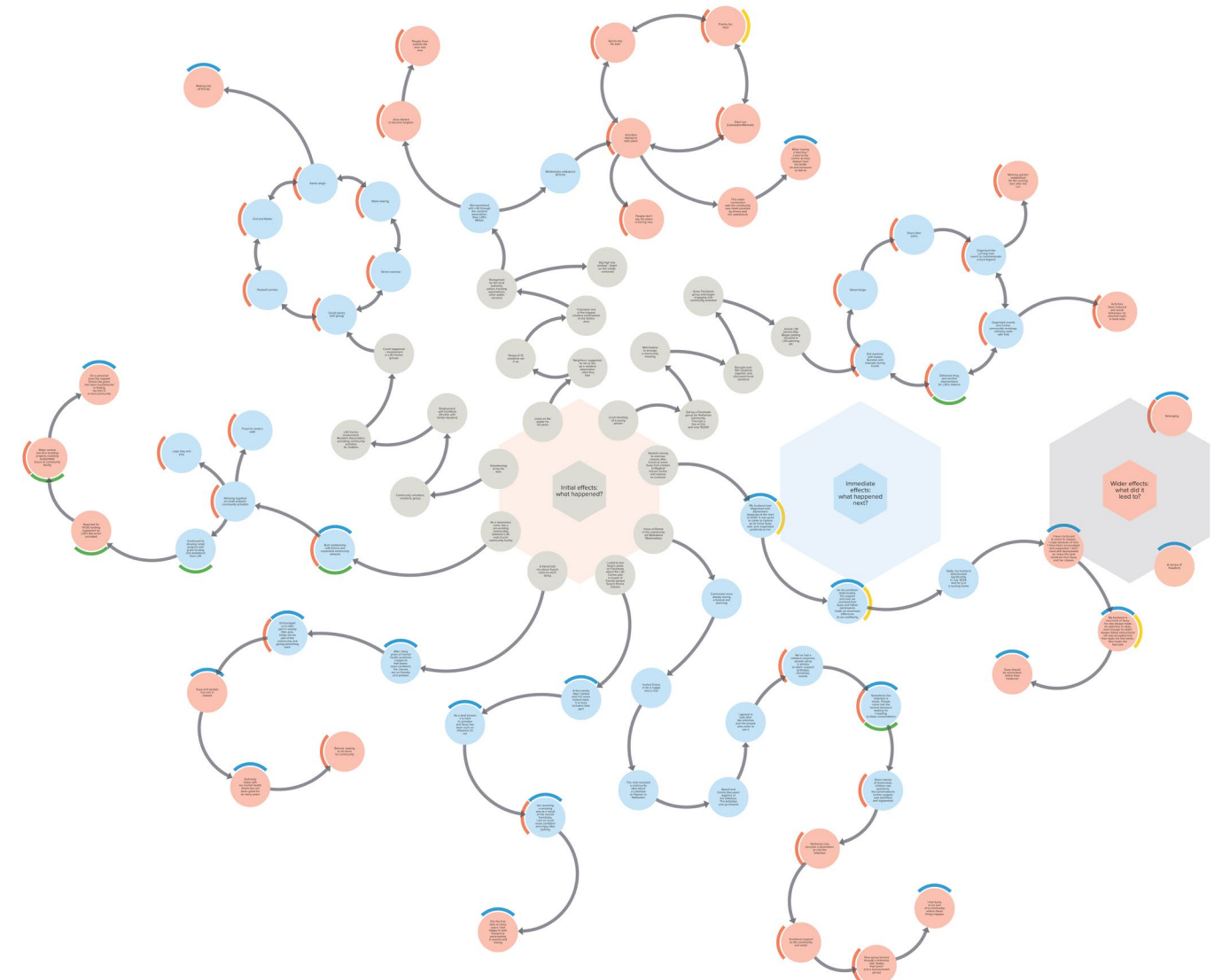


Figure 2: One of the ripple effects maps

This map is a digital drawing of one of the paper maps created during the workshops. It is too large to reproduce here in this report in a way that is legible, but it shows how the mapping process was able to highlight the ripple effects of the connector roles.

The stories of eight individuals are represented in this map. Each circle is something that happened – a chapter in a story – and they are linked by arrows to show how one event led to another. The grey circles are what happened first, telling how the individual came into contact with one or both of the connectors. The blue circles tell what happened next – the immediate effects, and the orange circles are what it led to – the wider effects.

The brighter coloured arcs around the circles indicate impacts on the individual (blue), their friends and family (yellow), their organisation (green) and the wider community (orange). See x for an example of an individual story from one of the maps.

Topics that featured strongly in people's stories included mental health, physical fitness, growing in confidence, finding friendship, and giving back to the community.

The ripple effects are discussed in more detail in the section of this report beginning on p. 16, with selected stories in written format.

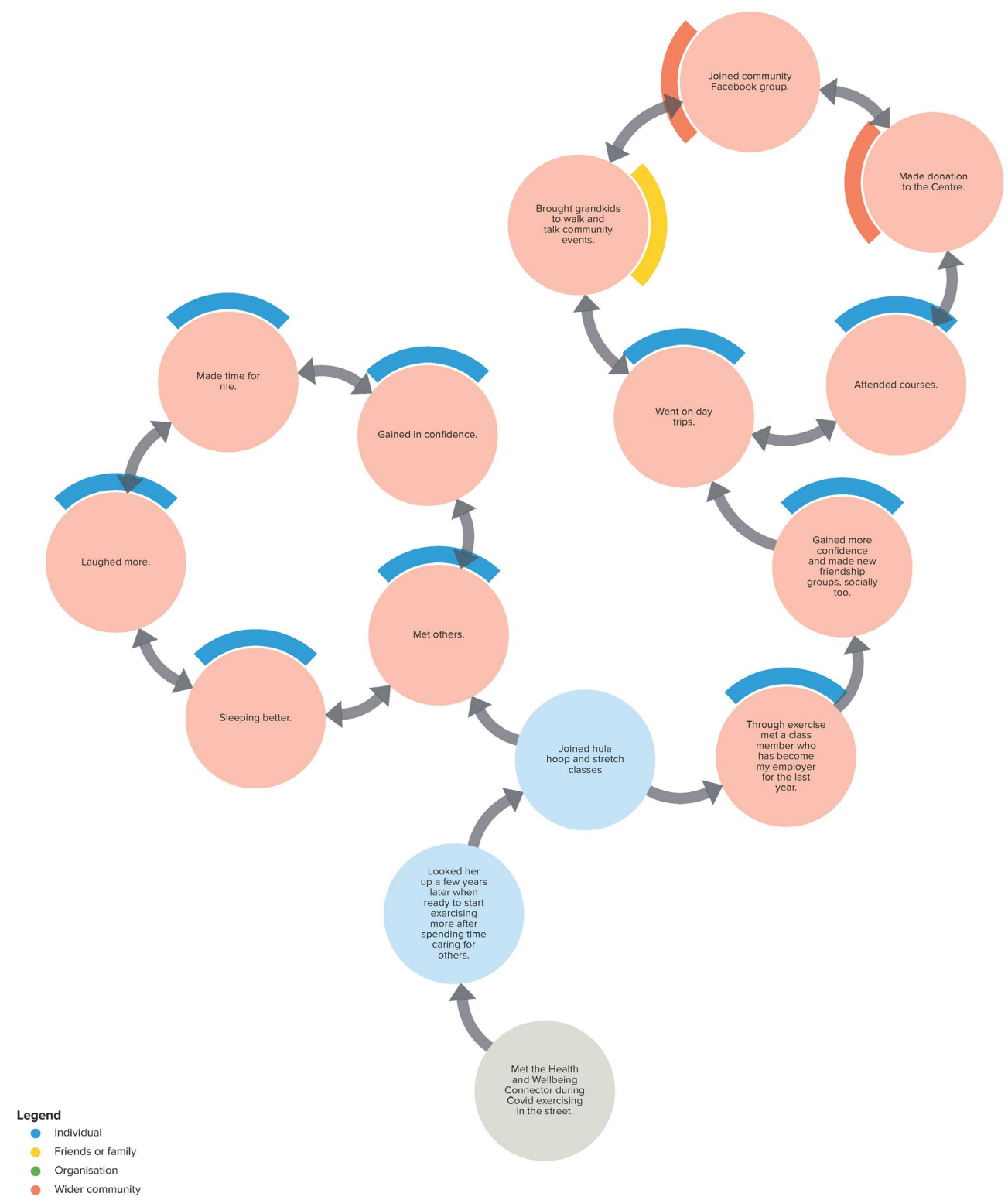


Figure 3: One of the ripple effects stories



# Connectorship in action: the ripple effects model

## Summary of findings

In their work on asset-based community development, Russell and McKnight define the 3Cs of community as:

- **Capacity**  
people are able to contribute
- **Connectivity**  
people are connected to each other
- **Commonality**  
people feel an affinity

These are the elements needed to build a thriving community of active citizens, and connectorship is the means by which this happens.

The Community Builder and Health and Wellbeing Connector are connectors. Their connectorship practices have supported increases in capacity, connectivity and commonality in Netherton.

These effects have rippled out from individuals to their friends and families, from organisations to the wider community, and as people have experienced these effects, they have developed their own connectorship practices, spreading the effects further (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).

The process of change has been a non-linear, ripple effects pattern, with the Community Builder and Health and Wellbeing Connector at the centre, creating ripples and helping maintain momentum as the ripples spread outwards.

A note on organisations: Russell and McKnight use the terms 'associations' – clubs, groups and small organisations run by their membership, and networks of volunteers; and 'institutions' – groups of people who work together for pay, including for-profit businesses, non-profit organisations or governmental institutions. We have used 'organisations' to refer to both associations and institutions who are active in Netherton.

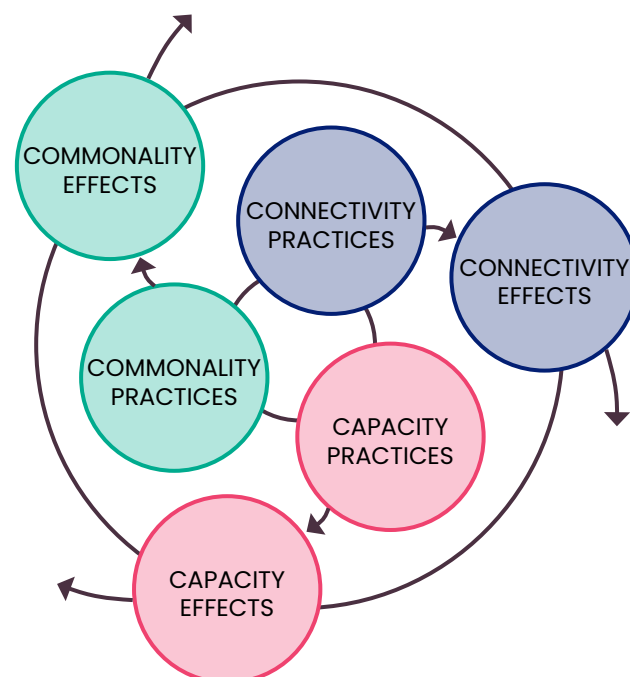


Figure 4: Connectorship practices and effects

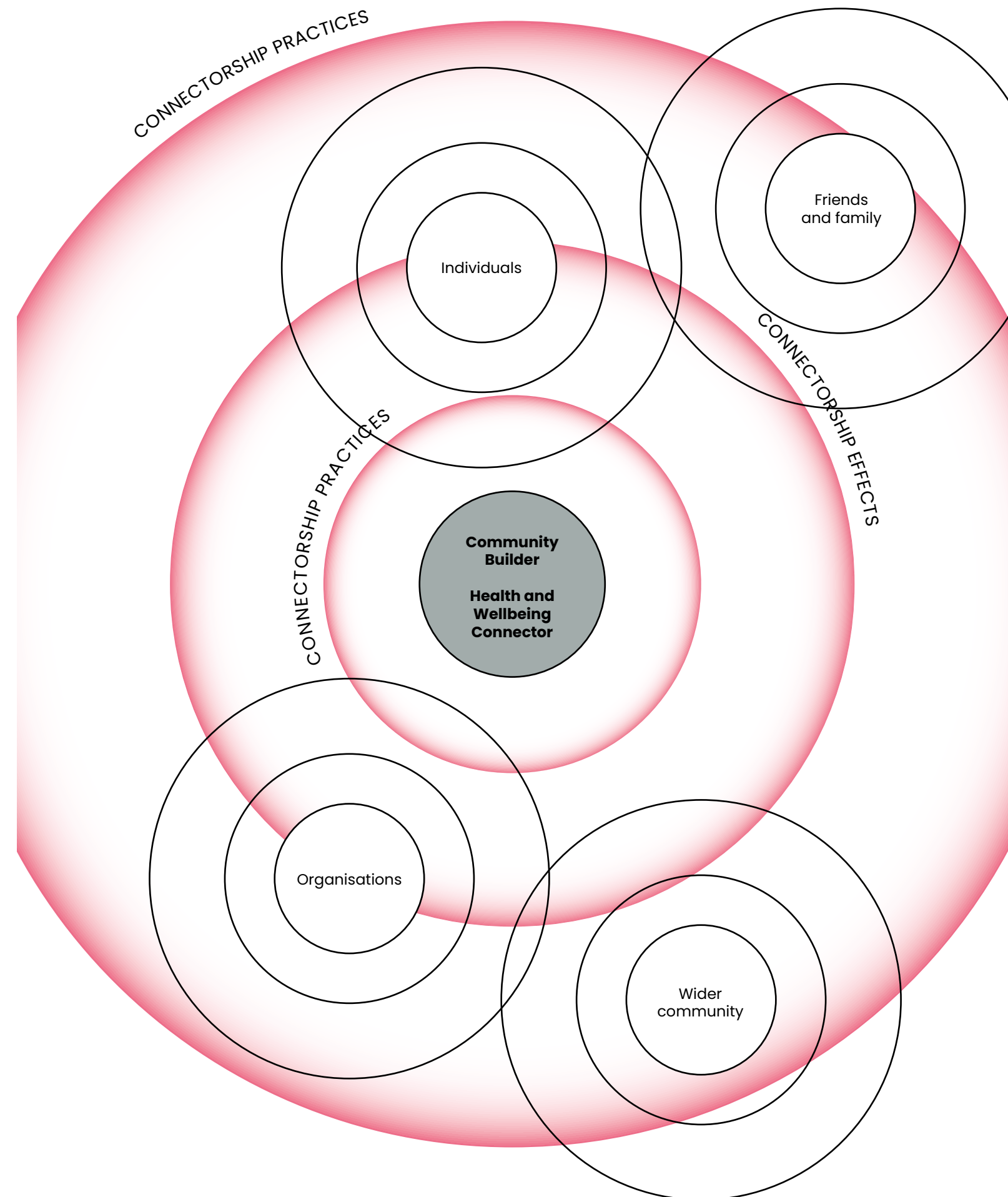


Figure 5: Ripple effects model of connectorship

# What have been the changes in the community?

Our research showed that there have been changes in the community in terms of increased capacity, connectivity and commonality. Below, we consider each in more detail, illustrated with selected stories from the REM workshops. The stories have been anonymised but as far as possible are told in participants' own words.

Also highlighted are related facts and figures illustrating the potential impact of some of these changes in monetary terms.

## Increased capacity

People are more able to contribute their knowledge, skills and passion for the benefit of the community due to:

- Better health and wellbeing
- Feeling empowered
- More sustainable local organisations

People told us how they have experienced **improved mental and physical health** since becoming involved with activities run by the connectors, particularly the fitness classes run by the Health and Wellbeing Connector (p. 32). They mentioned improved flexibility and stamina – one had been able to climb Snowdon, something they did not feel they could have done previously. Two felt they would be on pain

or anti-depressant medication were it not for the classes. Others spoke about how joining in with outdoor activities such as litter picking (p. 40) and Canal Crew (p. 41) was beneficial for their wellbeing. Several found classes had helped them to find resilience in challenging life circumstances, for example the Covid pandemic, caring responsibilities, or bereavement.

Increased skills and confidence have helped **people feel better equipped to support themselves** and, more than that, **empowered to make change happen**. One person told us how, having received support through a particularly difficult time for her family, she felt able to return to work. Another had gained confidence from presenting her idea for mindfulness-based craft activities in the community and, having successfully applied for initial funding, has continued to develop and grow the sessions, delivering them for different groups in a range of local venues. Others had begun volunteering. People had been connected to other sources of available help, whether financial, educational, or emotional. Wellbeing benefits had spread through people bringing friends and family to activities.

Local organisations also feel more confident and resilient. Building improvements and better community connections have helped ensure that **organisations and community places are of long-term benefit to local people**.

We spoke with people providing community activities and support on behalf of local churches and the library service. They

have gained a better understanding of and connection to the community they serve. Through this, plus coordination and promotion of their activities, and in some cases grant-supported improvements to their premises, they have been able to tailor and increase the activities they offer, engaging greater numbers and a wider range of people.

For example, through being encouraged and supported to apply for funding, local churches St Mark's, St Oswald's and Emmanuel have been able to carry out energy saving measures, making them more environmentally sustainable as well as reducing their running costs. These improvements have had benefits beyond the organisations and their members, because they both run and provide venues for a wide range of services and activities including arts and crafts, fitness classes, afternoon teas, and community groceries or pantries (low-cost food shopping).

L30's Million funded energy efficiency audits for all three churches and the Community Builder and LTO assisted them to apply for funding from a range of sources, based on the findings of these. St Mark's has had funding for its roof, heating and windows, transforming the interior of the building by making it warmer, lighter and brighter. St Oswald's has fitted new boilers, radiators, LED lights and solar panels, and has seen its monthly energy costs drop to a fraction of what they were previously. Emmanuel now has solar panels and better insulation and may be able to host fitness classes this winter, when it used to be too cold.

In addition, building extensions funded by L30's Million are underway or complete at L30 Community Centre and a local boxing club, Sefton ABC. Funding for the boxing club was matched with funding from the police and that investment has doubled the footprint of the building. That has meant twice as many young people have been able to attend the club where they benefit not only from learning about fitness, but also from building strong relationships and developing a positive mindset.

*"My children are more confident. They can stand up for themselves and speak in large groups. They plan to volunteer in their adult life."*

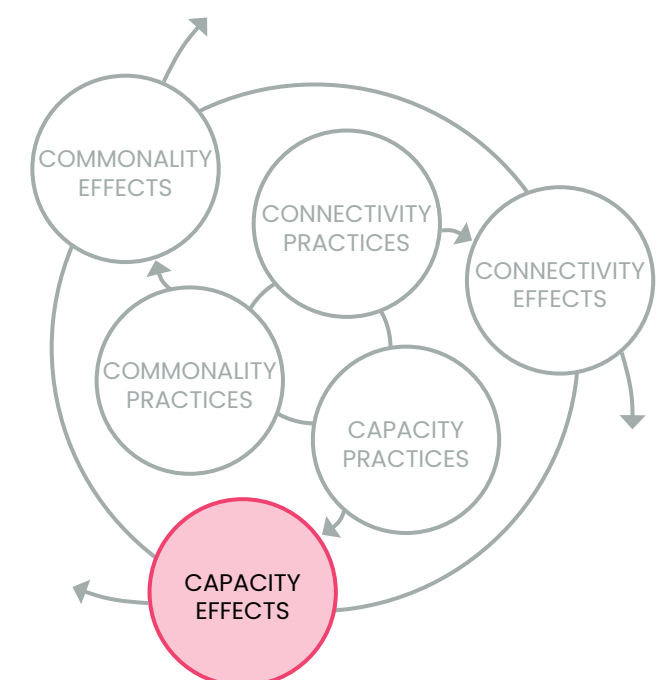
(Community member and workshop participant)

## COST OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH:

In any given week, an estimated 1 in 6 people in England will report a common mental health problem such as anxiety or depression. Mental illness costs England £300 billion per year, equivalent to nearly double its NHS budget.<sup>10</sup>

## VALUE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

The average social value of an adult being 'fairly active', that is, engaging in 30–149 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week, is £2,730 per year. This is made up of the wellbeing value to the individual and the wider value to society in terms of reduced costs of health and social care.<sup>11</sup>



Members of St Mark's described how their confidence to deliver arts activities had grown from an initial conversation with the Community Builder at 'Tea and Toast'. They had a vision for art for the community but lacked resources.

They applied for funding from L30's Million, which they used to buy supplies and storage. Their adult art group grew and flourished, putting on an exhibition. They identified a need for art activities for children and were encouraged by the Community Builder to apply for further funding from L30's Million. They received £300, enabling them to establish not only a children's art group but also a music group for teenagers with neurodiverse conditions. This involved safeguarding training for three volunteers, building their confidence.

New equipment including drying racks meant that they could work more closely with a local provider of arts sessions, which led to art 'leaving the building' in the form of an Art Care Package, aimed at people who are ill or lonely. Beneficiaries have included residents of James Horrigan Court, a housing with extra care scheme for older people.

As their activities have expanded, church members feel they have learnt more about the value of art for people's wellbeing and for building relationships. Their growing confidence has enabled them to branch out into other activities, such as Rimrose Valley walks with art activities and a pumpkin patch as part of the L30 Halloween Trail. With encouragement from the Community Builder, they have made relationships with other groups such as Netherton Library and L30 Community Centre, helping them feel more part of the community.

Support was in many forms, not just funding. Emmanuel Baptist Church was already planning its VE Day commemoration party when the Community Builder suggested joining forces with L30 Community Centre, making it a bigger event and bringing additional volunteers to help.

Some organisations mentioned areas of growing demand that they are keen to address in the future; specifically, activities for older children and more classes for adults, such as English and gardening.

*"People used to think St Mark's was shut. Now they know we are there for the community."*

*– community member and workshop participant*

#### VALUE OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR:

In 2021/22, the voluntary sector contributed 7.5% of overall UK income, and the voluntary sector workforce accounted for approximately 3% of the UK's total workforce.<sup>12</sup>

#### VALUE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES:

England's public libraries generate value of at least £3.4bn each year through their contribution to service areas including digital inclusion, children's literacy and health and wellbeing, representing a return on investment of a least six times cost. A branch library typically provides £1m in value annually.<sup>13</sup>



**Ripple effects story:**  
**I no longer need pain medication**

A friend told me about an exercise class that was available at L30 Centre. I had previously been a member at a gym. I decided to give it a go as I was suffering with a lot of pain. I had left the gym by this time. I had become very self-conscious and didn't think I would fit in.

The first class I went to was fantastic. I was made to feel very welcome by the whole class.

The Health and Wellbeing Connector is a bright light, she has helped me become more flexible and confident.

Since starting the classes, I can manage my pain so much better and I don't take any pain medication. My mental health has improved. I am more confident and much happier.

**Ripple effects story:**  
**More people are using the library**

I started working at Netherton Library. It was a quieter branch and hard to get people in for events.

The Community Builder reached out to connect with local venues and started to promote our activities. We started to see more families attending storytime and crafts. The unveiling of the tapestry had 50+ attendees and sensory play had 40+ kids. This would not have been possible when I started in Netherton Library.

The activity planner connected local venues and showed us what else was on offer. This let us co-ordinate to produce a better offer for local families. The L30 Easter Trail was a very busy event connecting local venues. There was more use of the library after this event, and we've now been part of Halloween and Summer Trails. An information market held outside Netherton Activity Centre highlighted local organisations and connected service with the community. We attended the L30 Community Pantry to promote our services. This deepened the link with the community and increased our understanding of the local offer. We feel a deeper sense of belonging and interconnectedness of the wider community.

The Community Builder has increased our profile in the community and we now have well-attended sessions. We have increased confidence in delivering sessions like crafts, slime making, quizzes and bingo. We are overwhelmed but pleased that people are using the services. I am proud that our team (with the Community Builder) has shown that the often-overlooked branch can be busy and well-used.



## Increased connectivity

Wider and deeper connections between people and organisations have led to:

- Reduced isolation
- Better access to support
- More joined-up local services

We found many examples of **a strong and active community who know each other and look out for each other**. People mentioned that they had made wider or deeper friendships through the connectors. Several had previously felt lonely or isolated, and there were different reasons for this, including the Covid lockdowns, illness or disability, social anxiety, being new to the area, being a new parent or having other caring responsibilities.

One of the most notable ripple effects from Community Builder support to individuals and organisations to develop their own ideas, was **friendship**. For example, we heard about a lunch group formed after a chance meeting at the Letterbox to Heaven, and a resident of a Housing with Extra Care scheme who said if it wasn't for the art group, run by St Mark's, they would have stayed in their room.

Through getting to know others in the community, people had found a **support network** in the form of friendships, friendly faces, or places they could go and feel welcome. This had helped people cope with life experiences including parenting, illness and bereavement. Several people were or had previously been in a carer role for a family member.

A developing **network of local community organisations** has helped individual organisations connect with each other, with the community, and with outside organisations such as funders, and through these connections to develop and co-ordinate their activities to be of more benefit locally. For example, L30 Community Centre and Netherton Community Grocery decided to merge their planned VE Day celebrations and following a successful event joined

### COST OF LONELINESS:

Approximately 7.1% of people in the UK experience chronic loneliness, meaning that they feel lonely 'often or always', and the cost of this is estimated to be at least £9,900 per person per year, due to its combined impact on wellbeing, health and work.<sup>14</sup>

### VALUE OF CARE:

There are around 4.7 million unpaid carers in England, or 9% of the population, and the care provided by unpaid carers in the UK has been valued at £184.3 billion a year, "equivalent to a second NHS".<sup>15</sup>

*"When having a bad day, I come to the Centre as they always have the kettle on and someone to talk to."*

– community member and workshop participant

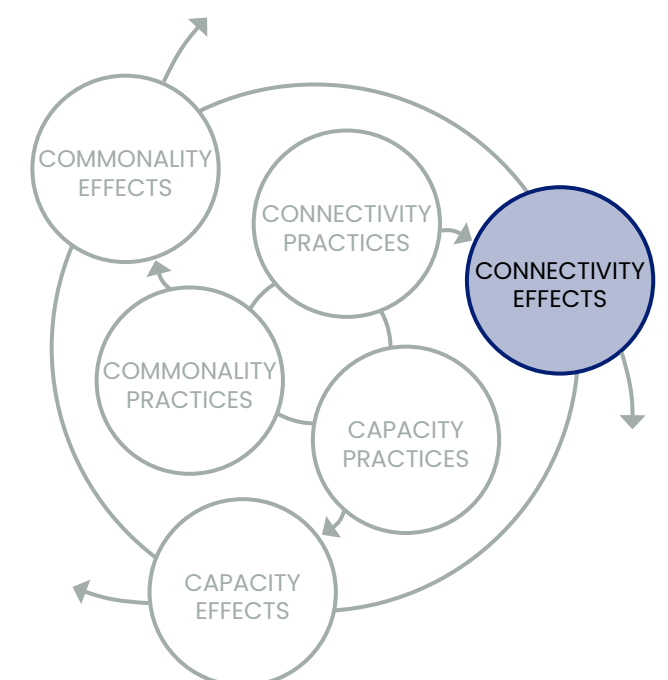
together to take part in the nationwide Big Lunch initiative the following month.

There has been progress towards **more accessible local services**. The Community Builder organises and advertises a monthly drop-in with the police, One Vision Housing (the biggest housing provider locally), and officers and ward councillors from Sefton Council. These sessions mean that people can report issues and obtain advice, which otherwise might require an expensive phone call or travel. They fill a gap, since ward councillor surgeries in St Oswald stopped during the pandemic and have not restarted, and the Council acknowledges that its nearest One Stop Shop in Bootle is not well-used at present. Drop-ins have been attended by up to 30 people, although the success of the sessions is dependent on the attendance of the service providers, which has not always been consistent.

The connectors have raised awareness of available services by **sharing information** through a range of formal and informal means and there were many examples of community members being connected with advice or assistance including from Green Doctors (energy efficiency experts), Citizens Advice, community groceries and pantries, and social prescribers. Service providers have also benefited from better links as the connectors have been able to provide a channel for the community to share information with them. This might be around, for instance, crime, antisocial behaviour, or public health. A recent example has been assisting the collection of survey data as part of a project led by Sefton Council for Voluntary Service, which aims to support increased early diagnosis of dementia.

*"What's important for any community, not just this one, it's important that they know their neighbours. Especially in this day and age...it can be scary, but to know your neighbours is so much better. Do you know what I mean? You're looking out for each other."*

– community member and interviewee



### **Ripple effects story:**

#### **A community idea led to deep conversations and ongoing friendships**

I knew of the Community Builder via Walkabout Wednesdays. We connected more deeply during a funeral, and I invited her in for a cuppa and a chat. The chat revealed a community idea about a Letterbox to Heaven in Netherton. We discussed the logistics, and the letterbox was purchased.

I agreed to look after the letterbox and the people who came to use it. We've had a massive response: people using it, photos to share. Support for birthdays, Christmas, events. Sometimes the letterbox is inside, and people come into the funeral director's looking for it. This leads to deep conversations. People share stories of loved ones, and children ask questions. Via conversations, further support was identified and signposted.

Netherton has become a destination to visit the letterbox. It has helped provide emotional support to the community and wider. A new group formed through a letterbox visit: 'ladies that lunch' (not a bereavement group).

I feel lucky to be part of a community where these things happen.

### **Ripple effects story:**

#### **The support I received has enabled me to support others**

I met the Health and Wellbeing Connector years ago at L30 Ladies' Night. I made regular appointments to have beauty treatments and built up a friendship. She told me we were welcome to a chair exercise course. I encouraged my daughter to come on the course, and we enjoyed the time we got to spend together. The course helped me with my mobility, but it only lasted 8 weeks and I needed to carry on.

When the course finished, my daughter and myself joined the Health and Wellbeing Connector's stretch and relax class. When classes stopped during Covid, I encouraged my neighbours to come out to the street exercise classes each week.

I had a short break due to life being busy. I recently returned after losing my brother, and I was struggling. I knew I would find support.

I've connected with neighbours through street fitness and a bingo street party. I've met old friends, made new friends, gained support and confidence, and I'm feeling fitter. I became a volunteer for Everton in the Community, at a dementia group.

I feel like an individual. I have something to offer.



## Increased commonality

People and organisations feel an affinity, leading to:

- A sense of belonging
- Becoming more involved
- A neighbourhood to be proud of

A repeated theme in the research findings was an increased **sense of belonging** to the community and neighbourhood. We heard this both from people speaking personally and as part of a local organisation, from people who live in L30 neighbourhood and people who work there. The feeling of being part of something bigger was founded in understanding the area better, knowing more people, making new friends, or having shared experiences.

There is evidence that **the community are more involved in activities that benefit them and others around them**. It might be said that the people who participated in the research are by their nature people who are willing to get involved. However, that is not necessarily the case, and for many people it took courage to share their personal stories in the workshops and interviews. Nonetheless, it was striking how many workshops and interview participants spoke of wanting to 'give back' to the community and were putting this into practice. Motivations included gratitude having experienced the benefits of others' efforts, finding an outlet for their skills and creativity, and the simple feelgood factor of joining with others for a common purpose and seeing it make a difference.

Several people described volunteering as a next step in a journey that had begun with feeling isolated and lacking in confidence, and through which their wellbeing, connections and sense of belonging had grown, until they felt ready to be more actively involved. The kinds of activities they mentioned included litter picking, planting and gardening, residents' associations, support groups, arts activities, collecting and distributing Easter eggs and other donated items, helping at food pantries and communal meals, and organising annual or one-off community events.

Being involved in community activities to make a difference is one way in which **the community have a say in how assets and activities are run to benefit them**. An example is the agreement made with the Canal and River Trust for them to support the community to adopt and care for a mile-long stretch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, an important green and blue space within the neighbourhood, helping to maximise its wellbeing benefit for local people. The initiative was launched with organised Canal Crew sessions (p. 41) including litter picking and wildflower planting. Going forward, community members will make their own decisions about management including planting, with advice available as needed, and providing only native species are used.

Another way for community members to have a say has been the Pie and Pounds events (p. 33) to decide on the allocation of community grants from the L30's Million funding. These have been open to anyone in the community, either to apply and pitch for a grant, or to come along and vote.

An activity supported in this way has been a monthly afternoon tea at St Oswald's Centre. Aimed at older residents, it is attended by around fifty people each month, more at Christmas. Tickets are sold at a subsidised cost and cover a two-course meal and entertainment. The team of 10–15 volunteers ranges in age from 13 to 80, bringing different generations together to plan and publicise the event, set up and clear away, and provide transport if needed. One of the young people involved has gone on to volunteer elsewhere, and all have gained valuable skills.

There is a sense that **local people feel proud of where they live** and that the neighbourhood is becoming more vibrant, attractive and safe. People spoke of their growing awareness of the existing assets within the area, how they had been improved and become more well-used, how activities were better co-ordinated, more wide-ranging and more accessible. We heard about the value of local green spaces as wildlife habitats and places to de-stress, and the positive contribution they make to the appearance of the neighbourhood, which has been supported by a reduction in litter in some open areas. A St Oswald councillor told us that reports of fly-tipping in the ward had dropped dramatically over the previous twelve months. Initiatives such as Canal Crew and litter picks have improved **access to good quality outdoor space** by both enhancing the spaces themselves and raising awareness of them.

## EXTENT OF VOLUNTEERING:

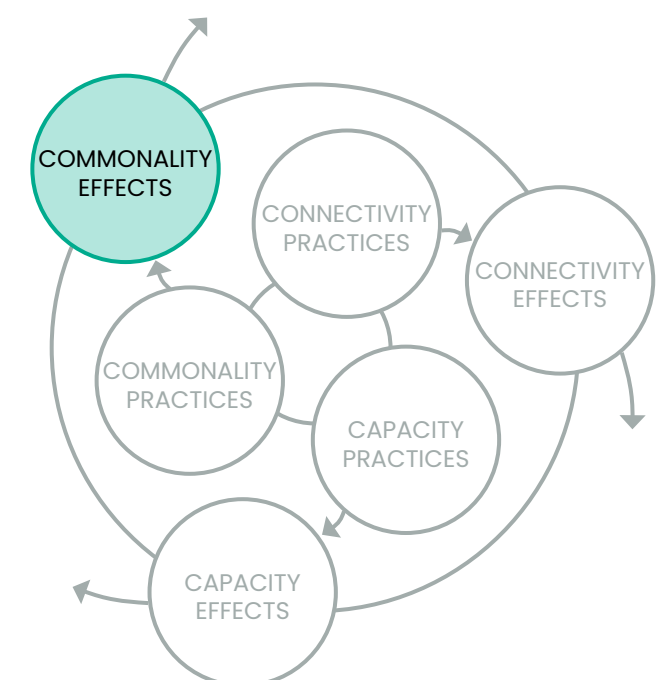
In 2021/22 (the most recent figures available) an estimated 14.2 million people in the UK volunteered through a group, club or organisation at least once. Nationally, levels of formal volunteering remain well below pre-pandemic levels.<sup>16</sup>

## VALUE OF GREENSPACE:

Regular access to greenspace reduces GP visits by 28% and could save the NHS £2.1 billion annually.<sup>17</sup>

*"The area started to become brighter...people from outside the area visit now."*

- community member and workshop participant



**Ripple effects story:**

**I now look forward to participating in events**

I used to see the Health and Wellbeing Connector's posts on Facebook about the L30 Centre and a couple of friends started her fitness classes.

A few weeks later I joined, and I've never looked back. It is more inclusive than the gym.

As a deaf person it is hard to socialise, and the Health and Wellbeing Connector has been such an influence for me. Her teaching is amazing and as a result of the overall friendship I am so much more confident and enjoy litter picking.

For the first time in many years, I feel happy to look forward to participating in events and mixing.

**Ripple effects story:**

**The church premises have become more of a community resource**

The Community Builder began to link with St Mark's Church from her appointment and provided a lot of encouragement. L30's Million commissioned an energy survey and encouraged us to seek grants to continue improving St Mark's for community use.

Using the survey, we applied and were successful to obtain a grant from L30's Million for new windows. We successfully obtained funding from other sources for the roof and heating.

We hoped that more of the community would use the premises as a resource, and this has happened over the last few years.

The process of engagement with the Community Builder and her predecessor has been very positive in bringing people together and helping the community. The Christmas event – turning on Christmas lights around the Christmas tree with community groups and story boards – was a great community event.

St Mark's linked with the Wildlife Trust through the L30 Marketplace event. We used land around the premises to create a wildflower meadow. The wildflower meadow has brought a lot of joy to many people in the community.

More people have joined various community activities, with people enjoying participating in these activities and making friendships.



# How have the connectors supported these changes?

The connectors have contributed to overall change by supporting capacity, connectivity and commonality. Below, we consider each in more detail, with examples of specific connector activities. See also p. 42 for a typical 'day in the life' of each of the connectors.

## Supporting capacity

Connectors have supported individual and organisational capacity by:

- Encouraging and motivating
- Providing a safe space
- Being alongside, rather than leading or fixing

The connectors aim to emphasise the positive, and to encourage and motivate others while being mindful of their current situation, and sensitive to the barriers to change that they might face. This positive mindset has been particularly important in **supporting the health and wellbeing of residents**. For example, the Health and Wellbeing Connector in their fitness classes makes creative use of music, sound, colour, movement, stillness, humour and words of affirmation to increase the confidence and lift the mood of those taking part. The Community Builder, working with the Canal and River Trust, planned Canal Crew sessions so that health and safety risks were managed, and people

knew when and where to meet, but with flexibility for them to come and go or undertake different tasks as they felt able.

Where they can, the connectors work on **reframing needs into strengths**. For International Women's Day, the Health and Wellbeing Connector shifted the focus of the usual litter pick so that a group of women could spend some time focusing on themselves. She led a walk through a nearby area of trees and greenery, with encouragement to notice the relaxing effects of being in nature, and then back at L30 Community Centre, as well as hot drinks, there were optional exercises to help counter negative self-talk, breathing exercises, and meditation. On a larger scale, there is significant financial need in the community, reflected in the L30's Million commitment to support health, 'physical, mental and financial'. Through the efforts of the connectors and many others, initiatives like food pantries and shared meals have become occasions where people enjoy coming together.

Several people spoke of how the connectors had helped in **creating a place that you trust to take care of your emotional physical wellbeing**, and how important this was to them. Safety is one of the shared values of L30 Community Centre and Fun4Kidz, its umbrella organisation, where the connectors are based, and so the ethos and staff of the Centre have played a large part in this. The connectors have aligned with this value by, for example, respecting confidentiality, being non-judgemental, and having appropriate training.

A key part of the connector roles, particularly that of the Community Builder, has been **mentoring and supporting people to generate, shape and deliver ideas**. The emphasis on 'being alongside' rather than 'leading' has been central to L30's Million. The aim has been to create a shift from practitioners doing things 'for' or 'with' the community, to activity that is done 'by' community members supporting themselves and working together.

The Big Local funding has directly enabled many community projects, with the Community Builder ensuring the funding opportunities are widely promoted locally and encouraging and assisting people to apply. However, she has also signposted people to other support from a range of sources, for instance, working with Groundwork to connect organisations with the VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme, and raising awareness of an offer by a local builders' merchant to support community groups with building materials.

As well as **supporting groups with existing assets**, as above, L30's Million has put money into **investing in opportunities for local people**. One of the ways it has done this is by making funding available for small grants to individuals and groups. Applicants complete a short form and then present their idea to community members at a Pie and Pounds night (p. 33), being encouraged and supported through the process by the Community Builder.

At any time of day, either of the connectors might be contacted directly by a community member who faces a difficult situation and needs someone to listen. The connector does not try to fix the issue, but is alongside the community member, **listening deeply** as they talk through the situation they are facing and realise their own solution. There have been many situations which, without the support of a connector, could have spiralled out of control with a significant mental health and wellbeing impact for the individual.

*"She was going 'look at all this green space here, this is on your doorstep and we can come here whenever we want, it's five minutes' walk, you can bring the kids here..."*

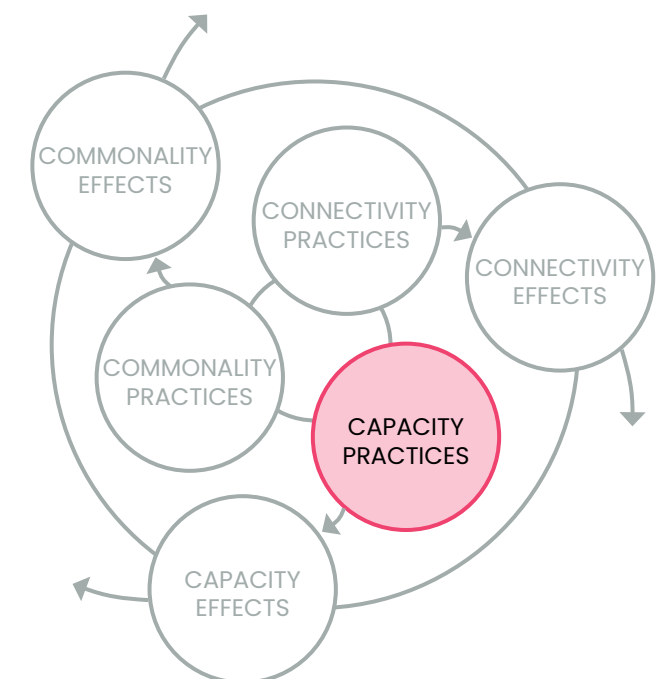
– nature walk participant and interviewee

*"I was always able to feel safe within the Centre and the Health and Wellbeing Connector was always encouraging so I believed in myself"*

– community member and workshop participant

*"Applying for funding was the scariest thing I had done. This gave me the confidence to speak in public and self-belief."*

– community member and workshop participant



**Connector activity: Fitness classes**

For £4 a week, community members can attend any of the regular sessions run by the Health and Wellbeing Connector at L30 Community Centre and St Oswald's Centre. By being low-cost and taking place in familiar locations, these are designed to be accessible to people who might not visit a gym or sports centre.

On Monday afternoons there is a stretch and relaxation class, timed to be convenient for people who need to do the school pickup afterwards.

On Tuesday mornings there is a circuit training class using weights and bands for strength and fitness. This began as a combat class, but recently, following a conversation with class members about being ready for something new, it has evolved into circuits. The Health and Wellbeing Coordinator was able to utilise their wide-ranging experience, and the flexibility of the role, to be responsive to changing needs. The circuits class is followed by stretch and relaxation, and time to chat about a chosen topic such as mindfulness or menopause.

On Wednesday mornings, there is a hula hoop class followed by a stretch and relaxation class. The hula hoop class is high energy, to music, and has a focus on increasing confidence. It is for all abilities and mixes hula hooping with other exercises, while giving people the opportunity for the satisfaction that comes with learning a new skill.

On Fridays, there is a walk and litter pick (see separate box).

All classes are tailored to people's individual abilities and allow them to fully participate while also gently increasing their fitness or mobility, as well as their confidence. For example, stretch classes can be done lying on a mat or sitting in a chair. Each class member is welcomed and there is time to chat with others before and after class, creating opportunities to share information and advice, and for friendships to grow. If children are off school, they can come to classes too, and during the school holidays extra family fitness sessions are added to the schedule.

Since February 2022, the Health and Wellbeing Connector has enabled over 7,000 fitness session attendances (number of sessions x number of people attending each session).

Over 40 community organisations and projects have been supported with grants from L30's Million, ranging from a ukelele group to a youth market to large-scale building improvements.

**Connector activity: Pie and Pounds**

Around three times a year, the Community Builder has run a community funding night when community groups can pitch for 'a slice of the pie'. This is a budget allocated by the L30's Million partnership from the Big Local funding.

Groups can apply at any time for a sum of up to £400 to support their activities. An example might be a pensioners' group meeting regularly, who would like extra funding to put on a meal. The process is trust-led, not target-driven, so the application form is brief and does not specify outputs.

Applicants are then invited to the next Pie and Pounds night. These happen on a weekday evening, usually 6.30–8.30pm. A variety of community venues has been used. Everyone who has applied is invited and can bring with them as many supporters as they like. An open invitation also goes out to the community. Applicants pitch to everyone in the room, explaining who they are, what they do, and what they would like funding for. People present have an opportunity to ask questions or to comment on each proposal before completing an anonymous voting form and posting it in a box. On the form, they are asked to indicate for each proposal whether they support it or not. There is space to add further comments; for example, they might support the proposal in principle but for a smaller grant than requested.

While the guests enjoy a (pie-based) meal, the Community Builder and colleagues check and count the votes. Grants are decided based on a majority vote and are announced at the end of the evening. The funding is transferred by the LTO and each group is asked to forward photos when their activity takes place.

Previously, all grants had been decided on by the partnership. Pie and Pounds was introduced by the Community Builder so that community members could decide directly on the smaller grants. The event brings together a wide range of groups to get to know each other, learn about each other's activities, and sometimes to challenge each other. There is not always agreement on how to allocate funding, but the decision is made jointly and transparently.

## Supporting connectivity

Connectors have grown connections between people and organisations by:

- Building one-to-one relationships
- Making connections within the community
- Linking with service providers

The connectors have worked hard at **developing individual connections** with community members. These had many different starting points. Through ripple effects mapping and interviews, we heard from 27 different people about how they first came into contact with one of the connectors. Of the 27, six already knew the individual as a friend, neighbour, or fitness instructor, and eight got to know them through the wider activities of L30's Million or L30 Community Centre, showing the importance of the connectors being embedded in the community. Equally valuable has been the efforts of the connectors in **widening the circles**, with three people having heard about their activities through word of mouth, three through social media (Facebook) and a further seven through leaflets, posters, street events or walkabouts.

Several people we spoke with mentioned the value of authenticity in the connector relationship, that the connectors **bringing who they are to work** made them relatable and helped to build trust. While they do not hide behind professional jargon, badges or uniforms, both postholders are appropriately trained and have many years of relevant professional experience.

A central aim of the connectors has been **enabling residents to connect with others who have similar interests and passions**. One of the ways they have done this is through **creating bumping spaces**, where people can meet informally and connections can grow organically. There are many examples of such spaces, including Walkabout Wednesday, Meet the Street, fitness sessions, Canal

Crew, L30 Marketplace, Pie and Pounds, celebrations such as the Platinum Jubilee and VE Day and annual events including at Easter, Halloween and Christmas.

The connectors have also helped raise awareness of facilities, events and activities run in and for the community by other organisations. The Community Builder produces and circulates an activity planner showing what's on in the neighbourhood over the week. The production of the planner has brought local organisations together to discuss their activities and share information.

While the connectors have created and supported varied opportunities for people to meet in person, they have also consistently and creatively utilised social media to reach people in a different way. For example, Walkabout Wednesday (p. 36) always begins with a video post to Facebook. The regularity has been key to growing the number of views, not only so that more people can benefit from the information being shared but also helping to generate the sense of a communal event.

Connectors have sought to be a **link between the community and service providers**. Both have built up extensive knowledge of available services so that they can signpost people to them.

Part of the Community Builder's role is **facilitating residents' voices**, such as when construction of new houses on one of the estates was causing issues in terms of noise and dust. The Community Builder convened a meeting between community members, the construction company, the site owners, Sefton Council officers and the ward councillors, at which all the advantages and disadvantages of the development could be aired, and established a message group between affected residents so that they could monitor the situation and communicate any further problems.

Local councillors who were interviewed highly valued their relationship with the Community Builder, who was described as a conduit, passing on information about local issues from residents who might not contact a councillor directly, and helping to get crucial information out to residents through her networks and activities. In many cases

she was able to connect people directly with the most appropriate source of help, freeing up the councillors to focus on the issues where they could be most effective.

It was widely recognised by research participants that the availability of different channels of communication enabled more people to access the services they needed. For example, that there were community members who found it difficult to walk into a building like a Council One Stop Shop or a community centre but would approach the Community Builder on one of her regular walkabouts.

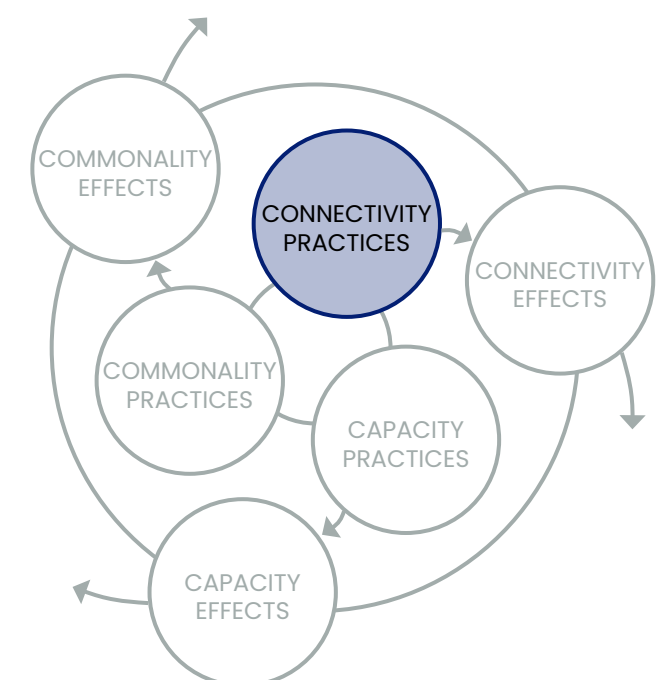
Relationships with service providers have not always been easy, particularly with large organisations seeking to balance the requirements of different departments and spread resources across multiple neighbourhoods. The Community Builder has been tasked with both **challenging and supporting** and has shown courage and persistence in highlighting issues of importance to the community, such as flytipping, and pushing for a resolution to a problem, such as locating a Letterbox to Heaven so that it can be both accessible to everyone and acceptable within Council regulations.

*"I actually just bumped into the Health and Wellbeing Connector in the square...I knew she was the Grinch on the Santa Sleigh and my daughter loves the Grinch...that's how it started."*

– community member and interviewee

*"The Community Builder's that person that people go to and then she triages it and sends it where it needs to go."*

– local councillor and interviewee



### Connector activity: Walkabout Wednesday

The walkabouts happen each week – different times, different routes, 'rain, hail, sleet or snow' –but always on a Wednesday. Soon after starting in the post, the Community Builder undertook training in asset-based community development, which emphasised outreach and 'not asking people to come to you'. She decided to trial Walkabout Wednesday, the idea being to be consistently out and about in the neighbourhood, each week, as a way of making themselves accessible to people and at the same time keeping an eye on environmental issues concerning the community, such as fly-tipping.

Two-and-a-half years later, Walkabout Wednesday has become well-known locally. Each walkabout now starts with a video posted to social media, letting people know what the route is going to be so that they can come and say hello, and sharing information about community activities and events. These videos have had thousands of views on Facebook. They have become a way for people to become and remain connected with the neighbourhood, even if they are mostly housebound or have moved away. Community members will come and join the walkabout or wait in their front gardens. Local organisations who want to highlight their services might also get in touch, knowing that the walkabout will help them reach a wider audience.

### Connector activity: Meet your Street

Meet your Street is a pop-up event. The Community Builder and Health and Wellbeing Connector pick a street in Netherton and set up an outdoor 'public living room' with inflatable sofas, rugs, and hot or cold drinks. It is not advertised beforehand, but on the day via videos on social media. People will be invited to come and join the connectors on the sofas and tell them about what's happening in the neighbourhood, or just chat.

Meet your Street is not regular or scheduled but happens every couple of months, more often during school holidays. It takes place for at least an hour at different times, on different days, and on different streets.

It is designed to be fun, to generate interest, and to connect with people who might not go to L30 Community Centre or to a specific activity. Some who do not come to the living room in person still like to join in online. People connect with each other as well, taking the opportunity to catch up with their neighbours.



## Supporting commonality

Connectors have brought the community together by:

- Being welcoming and inclusive
- Creating shared experiences
- Caring for the local environment

For someone to be an active part of a community it is essential that they feel welcome. There is always a risk that individuals or groups feel that a community activity is not for them. The connectors work at **creating places of welcome**. They do this by inviting people in, making activities accessible, being personally welcoming, and promoting an inclusive culture.

The connectors have employed imaginative methods to connect with new people, being visible and available beyond L30 Community Centre, physically and online. At events and activities, they make efforts to check in with people individually and find out how to make them comfortable.

For example, the Health and Wellbeing Connector checks people's physical capabilities, whether at litter picks or fitness classes, and adapts accordingly. Early on, she set up a health and wellbeing room in support of the community pantry at L30 Community Centre, recognising that many people were uncomfortable going back into social places post-lockdown and being available to meet them at the door or accompany them on their shop, and giving them somewhere to sit and have a cup of tea, to make the experience easier. Fitness sessions are low-cost, timed to accommodate school runs, and available to the whole family (p. 32). They offer opportunities for people to connect with each other at their own pace.

Where appropriate, the connectors challenge local organisations to also widen their circles, for example by encouraging them to take part in events such as L30 Marketplace. If someone is unsure about visiting a venue they have not been to before, a connector will accompany them and make an informal introduction.

L30's Million recognises the importance of **celebrating local stories to deepen relationships and generate energy for new things to emerge**. The connectors have worked with others to help create shared experiences – events, traditions, memories – that strengthen the sense of belonging to the community and the neighbourhood. Community-led activities such as Easter Bunnies, Santa's Sleigh and the Christmas lights switch-on have become annual events involving many volunteers and drawing in large and growing numbers of local people.

The connectors have taken practical action to bring local organisations together to share information, coordinate their activities, and make them available to more people. The activity planner produced by the Community Builder has helped avoid clashes and duplication, and highlight gaps, resulting in a more comprehensive offer for local people, which is especially helpful for families during school holidays, for example.

A creative approach has been to connect local venues with a themed trail, with activities at different venues throughout the day, and a group walk through the neighbourhood from activity to activity, which people can join for part or all. This has introduced people to venues they might not have visited previously, as well as being fun events for all ages. There have been trails themed around Easter and Halloween as well as during the summer holidays. Around 80 community members joined this year's Easter trail.

There have also been events that bring organisations together in one place to jointly promote their activities and services. For example, the L30 Marketplace held outside Netherton Activity Centre, and the display alongside the Christmas tree and lights where organisations were each invited to decorate one of the panels around the tree to help tell people who they are and what they do.

These initiatives have played in a part in **making local assets more available for community use**, by raising awareness of them within the community, and increasing understanding of the community among organisations providing venues and activities and encouraging them to see

themselves as part of a wider network. They have helped overcome some of the barrier effects of local geography by bringing people from one side of the L30 area to another – crossing the canal, for example.

That is not to say all events have been targeted at all residents. The connectors have given thought to **getting the scale right**, recognising that neighbourhoods can be flexibly defined, and there is a balance to be struck between diversity and coherence. Meet your Street (p. 36) is an example of engaging with people at a smaller scale, which is more accessible for some.

The connectors have supported activities **enabling local people to look after and invest in public spaces**. They have done this directly, through activities that bring people together to care for the environment such as litter picks (p. 40) and Canal Crew (p. 41), and indirectly, through encouraging others and helping to connect them with resources for their own ideas. Examples include the wildflower meadow planted by St Mark's Church, and the Bin Buddies scheme developed by a local young person.

Bin Buddies was the idea of a primary school student who was involved in recycling and litter picking at school, had been on a litter pick with the Health and Wellbeing Connector, and approached the Community Builder to see if it might be possible to get more litter bins in the area. The Council said they could not fund more bins, so the Community Builder worked with the young person on an alternative plan. With funding from L30's Million, ten bin packs have been put together so far. These are for community members who have applied to adopt a bin and committed to emptying it each week.

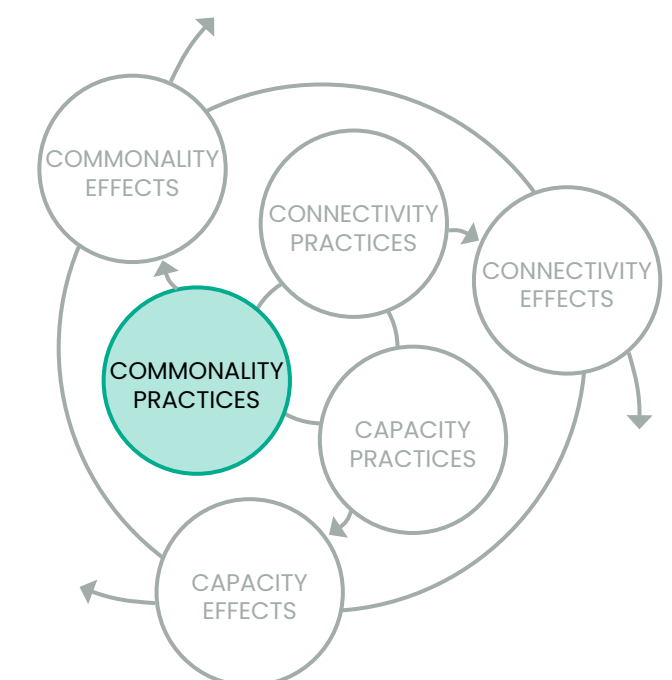
The Community Builder has also worked closely with local ward councillors to tackle fly-tipping by encouraging quick reporting, ensuring a prompt Council response, and by arranging and publicising community skips.

*"We only moved to this area about four years ago, so we didn't really know many people and they did Meet your Street... that was really nice."*

– community member and interviewee

*"I think it makes a lot of difference. Who doesn't like to walk in and watch nature and the birds and that? I don't know if you noticed but when we finished the litter pick on Thursday and we were coming out...there was a Robin on a tree, just a single Robin. That was lovely to see."*

– Canal Crew participant and interviewee



**Connector activity: Litter picks**

The litter picks take place on Friday afternoons, leaving from L30 Community Centre after lunch. They started out as simply walk and talks and followed that format for around 18 months. There are 5–10 community members on a typical walk. The litter picking was added by the Health and Wellbeing Connector in response to a conversation with a community member, to give people an activity to focus on if they felt anxious or self-conscious about joining a new group of people.

Litter picking also provides an opportunity for people to make a visible difference to the appearance of the neighbourhood. Equipment is provided and an area to tackle is selected each week, which might be a green space or within one of the housing estates close to the Centre. Members of the group feel the area looks tidier and that littering has decreased because of their efforts. Encouraged by the connector, the group has found further creative ways to contribute to wider community health and wellbeing on the litter picks; for example, taking coloured chalk with them and using it to make hopscotch pitches or draw attention to dog mess.

On returning to the Centre, there is time to sit and chat with a cup of tea. The Health and Wellbeing Connector encourages people to see this as phone-free time when they can relax, be in the moment, and connect with each other.

**Connector activity: Canal Crew**

The Community Builder worked with Canal and River Trust (CRT) to deliver a series of three volunteer sessions in Spring 2025, working to improve the environment along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, which passes through the middle of the L30's Million area. This followed the agreement with CRT for the L30 Community Centre to 'adopt' a one mile stretch of the canal. Branded 'Canal Crew', the sessions were advertised on social media and had around 10 participants ranging from school age to retirement age.

Session 1 was litter-picking along the towpath, Session 2 was wildflower planting, and Session 3 involved using a raft to access the water and canal bank to remove litter and invasive species. A representative of CRT was on-hand to provide equipment and advice on carrying out the activities effectively and safely, and crew members were encouraged to share their own knowledge and skills.

Volunteers were able to have a choice of different tasks and to attend part or all of a session. Most were already involved in community activities, but they valued the additional opportunity to spend time together, be outdoors and feel close to nature, to learn about and look after the environment. They also raised awareness of the canal and its care locally, with CRT branded hi-vis and temporary signage, social media posts, and several passers by stopping to chat.

## A day in the life

There is no typical day in the life of the connectors! However, they have written these descriptions of what a working day might look like for each of them, illustrating the breadth of their activities and the depth of the connections they make.

### A day in the life: Community Builder

8am Update all social media and post the daily activities available across Netherton and answer any messages.

9.30am Go into the office at the Centre and catch up with emails and phone calls. Review applications to take part in Pie and Pounds night. Send local community venues a request for information about half-term activities to help compile the next activity planner.

10am Work alongside a community member to register with Housing Support and Property Pool, which means completing a lengthy online form and uploading supporting evidence. The person may be upset or anxious about their housing situation.

11am Chat to community members who drop in to the Centre with queries, concerns or require advice/signposting. If they are new to the area, a neighbour or their GP practice might have suggested they get in touch. Or I might get a call from a community member I have got to know, who has an urgent difficulty and needs to speak to someone they can trust. Often, they just need someone to listen, but sometimes, if appropriate, I will support them with phone calls, form filling or in a meeting so that they can receive the support they need. Most recently this has involved supporting community members with urgent housing needs that could have left them homeless.

12pm Visit the Community Grocery at Emmanuel Baptist Church, collect surplus stock and drop this off with community venues who can make use of it.

1.30pm Meeting with the Community Neighbourhood Officer from Sefton Council to share residents' issues and concerns, which might range from fly-tipping, weeds and general maintenance of the area to bin collections and anti-social behaviour.

2.30pm Visit a local community venue such as St Mark's Church to catch up and have a face-to-face chat, to help stay connected.

3.30pm Answer questions received on social media, e.g. about availability and times of local activities.

4pm Meeting with community members to discuss activities they could get involved in to help make a difference in Netherton, like helping with the weekly Cosy Club lunch at the Centre, and any available support such as training for food hygiene certificates.

5pm Join Suey for a Family Fitness session.

### A day in the life: Health and Wellbeing Connector

8am Post social media daily planner. Check in with community members who need additional encouragement or support with their health and wellbeing, for example if they've not attended classes recently.

9am Set up the hall and welcome class members, making sure each person feels safe and included.

9.30am Teach a Fitness session tailored to class members with a wide range of ages and abilities, offering alternatives, modification and progression depending on individual needs.

10.15am Say goodbye to any members that aren't staying for the next session, greet members who are arriving. Maybe even meet them outside if they are anxious.

10.30am Teach a Stretch and Relaxation session, again tailored to class members, e.g. some may use a chair instead of a mat.

11.15am Say goodbye to class and pack up equipment.

12pm Have lunch, make list of people who I need to contact later or tomorrow. Reply to Family Fun group on Whatsapp.

1pm Collect cart and litter picking equipment from the Centre. Greet helpers, take pictures and have a chat whilst litter picking. Return to the Centre and arrange disposal or pickup of collected rubbish. Make cuppa for everyone and put equipment away.

4.30pm Arrive at the Centre for Family Fitness session – depending on the weather, we go outside. Bring equipment out. Greet members, play games, races, hand eye skills, encourage parents to take part. Motivate and encourage kids to keep going. Have a chat with anyone that's struggling with things at home. Put equipment away.

7pm Choreograph new routines, put play lists together. Depending on time of year, plan for days out or one-off sessions. Admin including attendance records and payments. Connect with community members I'm working with, perhaps helping them plan activities. At any time of day, I could get a call from a community member who is facing a situation they find overwhelming, and they just need someone to listen.

# What have been the conditions for change?

Connectorship practices have been supported by:

- The roles being embedded in the community
- Teamwork and shared principles
- Time and flexibility
- Funding and administrative support

There have been some key contextual features that have enabled the connectors to be effective in their roles in the ways outlined above.

The connectors have been **embedded in the community**. They are community members themselves, with wide pre-existing networks and a deep knowledge of the area. They have had a physical base in the L30 Community Centre, a long-established community facility within Netherton.

The shared commitment to the **principles of asset-based community development** by members of the L30's Million partnership and the connectors has been evident. The ABCD approach is explicit within the job description of the Community Builder (who is an employee, whereas the Health and Wellbeing Connector is self-employed) and both have taken part in relevant training. At the core of ABCD is the belief that sustainable community development comes from shifting the focus on what is lacking, to instead recognising

and nurturing local assets and individual strengths. Local Trust, who have managed the Big Local funding programme, and Groundwork, the accountable body for the L30's Million Big Local allocation, have been supportive of this approach.

The connectors have had the **emotional support** of each other and of the wider teams at L30's Million and L30 Community Centre. These are others working with the same aims and same ABCD principles, to whom they can go for guidance, practical assistance, or a sounding board. While rewarding, there are distinct stresses and strains to such an immersive role in terms of maintaining one's own resilience. Working jointly on many activities, and having a shared base at L30 Community Centre, has aided the connectors in checking in regularly with each other to share information, ideas and support. Sessions with L30 Community Centre's 'listening ear', a trained counsellor, have also been available to them.

Thanks to the long-term funding provided by Big Local, the connectors have had **time to work with people at their own pace**, allowing for the reality that change is often gradual and does not necessarily follow a straight and steady path. There may be many, many steps along the route and all sorts of external factors affecting the journey. We heard several illustrations of the benefits of a consistent, long-term approach: people who needed time to build the confidence to join an activity, or who needed to take some time out but wanted to return, or for whom a short course was insufficient.

The duration and nature of the funding have supported a **flexible approach**. Big Local was established with an emphasis on flexibility, including being non-prescriptive – 'enabling residents to spend on their own terms and in their own time, on the projects they judge to be most important to them'; and non-judgemental – 'giving communities the time and opportunity to learn, make mistakes, resolve disagreements and overcome challenges for themselves, on their way to achieving their ambitions'. Therefore, L30's Million partnership has been able to guide and monitor progress, including the connector roles and their activities, in a way that is **not target-driven**. For the connectors, this has meant freedom to direct their time, energy and resources where they judge it will make a difference, recognising and accepting that the difference may not be immediately measurable or directly proportional to the resource put in. They have also had flexibility to try different activities and, through listening and learning, to be responsive to the individuals, organisations and wider community they are working with. They have remained open to ideas from elsewhere, too. For example, Meet your Street is based on Camerados' public living rooms and Pie and Pounds was inspired by Merseyside Police's participatory budgeting.

An agile way of working requires **responsive administrative support**, particularly around finances. When Groundwork took over the LTO role in 2021, they were able to make quick payments and provide timely budgetary updates, which Sefton Council as the previous LTO had not. This made a significant positive difference to the overall work of L30's Million as a whole, including the connector roles. For example, when community members put forward an idea that was time-sensitive, such as installing and maintaining flower planters in an outdoor area over the summer, then a quick decision on funding could be made and the community benefits realised, whereas delays might result in missed opportunities and damaged relationships.

Through L30's Million, the Big Local funding has provided **resourcing for the connector roles**. It has also funded community grants, which the Community Builder has supported local people and organisations to apply for. The availability of these grants

has helped build capacity and has been an effective route to making connections within the community, but by no means the only one, and over time the connectors have built networks that allow them to link people to a whole range of resources to help implement their ideas, and to keep activities financially accessible to people.

# Conclusions

Here, we summarise the conclusions of our evaluation, which we hope will be relevant not only to L30's Million partnership and Local Trust as the Big Local funding comes to an end, but to local and national policy makers and commissioners as they develop their focus on neighbourhoods and consider how they can best support communities to thrive.

## The connector roles funded by L30's Million have supported positive change in Netherton

The process of change can be described in terms of connectorship, a concept used by Russell and McKnight in their work on asset-based community development. They define capacity, connectivity and commonality as the elements needed to build a thriving community of active citizens, and connectorship as the means by which this happens.

The L30's Million connectors – the Community Builder and Health and Wellbeing Connector – have employed connectorship practices that have supported increases in capacity, connectivity and commonality in Netherton.

The relationship between practices and effects (actions and change) has been a non-linear, ripple effects pattern, with the connectors at the centre. People who have experienced positive change have in turn developed their own connectorship practices – that is to say, they also have

become connectors, generating their own ripple effects. Examples can be seen in the ripple effects stories included in this report, including individuals whose gains in physical fitness or confidence have enabled them to take on a volunteer role, and organisations whose improved connections with each other and with the wider community have encouraged them to grow their activities.

While this report relates specifically to the connector roles, Figure 6 (p. 49) shows how the connectorship practices and effects it describes align with the overall L30's Million theory of change in working towards the vision of 'a safe, clean environment, full of active citizens making decisions together and controlling their own assets'.

Significant factors in the effectiveness of the connector roles have included their being embedded in the community, their commitment to the principles of asset-based community development, the funding and administrative support available through Big Local (via Groundwork, the LTO), and being able to work with people in a flexible and long-term way.

Neighbourhood renewal programmes such as Big Local and, previously, New Deal for Communities have shown the importance of long-term funding timelines, in these cases 10–15 years.<sup>18</sup> Time is needed, for example, to establish organisational structures and capacity, and to test and refine approaches.<sup>19</sup> In this study, we have also seen the impact on individuals. Several community members' stories illustrated how and why the long-term support of the

connectors had made a difference where a time-limited course or activity would not.

## Connectorship is an effective, sustainable model of neighbourhood-based change

The government has defined five missions critical to improving life in the UK. These relate to health, opportunity, energy, economic growth, and crime. The Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods (ICON) is making a case for a neighbourhood focus as the most efficient route to mission delivery in England, arguing that the hyper-local level is where 'mission-need' is most acutely felt and where people are mostly likely to get behind proposals for change.<sup>20</sup>

The ICON case is supported by evidence including from previous neighbourhood-based initiatives such as New Deal for Communities and Sure Start. A recent report from Local Trust also presents evidence that resident-led neighbourhood-level initiatives can strengthen local economies, lower child poverty and reduce crime.<sup>21</sup>

While many local authorities are making use of neighbourhood-level initiatives, research published by the National Network for Neighbourhood Improvement points to an increasing diversity of approaches, often connected with national programmes such as Family Hubs, Community Safety Partnerships, and the Local Area Coordination approach to health.<sup>22</sup> With this diversity comes variation in scale, thematic focus and governance – including nature and extent of community involvement. Some of these approaches already incorporate connector-type roles, although they tend to emphasise support for capacity more than connectivity or commonality.

Early findings in ICON's ongoing research suggest that investment in social infrastructure – 'the physical and community facilities which bring people together to build meaningful relationships'<sup>23</sup> – can be particularly effective in initiating and maintaining positive change. Also, that policies are more effective if they give local residents a say in decision making. ICON notes that,

despite over half of the public feeling that they belong to an area, less than a third say that they feel involved in that area.

Connectorship, as demonstrated by the L30's Million connectors, offers an approach that is holistic, embedded in the community, and prioritises social infrastructure. As such, it can link neighbourhood-level initiatives aligned to specific government missions (e.g. the national programmes mentioned above) with the people who live and work in an area and additional concerns they may have (e.g. the environment).

As we have seen, connectorship fosters a sense of belonging and is able to, over time, translate it into active involvement. Active citizens are able not only to shape the policies affecting them and thereby enhance the effectiveness of those policies, but also to take independent action to improve their neighbourhood. These are crucial components in sustainable change.

Policy makers and funders such as National Lottery are realising that funding by itself is not enough, especially where people face disadvantage, and that longer lasting benefits will come from partnering with communities to increase their agency, power and control.<sup>24</sup> Connectorship does not need to be expensive. It is not dependent on investment in large capital projects, although a physical base in the neighbourhood is useful. It seeks not to displace existing activity but, through its ripple effects, is instead able to sustain and multiply the impacts of other local resources.

## Health and wellbeing are foundational to community power

In the connectorship model, capacity, connectivity and commonality are interdependent. All the 3Cs are needed to build a thriving community of active citizens, and therefore to build community power – local communities being able to influence and change the places they live, the services they use, and the decisions that affect their lives.<sup>25</sup>

In this context, capacity is the ability to contribute skills, knowledge and passion. For most individuals, capacity is highly

influenced by physical and mental health. Neighbourhoods in Netherton are disadvantaged in various measures of health when compared with England averages.<sup>26</sup> Continued investment in the health and wellbeing of residents will be needed to maintain and grow the L30's Million legacy of active citizenship, and the relationship is two-way: community power supports health and wellbeing.<sup>27</sup>

The recently published 10-year plan for the NHS is organised around three shifts: from hospital to community, from analogue to digital, and from sickness to prevention.<sup>28</sup>

In relation to ill-health prevention, the plan aims to increase healthy life expectancy for everyone and reduce the gap between the richest and poorest regions. The work of Professor Sir Michael Marmot and his team nationally,<sup>29</sup> and in Liverpool City Region,<sup>30</sup> has highlighted that there are social and economic, as well as medical, conditions of good health. According to recent work by the NHS Confederation (in collaboration with PPL and Local Trust), it is at neighbourhood level where most of these conditions can be found, and where the most effective interventions can be made.<sup>31</sup>

The NHS Confederation refers to a growing body of evidence that approaches to health and care are more likely to succeed when they are based on active partnership with communities. It recommends that local residents are a leading partner in neighbourhood working.<sup>32</sup> A review of community-powered health and care on behalf of New Local goes further, finding that improving people's health and wellbeing requires action not only within but also outside the health and care system, within communities. Furthermore, that it is essential to connect people to support networks beyond formal services.<sup>33</sup>

The Community Builder and Health and Wellbeing Connector roles created and funded by L30's Million have together provided a demonstration of how community-led, neighbourhood-based support for health and wellbeing can facilitate community power. In turn, this has begun to have further health and wellbeing benefits in a ripple effects pattern. Continuation of the connector roles would be a way of utilising the

connectorship skills and experience that have been developed, to further strengthen and spread the ripple effects throughout the Netherton community.

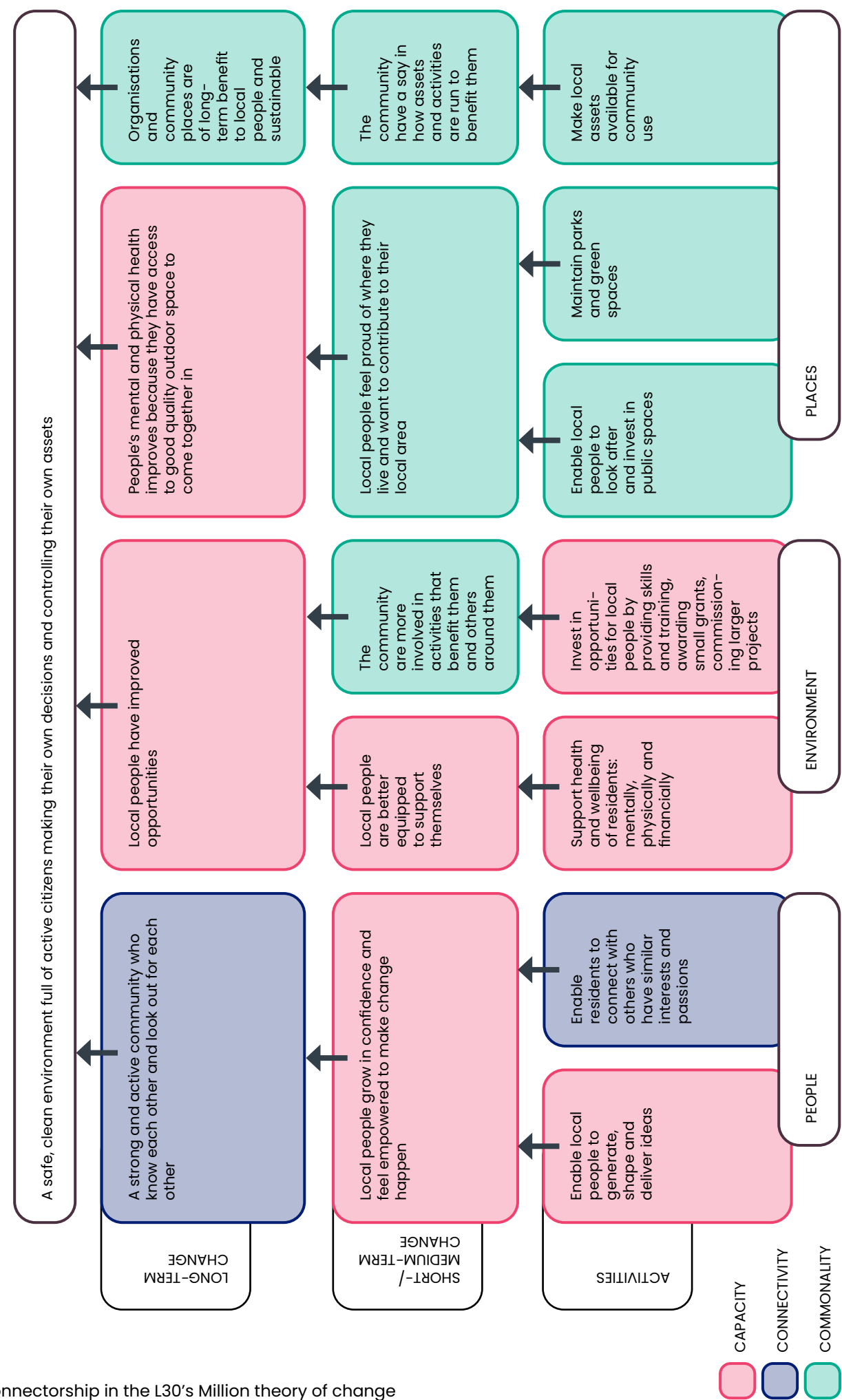


Figure 6: Connectorship in the L30's Million theory of change

# Recommendations

Based on the evidence in this report on L30's Million and its two connector roles – the Community Builder and the Health and Wellbeing Connector – here are tailored recommendations for three key stakeholder groups: local policy makers, national policy makers, and local commissioners.

## Recommendations for local policy makers

### 1. Embed connector roles in local strategies

Integrate connector-type roles into local neighbourhood and health strategies, recognising their value in building capacity, connectivity and commonality. These roles should be seen as essential infrastructure for community wellbeing and resilience.

### 2. Support long-term, flexible funding

Advocate for and allocate funding that allows for long-term, flexible, and non-target-driven community roles. The success of L30's Million Big Local has been underpinned by the ability of connectors to work at the community's pace and respond to emerging needs.

### 3. Strengthen local service integration

Use connectors as a bridge between residents and services. Encourage service providers across policy areas (e.g. housing, health, environment) to collaborate with connectors to improve service accessibility and responsiveness.

## Recommendations for national policy makers

### 4. Recognise ABCD as a model for community power

Promote area-based community development (ABCD) as a scalable, cost-effective model for community empowerment and sustainable neighbourhood renewal. This approach supports the national missions on health, opportunity, energy, economic growth and crime reduction.

### 5. Invest in social infrastructure

Prioritise funding for social infrastructure – community centres, local connectors and participatory events – as foundational to health, wellbeing and active citizenship. Evidence from L30's Million Big Local shows that such investment yields ripple effects across multiple policy areas.

### 6. Incorporate connector roles in national programmes

Embed roles like the Community Builder in national initiatives such as Family Hubs, Integrated Care Systems and Community Safety Partnerships. Ensure these roles are not limited to service delivery but also support relationship-building and community-led action.

## Recommendations for local commissioners

### 7. Commission community-led health and wellbeing roles

Fund roles like the Health and Wellbeing Connector that provide low-barrier, preventative health support embedded in the community. These roles complement formal health services and contribute to reducing demand on the NHS.

### 8. Use connectors to enhance social prescribing

Leverage connectors as trusted intermediaries who can support social prescribing pathways, especially for individuals who may not engage with traditional services. Their local knowledge and relationships can improve uptake and outcomes.

### 9. Measure impact

Adopt qualitative evaluation tools such as ripple effects mapping and appreciative inquiry to capture the broader, non-linear impacts of community-based interventions. This approach reflects the real-world complexity of community change and values lived experience.

# References

1. Local Trust, 'About Big Local', Local Trust, accessed 22 October 2024, <https://localtrust.org.uk/big-local/about-big-local/>.
2. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 'English Indices of Deprivation 2019', GOV.UK, 26 September 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>.
3. Nurture Development, 'Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)', Nurture Development, accessed 4 April 2025, <https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/>.
4. Cormac Russell and John McKnight, The Connected Community: Discovering the Health, Wealth, and Power of Neighborhoods, First (Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Inc., 2022).
5. Scott Chazdon et al., A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2017).
6. ARC West, 'Introduction to Ripple Effects Mapping', NIHR Applied Research Collaboration West, accessed 29 November 2024, <https://arc-w.nihr.ac.uk/training-and-capacity-building/arc-west-courses/introduction-to-ripple-effects-mapping/>.
7. James Nobles et al., 'Ripple Effects Mapping: Capturing the Wider Impacts of Systems Change Efforts in Public Health', BMC Medical Research Methodology 22, no. 1 (2022): 72, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-022-01570-4>.
8. Hallie Preskill and Tessie Tzavaras Catsambas, Reframing Evaluation through Appreciative Inquiry (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2006).
9. Nigel King, 'What Is Template Analysis?', University of Huddersfield, accessed 30 April 2025, <https://research.hud.ac.uk/research-subjects/human-health/template-analysis/what-is-template-analysis/>.
10. Sport England, 'Social Value of Sport and Physical Activity | Sport England', Sport England, accessed 11 February 2025, <https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/research/social-value-sport-and-physical-activity>.
11. Frederico Cardoso and Zoe MacHayle, 'The Economic and Social Costs of Mental Ill Health', Centre for Mental Health, March 2024, <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-mental-ill-health/>.
12. National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 'What Do Voluntary Organisations Contribute to the Economy?', NCVO, 2024, <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/uk-civil-society-almanac-2024/impact/>.
13. John Gordon et al., Libraries for Living, and for Living Better: The Value and Impact of Public Libraries in the East of England (UEA Publishing Project, 2023), <http://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/resource/libraries-living-and-living-better>.
14. Campaign to End Loneliness, 'Facts and Statistics about Loneliness', Campaign to End Loneliness, accessed 4 April 2025, <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/facts-and-statistics/>; Sebastien Peytrignet et al., 'Loneliness Monetisation Report: Analysis for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport', GOV.UK, 17 June 2020, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963077/Loneliness\\_monetisation\\_report\\_V2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963077/Loneliness_monetisation_report_V2.pdf).
15. Health and Social Care Committee, Adult Social Care Reform: The Cost of Inaction, HC 368 (2025), 15, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmhealth/368/report.html>.
16. National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 'How Many People Volunteer?', NCVO, 20 November 2024, <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/uk-civil-society-almanac-2024/volunteering/>.
17. Natural England, Growing Together - How Community-Led Green Infrastructure Delivers Health and Climate Benefits, 21 May 2025, <https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2025/05/21/growing-together-how-community-led-green-infrastructure-delivers-health-and-climate-benefits/>.
18. Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, 'Delivering Neighbourhood Renewal: Proposals for Change', 14 May 2025, <https://www.neighbourhoodscommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Driving-Neighbourhood-Renewal-Proposals-for-Change.pdf>.
19. Local Trust, 'The Big Local Story: A Summary of Our Learning from the Big Local Programme', 2024, <https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/9951-The-Big-Local-story-Summary.pdf>.
20. Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods, 'Think Neighbourhoods: A New Approach to Fixing the Country's Biggest Policy Challenges', 5 March 2025, <https://www.neighbourhoodscommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Think-Neighbourhoods-Report-Web-FINAL-1.pdf>.
21. Local Trust, 'Everybody Needs Good Neighbourhoods 2', Local Trust, July 2025, <https://localtrust.org.uk/insights/research/everybody-needs-good-neighbourhoods-2/>.
22. Ben Lee et al., 'Neighbourhoods in Action: Achieving Big Results by Working Hyper-Locally', National Network for Neighbourhood Improvement, October 2024.
23. Tom Kelsey and Michael Kenney, 'Townscapes: The Value of Social Infrastructure', Bennett Institute for Public Policy, May 2021, <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/publications/social-infrastructure/>.
24. 'Putting Community Agency, Power and Control at the Heart of Our Funding in England | The National Lottery Community Fund', 6 November 2024, <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/news/blog/2024-11-06/putting-community-agency-at-heart-of-our-funding>.
25. National Lottery, 'Our Vision for Funding in England', accessed 17 July 2025, <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/our-vision-for-funding-in-england>.
26. Local Insight, 'Map', 2024, <https://wirral.localinsight.org/#/map>.
27. David Buck et al., 'Communities and Health', The King's Fund, 5 May 2021, <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/long-reads/communities-and-health>.
28. UK Government, 'Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England - Executive Summary', July 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>.
29. Marmot et al., 'The Marmot Review: Fair Society, Healthy Lives', The Marmot Review, 2010, <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>.
30. Marmot et al., 'All Together Fairer: Health Equity and the Social Determinants of Health in Cheshire and Merseyside', Institute of Health Equity, 2022.
31. NHS Confederation, 'Resetting the Relationship', NHS Confederation, Local Trust and PPL, 29 April 2025, <https://www.nhsconfed.org/publications/resetting-relationship-social-model-health-creation>.
32. NHS Confederation, 'The Case for Neighbourhood Health and Care', NHS Confederation, Local Trust and PPL, n.d., accessed 12 May 2025, <https://www.nhsconfed.org/publications/case-neighbourhood-health-and-care-0>.
33. Grace Pollard, 'Community-Powered Health and Care', New Local, 25 June 2024, <https://www.newlocal.org.uk/publications/community-powered-health-practice-review/>.

# Appendix 1:

## Ripple effects mapping sessions – questions and answers

Guided by the facilitator, the ripple effects mapping workshops began with participants talking to each other about their involvement with L30’s Million and the connectors. Responses to question prompts were written on sticky notes and displayed on the wall while the process of creating the maps took place. These are the answers from each group.

|                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 1: What has been a highlight, achievement or success you had based on your involvement? What are you proud of?</b> |
| Funding for building and activities                                                                                         |
| Community engagement and events – e.g. NAC and pumpkin patch                                                                |
| More awareness of the library and the activities                                                                            |
| More people using the library                                                                                               |
| Mindfulness awareness                                                                                                       |
| Contacts in the community                                                                                                   |
| New friendships                                                                                                             |
| Friendship – reconnecting the dots from years ago                                                                           |

|                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 1: What made this achievement possible?</b>                                           |
| The Community Builder and Groundwork – encouragement, interest, network                        |
| Activity planner across all local services                                                     |
| The Community Builder building relationships                                                   |
| The Community Builder making connections                                                       |
| The Community Builder encouraging                                                              |
| The Community Builder enabling                                                                 |
| Funding from L30                                                                               |
| Presentation for funding                                                                       |
| Contact with the Community Builder                                                             |
| The Community Builder and Health and Wellbeing Connector’s beautiful faces and approachability |
| The Community Builder and the L30 Centre promoting in the community                            |

|                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 1: Were there any unexpected or unanticipated impacts that arose as a result of your involvement?</b> |
| Open for more people                                                                                           |
| Greater use of facilities                                                                                      |
| Connections broadening – so services increasing                                                                |
| Contacts with other people and venues                                                                          |
| New friendships                                                                                                |
| Confidence to make changes                                                                                     |
| Increased awareness of other local services and meeting lots of people from the community                      |
| Having 75 kids show up for a craft session!!! (At the same time)                                               |
| Friendship                                                                                                     |
| Petunia – our scarecrow in different guises – bringing a smile to the community                                |
| Spreading artwork in different areas – exhibitions                                                             |

|                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 1: What connections with others, new and/or deepened have you made as a result of your involvement?</b> |
| Deeper understanding of the community of Netherton                                                               |
| New organisations and venues, wider community                                                                    |
| Meeting new people, learning new things                                                                          |
| Friendship                                                                                                       |
| Meeting the Community Builder and having her support has been a huge help at the library                         |
| Taking art into the community                                                                                    |
| Crafty Pots coming to us                                                                                         |
| Care packages, children’s art, James Horrigan                                                                    |
| Social media usage increased                                                                                     |
| 100 morris dancers using premises regularly                                                                      |
| More use of building for concerts, exhibitions and community events                                              |
| More folk dropping in                                                                                            |
| Zero fashion                                                                                                     |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 2: What has been a highlight, achievement or success you had based on your involvement? What are you proud of?</b>                                                                                                                |
| Being able to become more confident in my own fitness following a back injury – the Health and Wellbeing Connector made me believe in myself                                                                                               |
| Being able to maintain my fitness in a friendly encouraging environment                                                                                                                                                                    |
| I am proud of being able to contribute to the community at Christmas/Easter                                                                                                                                                                |
| Reconnecting with people                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Becoming more involved with our community                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Proud of being involved with our community                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Being part of a close family and community                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Making new friends                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Getting out of the house                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Kids getting involved with community                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Everyone friendly and happy to help                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Recovering from a C2 fracture after car crash, the Health and Wellbeing Connector kept in touch with me and coaxed me to go back to classes, keeping me grounded until my confidence came back to drive, exercise more and meet new people |
| Being part of a community                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| I can now hula hoop                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| I am proud of dressing up as a bunny at Easter and giving out Easter eggs to the children                                                                                                                                                  |
| I am fitter and have lost weight                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| I am more confident and at ease with myself                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 2: What made this achievement possible?</b>                                                                        |
| The Health and Wellbeing Connector made me feel a part of the community                                                     |
| The other ladies were so welcoming, this made me want to give back to the community                                         |
| The friendliness of all at the Centre                                                                                       |
| Turning up regularly for ourselves                                                                                          |
| Finding time to put ourselves first                                                                                         |
| The Health and Wellbeing Connector’s encouragement to help me feel included in the community and comfortable in the classes |
| Living locally                                                                                                              |
| Affordable                                                                                                                  |
| Being involved in a caring community and encouraged to participate in activities beside the gym                             |
| Always feel welcome                                                                                                         |
| Aware of everyone’s disabilities/kids                                                                                       |
| We all benefit as a family                                                                                                  |
| Access to the Centre                                                                                                        |

|                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 2: Were there any unexpected or unanticipated impacts that arose as a result of your involvement?</b>                                                         |
| Becoming a valuable contributor toward families at the L30 by donating pyjamas at Christmas and Easter eggs at Easter. All donated by my workplace, family and friends |
| Meeting old friends and making new ones                                                                                                                                |
| Having purpose                                                                                                                                                         |
| Support                                                                                                                                                                |
| Confidence and optimism                                                                                                                                                |
| Making new friends in the classes I attend                                                                                                                             |
| Through attending classes and courses after a 2-year break, having confidence to find work                                                                             |
| Through another class member gained employment                                                                                                                         |
| Just how lovely everyone was, it made me want to get involved, really has helped me with my mental health                                                              |
| Learnt that opportunities to take my grandchildren out so that they interact with the L30 children and mingle                                                          |
| Fundays for families                                                                                                                                                   |
| Advice from CAB in confidence when required                                                                                                                            |
| Made new friends/kids                                                                                                                                                  |
| Den building                                                                                                                                                           |
| I don’t feel invisible anymore                                                                                                                                         |

|                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 2: What connections with others, new and/or deepened have you made as a result of your involvement?</b> |
| Feel appreciated at the Centre for the donations I make                                                          |
| Meeting different people who you feel comfortable with                                                           |
| Meeting different people which opens doors to other things                                                       |
| More energy, focus, self-care and awareness                                                                      |
| Made new friends                                                                                                 |
| Happier, more confidence, become more optimistic                                                                 |
| Enabled me to make new friends and pinch ideas for fundraising                                                   |
| More confidence                                                                                                  |
| More confident                                                                                                   |
| More relaxed                                                                                                     |
| New friends                                                                                                      |
| More boundaries                                                                                                  |
| Holiday – myself with kids                                                                                       |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 3: What has been a highlight, achievement or success you had based on your involvement? What are you proud of?</b>                                                                                                          |
| Post box/letterbox to heaven                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Visit L30 Community Centre for cookery/slow cooker classes                                                                                                                                                                           |
| The amount of people it has helped/supported                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Community litter pick                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Making me feel proud i.e. what else can I do for my community                                                                                                                                                                        |
| As a deaf person it was a huge step coming to the L30 fitness and litter picking sessions, and it has taken me out of my comfort zone and enabled me to make friends                                                                 |
| Volunteering at Fun4Kidz, L30 Centre                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Community participation                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Group development                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Covid (street work)                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Community participation i.e. taking part in a residents association group looking after estate and residents. The group was officially recognised by the Council, Police and One Vision Housing. I was very proud to be a part of it |
| Keep fit – Health and Wellbeing Connector – supported through community, “don’t know where I’d be without it”                                                                                                                        |
| Netherton community – local members supported and encouraged                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Working together with the Community Builder                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Support for finding and obtaining funding for major developments to community facilities                                                                                                                                             |

|                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 3: What made this achievement possible?</b>                                                                                                |
| Linking in with the Community Builder at L30’s Million                                                                                              |
| Positive relationship between myself and the Community Builder and community                                                                        |
| The Health and Wellbeing Connector and her fitness classes has made it possible for me. Going to them has brought my confidence on leaps and bounds |
| What made it possible was the enthusiastic participation of residents’ meetings where held at L30 Community Centre                                  |
| Funding!                                                                                                                                            |
| Use of community space                                                                                                                              |
| Making friends and being around positive like-minded people                                                                                         |
| Positive relationships, supportive community, connected community                                                                                   |
| Community, residents                                                                                                                                |
| L30 Community Centre                                                                                                                                |
| Local interests                                                                                                                                     |

|                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 3: Were there any unexpected or unanticipated impacts that arose as a result of your involvement?</b>                |
| Sefton Council objecting                                                                                                      |
| Media attention and social media – photos, community conversations                                                            |
| Unexpected popularity of letterbox to heaven                                                                                  |
| I enjoy it so much and made more friends                                                                                      |
| Many good debates                                                                                                             |
| The enjoyment. I could not in a million years ever have imagined that I would enjoy litter picking. The friendship is amazing |
| The residents’ group got an excellent report from Council, Police and all who had connections with the group                  |

|                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GROUP 3: What connections with others, new and/or deepened have you made as a result of your involvement?</b> |
| Deepened connection with the Community Builder                                                                   |
| Get to know wider community                                                                                      |
| I now watch Walkabout Wednesday videos to find out what’s going on                                               |
| Support local people to use the letterbox, write letters etc.                                                    |
| Highlighted the community garden at the back of the funeral director’s                                           |
| Tonight linked in with Health and Wellbeing Connector                                                            |



# About the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place

The Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place is an interdisciplinary public policy research institute which brings together academic expertise from across the University of Liverpool with policy-makers and practitioners to support the development of sustainable and inclusive cities and city regions.

For more information on the work carried out by the Heseltine Institute with partners in Liverpool City Region, please visit:  
[www.liverpool.ac.uk/heseltine-institute](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/heseltine-institute)

Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place  
University of Liverpool  
1-7 Abercromby Square  
Liverpool  
L69 7WY

Copies of this report are available at:  
[www.liverpool.ac.uk/heseltine-institute](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/heseltine-institute)