

Sompting Big Local

2012 – 2025

THE SOMPTING STORY MADE BY MANY

Telling the Story of 13 Years of Doing Things Differently

Prepared By
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Ode to Sompting Residents

**Residents of the Village of Sompting,
Did you know that things are changing?
Do you dare to dream?
Have you heard; have you seen?
Big Locals' come to us,
Get on board, don't miss this bus!
Our Village, split by roads,
Where's our future – who really knows?
Now's the time to shout out loud,
Time to stand out from the crowd.
It's about how Sompting can be better,
Tell us please, by phone, email or letter.**

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SUMMARY

A Community-Led Journey: 2012–2025

Sompting Big Local has been a bold, resident-led adventure shaped by one core belief: **when local people lead, lasting change happens.**

Over 13 years, with £1.2 million in funding from the Big Local programme, we empowered residents to shape the future of their village through trust, conversation, and collective action. This report celebrates the impact, learning, and legacy of that journey.



Funding and reach

- **£1.2 million** invested in Sompting through the Big Local Programme
- **70+ Grassroot projects** supported through the Action Fund with **£150,000+** in grants
- **£250,000** invested in local green spaces, generating over **£1.75million** in wellbeing value

A Community-Led Journey: 2012–2025 outcomes and impact



- The **Sompting Big Local Hub** welcomed over **25 local groups**, supporting everything from craft clubs to well being drop-ins
- Weekly cafes, workshops and support groups helped reduce loneliness and boost confidence



- Our **minibus** enabled **7543 passenger journeys** across **690 trips**, improving access and reducing isolation.
- Social Value of **£448,179**



- **20+ free community events**, including circus workshops, community picnics, and pantomime trips
- **86% of attendees** at the 2024 Summer event tried something new



- Projects like **Mummy Shock**, **Sompting Singalong** and **warm bag** distribution supported residents through hardship, loneliness. and recovery
- Investment in mental health services and social prescribing laid a foundation for wellbeing



- **40+ young people** regularly attended youth sessions like the drop
- Partnerships with youth organisations which provided **life-saving mental health interventions**
- **Knife crime workshops** and creative experience

ABOUT SOMPTING BIG LOCAL

2012–2025 | A Community-Led Journey

Sompting Big Local was born from a bold idea: that lasting change happens when local people are in the lead.

In 2012, Sompting was chosen as one of 150 areas across England to receive £1 million of funding from the Big Local programme, run by Local Trust. The aim was simple but powerful, to give local residents the opportunity, resources, and decision-making power to improve their area in ways that mattered most to them.

This wasn't about parachuting in solutions. It was about putting trust and funding into the hands of the people who know Sompting best: its residents. For too long, local voices had been overlooked. Big Local gave residents a seat at the table, not because they suddenly became "capable," because they always were. They just hadn't been given the invitation.

As one partnership member put it:

"Having funds already in place yet sourcing ideas and projects from the community to spend it was a new experience... but with perseverance and reaching out, we saw confidence and a sense of being listened to grow."

A Community Built on Connection

From minibus outings to food support, singing groups to youth mentoring, creative arts to community picnics, everything Sompting Big Local delivered started with a conversation. Residents shared what they loved, what was missing, and what could be better. And little by little, project by project, the community shaped its own future.

We invested in:

- **Spaces** where people could meet, create, and feel safe
- **Events** that brought joy, pride, and togetherness
- **Support** for wellbeing, mental health, and resilience
- **Opportunities** for young people to grow, lead, and be heard
- **Local ideas**, backing over 70 grassroots projects through the Action Fund

It wasn't always easy. Apathy, misunderstanding about what we could fund, and difficulties working with local authorities brought real challenges. But it was through community festivals, giant snow globes, singing groups, youth trips, and open dialogue that trust began to grow. The laughter of children bouncing in fake snow, or families experiencing live theatre for the first time, those were the real outcomes. Joy, connection, pride.

A Lasting Legacy

As our journey comes to a close in 2025, the impact of Sompting Big Local continues to ripple outwards, in friendships formed, skills learned, confidence gained, and a stronger sense of community pride.

This report is a celebration of everything that's been achieved, not just by the partnership, but by everyone who gave their time, voice, and heart to make Sompting a better place.

Thank you for walking this journey with us.

SOMPTING BIG LOCAL HUB

Building Connection, Creativity and Confidence

The Sompting Big Local Hub was created to offer a physical presence for the Big Local partnership, ensuring residents had an accessible, friendly space to meet, connect and engage. It quickly became a hub of community activity, delivering wide-reaching impact across wellbeing, skills, inclusion and community cohesion.

Powered by People

Staffed initially three days a week by a Big Local worker and volunteers, the Sompting Big Local Hub operated on trust, kindness and consistency. It created a safe and familiar space for all. It also played a crucial role in raising awareness of Sompting Big Local, giving residents a central place to learn about the project, share ideas, and get involved in local initiatives.



Strengthening Social Connection and Reducing Isolation

The Sompting Big Local Hub offered a place for residents to drop in, meet others and access support from local organisations. Regulars reported an increased sense of connection, belonging and safety, with the Sompting Big Local Hub offering:

- A space to meet and talk to local PCSOs about policing concerns
- Drop-ins for energy saving advice and financial support
- A place to discover more about the Big Local project and share local issues

Groups using the space, including Connect Café and the food bank, helped reduce loneliness and supported those going through tough times; with many visitors reporting improved mood, confidence and emotional wellbeing.



Improving Wellbeing Through Creativity

The Sompting Big Local Hub became a base for projects that nurtured creativity and brought people together:

- **Krafty Kids** offered arts and crafts sessions for children and their families, encouraging creativity and playful learning.
- **Witnits** brought older residents together through knitting, creating a relaxed and sociable space for conversation and connection.
- **Strange Creature Petshop**, part of the 2014 Adur Festival, transformed the Sompting Big Local Hub into a creative workshop where families made recycled “strange creatures” together. The project was crowdfunded, with the Sompting Big Local Hub given as match funding, a perfect example of community collaboration and creative inclusion.



— “ —

Thank you for letting me trash your shop!! make a noise with loads of kids and making me feel so welcome.

This Project would not of happen without your funding and support and I'm extremely grateful.

— ” —



Supporting Wellbeing and Mental Health

The Sompting Big Local Hub was also used as a space for health and wellbeing initiatives, providing a supportive environment for residents to improve their physical and mental health. Regular sessions and support groups included:

- **Mindfulness sessions** to help reduce stress and improve overall wellbeing
- **Mental health and wellbeing support** offering a safe space for residents to talk and seek guidance
- **Diabetes and Epilepsy support groups**, ensuring individuals had access to advice, peer support, and community care

Supporting Digital Inclusion and Lifelong Learning

Through a partnership with Adur and Worthing Council, the Sompting Big Local Hub became home to IT Junction, a twice-weekly digital access point that:

- Offered free computer and internet access
- Helped residents improve digital confidence
- Tackled digital exclusion, especially for older residents and job seekers



Yesterday, having a computer program problem, I nipped into the IT Junction office where I was warmly welcome by your resident electronics experts Harry and John.

The problem was resolved by Harry who then explained exactly where I was going in layman's terms which I actually understand. Even more importantly it was a free service. I was extremely grateful for all the help and advice received.



A Hub of friendship, activity and good free coffee!

Don't be alone, come and connect with others from your community.

Tuesdays 10am till 2pm

Sompting Big Local Hub, Cokeham Road, Sompting.

For more info contact: Allie Moore: 07795483277
www.s-c-c.org

A Lasting Legacy

While the Hub has now closed, its legacy continues in the friendships formed, the projects it launched, and the connections it sparked across Sompting. It proved that a small community space—used well, can have a lasting impact on people's lives and neighbourhood spirit.

The Sompting Big Local Hub wasn't just a place, it was a catalyst for change.

“

Having Connect has helped me feel a part of something.

I've had a really hard life, where I haven't felt accepted but that's never been the case with Connect

”

Connect Café: Welcoming, Warm and Uplifting

Run weekly by Sompting Community Church, the Connect Café was one of the most popular regular uses of the Sompting Big Local Hub. While people came for coffee, many stayed for the warmth of conversation and support. The café's close link to the local food bank meant those facing hardship didn't just leave with essentials, they left feeling cared for and valued. Many reported feeling “uplifted” by the experience.

The café has since grown and moved to a larger venue, but its roots were planted firmly at the Hub.



25+

Clubs, groups and organisations used the Sompting Big Local hub

Including:

- Creative skills
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Support groups
- Information Sessions

In Sompting's heart, a hub did stand,
A place where dreams and hopes were planned.
With open doors and welcoming grace,
It served as a warm and vibrant space.

A community's heartbeat, strong and true,
Where neighbours gathered, old and new.
A hub of laughter, learning, and care,
A place where friendships found their air.

But now the time has come to say goodbye,
As the hub's doors close with a sigh.
Though tears may fall, and hearts may ache,
The memories we made, we'll never forsake.

For in the time we spent together here,
We built a bond, forever dear.
The lessons learned, the stories shared,
Are treasures that we'll always bear.

Though the hub may close, its spirit will live on,
In the hearts of Sompting, a love that's strong.
We'll carry its legacy, bright and tall,
As we continue to stand, united for all.

So let us celebrate the times we've had,
The joy, the love, the laughter so glad.
Though the hub may close, it's not the end,
For Sompting's community, forever, we'll defend.

As we bid farewell to this cherished space,
Let's remember the smiles on each face.
And know that Sompting's spirit will remain,
In the hearts of all who share its name.

SOMPTING BIG LOCAL MINIBUS

Sompting Big Local Minibus: Enhancing Community Connections and Wellbeing

Until December 2024, the Sompting Big Local minibus service played a vital role in improving mobility, strengthening social connections, and enhancing the wellbeing of our community. Through regular outings and group trips, residents enjoyed greater access to leisure activities, community events, and essential services.

Strengthening Social Connections



Users of the minibus service reported a significant improvement in their social lives. Through shared journeys, they built friendships, strengthened neighbourhood bonds, and enjoyed a greater sense of belonging. The service helped residents to:

- Participate in weekly social outings
- Attend community events and activities
- Foster new friendships through shared travel experiences

Boosting Health and Wellbeing

The impact of the minibus service extended beyond social connection; it also contributed to improved health and wellbeing. By enabling access to leisure centres, outdoor spaces, and group activities, residents benefited from:

- Enhanced mental health and confidence
- Increased physical activity
- A greater sense of independence and mobility



A Service That Made a Difference

For many, the Sompting Big Local minibus was more than just a way to get around—it was a lifeline to a more active, connected, and fulfilling life. Whether it was a trip to the seaside, a community event, or a garden centre, the minibus opened doors that might otherwise have stayed closed.

Over **690 journeys** and **7,543 passenger trips** were made possible, each one helping to reduce isolation, support independence, and bring neighbours together. When we looked at the true impact, including the incredible contribution of volunteer time, the total estimated social value of the minibus reached **£448,179**.

Although the service ended in December 2024, its legacy continues to be felt across Sompting. It brought people together, lifted spirits, and proved what's possible when community leads the way.

Thank you to every passenger, volunteer, and partner who helped make this journey matter.

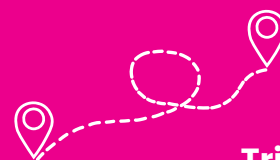
“

Value for money, which has hugely helped us to access opportunities for our school children. Provision of the driver saved a lot of organisational difficulties, too, and liaison was super!

”

Legacy: A Continued Community Asset

While Sompting Big Local is no longer operating the minibus, its legacy continues. The vehicle has been handed over to The Sid Youth, ensuring it remains available for community group use. This means local organisations and residents will still benefit from accessible transport, supporting social connections and community activities for years to come.



690

Trips since 2017



7543

Passengers



£448,170

**Social Wellbeing
Value**

EVENTS

Building Community Through Shared Experiences

From the very beginning, Sompting Big Local saw events as more than just gatherings—they were a way to connect, to listen, and to build community from the ground up.



Starting With Conversations: Using Events to Listen and Learn

In 2013, as the partnership developed its first community plan, it used existing local events to speak directly with residents, learning what mattered most to them and what they wanted to see in Sompting. That listening turned into action.

In April 2014, the partnership hosted its first event at Halewick Park over Easter. Soon after came the first large-scale event, Mayday at the Marquis Pub. It raised funds for St Mary's Church and gave Adur District Council a chance to consult with residents on park improvements. From the start, these events had purpose.



Making Magic Moments: Events That Made a Difference

From the outset, the partnership also wanted events to bring **new experiences** to Sompting, opportunities residents might not otherwise encounter locally. Over the years, Sompting Big Local ran around **20 events**, some in partnership with residents and The Sid Youth. Each one was designed to bring people together, create joy, and offer new experiences:

- **Circus skills workshops** weren't just fun, they helped build hand-eye coordination, persistence, and confidence.
- **Crafting and community picnics** gave neighbours a chance to connect and create lasting memories.
- In December 2019, Sompting Big Local took 103 residents to a subsidised **pantomime trip**, making a magical experience affordable for families who might not otherwise have had the chance.

“

It was a great event! We loved the circus, activ8, the smoothie bikes and Punch and Judy. The climbing wall was also a massive hit. What a great free community event. Thank you! Thank you to all the organisers and contributors!

”

“

You have made our Christmas start on a very high note. With out you we wouldn't of been able to go to see the panto, oh no we wouldn't, but oh yes we did so thank you all that made this night happen xxx

”



Staying Connected During Covid

When the pandemic hit in 2020, everything changed, but connection didn't stop. A tea party to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain was cancelled, but in its place, Sompting Big Local got creative.

Hugs with Mugs, launched in May 2020, brought residents, and even former residents, together online for weekly chats and check-ins. **Zoom bingo** became a regular fixture, with no prizes, just plenty of laughs.

A special Christmas Day partnership with Roseworth Big Local brought two communities together across the country during a time of isolation.



From Magic to Stories: Keeping Kids Engaged

To bring smiles to young faces, Sompting Big Local teamed up with a magician who shared fun tricks through a Facebook post, giving children (and parents) something light-hearted to try at home. It was simple fun with a powerful effect, lifting spirits.

They also worked with children's authors Saviour Pirotta and John Dougherty. Saviour led small workshops helping 7-9-year-olds write their own stories, while both authors hosted live Facebook sessions designed to support learning and imagination at home.

“

....my kids and I have become massive fans of our local magician David Croucher who has been posting 'magic monday' videos from his home. Funny guy, great magic shows, and magic lessons.... I can already make a pencil disappear into thin air, and bend a spoon making it instantly straight again!! 😊😊

”

Partnering for Bigger Impact

A three-year collaboration with The Sid Youth saw annual summer events grow in size and reach. The Sid Youth led the delivery, with Sompting Big Local offering funding and support.

This partnership brought a wider range activities and services, including:

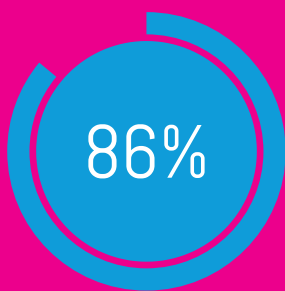
- Sussex Police engagement
- Bears Basketball sessions
- WBC carers boxing demos



In the final year of the partnership, additional support organisations also attended, enriching the experience for all involved. Notably, Billy and Beyond and Age UK Brighton, Hove and West Sussex provided valuable resources and support for both young people and older residents.

The variety of opportunities offered made a clear impact. Whether it was learning a new skill, connecting with a service for the first time, or joining an activity they'd never considered before, the events opened doors for personal growth and community engagement.

Together, these organisations gave Sompting residents fun, free, and inclusive events to enjoy—and reasons to be proud of their community.



Attendees tried
something new at the
2024 Summer event





The Chronicles of Atom and Luna – A Magical Farewell Event

A Special Afternoon for Sompting

On Saturday 12th October 2024, Sompting Big Local hosted The Chronicles of Atom and Luna, a magical, family-friendly theatre show that brought the community together for one final shared experience as part of our 12-year journey.

Held in the afternoon at the Sir Robert Woodard Academy, this spectacular performance marked the last public event funded by Sompting Big Local, and it couldn't have been more fitting. The show, produced by Funnelwick Limb and toured in partnership with Applause Rural



Touring, told the story of twins Atom and Luna on a quest through an enchanted forest. It was full of music, puppetry, and poetic storytelling, a modern fairytale that captured imaginations young and old.



Celebrating Local Access to the Arts

Bringing The Chronicles of Atom and Luna to Sompting was part of our ongoing commitment to making the arts accessible to everyone in our community. Many families who attended told us it was the first time they had experienced live theatre of this kind – right on their doorstep.



The Chronicles of Atom and Luna – A Magical Farewell Event



Feedback on the day was overwhelmingly positive:

"My daughter and I came this afternoon and loved it! Thank you so much to everyone involved. It was a magical time!"

"It was a great show. Well done all and thank you for putting it on! Nice to see SRWA's theatre space too."

At the end of the performance, audience members were invited to meet the cast and get up close to the beautifully crafted puppets, a highlight for many children (and adults!). This personal interaction helped bring the story to life even further and added a special sense of connection and magic to the experience.

With around 75 people in attendance, it was a joyful and fitting celebration of everything Sompting Big Local has aimed to achieve: connection, creativity, and community pride.



A Fond Farewell

This event wasn't just about entertainment – it was a celebration of everything Sompting Big Local stands for: supporting families, creating shared memories, and bringing people together. As our final public event, The Chronicles of Atom and Luna was a joyful and heartfelt way to mark the end of our journey, leaving a lasting impression on all who came.

SOMPTING SINGALONG

Bringing Joy, Connection, and Wellbeing Through Music

The Sompting Singalong was launched in late 2021 as a response to the social isolation and challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. It was made possible when two passionate residents, Roger and Sheila, stepped forward to lead a singing group for the community. Since then, the Singalong became a cherished space for joy, connection, and wellbeing until its conclusion.

The Benefits of Singing Together

The Singalong provided numerous benefits to those who attended, improving their physical, mental, and social wellbeing:

Physical Benefits: Enhancing lung function, improving posture, and promoting overall respiratory health.

Mental Benefits: Reducing stress, lifting mood, and alleviating anxiety through the power of music.

Social Benefits: Combating loneliness, fostering friendships, and strengthening community bonds.

Pure Enjoyment: Above all, participants found joy in singing together, creating a positive and uplifting experience each week.



“

I've usually had stressful days during the week, but when I come out of a singing group, I find all the pressures have gone, all the stress has gone out the window...
I feel relaxed and stress free

”

A Community-Led Success

The Singalong took place weekly at St. Peter's Church Hall, with up to 16 people in attendance. Roger and Sheila dedicated an incredible 720+ hours to running the group, generating significant economic and social value:

- The estimated economic and social value of their contributions amounted to **£38,460**.
- The social value of reducing loneliness within the group was estimated at **£188,325**.
- The social value of fostering a sense of belonging among members was estimated at **£137,000**.

A Lasting Impact

Although the Sompting Singalong is no longer running, its impact remains. For many, it was more than just a weekly event, it became a source of comfort, friendship, and emotional wellbeing. The dedication of Roger and Sheila, along with the enthusiasm of all who attended, ensured that the Sompting Singalong was a heartwarming success.

The legacy of this initiative demonstrates the power of community-driven activities to transform lives. Through the simple act of singing together, residents found relief from stress, strengthened connections, and built a happier, healthier community.



720+

*Hours of
Volunteer
time*



1415

Engagements



£363,785

*Social and economic
impact*

PARKS

Investing in Green Spaces for Health, Play and Community

Since 2012, Sompting Big Local has contributed **£250,000** toward the improvement of parks and open spaces across Sompting, transforming them into places of play, relaxation, and connection for all ages.

A Lasting Investment in Play and Wellbeing

Sompting Big Local allocated **£90,000** specifically to developing playparks at **Sompting, Hamble, and Croshaw recreation grounds**. This brought safer, more engaging play opportunities to local families. Based on the Making Parks Count study, which estimates £7 of wellbeing and environmental value for every £1 spent on parks, Sompting Big Local's overall contribution has delivered an estimated **£1.75 million** in community benefit.



Parks with Purpose: Designed by and for Residents



Listening to the voices of residents, Sompting Big Local funded the installation of **child and parent swings** in all local parks, allowing families to play together in a more interactive and connected way.

Three **outdoor table tennis tables** were also installed, creating opportunities for people of all ages to try something new and enjoy sport informally in their local space.

To encourage social connection, Sompting Big Local also added **benches and picnic tables**, making parks more welcoming places to stop, chat, and spend time together.

Powered by Community: Supporting Local Volunteers

Sompting Big Local recognised the passion of local residents who wanted to take an active role in caring for parks. With the support of groups like the Friends of Hamble Park, we created meaningful opportunities for volunteers to get involved. From planting events to celebrations like the King's Coronation, residents came together to make a difference.

The Sompting Big Local Action Fund enabled volunteers to purchase tools to support this work, turning ideas into action and giving people ownership over their shared spaces.



Greener Spaces for Future Generations



Part of the £250,000 investment also went toward increasing biodiversity at Sompting Recreation Ground. A bund was created to prevent illegal encampments and protect the space. Wildflowers were sown and a variety of trees planted, bringing colour, wildlife, and in time, much-needed shade during warmer seasons.

Improving Facilities for Everyone: Redeveloping the Toilets at Sompting Recreation Ground

In addition to enhancing play spaces, Sompting Big Local also supported the redevelopment of the public toilets at Sompting Recreation Ground. These vital upgrades focused on improving accessibility and cleanliness, making the space more inclusive and comfortable for all visitors, especially families, older adults, and people with additional needs.





Sompting Recreation Ground Toilets

At Sompting Big Local, we believe in removing barriers that prevent people from fully enjoying their community, and one of those barriers has been surprisingly simple: access to a toilet.

For many years, the public toilets at Sompting Recreation Ground were the only publicly available toilets in the village. But due to persistent vandalism and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, they were closed and that closure affected a lot of people.

Through conversations, surveys and everyday chats at community events, we heard time and again how important this facility was, especially for older residents,



families with young children, and those with health conditions who need quick access to a toilet when out and about. In fact, back in a 2017 survey by the Parish Council, a huge 91% of local people said they didn't feel they had access to clean public toilets.

We saw this as a clear call to action.

Taking the Lead

Sompting Big Local stepped in to explore a better future for this essential space. We began researching modern, vandal-resistant solutions and shared ideas with the community and local partners. That included speaking to suppliers, investigating modular toilet options, and working closely with Adur District Council and Sompting Parish Council.



Sompting Recreation Ground Toilets

In March 2024, we funded the installation of a brand new modular toilet unit at a cost of £150,000—a significant investment in the future of our village. The new two-pod block includes:

- A brick exterior to blend into the surroundings
- One pod with full disabled access, and another that's gender-neutral and family-friendly
- Stainless steel fittings and hands-free wash stations
- A quick-install design—installed in just a few days and fully fitted out in weeks

While this was a huge step forward, the challenges didn't stop there. Over the following year, the toilets were opened and closed multiple times due to further incidents of vandalism. But instead of stepping back, Sompting Big Local continued working closely with the supplier and Sompting Parish Council to identify ways to strengthen the facility.

Upgrades were made to specific fixtures to increase the toilet block's overall durability and resilience, helping reduce the risk of future damage.

Sompting Parish Council has now taken on responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the facility—ensuring it can remain open and usable for the whole community.

Because everyone deserves to feel confident enjoying their local park and sometimes, that starts with knowing there's a toilet nearby.

ACTION FUND

Backing Local Ideas, Fueling Community Action

The Sompting Big Local Action Fund was created with one goal in mind: to put power and funding into the hands of local people with great ideas. Whether it's a small event that brings neighbours together, a group tackling loneliness, or a grassroots project improving green spaces, this fund helped make it happen.

Since launching, the Action Fund has supported a wide range of community-led projects, each one shaped by the people who know Sompting best, **its residents**. These are not one-size-fits-all solutions. They're personal, local, and rooted in what matters most to the community.



Appear on the Pier

With support from the Action Fund, Sompting Village Primary School took part in Appear on the Pier, a creative community arts project run by local artists Nadia and Nussy from Creative Waves. Twelve Year 5 and 6 students worked together in a school-based workshop to produce artwork that's now printed on vinyl and proudly displayed on Worthing Pier for the next two years. The project didn't stop there, students also attended the official art launch and joined a follow-up "Art in Motion" workshop with the original animator. For these children, the project boosted creativity, confidence, and community pride, and gave them a chance to see their work showcased in a public space.





Mummy Shock

One of the projects supported by the Action Fund is Mummy Shock, a gentle, supportive 10-week course for new mums, held at Sompting Village Hall. Designed and delivered by local women with lived experience and training, the sessions created a warm, safe space for mothers to share, reflect, and connect.

Fifteen mums and their babies took part. For many, it was a lifeline. One participant described it as *"the antidote to the isolation I felt at baby classes, where putting on a brave face felt like the only option."* The facilitators—Ana, Melissa, and Rachael—were praised not only for their empathy and honesty, but also for creating an environment where difficult emotions could be expressed without fear of judgment.

Survey feedback showed that:

- **100%** of participants said the course **fulfilled their expectations**.
- **91%** said they **benefited a lot**, and **73% felt significantly less lonely** and more socially connected.
- **64%** said their **confidence as a mum had improved** a lot.

Every single mum said they would recommend Mummy Shock to others. Beyond the numbers, the stories say it all. One mum shared:

"When I started Mummy Shock, I was in a really tough place... I felt like I had absolutely lost the plot. After the first session I walked away feeling so much less alone. Mummy Shock helped me put all those broken pieces back together again."

Another added:

"This course has been a godsend. I've suffered with social anxiety my whole life, but I found the confidence to speak up, to connect, and to feel like I'm not out there on my own."

With the support of the Sompting Big Local Action Fund, Mummy Shock offered not just emotional support, but a lasting sense of community during one of the most vulnerable times in a parent's life.



Over the Moon on Sompting Rec

With support from the Sompting Big Local Action Fund, Over the Moon Shoreham C.I.C. delivered a creative outdoor session designed especially for local children and their families. Taking place on Sompting Recreation Ground, the project offered a playful mix of arts, crafts, and storytelling for children aged 3 to 10, accompanied by parents and carers.

The event provided a much-needed opportunity for families to spend quality time together outdoors, get creative, and connect with others in their community. Children were able to freely explore their imaginations, while adults appreciated the relaxed, welcoming atmosphere.

In total, 25 people attended, with **20 Sompting residents** taking part. Feedback suggested that families valued having something fun, free, and inclusive to do locally, and the organisers noted the strong sense of community that emerged throughout the session.

Small grants like this one help make meaningful experiences like these possible, encouraging creativity, strengthening local bonds, and bringing people together in shared spaces.





Protecting the Sompting War Memorial.

With funding from the Sompting Big Local Action Fund, St. Mary the Virgin Church carried out essential work to preserve an important piece of the village's heritage, the Sompting War Memorial.

This much-loved landmark holds deep significance for the local community, serving as a space for remembrance and reflection, particularly during annual services like Remembrance Sunday. Over time, natural wear and weathering had begun to affect its condition. With the support of a £2,003 grant, the church was able to carry out necessary conservation work to ensure the memorial remains safe, stable, and accessible for future generations.

In total, around 1,000 people engage with the site annually, with 25 Sompting residents attending on average during regular moments of remembrance or community use.

This project wasn't about starting something new, it was about protecting something meaningful, a physical reminder of the lives lost to war, and ensuring it continues to have a respected place in the heart of the community.



The Action Fund wasn't just about financial support—it's about giving people the confidence, tools, and backing to create change where they live. It's a celebration of what's possible when local voices are heard and supported. It's community empowerment in action.

RECOVERY, WELLBEING & RESILIENCE

Sompting Big Local has always been about helping people live better, physically, emotionally, and socially. Our work is rooted in the belief that a strong, connected community builds confidence, resilience, and hope. From the very beginning, we've focused on listening to residents and responding in ways that are thoughtful, practical, and locally led.

A Strong Start: Investing in Social Prescribing

One of our first major projects was to part-fund a Social Prescriber to serve Sompting and Lancing. Working in partnership with Adur & Worthing Councils, this helped launch the Going Local service.

Top referral reasons included:

- Lifestyle factors
- Housing
- Money, debt, and benefits
- Social isolation

This early investment in person-centred, joined-up support laid the foundation for our long-term commitment to health and wellbeing.

Christmas Cheer with Piglet's Pantry

During a winter lockdown, many residents faced Christmas alone. We teamed up with Piglet's Pantry to deliver festive afternoon teas to those most in need of a boost.

- **50 residents** received homemade teas
- Nominated by neighbours, a gesture of local care and connection

Data from April 2019 to January 2020



154
Referrals



32
Sompting
Residents



Jubilee Street Party Boxes

To help neighbours celebrate the Queen's Jubilee, we provided **20 Street Party Boxes** with everything needed for a cheerful local gathering:

- Bunting, flags, plates, and cups
- Encouraged dozens of doorstep and garden parties
- Reconnected people after long periods of separation



Warm Bags for Winter Support

In response to the cost of living crisis, we created **100 Warm Bags** for residents experiencing fuel stress or isolation.

Working with local partners and donors, the bags included:

- Thermal socks, blankets, thermal mugs
- Tea, coffee, biscuits, and infra-red thermometers

This project offered both practical warmth and a clear message: *you are not alone.*



FIRST AID

Community Safety Boost: Defibs and First Aid for All

We funded the installation of **three defibrillators** in key spots across Sompting to help make the village a safer place for everyone. These life-saving machines are easy to access and mean help is never far away in an emergency.

As part of the project, we also trained a local volunteer who's gone on to run free and low-cost first aid sessions right here in the community. Thanks to their efforts, **over 80 people** have learned how to respond in a crisis and some local groups have even gained Emergency First Aid at Work certificates at a much lower cost than usual.



We also received extra funding to run Mini Medics, first aid course for children, offering essential skills in a playful, age-appropriate way. This meant younger residents could get involved too, learning important skills and building their confidence in how to help others.

The impact didn't go unnoticed, Tim Loughton MP even praised the project in Parliament, highlighting it as a great example of local people stepping up to meet local needs.

The legacy lives on, St Peter's Church has kindly taken on the care and maintenance of one of the defibrillators, helping to keep the project going well into the future. Meanwhile, over in North Sompting, a local resident has stepped up to look after another, showing how the community continues to pull together

A brilliant example of how something small can lead to something big, skills, safety, and stronger connections across Sompting.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Supporting Young People in Sompting

At Sompting Big Local, we believe young people are the heartbeat of our community. Over the years, we've proudly supported a range of youth-focused initiatives—creating safe, inclusive spaces where young people can grow, connect, and feel valued.

Investing in Young People: The Youth Worker Legacy

One of the most impactful steps we've taken at Sompting Big Local was funding a dedicated Youth Worker role through Sompting Community Church—a role that ran for three years and laid the groundwork for lasting change in how our community supports its young people.

A Safe Space to Grow

Led by Amy Tamplin, the youth worker created safe, inclusive spaces where young people could gather, be themselves, and access trusted support. Amy launched The Drop, a weekly after-school session at the Sompting Big Local Hub. Designed as a relaxed, screen-free zone, The Drop gave young people a place to socialise, play games, do crafts, or simply unwind after school with a snack and a chat.

Over time, The Drop became a regular part of the week for many young people, particularly those from Sir Robert Woodard Academy, which sits right on their walk home. For young carers and those facing challenges at home, it offered crucial respite, structure, and a sense of normality. In total, more than 40 different young people attended during Amy's time, with many becoming regulars and even helping shape the sessions themselves.



Building Trust and Providing Support

The real impact of the youth worker role came through relationships. Through her presence at The Drop, the Fusion youth group, and her regular work at SRWA, Amy built trust with dozens of young people, opening the door for deeper support when it was needed most. Whether it was one-to-one mentoring, helping someone navigate anger or anxiety, or just being a steady, listening ear, she helped young people feel seen, heard, and supported.

Her ability to connect also led to referrals and partnerships with other support services, including social services and school safeguarding teams, ensuring wraparound care for the young people most in need.

Listening to Local Voices

Through a summer event delivered with Sid Youth and AudioActive, and the running of a dedicated youth club, we created spaces for young people to be heard—and to have fun. From live performances to open conversations, and regular youth sessions, we gained valuable insights into the needs and aspirations of local youth. These insights have gone on to shape future provision in the area.



Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

We awarded a grant to Electric Storm Youth (ESY) to deliver vital mental health support, including one-to-one sessions and wellbeing drop-ins for 11–18 year-olds. With pressures on young people rising, this service has provided a compassionate safety net, offering not only support, but also a sense of hope.

“ It was the only place I could vent and offload. ”

In 2024 alone, ESY delivered emergency counselling to two young people in crisis. Both had previously attempted suicide and actively sought help from their school. Thanks to SBL's funding, ESY was able to respond immediately—providing life-saving counselling that the school could not otherwise offer. The pastoral team credited these sessions with potentially preventing further suicide attempts.

Young people have shared how powerful these sessions were:

— “

I've learned CBT techniques that hugely helped me with my OCD... CAMHS didn't think my case was serious enough, but I was really struggling. These sessions made a huge difference

— “

I felt supported and taken seriously. I found my voice

— ”

— ”

This project has shown just how crucial it is to have fast, accessible support for young people—and how funding from SBL can be a direct lifeline.

Knife Crime Awareness: The Ripple Effect

As part of our broader commitment to supporting young people's wellbeing and safety, we also funded a powerful workshop at a local school focused on knife crime awareness. Delivered over five weeks before the Christmas break, the Ripple Effect sessions helped students explore serious issues through mature conversation, case studies, and virtual reality experiences.

Students engaged deeply with the story of "Olly's Story," reflecting on the ripple effects of violent incidents—not only on victims, but on families, witnesses, and the wider community.

One standout moment was when a student, initially resistant to the idea of reporting knife carrying, changed his perspective after hearing stories and participating in group discussion. He ended the session by saying he'd rather report a friend than see them or someone else seriously harmed.

These sessions demonstrated how giving young people safe spaces to talk openly can spark real change in thinking and behaviour.

Broadening Horizons Through Experience

We also ran a number of trips to Wembley Stadium, giving young people the opportunity to attend England international football matches, many for the first time. These experiences weren't just about sport; they were about aspiration, adventure, and belonging. For some, it was their first time visiting London or being part of a national event. These kinds of shared moments create lasting memories and help strengthen community ties.



Removing Barriers to Learning

We also supported a project at Sir Robert Woodard Academy to provide IT equipment for students with special educational needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This practical support meant young people had equal access to learning opportunities, ensuring that no one was left behind due to a lack of resources. It's a simple but powerful reminder that inclusion is about meeting real needs, and sometimes that starts with something as basic as a laptop.

New Project with Sid Youth

Building on the legacy of our previous youth work, we're excited to be launching a new project in partnership with Sid Youth. This initiative will provide a dedicated worker focused on supporting young people through a combination of one-to-one mentoring and group-based youth work. Drawing on Sid Youth's experience and mentoring approach, the project will offer consistent, tailored support that helps young people navigate challenges, build confidence, and engage more fully in community life.

By creating regular opportunities for connection, learning, and trusted relationships, this new project aims to meet young people where they are and walk alongside them as they grow.

Looking Ahead with Hope

At Sompting Big Local, supporting young people has never been an afterthought, it's been one of our guiding values from the very beginning. Whether through long-term mentoring, crisis counselling, or creative youth engagement, we've stood alongside young people as they navigate challenges and pursue their aspirations.

From informal drop-ins and digital access initiatives to knife crime awareness sessions and mental health support, each project has shown us the real and lasting impact of early intervention, consistency, and care. These programmes weren't just services, they were lifelines, connections, and spaces where young people could feel seen and supported.

As we begin new partnerships, such as our collaboration with Sid Youth, we do so with confidence. The foundation we've laid through years of youth-focused work has created strong networks and a better understanding of what truly matters to young people in our area.

We're proud of what's been achieved, and hopeful for all that's still to come. The future feels brighter knowing the next generation is being heard, empowered, and supported.

Reflections & Learning from the Sompting Big Local Partnership

As the Sompting Big Local journey comes to a close, we as a partnership wanted to reflect on the learning, the challenges, and the heartfelt moments that defined our 13-year experience.

What stands out most is the growth in confidence, pride, and participation among residents. Many who once felt unheard now engage with local issues, challenge decisions, and take pride in their role as changemakers. That's the legacy we're most proud of, not just the parks, projects, or equipment, but the people who now feel empowered to shape the place they call home.

Over the years, Sompting Big Local supported a wide range of projects that made a tangible difference. Mummy Shock offered vital emotional support for new mums. Sompting Singalong brought people together through music. Defibrillators and first aid training helped make our village safer, more than 80 adults and children gained life-saving skills. Local schools and community groups received support, especially during the cost of living crisis and the Covid pandemic.

We also recognised the importance of going beyond Sompting. The purchase of our community minibus enabled older residents to enjoy social outings and gave local young people access to enriching experiences, from theme parks to Wembley Stadium. We're proud that the vehicle remains a community asset today.

Our community events became moments of real connection. Fun days featuring climbing walls, gaming buses and a woolly mammoth puppeteer captured imaginations. Our pantomime trip, including a double-decker bus full of families visiting the theatre for the first time became treasured memories. The giant Christmas snow globe brought joy and wonder to all ages. These weren't just fun activities, they helped foster empathy, inclusion, and a stronger sense of belonging.

Of course, it wasn't always easy. Big Local was different. It wasn't about delivering services to the community, but about enabling change with the community. With funding already in place, our role was to listen, reach out, and support local people to shape and lead the projects they wanted to see. That approach brought a unique set of challenges

In the early days, we faced apathy and confusion about what Big Local was or could support. Reaching every part of our diverse area of benefit with its different needs and social dynamics wasn't straightforward. Working with local councils could be challenging at times, with differing priorities and processes to navigate. That said, we also found supportive allies across various organisations who shared our commitment to community-led change.

One of the most significant operational challenges we faced was working without a Chairperson. While this reflected our values as a flat, resident-led partnership, it created a leadership gap. Without a designated lead, we missed opportunities to support our paid worker more effectively and struggled at times with communication and long-term planning. In hindsight, having a Chair could have helped bring greater cohesion and clarity.

A key part of our ability to overcome challenges and deliver effectively was the support we received from Community Works, who served as our Locally Trusted Organisation (LTO) for eight years. Their governance, experience and financial oversight allowed us to focus on community engagement and delivery, knowing the operational side was in safe hands. They offered flexibility when we needed it, advice when we asked for it, and the space to lead in our own way. We are deeply grateful for their steady presence and trust.

For many of us, this wasn't our first time volunteering, some brought decades of experience in charity work, event organisation, or supporting others. But Big Local was different. It asked us to do something bold: to hand over the power and resources to local people, and to walk alongside them as they created change on their own terms. That's what made it special. That's what made it work.

The wisdom and assets of local people are the starting point for lasting change."

— Cormac Russell

The end of a Chapter, Not the Story

As we bring the Sompting Big Local journey to a close, we do so with full hearts and deep gratitude. Over 13 years, we have seen what's possible when power is placed in the hands of local people. We've witnessed the quiet magic of conversations turning into action, of ideas becoming impact, and of neighbours becoming friends.

This was never just about funding, it was about trust. It was about asking, listening, and walking alongside one another. It was about finding joy in small moments, standing together in hard ones, and building something that will last far beyond the final report.

We leave behind more than projects. We leave behind confidence, connection, and a belief that community-led change isn't just possible; it's powerful. The minibus may be parked elsewhere now. The Hub may have closed its doors. But the spirit of Sompting Big Local lives on in the people who stepped forward, spoke up, and stayed involved.

To everyone who gave their time, their voice, their ideas—thank you.

To those who shared their stories, offered a lift, made tea, showed up—thank you.

And to the next generation of doers and dreamers in Sompting—we pass you the baton, with pride.

This isn't the end. It's a beginning.

Because change doesn't stop when a programme ends.

It continues in every conversation, every gathering, every act of care.

The story of Sompting is still being written—by many, for many.

The Journey We Took

We set out not knowing the path we would take,
No map in our hands, no lines we could make.
Just questions, some courage, and cups full of tea –
And a dream of what Sompting one day could be.

The first steps were small, but the welcome was wide,
A minibus ride, a chat by your side.
A snow globe in winter, a picnic in sun,
A circus, a song – and slowly, we'd begun.

We listened, we learned, we stumbled, we grew,
Found strength in each other, found something true.
From babies and bingo to street party cheer,
Each moment, each meeting, made meaning appear.

This journey was built not in headlines or gold,
But in warmth, in connection, in hands that we hold.
In laughter and learning, in saying "me too,"
In showing what neighbours with vision can do.

Now the road gently bends, and the signs start to shift,
But the stories we've made are a permanent gift.
We carry them forward, wherever we roam –
For Sompting's not just a place – it's a home.

