Case Study
2012

Friends of Furniss Island
About Us

The project is based in Truro in a green area along the River Allen.

This case study will tell you all about our project and how we went about getting it up and running. The positives as well as the frustrating bits that challenged us, but which we were able to resolve!

We hope that our experience and the learning curve we underwent helps you and your projects.

Overview of Our Project and its Aims
The project was to set up a Committee to help Friends of Furniss Island become constituted so that they could apply for funding for various projects they wished to pursue to enhance the Furniss Island Community Garden.

How Long It took Us
In 2010 a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme was set up which evolved into the Friends of Furniss Island.

How the Project was funded
CRCC provided free advice to the Friends of Furniss Island, but the group has been fortunate to receive huge support from local organisations to improve the garden.

Truro City Council, Furniss Biscuits and local garden centres have all supported or sponsored the group to help them run various events to raise funds.

“The group acts as a platform for individuals with any idea. CRCC have given us invaluable governance advice to help us set up a Committee to evolve the community garden.”.

We Were Motivated to undertake this Project
People were leaving litter, drink bottles and other rubbish in the garden area. It was also becoming an area known for anti-social behaviour.

Residents of houses and flats surrounding the area were disappointed to see the area being used in this way so the Friends of Furniss Island evolved to help improve the small garden area.

The Challenges We Faced.
Geoff, who was one of the original leaders of the project, became ill and was unable to carry on with the group shortly after the CRCC started assisting. Kloe, a volunteer working with the project, then took over running the group, received extensive advice from CRCC.
One of the main problems faced by Friends of Furniss Island is the fact that most of the membership are elderly and not willing or able to take on committee roles or commit to regular meetings because of problems with ill health and mobility.

The group put up an arch of willow at the entrance to the gardens - unfortunately it was vandalised. However there are future plans to involve Truro School to build a metal arch.

**How We Made it Happen.**

Unfortunately one of the main organisers became ill. Kloe had contacted Truro City Council looking to work with a community group in Truro. The Council signposted Kloe to work with the Friends of Furniss Island.

Kloe took over co-ordination of the project due to sickness and was signposted to Volunteer Cornwall to advertise for more committee members and to advertise events in the park which might lead to more people willing to engage with the group.

Furniss Island also encouraged more people to become involved – particularly younger people as this is vital to ensure the sustainability of the group.

Furniss Island has gathered enough regular members to agree the basis of their constitution and hold quorate meetings. Now their constitution is formally adopted the next step is to move on slowly to deal with policies and then look for funding.

**Support We Received from voluntary or statutory organisations e.g CRCC/PCDT/Parish Council/Comwall Council**

A Comwall Council Regeneration Officer asked Comwall Rural Community Council to help Furniss Island.

Various email, telephone conversations and meetings were held with the group to discuss the constitution and policies needed. This included general advice on running committees and in particular, the need for engaging more members onto the committee to avoid over reliance on one individual in the future.

CRCC also advised on legal structures, constitutions, bank accounts, insurance providers, policies, roles of committee members, publicity and linking in with strategic bodies such as Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum.

**How We Keep the Project Sustainable.**

The continued support of Truro City Council and local garden centres is invaluable. It is also hoped to small grants to purchase tools, plants etc to continue to enhance the community garden.

Future plans also include plans to improve the lock situated along the River Allen; and the location of bat boxes.

**Who Benefits from our Project, and How:**

The project aims to empower local residents by giving them a small area of space to evolve any idea they can imagine may sustain the garden. The community garden is again becoming an area to be proud of as it moves forward and is improved by various individuals.

The various future ideas will allow residents and local people to see both wildlife/ fauna situated in an area of a post-modern town.
What We Learned from the Project:

Talk to as many local people, local organisations, local schools etc.

They can and will give you lots of help.

Our Top Tip!
Don’t be afraid of talking to everyone. Don’t be afraid of being a nuisance and keep trying. Don’t give up!

For more information on CRCC and PCDT services visit:

www.comwallrcc.org.uk
www.pcdt.org