

Report To: Partnerships Review Committee
Lead Officer: Council Representative on Outside Body

20 January 2017

Outside Body Update - Emmaus Cambridge

Purpose

1. To update Members about the Outside Body's activities since the previous meeting of the Partnerships Review Committee.

Executive Summary

2. Emmaus in Landbeach is continuing to be the home for about 38 formerly homeless people, offering communal living and voluntary work in our social enterprise, which is based around recycling of furniture, clothes and bric-a-brac.
3. The Emmaus movement has been lobbying the government hard to highlight the need for their support, if only through enhanced Housing Benefit, for communities like ours that offer supported living conditions and training. The change to HB has been postponed twice but is still threatened. Our community (the first to be established in the UK) has celebrated 25 years of existence last summer.
4. Our aim this year is to have a strong fund-raising campaign and to build 10 further rooms at our community. Emmaus Cambridge has a strategic target of supporting 50 companions by 2018. The plans have been approved now, and necessary work on Phase 1, extending the car park, has been completed. South Cambs DC donated £100,000 towards the new building and car park, which has given us the confidence to go ahead. We have most of the money we need and building is due to start in the summer. We are about £50,000 short of our target, and are planning to contact businesses and individuals about sponsoring a room (which could carry their name), and a 'buy a brick' scheme for smaller donations.
5. Community operation continues with its perennial stresses. The social enterprise relies on paid staff and a very fragile workforce of Companions, and juggling the tasks to provide a stimulating work environment for everyone whilst not pushing people too far out of their comfort zone is always a challenge. Nevertheless the community and its social enterprise turned over just over a million pounds this year for the first time.
6. Emmaus Cambridge is fully committed to continuing to work in partnership with SCDC to alleviate homelessness and poverty in Cambridgeshire. We provide furniture at a very reduced price to people referred from agencies supporting people living on the edge.
7. In 2012, a group of researchers talked to companions and staff members in seven communities across the UK, trying to establish the main outcomes of Emmaus's work. Their research found that for every £1 invested in an established Emmaus community, £11 is generated in social, environmental and economic returns.
See "<http://www.emmaus.org.uk/impact>

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