**Date: 06/01/2021**

**Duration:** 47:16

**Interviewer:** \*Project Introduction\*

**Interviewer:** So, let’s start, okay, so my first question is what is the name of your group?

**Participant:** So, our group is [GROUP NAME].

**Interviewer:** And how, how and when did the group start?

**Participant:** Urm, the group started about twenty-nine years ago when there was a need for like play groups, support for families, stuff like that and in a deprived estate in [AREA NAME 1], urm and it was started by getting funding locally to support to pay for premises, which is now grown into a community centre.

**Interviewer:** Okay and how did the group start to do COVID related stuff?

**Participant:** Yeah, so the community centres being very active within the community for many years, but during COVIVD-19 we had to change the way our services were delivered. So, we worked with urr, families, children age up to people over ninety. So, we had to do like family activity packs to be delivered out, we also, there was also to access the lunches, we done different ways to access our services, so cooking on a budget that we used to do, we had to do that in a pack and deliver that out. Urm adapted it to remote befriending, urm, cake and conversation where we dropped cake off and food. Urm also to be included digitally as well, for those that didn’t have access to the internet at home, we managed to gain some funding to buy urm, tablets and internet devices so that people could stay connected urm, through the technology. Urr and we also worked with partners as well where we had volunteers who support people who may struggled if they haven’t had that digital training or that access to get used to it as well. We also tried to deliver different sessions, one of our events was spooky trail, usually we do the event in the centre, but we couldn’t this year, so we had to do a bit of a spooky orienteering around the local, urr, wards and parks just after we come out of lockdown which was family led, so families went out, picked up the information and the packs and went around to do it themselves. Urm, we also done Christmas dinner in a bag as well because we couldn’t have people at the centre, so we done packs for food for [surplus? 02:10] because we face quite a lot of food deprivation as well around this time, so we’ve had to respond to their needs. And to be addressing this, and we’re still in the process, again its in this third lockdown of going back to remote deliveries and working and putting a six-week plan together of how we can continue to support the issues with volunteers through this next lockdown.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so urm, I, I think you already answered some of this but have anything changed since the group started?

**Participant:** Urm, since it started or since COVID?

**Interviewer:** Well, both, you can explain a little bit more the context and –

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah, the centres definitely grew in the services that it’s offered and we’re very dependent on external finding, urm, so we’ve made quite a lot more partners and had quite a lot more opportunities than went it started. Urm and I think the structure of the way in which it works is very much volunteer orientated now which is absolutely fantastic to see. So, there’s a high ratio of volunteer to staff members and my job is to coordinate those volunteers and recruit and train them up as well, so we’re quite lucky like that. Urr we’ve learnt to, I’d say, do consultations better, so we’re listening more to the community and their needs and that impacts on what services we deliver and what we put our funding for as well – so we’re meeting the needs of the local people.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and was that since COVID? How was the process?

**Participant:** Yeah, I’d say we were very good at doing it anyway, but I’d say since COVID and the lockdown we’ve had to do this better. We were very quick to respond so as soon as we’d seen the lockdown coming, we were on the telephone to the service users, to the volunteers asking any support they needed, any ideas and suggestions. So, I think it was very much more intense during the COVID 19 urm pandemic. And urm it’s given us an opportunity to see we can still deliver services but from home or do it remotely.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and since COVID 19, did the group change, ahs anything changed?

**Participant:** Urm, yeah, I wouldn’t say it changed, I’d say it adapted. Urm so pretty much all of the services we were delivering the centre we could urm, do remotely, so like the card making, we, we went out and delivered the activities to people. So, I wouldn’t say its changed, but I’d say its adapted to the better and we’re in a better position now, having gone through the first on, on how we’re going to deliver urm, sessions and activities going forward as well.

**Interviewer:** Okay, can you tell me a little bit more about the situation at the moment? Urm with the group.

**Participant:** Yeah so, yeah so at the moment we’ve got a community library in our building, as well, so it’s one of the sister libraries from the main one, that’s closed at the minute because we’re not allowing anybody from the community inside the building. The only services we’ve got running at the community centre at the minute is the telephones are being manned, by the receptionists, and we’ve also got the nursery and after school urm, we have after school play sessions as well. So, for the young people, that’s still allowed to be run, but for any other services that we used to deliver with the [unclear, 05:22] stuff like that, everything’s gone over the telephone or online or urr, by having conversations at the gate, stuff like that. So, it’s changed a bit.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and have you had any previous experience of organising groups like this one?

**Participant:** Urm, I personally I have, I’ve done volunteer work for many, many years and community development work as well. Urr but I think the staff are very well equipped with their experience of how to adapt to things quickly and how to deliver in a different way. The whole of the [GROUP NAME] has been absolutely fantastic in how it’s provided these services, urm and its been important to us to say that we’re still here, we will still provide this service to you, urm and that’s our aim and our goal.

**Interviewer:** Okay and when did you get involved and how?

**Participant:** Urm in [GROUP NAME]?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** Urm I, I yeah, I started three years ago at the organisation, I’m lottery funded so we’re in the process of doing another lottery application at the moment, I’m luckily externally funded. Urm… the work I do, and the work the community centre does is we’re very, very passionate about the community, about people, about identifying the needs, looking at people’s starting journey and the progression that they’ve made, helping to support what that might mean along the way. The impact that our services have on that one person, but then the wider impact that has on the family members as well. Urm so… people coming into our services, might be coming in for one thing, but we can offer the holistic approach, so we can address any other needs, and identify them and help support them. And if it’s something that we can’t personally do, we have great partners that we can signpost them to, as well. And its very much community urr focused on the people, urm and how we do our services.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so what is your role in the group?

**Participant:** What’s my what sorry?

**Interviewer:** Role.

**Participant:** My role? I’m volunteer coordinator.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so you work for the, the association?

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah, so I’m employed urm, by the association, funded by the lottery, urm, and my role is to urm recruit, induct, train and place volunteers urr, both the community centre and across the community as well.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and with the activities related with COVID, why did you decide that was important to provide those service?

**Participant:** Because the area we work in, like I mentioned it’s one of the top deprived areas and people depend on us. Urm a lot of the feedback, evaluations that we’ve been doing, it talks about how [GROUP NAME] is the heart of the community, how people don’t know how they’d manage without it, and we’ve done consultations where we’ve had feedback previously, one of our main concerns is this urm, the high level of mental health problems, drug and alcohol additions of people on that estate, and we didn’t want to lose touch with people that might need our services. And people are quite isolated as well, so we know the services we work with, we know that community, so for us it was vital that we were still staying on contact, still offering that, so that people didn’t become, urm, more dependent on self-medication or more isolated or suffer more with their mental health or can’t put a meal on the table for the children. So, for us we were absolutely dedicated to making sure our phones and our persons were still open, even if the centre wasn’t.

**Interviewer:** What are your motivations to do this kind of work?

**Participant:** The, the passion that we’ve got for the people, we see that, we see that difference that it makes, we see that, that person changed that come through the door – normally when our centre’s open, that might be absolutely at their wits end, they don’t know where to turn to get help. And when you see that journey and you know that you’ve helped that person and you see that person change and be able to, urm be more proud of who they are, feel more connected, can’t to access other services, urm, it’s a massive, massive motivation. And I think the work that we do, even though we’re one of the poorest areas, we’re really, really blessed to see that difference that our work makes as well. And that gives you your passion, you’re drive when you know you’re making that difference, it comes naturally to want to continue to make that impact and have that positive urm impact on people and their families.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how does the activity that you do in the group relates with other parts of your life?

**Participant:** Urm… I’d say the work we do it it it kind of like, you never, you never switch off from work when you finish work, there’s always something that’s there with you. Like if you’ve had a situation where you’ve got home, you’re still thinking about it. Urm, and I think, I don’t think it impacts hugely, but I think, you have to be community orientated to do the work you do in your own life as well as in your home life. You still have to have similar motivations, and I think it takes certain types of people to do the work, for the right reasons. And that, that kind of comes naturally for them. So, for – I don’t know if I’m making sense here, \*laughs\*. But you’re that, in that mindset anyway so you’re that, that person mainly all the time. So, urm, but personally it impacts me, you want to do more so eventually you do, it impacts on your life, you’re working extra hours, you’re working weekends doing different events and stuff like that. So, it’s a balance, it’s a balance, you don’t mind.

**Interviewer:** What do you mean by being community orientated?

**Participant:** I think, I don’t know, I think you have to have a passion for people, urm, and that passion to want to make a difference and help people’s lives improve. And I think a lot of people that do the work that we do, they’re naturally like that, they see the bigger picture, they see people struggling, they see people that need help and support. Urm, and I think that, they’re the type of people who are more inclined to do the community development, or community work or stuff like that. I think, I think compassionate, as well, is the worked I’m looking for.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and what geographical area has the group covered?

**Participant:** Urm, it covers, it covers [AREA NAME 1], [AREA NAME 2], [AREA NAME 3], at the monte but we cover, we work across the board, so we’ve had volunteers as far as [AREA NAME 4] and North [CITY NAME]. And we’ve had service users who will travel form across the board as well, so we don’t have – although that’s our demographics we’re not just urm, held at that. Anyone comes through the door from anywhere, we will work with them, but it’s mainly from those areas, that we get people from, and [AREA NAME 5] as well, so it’s mainly [AREA NAME 1], [AREA NAME 3], [AREA NAME 2] and [AREA NAME 5], but we do have others.

**Interviewer:** Okay, you already mentioned some of the things that the group do, but can you please explain a little bit more what kind of activities you do during the COVID pandemic?

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, no problem. So, we work with all different age groups, urm so like I say nursery, youth, we do health and wellbeing we do urm, job and benefits advice and we also do digital technology support, and also the volunteering project as well. So, taking the different sections and so on, so for the children there was a lot of activity packs being delivered, so we’d have like play schemes, stuff like that, that we weren’t able to do, so we had like skipping ropes and different games and activities given out for families, and there was quite a lot of families that received this as well. And then we do cooking on a budget, which his a service, so we buy the ingredients, put the recipe together, do a short video of how they do it, so the service users that would access that, that we got delivered to their door. Urr volunteers urr week is something we usually celebrate together, we couldn’t do that this year so we’ve done a picnic in a bag with like the health walk and we delivered that to them, so they could go out and have a walk themselves. Urm also the charity shop that the volunteers run, and the community café had to close, but one of the volunteers that identified that people whose children were going back to school in September may struggle financially having gone through furlough or having lost their job. Urm so we created a uniform donation day where donations of uniform was given to her, urm and it was over a hundred and fifty families that benefited form that. Urm that, and that is just one thing that would make such a difference to a family who might be worried about buying uniforms for the children.

Urm also we done food packs and parcels as well, we done meals on wheels type delivery where volunteers have come out and delivered to people urm, isolated or shielding, and we done brunch and board games which was breakfast and aboard game, like a jigsaw puzzle that they could do inside themselves. Urm but it’s mainly having that conversation urm at the garden gate and seeing them face to face. We’ve done an art for mindfulness project as well, which was about, we went out and delivered activates for people to paint a picture that we’re going to display when new open again. We done, gosh we’ve done lots, \*laughs\*. Urm but it is, it is something that we also link back to the needs of people, so having them conversations with then, seeing what ideas they’ve got, what they’d like to say or what, what would cheer them up as well. And we’ve done postcards as well, we’ve done Christmas cards. Urr Christmas dinner in a bag, we’ve also done Christmas Eve food as well. Urr to make sure that people had plenty over the Christmas period. And that’s just a few of the examples that we’ve done. And again, putting a six-week plan together for this lockdown, going forward, we’re trying to make it a little bit different from the last two lockdown so there’s something a bit different to look forward to.

**Interviewer:** You will do something different?

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah so urm, last time, urm we did… the activities that we did last time, so we’re looking at doing something a little bit different so chocolate and chat, urm a pamper, like a looking after yourself set, urm a quiz or puzzles to keep the mind occupied, so we’re looking at doing something once a week delivered to the house as well as the befriending and telephone services as well, so yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how many people are in the group?

**Participant:** Sorry?

**Interviewer:** How many people are in the group, for example how many volunteers do you have?

**Participant:** Urm, we’ve got seventy, about seventy volunteers that are active on a normal basis, but over the last quarter we’ve had forty-nine that have been active in between lockdown or delivering emails stuff like that. We’ve also got a board of trustees who are volunteers, urr so they’ve been meeting via Zoom, discussing urr, the closures the openings, still like that as well. So, it’s quite a busy group, and then there’s staff of about nineteen, normally that work in – and that’s adult services and young people services.

**Interviewer:** Urm what kind of resources do you have?

**Participant:** Urm, at the minute the centres got plenty of resources, but we also are looking for funding as well. So, we’ve got, like I said the library in the centre, the nursery, we’ve got a fully function kitchen, we’ve got the charity shop, we’ve got the community café, we’ve got a main hall that’s kitted out with tables, chairs. We’ve got IT equipment as well, so resource wise the centre’s quite well equipped.

**Interviewer:** Are there any particular skills that people int eh groups have?

**Participant:** Urr yeah definitely, so we’ve got a wide range of volunteers that’s have got many urr skillset, so we’ve got a lady who delivers sewing sessions, urm well did deliver when we were open. Flower arranging sessions that were hosted as well, and we had music for mindfulness where one of the volunteers were coming in and showing the volunteers how to play different instruments. We have volunteers that speak different languages, we’ll sit down, and we’ll do communication café where people of other languages listen and understand about cultures. Urm, we’ve got people that have got cooking skills so will do the cooking for the community lunches, urr we’ve got people who are very good at creative writing that could come and do a bit with people as well. People that area really good at art that would showcase their work. And also, we’ve just started like a memory, a memory group as well, about sharing memories and we’ve got people who are quite good at history researching as well. So, another history group that was quite, well led by volunteers. Communication as well and customer services for the people who are urr in the charity shop. So, we’ve got quite a broad range of people with certain skill set.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how did you get volunteers involved?

**Participant:** Urm many ways, many ways, \*laughs\*. So, a lot of the recruitment has been word of mouth, going out speaking to people, making yourself known in the community, also working with partners as well, so we’ve got very good partners as well where we can put volunteering opportunities up. Urm, so that means that people can have a look if they’re registered alright, see what’s available. We’ve also urm, word of mouth from people who’ve already volunteering is a very good way as well. So, they tell their friends, and a lot of the time we have family members that volunteer, so we might have sisters who volunteer together, or we might have mother and daughter, or father and son. And I think when you’ve got a close-knit community like that, its very easy to kind of draw people in and say that this is what we do, this is what we offer. Quite often people come to us who’ve been signposted to us by partners as well. But also, we’ve had urm college placements, university placements of people who’ve come back and volunteered, urm and we also, we’ve really good at doing like partnership volunteering so an organisation will come in and volunteer for one of the events that we’re doing as well, so it’s quite widespread out there. But we also do recruitment events as well, so the last recruitment event we did was like a roadshow, so instead of having it at the centre, we had it at like five different venues across [AREA NAME 1] to try and get out there. But we work with partners so, voluntary, other voluntary sector organisations joined us, and we went around to different places to showcase our volunteering opportunities.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how do you coordinate, do you organise help?

**Participant:** Urm, it depends on what the call of need is, so like with this pandemic, say food delivery for instance, people who’ve got their DBS check and can drive, urm they’ve had to change their role, because one of the gentlemen worked in the library, and the library was shut so he couldn’t do that anymore, so urm just having the discussions, making sure their expenses are paid, urm, and just for supporting and coaching them through just exactly what is expected of them. And be clear with what you’re asking them as well. So, he’d go out and deliver meals to the vulnerable people and he was also working with another organisation that was doing the same as well. So, it’s just making sure that you’re addressing the need that the support in the community need and matching it with urm, relevant people as well.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Do you have for example, do you have a Facebook account or other social media?

**Participant:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. [GROUP NAME] got its own Facebook page but we also set up urm, for COVID, a Facebook page called [FACEBOOK PAGE NAME]. So that was like light-hearted Facebook page where we put quizzes, we put a bingo session. Urm we’d ask for suggestions for activities that we could deliver out. Urm so its very much people orientated. Urr we also have twitter account as well, so that’s quite often stuff we’ll put there with information on there, anything that we’re doing, we’ll put photos up. But we’ll try and do it a different way, so it’s not just social media, so people who don’t access that can still find out information on what we’re doing as well. So, we put a lot of posters around, we put a banner out saying, “contact us and we’ll tell you more.” Urr, we’re having conversations with people on the phone as well, weekly, we’re sharing information about what we’ve got coming up. So, we try to make sure we’re addressing all aspects of what people need access to.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm, so you already mentioned that the group is in contact with other urr groups locally, can you explain a little bit more what kind, what type of groups have you need working-?

**Participant:** Yeah, course, yeah, so we’ve got urm, we’ve got our local housing provider so we’re in very close contact with them, they’re one of our key partners, and [CITY NAME] city council. Urm a lot of that’s funding wise and finding out where our tenants that might be being supported or residents or any ideas and suggestions of working in collaboration with them as well that they may have. There’s also a lot of urm good neighbour group we work with as well to make sure, you know, if there’s anyone that needs any support, urm who’s older or vulnerable, that we can work to support them as well. Urm, and different community centre. And there’s also a lot of community orientated groups, there is [COMMUNITY GROUP NAME 1] that’s been going for quite a while, the, the [GROUP MEMBER NAME], the group that she urm chairs, urm that’s a really good one. And then there’s also a [COMMUNITY GROUP NAME 2]. Urm that they’ve been doing quite a lot of work as well, they’ve really come alive since, urm COVID 19, they’ve set up like a big response group urm, and [CMMUNITY GROUP NAME 3] has been really good at delivering food for us, to deliver as well, as long as cracking good food. We’ve got many, many partners that we work with, organisational as well, that we, I could sit here for an hour explaining all the different ones. Urm but at the minute its mainly ones that we can work in coalition with to try and address the needs of the community.

**Interviewer:** And this was something that started with COVID or you already had?

**Participant:** Urm, we already had great connections within the community, that’s something that we’ve built up over the years and established really strong partnerships with. Urm, I’d say with, like the [COMMUNITY GROUP NAME 2] group, urm and the community groups that are working in the ground level, that’s become more so since COVID 19.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how is the relationship with the local council?

**Participant:** Urm, excellent, we have urm a fantastic relationship with our local housing provider and our local services. Urm and it’s, it’s one that, we, we work to strengthen all the time.

**Interviewer:** Okay, is the group part of any national network?

**Participant:** Urr no, I wouldn’t say any national network. Urr we’re part of [CITY NAME], urr [AFFILIATE ORGANISATION NAME], and other smaller affiliates that we, that we joined their organisations, so we’ve got access to training, funding stuff like that, but nothing on a huge scale.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and what kind of organisation is the [GROUP NAME]? Is it a charity, company?

**Participant:** It’s a charity, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay, you talk a bit about your own motivations for getting involved, urm in your opinion, what are the motivations of other active participants? The volunteers for examples, why did they get involved? Specifically related to COVID, but also more broadly, yeah.

**Participant:** Yeah, I think, specifically with COVID people felt the need they wanted to help, they felt they were getting a bit isolated themselves, and they needed a bit of routine, they needed structure. Urm and… the volunteers that couldn’t access during COVID 19 they relay felt the strain as well because they’d gone from being quite busy to having to stay at home. We’ve got a lot of older people urr volunteering and quite a few with health issues as well, so they really felt the impact. Urm, but when the volunteers were getting involved you could see that it’s given them that daily routine and something they could look forward to. Urm and a lot of them were saying that they felt that they’re making a difference to those in need, so it was quite, urm, their own motivations to help others, to want to get that routine, that little bit of normality back, urm as well. And that was their motivation about speaking to them about how they felt about coming back to support different services.

In, in general, its, we get a lot of people reflecting back that they want to volunteer to help improve their confidence, to meet new people, to gain new skills, to help unemployment. Urm to, to have something to focus on, to give them structure, and it’s, it’s very much urm, I’d say, a lot of the reasons to build themselves up and to get more confidence and self-esteem. And, and I suppose as well improve their life and how they see their life at whatever time they come to us to volunteer to us as well. Because some of the people are just older and want to get out of the house, but for others as well, certainly we’ve had a couple who have lost partners and, who are back to living at rock bottom, and for them it was a lifeline when they’re doing something and keeping their mind occupied and getting out the house.

**Interviewer:** Okay, can you explain to me the relationship between the group, the COVID group that you mentioned urm with the association?

**Participant:** Yeah, so urm, we stay in contact about different services, urr mainly through WhatsApp, the COVID ones, about different services available, urm about things like doing food parcels, things like that, so its like an information sharing network, on what’s going on, stuff like that. And where people can go to to sign post. So, one example is one of the urm… Muslim groups that were up there, they were cooking on Christmas day, and the following, that week and people could come and pick-up food from their Mosque things like that, and you know our Christmas dinner in a bag you could share. So, it’s really important to find out what other groups were doing, so if there is something that we can’t help we can transfer them and signpost them to them. And just to keep up to date with what organisations were doing, and so how they work in the COVID19 crisis, as well.

**Interviewer:** And so, and the group within the volunteer groups within the association, so how is structured? How is the relationships, so you coordinate the volunteers group, right?

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** But is not different, its not a different group from the-

**Participant:** The regular, no, like I say a lot of it was the same volunteers. There’s only one volunteer externally who had started up doing food deliveries but then went back into work, so we took over. Urm there was a couple of her original volunteers, so we just done the registration, made them feel part of the group, gave them the support and, covered the expenses as well. So, we wanted to make sure they felt part of the overall volunteer group. So, they didn’t feel that they were like outsiders helping us, urm but part of [GROUP NAME].

**Interviewer:** Okay, and beside this volunteer did you have more people dropping out?

**Participant:** Not so much dropping out, it’s the, some of them were poorly so they’ve been shielding, urm, some of them are scared to come back to the centre as the current situation was, even with like we’re allowed to come back and I’ve still got volunteers who are at home, who are just waiting to see how it pans out really. I think this third lockdown its going to be harder to get people back when we reopen, because there’s a lot more fear urm for this second strain of COVID 19.

**Interviewer:** Do you think so, yeah?

**Participant:** Yeah. So urm… I do have concerns on how that’s going to impact on the volunteer team going forward. But it’s my job to make sure that one, we stay connected, two, we give reassurance, and three we make sure they’re safe if at any point the do return.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and during COVID has involvement in the group meant a lot of time and effort? For you for the others?

**Participant:** It it certainly has been a busy time, it certainly has. I’d say, urm, when you’re working from home, when you’re coordinating various activities, and the volunteers it is very full on. It seems to be, when we got back into the community centre to work form there after the first lockdown, you seem really, really quite, so you’re like, “oh, there’s not a lot to do really.” And then the second lockdown hit and again it was full force, get everything out there, make sure people contacted. And again, it is now, but also, we do reporting as well, so we do monthly monitoring, we do lottery reports, so on top of everything else you’ve got all your normal job stuff to do as well. So, it is a very, very full-on time.

**Interviewer:** And for the other active helpers?

**Participant:** Yeah, as well, the staff are absolutely floored trying to sort things out as well. And also, the volunteers who are trying to sort things out they’re kind of like, “right, we’re here, we’re ready, anything that you need doing, let us know.” Urr so we are lucky to have quite an active team, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And how about emotional effort?

**Participant:** Urm…I, I, I think we do well, I think we do well. I mean don’t get me wrong I’ve had my moments when I felt, I can’t, you know, I’ve had my down days when it has impacted on me personally working from home. And I suppose it depends on the journey that you’re going through yourself as a person, going through this at the beginning of the pandemic, my partners mother was staying with us and she was poorly with bowel cancer and she was in hospital. Urm, and towards the end of it, we couldn’t go and visit to say goodbye or anything like that. So that was extremely hard. More so for my partner but the impact of seeing him going through the pain and then when you try and do your daily job and you try and stay focused and stuff like that, it’s extremely hard. And it does hit home. And then you know, you hear, you become a bit obsessed with the news and the stats and the cases and it can become quite a burden at certain points, I know certainly it has for me, but you have to get back up and you’ve had to continue and just carry on doing your work.

**Interviewer:** Any other problems, challenges that have affected the group?

**Participant:** Urm, no we’ve been quite lucky actually. Urr, we haven’t actually faced any challenges, like I say, we’ve just adapted very, very quick. Urr to the response really. So, I feel that we were quite, on top of things and we know what we needed to do and we just got on with it. Urm I wouldn’t say as a community centre there’s been any major challenges at all.

**Interviewer:** Okay, why do you think you were able to adapt so quickly?

**Participant:** I don’t know, I honestly don’t know. I think because we paid attention and we listened and we had a feeling that this was going to go this way, so we need to get ourselves into action before it hits. And I think because the team worked together so well, we were able to implement things quite fast and get - and run with it really rather than drag our feet and go into a panic. It was just, it was action for us. Urm, it just kicked in.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how about the kind of things that have helped to keep the group going? Urm, can you mention specific things that have you done that maybe help the group?

**Participant:** Urm, I think support, support and team work’s a lot of it, I think doing this kind of thing, and especially doing it now and working from home, now you’re back in and stuff like that, you need a good team around you and you need that support and that motivation and that encouragement and that commutations well. So, I think, because we’ve had that, its, it’s supported us, its supported the volunteers and given them reassurance as well.

**Interviewer:** Were any of this strategic?

**Participant:** Strategic?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** Oh, I don’t know, \*laughs\*. I’m not too sure how to offer that one.

**Interviewer:** if you planned to do these things like you did or its was just ad-hoc?

**Participant:** No, a lot of its planned, a lot of its planned, we’ve had to urm, so we have to plan from the very beginning, so may weeks or so many months down the line. Urm so we have to plan, there’s not been many ad-hoc stuff, that we’ve done, everything has been put into place through planning.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm… in terms of lessons, and learnings from coordinating this group. The volunteer group, urm so you feel that you have learnt anything from coordinating the group?

**Participant:** Urm I fell you need to absolutely have honest conversations with volunteers about what they’re happy to do and what they’re happy – not happy to do. And you need to listen to that as well. Its really great that people want to help, as well, but sometimes they do it because they feel they should. I know, it it’s a difficult situation and people are scared, but they want to help, and its having those conversation and listening and understanding, rather than just saying, “right, there’s so many things we need to do, I need you , you and you.” you’ve got to give people space to be able to be comfortable to say, “I’m happy to do it,” or, “no, I don’t feel safe, I’m out this time.” And I think I’ve learnt to be more… aware of people that way, as well. And to allow that, rather than to say, “right, this a great idea, we’ll do this.” It’s asking people, you know, are you happy to do that. So it is, you know it’s their needs as well and supporting their needs. It’s, it’s strange times, we’ve never been through something like this before and it’s having that time to listen to people’s worries.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that it changed anything in the community?

**Participant:** I think, I think people are more appreciative, and I think people feel more… compassion for each other, and there’s a little bit more, I don’t want to say tolerance, but people are happier to see people now, and they look out for each other a little bit more. There’s a bit more connection in the community, people look out of reach other, urm, at that, the estate where we were, people had drifted apart quite a lot, there wasn’t that neighbourliness, and I think now, having come through lockdown, that, thats developed more and people have felt more connected.

**Interviewer:** And how do you see the future of this group, of the community?

**Participant:** Yeah, urm… very, very well actually. Coming through this next one now with what we’ve got put in place I think it’s really going to continue to keep people connected and make that difference and keep people involved. Urm… then I am also a little bit concerned that when we come out of this, we return back to the community centre itself again how many volunteers are going to be happy to come back, but we’re just going to have to, urr give people that, that space to come to us when they feel safe to do so, rather than saying, “right, you’ve got this role to do, come on,” \*laughs\*. But I feel, I feel hopeful, and I feel that, in a way more people are wanting to get involved with certain things-

**Interviewer:** You see that?

**Participant:** Some, I feel that certain people come forward to help as well, like people who have been furloughed, urm, that have got time during these lockdowns that they wouldn’t normally have time to do. So, I think that’s been a positive. But yeah, I feel really confident about the future as a whole and the community centre and the volunteering group.

**Interviewer:** And how are you preparing for the next lockdown?

**Participant:** Urgh, there’s a lot of telephone calls to volunteers, making sure they’re okay, making sure they’ve got what they need. Urm but also to the ones that can access, like do deliveries, stuff like that, it will be conversations with them to share the plan and what we’ve got. And to get any ideas really. Urm and just taking it from there, we’re going to take, we’re going to take each week as it comes and just keep revaluating. That’s all we can do when we’re not too sure what’s going on.

**Interviewer:** You have regular meetings?

**Participant:** Yeah well, its, as a volunteer team we used to meet monthly, together. But we’ve also got a volunteer focus group that looks at activities and events. But because we cannot meet now, it’s telephone meetings and anyone that can use Zoom, it it’ll be back on that as well.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how do you see your role in the group in the future?

**Participant:** Urm. Hopefully still very much needed. Urm, I do think that with volunteers, its always such a fantastic project. But it always needs somebody to coordinate and, you know, this is my third year at [GROUP NAME] doing it, and hopefully many more years to come, coordinating the volunteer team.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm, thank you, I don’t think I have any more questions actually, is there anything that you wanted to add, maybe, urm…?

**Participant:** Urm no, I understand exactly what you’re doing urm from the transcript that you’ve sent through and I think it’s really good that people are trying to understand how different communities work in this situation. Urm but yeah, no, I’ve just been happy to help in any way I have.

**[Debriefing]**

**[End of Interview]**