**Date: 14/12/2020**

**Duration:** 48:58

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

Yeah, so my first question is if you can tell me the name of your group, so?

**Participant:** Ah yes, so its was [GROUP NAME].

**Interviewer:** Okay, and when did the group start?

**Participant:** Urr it started, well there were conversations pre-official lockdown. I think it would have been… mid to late March, that things kicked off.

**Interviewer:** And how did it start? Who was involved? This kind of thing.

**Participant:** Urm, so we had urr a chap set up a group on Next Door, I don’t know if you’re familiar with that?

**Interviewer:** No.

**Participant:** It’s a neighbourhood urm, App that’s been around I think for a number of years and anyone can post anything to do with their local postcode or area and I kind of lurked on there for a number of years and then saw a post suggesting that, you know, we got together and discuss, you know, how we can support the community and out of that a WhatsApp group began and then from there it sort of evolved into urm, sort of [POSTCODE] based leafletting campaign, urr, yeah about two or three hundred members joined.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** And yeah, that’s kind of how it started and then, everyone you’ve heard from the group, we’re the ones that have run it and organise.

**Interviewer:** And what was the aim of the group when it started?

**Participant:** Urm, it fluctuated somewhat, it went from kind of skill share and condensed down into groceries, basic safeguarding – sorry, I just realised I might not be in the most quiet place, I’m just going to move, sorry.

**Interviewer:** It’s okay, no problem.

**Participant:** -communal spaces in this house is trying to find one that’s unoccupied. Urm, yes so it was skill sharing eventually and then yeah, groceries, medication, urm… basically a forum for anyone to request any urgent help, offer help and… yeah, I think it just, a bit of a community spirit, make people feel as though they had someone to talk to if they were worried, concerned or in need or anything really.

**Interviewer:** And has anything changed since it started?

**Participant:** Urm, well its obviously a lot quieter now. Everyone I think has set up their own networks of support, either through the group or now people have been able to move around and sort of settle and find, you know, either connect with family members or friends as a result, the requests for help are far, \*coughs\* excuse me, far less. And what we’ve done because the group obviously got so large, we created a separate chat group for questions, general questions and sharing of articles, occasional promotion of business and services, urr so there tends to be more activity there now than on the more sort of urgent support channels. So yeah, it’s gone more from, “I need help,” to, “I just want to chat, or I just want to share something that interests me.”

**Interviewer:** Okay, but did you keep providing help?

**Participant:** Urm, personally there is a chap that I was doing prescription collections for at the start of lockdown, and we’ve recently started doing those for him again. Urm other than that there’s only been maybe a half a dozen requests since lockdown number two and they’ve all been met. So yeah, where there’s a request it gets answered and it gets dealt with, but there’s very few these days.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm have you had any previous experience of coordinating groups like this?

**Participant:** No, nope completely, I’ve never, the only I thing I suppose that would remotely compare is I’ve been involved in a [ORGANISATION NAME] organisations so people had set up a system whereby we picked up food from supermarkets and bakeries on a Sunday, you know, the stick, produce that was going out of date, and then redistribute that in a route around the city to, you know, single parent families, those that are, sort of on their, what is it the JAM line? Just About Managing. Urm, yeah so, I was involved in that but no, no sort of political involvement, no sort of charity work or any coordination on this level before.

**Interviewer:** So why did you get involved?

**Participant:** Urm… a few reasons I suppose. Urr one probably, the most obvious is that I was out of work at the time, I’d got made redundant at the end of last year, so I had all of this time and of course the job market came to a screeching halt in March and I thought, “well I’ve got this free time and there are a lot of people out there that are probably going to struggle. What can I do?” urm, obviously we’d seen it coming, urm so I had quite a bit of time to think about, “right, what is my response going to be? Am I going to sit and watch Disney during lockdown or am I going to do something a bit more productive?” Urm… and yeah, my background, I grew up as a [NAME OF RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION], the first sort of twenty-one years of my life. So, lots of time spent door knowing and preaching and all that kind of thing, so it didn’t feel too out of my comfort zone to be dropping off leaflets and… doing things locally, so, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and when did you get involved, in the beginning of the group, yeah?

**Participant:** Yeah, right at the start.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Urm and what is your role in the group?

**Participant:** Urm we call ourselves admins, so all of us would meet once a week on Zoom to discuss where we were, where we needed to go and any sort of pressing issues. I suppose if I took on any specific role, I coordinated the leaflet drop. So, we worked out, did about ten thousand properties in [CITY NAME] and yeah, I took responsibility for sort of mapping out where we’d been, because we had swathes of volunteers that I thought, almost looking for a reason to get out and about, and said, “yes, I’ll drop leaflets off, where do you need me to go?” So, I’ll get the leaflets printed, get them distributed and then check that they’d been done. Urm I created the rotas for monitoring the group when it was at its peak. So, to try and make sure people got help to make sure we were following some reasonable safeguarding precautions. I set up a rota system so there was always someone monitoring the chat and wrote some basic safeguarding guidelines as well so when some people didn’t follow the, sort of good, best practice, we had some advice to give them. And every time someone new joined the group, we could point them to just a little word document urr that explains, you know, this is what the groups for, this what to do, this is what not to do, this is how to stay safe. Urm, yeah, so those were kind of my specific roles, but everyone kind of played a different part really.

**Interviewer:** And has your role changed?

**Participant:** Urm, again it got quieter, a lot of my work was right at the beginning and then after that point, I’d do my stint keeping an eye on the group, urm… been some mediation in there when there have been some rather tense situations. Urm… but no, a lot of my work was the groundwork really. Since then its just been maintenance.

**Interviewer:** And how does the activity that you did in the group and you still do some of them now, relate with urm other parts of your life?

**Participant:** Oh, good question. Urm… not sure if, if it does. I mean I found work, but that’s in a completely different arena. Urm, developed a couple of good friendships out of it, with a couple do f the other admins. Urm… and I suppose tis affected my reading slightly, I started to look into some, like political writings and want to know a little bit more [audio interference 09:43]. I don’t know that its had an overarching impact on my sort of day to day rally, no more than anyone else really.

**Interviewer:** I didn’t hear you, you mentioned that you started, impacted your reading as you were reading something on…?

**Participant:** Oh sorry, I just did some basic reading on urm politics in this arena to do with sort of urr… community action, urr trying to understand its relation to the world of academia, the world of politics, and the dynamics there and yeah just try and understand a little bit more about sociology.

**Interviewer:** Okay, interesting.

**Participant:** But yeah, on a very broad brush. I’m not academic myself, so.

**Interviewer:** Okay, can you explain a little bit more what geographical area the group covered?

**Participant:** Yeah, it was quite simply the postcode beginning [POSTCODE].

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** Urm because that seems to be the way the other groups evolved, was just take a post code each, and so it made sense for us to do the same.

**Interviewer:** Why did you decide to do that, based on the postcode?

**Participant:** Urm well it grew quite organically, I suppose. It started with we leafletted a handful of streets in… this area, and then the sensible thing it seemed to do was to move out from that area. And like I said the point that we were starting to leaflet on a grander scale, we’d picked up that there were other groups that seemed to be identifying themselves by a postcode as well.So, it was just a consensus in the group of, let’s try and cover out postcode and see what we can do.

**Interviewer:** And what kind of things did the group do?

**Participant:** What kind of things?

**Interviewer:** You mentioned you collected prescriptions, what else?

**Participant:** Urm so prescriptions, food deliveries, urm… I think, urr one or two fun little things, like I think there was this scarecrow trail, urm some joke trails that were put up. Urm but yeah, we decided to keep it quite basic, because at one point, there was such a flurry of communication about all sorts of different things, we just said, “right, we’re going to stick to groceries, prescriptions and urgent requests for nay other kind of help,” so, yeah, kept it quite limited.

**Interviewer:** And how often do people in the group did these things?

**Participant:** So hard to say, I’ve been asked that question quite a few times.

**Interviewer:** You have been? Okay.

**Participant:** Urm, the only way to work it out would actually be to download all of the WhatsApp messages and then sort of try and pick out the requests. I’d say probably at the outset maybe one or two a day. For the first month or so and then its tailed off from there. But that is a finger in the air kind of judgement really.

**Interviewer:** Urm how many people were in the group, you mentioned in the beginning the urr, active helpers, and how many were active helpers?

**Participant:** Urm again it’s really hard to say. Urm I’d say the group in terms of members reached about 350. Urm I’d say the proportion of those actually able to offer help and who did… maybe about twenty percent. But again, that, that is just a guess, we didn’t have any formal register of volunteers, it was all very ad-hoc co. And we had a lot more people volunteering to leaflet, than people volunteering to go and do… grocery runs, or pharmacy runs. And often I think once people had made a connection with one person, that then stuck. So, for example the chap that I did the pharmacy run for, I just did that for him for weeks on end, so he didn’t keep returned asking different people, he just went straight to me. Urm and I dare say that happened with a number of others, they got their first… grocery shop or… urm yeah prescription from someone and then continued to work with them.

**Interviewer:** Mmm, do you think some of the people are still doing that at the moment?

**Participant:** Urm, possibly, possibly, like I say I returned to, well I’ve actually passed the job onto my boyfriend now because I’m working, but my boyfriend now goes and picks up the prescriptions for this same gentleman, there was another chap that did it for a short while in between, but eventually hes found he way back to me. So, I wouldn’t be surprised if that’s happened with others.

**Interviewer:** Okay, in terms of resources, what kind of resources did you have?

**Participant:** Urm, apart from basic technology, urr… we had… just a lot of people willing to help. Urm, and we did have some assistance in terms of urr… printing, getting leaflets printed for distribution. I think we had, one maybe two small business agree to print in bulk for us. Urm and we had another volunteer who we set up and she, she managed a phone line, so for anyone who wasn’t WhatsApp friendly, they could call that number, so we had that as a resource but, really everything was managed through WhatsApp and then for those within the admin group it was through Zoom really. Other than that, I can’t really think of anything.

**Interviewer:** Any particular skills that people in the group have? Skills?

**Participant:** Urm, sorry, my audio’s a little bit funny.

**Interviewer:** No, my accent probably.

**Participant:** Urm, so we had a, one chap who was in the business of putting together funding proposals, so he put one together, that got a little bit confusing, so we didn’t end up going ahead with that in the end.

**Interviewer:** Why?

**Participant:** [GROUP MEMBER NAME 1] who I think you’ve spoken to, she already had a background in [OCCUPATION 1], and urr was very heavily involved with the local foodbank. So, obviously she was key. Urm, we have a [OCCUPATION 2], [GROUP MEMBER NAME 2]. So, her insight into how best to deal with certain situations was really useful. Urm… yeah, we had, had some mixed experience with the creatives who offered help. So, we had one lady who, one project I did undertake over the summer was to try and create hyper-local groups, so looking for volunteers to set up a street level group, whether they could actually take better care of each other, and where they didn’t need to come to this big group to look for support. We had one, urr, young girl who was very creative and set up a really lovely group for her street, did lots of artwork and design and got everyone involved in coffee mornings and… you know bring and buys and all sorts. But then we had the other end of the spectrum someone getting every upset because we’d used their idea for the leaflet and they’d already approached the university and had agreed all of this funding, but I think it was about a month into our activities. So, there was a little bit of conflict there. Urm but yeah so, I seemed to have gone off tangent here. I hope some of that was useful.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, sure. Okay, urm okay, how did you get people involved in the group?

**Participant:** Well leafletting was the key really. Everyone just got a letter through the door with some basic advice on, you know, what they can do to take better care of themselves, try and be safe. But then information on local vendors and urr a way to join the WhatsApp group. Urm… urr I was the liaison with the council, so they just kept us informed on what they were doing what other groups in the area were doing. Urr we had some chats with the university as well.

**Interviewer:** Why? The university?

**Participant:** Urm, they approached us, so urm… the chap that I was talking to at the council who’d been tasked with overseeing the mutual aid, funnily enough one of his neighbours was a researcher, or a professor I can’t remember what, at the university, who was interested in seeing if they could be of any help, or, but it seemed to turn into how they, how we could help them, a little bit. So, it didn’t, nothing ever came from it in the end, urm but we had a couple of meetings with them where they wanted to just understand what we’d done, how we’d done it, very similar to this conversation, but at the time was under the guise of “how can we help you? what do you need?” So, urm, yeah, which there wasn’t really a lot unfortunately. But yeah, like I say the core of it, to get people to join… the leaflets and beyond that it was WhatsApp.

**Interviewer:** And you mentioned that you had connections with the council, how was the relationship?

**Participant:** Really good, yeah. I’d speak to, his name was [COUNCIL OFFICER NAME], I’d speak to [COUNCIL OFFICER NAME] once every couple of weeks. Urm, and yeah it felt like quite a healthy dynamic he’d offer suggestions and give me lots of things to look into, but wasn’t at all, urm, directive. It was very much you know, “you’re doing a great job, thank you, these are some things you might want to think about, otherwise, just let us know if you need anything.” And again, there wasn’t much practical help that we can really get from the council. But just having them there to, if we needed advice or support was nice.

**Interviewer:** And how was the relationship with other groups, locally?

**Participant:** Urm, I’d say for the most part good. There was an attempt to make a [CITY NAME] wide network, as in the various sort of [CITY NAME] postcode groups came together on a group chat with the idea of sort of creating a super mutual aid group. Urm but… I think all that brought home to me was we were really lucky in our group, in [POSTCODE] that all of the admins all of the people running it were quite happy, all got along, all had the same ideas pretty much or how they wanted it to work. As soon as we went sort of further afield and started interacting with the other groups, it just showed me how complicated that can be. You’ve got lots of different people pulling in lots of different directions with their own ideas they want to do, and how bureaucratic or otherwise they want it to be. Urm, so I think there are occasions where the group were able to support each other, especially when it came to foodbanks… and urm, the occasional sort of drop off of services or good or what have you. Urm but yeah, other than that I think it was just too ambitions to get everyone working together, so.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think so?

**Participant:** Like I say there were just so many… it started to feel a little bit political. So, I sat in on the group for a number of months, and often found myself trying to mediate, so there are a couple of quite strong personalities, who would end up having a little bit of a battle over the group about what they wanted to do, and how they thought we should all be operating. Urm… and so a lot was said without an awful lot being agreed upon. So, I think… towards the end, towards my, the end of my involvement, [GROUP MEMBER NAME 1] and I had said, “look let’s try working together on one project,” urm which I think at the time was something around… urr schools and food for kids during the holidays. And someone who was quite passionate about that said, “yeah, I’ll lead that up and I’ll work out how we can all work together as a group to to do something positive here.” And just nothing happened. Urr, yeah, I think it got a bit too unwieldly and there were too many conflicts of opinions.

**Interviewer:** So, I guess the group is not part of a national network?

**Participant:** Sorry?

**Interviewer:** If you are part of a national network? For example, the COVID mutual aid network? Did you join? No.

**Participant:** No, no, we did try and stay in our little bubble, to be fair.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and how did you find people that needed help?

**Participant:** Urm… on a person, so in terms of my own personal experience helping people?

**Interviewer:** Yes, but how did you access to those people?

**Participant:** Urm… so I’m not sure if you mean as a group, so how did the group find helping others or me when I was specifically doing pharmacy or grocery shopping?

**Interviewer:** It can be both, yes.

**Participant:** Both?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant:** Urm so in terms of the group it was really positive, like I think the amount of times we actually had to say to people, “glad you’re happy that the group’s working so well, but remember lets keep the chat low so we didn’t flood everyone with tonnes of messages.” Because people would see an interaction within second someone says, “can someone help me, I need to get this medicine for my daughter?” Within a minute or two someone would respond and say, “yeah, I’ll take care of that,” and take that off into a private conversation. And then people would pile on saying, “this is such a good group, and it’s so wonderful seeing people get the support they need!” So, on a grand scale I think it was really positive and just quite reassuring for everyone, to see that “oh you know if I get stuck, there’s going to be someone to help.”And I think we were very lucky in that we didn’t get any… we didn’t have any safeguarding concerns, no one went to do something and either felt uncomfortable or unsafe, we didn’t have any, anything like that which was good, so.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so you didn’t mediate the help that was provided, so who needed help, it was everything on WhatsApp? Just to understand how the process works.

**Participant:** Sure, urm, what would generally happen, is someone would ask for help, we would leave it open to the group for someone to respond, and then generally whoever, which ever admin was sort of on duty at the time would just check with the volunteer, “are you okay with this, have you read the safe guarding instructions which had details on, you know, basic safety and hygiene, but also you know, being aware of surrounds and what not?” But we didn’t we wouldn’t mediate directly between the person needing help and the person offering. We’d just sort of be there as a support. On both sides really, just to make sure that it went smoothly.

**Interviewer:** And has your group tried to get official recognition, either becoming a charity or a company? Something like that? No.

**Participant:** No, I think we were all in agreement that we didn’t want to become, we were a temporary solution. None of us really have the time I think or the natural inclination to do this long term. You know this was because its needed, right now. So yeah, we’ve not, not looked into anything more formal. I think the only thing that was already really happening was the foodbank. Urm I’m not sure if, well [GROUP MEMBER NAME 1] would have probably told you more on that score than me.

**Interviewer:** But you can tell me, how, how actually how the foodbank relates with the group?

**Participant:** Urr I mean, I don’t know all of the details, that was very much [GROUP MEMBER NAME 1]’s remit. But as I, it was a foodbank that sprung up directly in response to the crisis, it wasn’t in existence before, and I think has now been partially reabsorbed by an existing charity. Urm… I know there are some concerns around that, simply because the foodbank in place during the first lockdown was extremely accessible and kind of, “no questions asked, you need, we give.” Urm… and I think what it’s been absorbed into is a lot more rigorous and perhaps makes it harder for people to access. So, I’m, yeah, I haven’t spoken to [GROUP MEMBER NAME 1] about that for a while, we’ve become quite good friends through the course of this, But I haven’t had a chance to catch up with her obviously for a little while, so, yeah that’s about the extent of what I know really.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and you already mentioned some possible motivations for getting involved in the mutual aid and community support during the COVID, urm, what are the motivations for the other active participants? The volunteers the coordinators?

**Participant:** Oh, good question! Urm… I can only guess obviously because I haven’t out right been asked anyone. But I would say for some of the administrators and probably a lot of the members as well, it would have been social. I picked up from a few that they’ve been in the city and maybe not made all that many social connections, so this was a good opportunity. That, you know, some people I guess curiosity, they got a letter and they thought, “oh, I wonder what this is about,” and just joined out of curiosity, some would have stayed and well, quite a lot have left, obviously, since. Urm… there would probably be quite a lot of political motivations, I mean we had [MP NAME] our local MP join one of our sessions at the request of one of our admins. Urm, [MP NAME] I don’t know if he’s an MP or not, like I say, I’m almost a-political. Hang on let me look him up. Yeah, he’s the MP, urr [POLITICAL PARTY] MP for [CITY NAME]. Urm… and yes, I’ve, I’ve quite a few people I’ve spoke to, for example the chao that tried to set up the… [CITY NAME] wide group, getting all of the admins, urm the administrators together… he was urr, sort of very activists orientated as were I think a couple of people at the university. Urm… so… yeah, I think there were probably some political motivations. And just a lot of people that care, that just wanted to help didn’t want to just sit at home or sit at home but at least do something with the time they had.

**Interviewer:** Okay, urm… and has involvement in the group meant a lot of time and effort for you, do you feel that?

**Participant:** A lot of time…?

**Interviewer:** And effort, effort.

**Participant:** Urr, yes, urm… again, that’s gone down massively as lockdown has eased and even going into the second one not half as stressful, but… obviously it was stressful for everyone anyway because we were all having to adapt to the change in circumstances, urm…. Personally, I just, it was very, very busy, so phone constantly going off, trying to coordinate the leaflets, trying to make sure that requests were met, fulfilling quite a few of those requests myself. Urm… and yeah, an awful lot of uncertainty over what sort of contribution I could make, whether or not I was doing the right thing, whether we were doing the right thing as a group, was this the best way to spend our time? Urm so yeah, an awful lot of time, thought and effort went into it which I think is why I’m probably so relieved it hasn’t been the same this second lockdown.

**Interviewer:** Urm and have people drop out of your group?

**Participant:** Yes, yeah, urm… I don’t have my phone otherwise I’d check how many were in it now. I’d say probably lost about half our membership.

**Interviewer:** Half? Okay.

**Participant:** Urm, yeah, but then I think quite a lot of those were people that fell into that curious category… ort had since moved, or their circumstances had changed and the group’s just no longer… urr useful.

**Interviewer:** Okay, any other problems that the group have faced, challenges, problems, this kind of stuff?

**Participant:** Urm… we’ve had some characters. In terms of people urm… particularly those with learning, special learning needs that didn’t necessarily understand how to use the group and just wanted to talk. Urm… and some sort of local disturbances that we’ve tried to manage outside of the group but also using the group, if that makes sense. Urm, so yeah, dealing with some interesting characters. And there, I think there was one time when we did completely panic because we had a, someone report to the group early on that they thought there was a domestic disturbance, quite a serious one, going on in their [audio interference: 35:06] building. And of course, everyone piles on and starts talking, some confidential information was posted to the group that we were then scrambling to get taken down, thankfully we got it taken down, but yeah, that was quite early on which is why we ended up with a guide to, “this is how you use the group, this is what you do say, this is what you don’t say.” Urm but, again, because we had such a good team of admins running the group, we all jumped in got it sorted, Zoomed the next day or a bit of a post-mortem, like what, what happened there? How can we stop this happening again? Urm but yeah that was an isolated incident, other than that, its mostly been a positive experience really, I think for everyone.

**Interviewer:** And is there any kind of thing that maybe the group have done that have helped the group keep going?

**Participant:** Urm… I would say, urm, one thing that we were quite particular about was keeping the communication fit for purpose. So again, in those guidelines we wrote those quite early on after that incident I mentioned. Not only to try and address safeguarding but also to… explain to people this isn’t a communal space to come and chat, this is for urgent things – remember you are messaging about 250/300 people. And so, you know, we don’t want everyone’s phones going off every two minutes whilst you have a chat. So, we got quite strict about that, and I think that was helpful. And then, because I felt quite bad about being so strict, I then created the chat group which was for people to go and have conversations if they wanted, and just a bit more of a social thing. I think that was a positive, just trying not to overwhelm people but also make sure they had somewhere to go, because we say a lot of people leave the group after a flurry of chatter. And I thought, “well I don’t blame you either, frankly.” Urm, trying to think if there’s anything else that… I think that, one thing I would have liked to have done more with, is where it has worked and been really positive, is those micro groups. So, getting someone on a street to from a street group, urm, myself and one of my other admin friends took responsibility for that. And we only managed to set up maybe… six.

**Interviewer:** Six, okay.

**Participant:** Urm so not a lot, but those that have worked well, its really nice. I’m still on a couple of them and they all seem to look out for each other and have a bit of a chat and I think check in with each other more than I think maybe they would have done if they’d just been part of the bigger group, so, yeah that’s nice.

**Interviewer:** And why did you decide to do those things?

**Participant:** That was in part the advice of… [COUNCIL OFFICER NAME 1], from the council, that was something he gently nudged me towards and when I had the time for it, I looked into it. Urm… we discussed it as a group amongst the admins and agreed that because we didn’t want to be a long term… sort of support system, the more people we could encourage to create their own groups, the better. Urm… yeah, and things were quieter, and I was still out of work so I thought, right, well… what else can we do. And so, had a crack at that. But yeah, that was a lot more work than I’d anticipated, and you were relying on other people to… to lead it which obviously can be tricky.

**Interviewer:** So, where any of these things strategic?

**Participant:** Sorry?

**Interviewer:** They were strategic, if you planned to do it, or they were spontaneous.

**Participant:** Yes, yes so initially we just asked for volunteers and anyone who just showed an interest we would then… almost kind of coach them though how to set up a group based on our own experience. Again, I wrote a document because I’m a geek so, that kind of thing. I work in training so writing sort of instructions and what-not is kind of what I do. Urm so yeah, we gave them as much support as we could to know how to set up a group… how to be safe, how to make sure they didn’t get overwhelmed themselves… urm… but really that all came down to their will and their motivation and I think some people liked the idea of it, but having to get out and do it was another thing, so. But those, like I say, those that did, we… sort of helped their hand and sat in on the group without saying anything for a month or two, just to make sure they were okay and then just left them to it and seems like they’re going strong, so.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned some meetings, weekly meetings, right?

**Participant:** Mmm-hmm.

**Interviewer:** They were admin or also for the volunteers?

**Participant:** Urm, we opened up initially, before we’d even become an admin group, we said anyone that wants to join, anyone that’s interested in being part of managing this or running it, we’re going to hold a zoom, and at that point none of us knew each other. And then I think we had maybe… well like I said we met every week and I think on maybe three or four occasions we had other people come along. So, one was [MP NAME] who I’ve mentioned; another was urr a head teacher who we thought, because he’d, he’d observed what we’d been doing in response to that incident I mentioned and seemed to have some things to say about it, so we invited him along but, yeah, he he didn’t stay. We thought, “oh, maybe he could join as an admin.” But unfortunately, he only had criticisms, no solutions, no suggestions of what we could have done differently, just everything we’d done wrong. Sat through that, didn’t invite him back. But funnily enough the, another girl who’d actually been really proactive in responding to that crisis-

**Interviewer:** The crisis of the domestic violence, yeah?

**Participant:** Yeah, she was fantastic and got on to private message with the woman who had raised these concerns and then was dealing with the police and all sorts. She just dived straight in, she joined that meeting also and is now part of the admin team, so she came, came along maybe a month or so in, but is now, you know, another member of the team. Urr we had one final chap who, he’d been instrumental in the leafletting campaign and had just done so much running around for me and helping me coordinate the final sort of push to get the last streets done. I said to him, “do you know, do you fancy joining, you’ve done so much work?” I think he came along to one meeting, didn’t say a lot and about a week or two later said, “yeah, this isn’t for me. I like doing but I don’t like being on these meetings and discussing all the boring stuff, so I’ll leave that to you and you just let me know if you need me.” So, yeah. Urm, but yeah generally the admin chat was just the, I think it’s, at its peak there was ten of us.

**Interviewer:** Urm, and finally I want to ask whether you have learnt anything from coordinating this group?

**Participant:** Loads, absolutely loads. Urm… where to start though? Urm… I didn’t know I suppose lots of little ideas have been planted that I’ll probably return to once I’m settled in my new job. So, urr like I said wanting to understand a little more about the dynamics between community action and, you know, social initiatives, government initiatives and how they can play off… one another, quite, that interests me. Urm, learning a bit about my own capabilities so, urm… generally I’m not really much of a leader, I’m more of a follower; but in this incidence did do a bit more leading and a bit, “this is what we’re going to do, let’s do it.” Urm so that’s been nice for me to learn that I can do that. Urm… I guess what a diverse population that we have in [CITY NAME] and probably how privileged we are in our particular postcode when we hear, have heard about some of the things that have gone on in the other postcodes, and how difficult it is. And again, [GROUP MEMBER NAME 1], all the work she’s been doing has brought it home to us just how comfortable we are in our little postcode bubble. Urm, but yeah, probably loads more, right now it all feels like quite a long time ago. Urm, yeah, I won’t waffle anymore, so [unclear: 45:21]

**Interviewer:** Okay. Yes, tell me more!

**Participant:** No, \*laughs\*, no I’ll get all embarrassed.

**Interviewer:** Urm do you think, urm, how do you see the future of this group?

**Participant:** Ooh, good question. Urm, I think it will peter out, certainly in its current form. Urm… you know I wanted to withhold judgement until the second lockdown occurred. And yeah… the, the level of need… through the group at least there’s, there’s so little that I can’t see it serving a long-term purpose. Unless someone was to come along and reinvigorate it and maybe more it in a new direction. Urm, but the last time we admins chatted which was, maybe a month ago, urr yeah just into the second lockdown, we all agreed that we’re quite exhausted. I think, you know, we all put quite a lot of work in, set the group up and, yeah, I don’t think any of us have the energy to reinvigorate it or even think of how and why we might want to do that. So, I can only see our group, slowly dwindling over time.

**Interviewer:** And your role in the group?

**Participant:** Urm… the same, essentially. I think… I, I’ve made some really good connections and so I think if… there were a need for either my skillset that I’ve acquired or the network I’ve built up, people know how to get in touch with me. And you know, if I had more of a doing role, in the future then I would jump at it. But in terms of trying to coordinate something like this again – no. Not right now.

**Interviewer:** Why not?

**Participant:** Just because one of the reasons I was able to devote so much time and thought to it was because I was out of work, now I’m back into fulltime work, it’s just, it wouldn’t be feasible.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant:** So.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you, I don’t think I have any more questions, is there anything you’d like to add?

**[Debriefing]**

**[End of Interview]**