



Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Community Learning & Inclusion

Introduction

Thank you for your support. The HRA grant has allowed the Whitehawk Inn to continue to provide a range of community services and adult learning in East Brighton following the loss of the Adult learning funding. With the Bridge and the Friends Centre having closed, there are fewer places available for people to access support, employment and training opportunities in their communities; venues such as the Whitehawk Inn provide these services where they are most needed. We have invested the HRA grant in continuing to build on the work we have previously undertaken to provide much needed and wanted services in our neighbourhood and to make them available to other areas of the city. Importantly, this grant has helped us begin to widen our offer and allowed us to start to work specifically with council tenants.

A place for our community

The Whitehawk Inn provides work and learning; information advice & guidance; adult learning and community groups and activities. The HRA grant has not only helped keep services running during the Covid-19 pandemic but given us the chance to introduce new services, suggested by local residents, and the opportunity to introduce even more in the year ahead.

Although Covid-19 social distancing rules mean that we have been unable to offer our usual “open-door” access we have introduced new ways for people to access services. We were determined that people should not be isolated and that the Whitehawk Inn would be a place where people can get the human support and contact they need during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Listening to residents

In October our staff and volunteers conducted one-to-one consultations with residents either at the Whitehawk Inn, in the community or on-line to understand what courses, activities and support they want to see at the Whitehawk Inn.

We received **87 suggestions** for courses; these fell into 8 categories: Arts & Crafts, Exercise & Well Being, Family Support, Hobbies & Interests, IT, Languages, Performance Art and Vocational.

We received **39 suggestions** for activity groups people would like to attend; these fell into 4 categories: Community Cohesion, Hobbies & Interests, Vocational, and Well-being.

Many people told us that they would like Whitehawk Inn to be open at evenings and weekends.

Our response to feedback

The HRA grant has enabled us to address some of these requests immediately, for example

- We have booked a film making “Green Screen” workshop in December teaching people to capture pictures of themselves against different background that they can use to send electronic greetings cards over the festive season. This starts to address residents’ request for film-making, IT and social media courses.
- In November we ran our first weekend class with a pottery workshop running on a Sunday. This starts to address residents’ requests for Arts & Crafts and weekend opening.

Working together for our community

The HRA grant supports the Whitehawk Inn to be a resource for other community organisations to use. For example we are working with Community Engagement Officers to provide a space to store equipment from the local food bank during their refurbishment. Prior to Covid-19 restrictions we supported the local Broadway GP surgery to run a “Worry Tree Café” each Friday afternoon at the Whitehawk Inn where surgery staff, patients, family and friends could meet to chat and socialise providing peer support for each other. We are looking forward to this service resuming as soon as possible. We are linked with many networks, for example the Social Prescribing network and as we have developed robust Covid-19 safety procedures we are able to offer our facilities and space for people, local residents or organisations, to run groups and activities at the Whitehawk Inn.

Community Cohesion – A Case Study

This year 10th – 17th October 2020 was National Hate Crime Awareness Week.



Members of the Whitehawk inn Creative Writing Class worked on producing essays, poems and some artwork on the theme of Hate Crime which they displayed on the noticeboard at the Whitehawk Inn.

The classes and exercises brought together people from different communities and backgrounds, both in class and on-line, who not only produced individual pieces of work but reflected together to produce a group poem.

National Hate Crime Awareness Week
Display by Learners at Whitehawk Inn

A shared vision for the future

Local residents’ visions, and there are many, for the Whitehawk Inn include “...the community sharing cultures to promote mental health and well-being”, “cultural film or quiz nights where people can share food”, “...classes would help my mental health by my feeling part of a group...”, “...people all bring one dish to share with others. Introducing people to the diverse nationalities now living in Whitehawk, promoting understanding and tolerance...”, “...being open at weekends...”, “...something to look forward feeling less isolated and feeling part of the community...”, “..for many particularly older people, it is also a social lifeline”.

The Whitehawk Inn shares these visions with residents. BHT continues to invest resources into the Whitehawk Inn and, with the help of the HRA grant, we are beginning to bring these visions to reality. With the essential support of the HRA grant, council tenants, local residents and people from across the city will benefit from access to vital services and support from a resource and activity centre in the heart of East Brighton.

For more information

To find out more about any of our services, to suggest an activity that you would like to see, or to arrange to use our building or facilities, please contact us by telephone on **01273 682222**, via e-mail whitehawk.inn@bht.org.uk or visit our website www.bht.org.uk

