



CASE STUDY

Do you have common-unity? Solihull Moors Foundation

OVERVIEW

Community engagement could not be more important now due to the current times in which we find ourselves. Although the club's community and offering hasn't changed, awareness of what and who is available locally has been heightened during Covid-19.

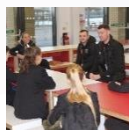
Solihull Moors FC and its Foundation has been playing a huge part in its local community during the pandemic, using the power of football to connect and collaborate way beyond its club internal network.

"As a club we pride ourselves on being 'a community-driven club that is accessible, user-friendly and offers everyone a warm welcome to a friendly and inclusive hub.'

"But we also look at more than football.

"Communication and collaboration with the community has been the biggest contributor to our growth, not only within the club but has also broadened our reach in the community."

Becci Fox – Head Of Community at Solihull Moors



Asset-Based Community Development

ABCD APPROACH

The ABCD model is sometimes referred to as the 'inside-out approach'. Community development is about first understanding what is around you in terms of community strengths and assets, rather than identifying problems or concerns.



Once there is an understanding of what's local to your club or league, it's then about how you find out exactly where these assets are and what they could add or bring.

Benefits could include the mobilisation of individuals and skills, or the identification of physical assets such as facilities. Both support enhanced community life and activity.

The foundations of this model are built on relationships with people. This is what really creates an 'inside-out' approach.

Using this approach can build on positives and create partnerships with shared outcomes. It's a 'win-win' ethos.

What's the main purpose of the Solihull Moors Foundation and how has it benefited the community?

WHY WAS THE FOUNDATION SET UP?

When the Foundation was created in 2019, its primary purpose was to promote local community participation in healthy sporting recreation. In partnership with the main club, the Foundation is able to help the local community and other good causes, using connections in the footballing world and beyond.

The Foundation's four main focus areas are:

1. Health and Wellbeing;
2. Education;
3. Employment & Volunteering;
4. Community and Social Cohesion.

HOW WAS IT BUILT?

Collaboration and partnership-building are key. It can be time consuming, but the opportunities which come from understanding local assets and creating connections with individuals, organisations and businesses can be hugely beneficial.

This approach is helped by the Foundation being a registered charity. It allowed for new opportunities, such as partnership funding with the local NHS's physical and mental health sessions. It also allowed the Foundation to gain a greater understanding of the corporate social responsibility of local businesses, leading to partnerships with shared outcomes.

Collaboration and partnership work has to be two-way. Understanding both parties' objectives, values and outcomes is key in making any partnership flourish.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

The Foundation is working in over 25 local schools, focusing on specific projects such as one which targets knife crime and another that promotes mindfulness. It also works with the older generation, for example through 'Knit and Natter' sessions, as well as running bereavement groups for those suffering a loss. One of its most successful collaborations to date has been a joint funding application with an employability charity and a counselling charity. The collective aim is to support young people with a disability, who are no longer in education, by supporting their mental health, fitness and employability. The goal is to enable these young people to be reconnected with society.

KEY LEARNINGS



Community starts at home: The players and fans are great people with whom to begin conversations about what they believe is missing within the community and how your club or league can get involved.



Understand what is currently on offer: Finding the gaps in the market in your local community provision and seeing how you can potentially fill these gaps.



Finding common-unity: The values of your club or league should blend with the community and underpin the work you're looking to be achieved.



It's two way: When understanding assets and your local community, there *must* be benefits for everyone involved.

"If you are looking to grow, the key for me is to look at partnership building. Talk to your Council commissioners, local NHS, schools as well as those with who you're more connected, such as your fans. Understand where there are current gaps in provision and services but more importantly how you – alongside other partners – can work together and support the wider community."

Becci Fox – Head Of Community at Solihull Moors