

Coast to Capital

A large, thick pink circular graphic that is open at the top and bottom, framing the central text.

The Quarry Building

Project Summary

The Aldingbourne Trust is a charitable organisation located near Chichester, West Sussex. The charity supports people with disabilities to become full and active citizens by providing opportunities to develop skills and gain meaningful employment. This support helps those who may have otherwise relied solely on Local Authority support, to live independent and fulfilled lives.



The project involved building a new space on the Aldingbourne Country Centre site. This building would be used for new office space for Aldingbourne staff, a café and shop area, and purpose built, equipped spaces that could be rented for events and meetings. This will provide a revenue stream for the Trust, open up existing areas for repurposing and most importantly, provide the best space possible for those people that the Trust are dedicated to support.

2,517 sqm Quarry Building
350 Jobs & Apprenticeships
80 Entrepreneurs & Enterprises assisted

Project Achievements

The 2,517.5 sqm Quarry Building was completed in 2018 and met all project ambitions. A total of 350 new, safeguarded, and indirect jobs and apprenticeships resulted from this project. Additionally, 80 entrepreneurs and enterprises were assisted in various ways including providing a space to conduct their business and reach more customers.

Visitor numbers have increased, bringing in additional independent income and providing more opportunities for the people supported by the charity to train and develop within a commercial setting. In 2018 and 2019 a number of events were held, and the Trust hosted their busiest Easter and Halloween on record.



In 2020 the Quarry Building was recognised by the Sussex Heritage Trust, with the building winning the prestigious 2020 Public and Community Award. The judges said, *“It doesn't look like a social care facility”* was the reaction of an early visitor to this brilliantly conceived and executed centre for people with special needs. *The robust external appearance combines with the warm, playful interior. This and the high standard of finishes creates an environment in which people of all abilities can realise their potential. Well done, Aldingbourne Country Centre!”*

£1,960,000 Local Growth Fund

Coast to Capital awarded Local Growth Fund of £1,960,000 to the project and this installed confidence in other investors. Without it, the project would unlikely have progressed and been able to deliver such impressive outputs. A total match funding sum of £2,991,269.50 was contributed, the majority of which received as charitable donations, and acted as a catalyst for additional spend on the wider site. Further improvements have been made in terms of accessibility, attracting visitors to the site, and adding to the general offer for people with disabilities and the wider community. Next steps will include work on one of the training buildings which will significantly improve pastoral and leisure space for the Trust's beneficiaries.

Project Benefits

Prior to the new building being opened, the Trust had the capacity to support about 1,000 people per year. Capacity has now risen to 1,300 per year, via new collaborations and being awarded tenders. People being supported at the Aldingbourne Country Centre have more opportunities and presence in the shop and hospitality areas.

The Quarry Building enabled further work to the Aldingbourne Country Centre site to take place, including creating better site facilities for the Trust's users, spaces for small businesses and additional facilities for visitors including a baby playroom, kids clubs and forest school activity



The Quarry Building incorporates a Changing Places room. This provides facilities for people who use hoists and benefit from a large, hygienic toilet/shower – increasing inclusivity for all members of the local community to visit and use the Centre. The further improvements are adding another Changing Places room in the area used by the Trust's beneficiaries.

Feedback from people who visit and are supported at the Country Centre is extremely positive. The Trust has developed a “social enterprise meets social care” offer, which attracts visitors across West Sussex and beyond, increases commercial activity – supporting local business and extends training and development opportunities for the Trust's target beneficiaries. These opportunities should not be underestimated. A case study illustrates the benefits being in a focused and busy environment brings: -

ALISON'S STORY - Alison Fairbrass

What does the Aldingbourne Country Centre mean to you?

Well, ACC means to me, I get out in the community and meet loads of different people. Something about Aldingbourne is socialising because I live quite far away. I live in East Wittering, a bit cut off and I wouldn't like it to stop. I love Aldingbourne because I've been there so many years. I left college when I was 16, then moved on to Aldingbourne because I didn't know what I want. I was worried what I was going to do in the future. I didn't want to just stay at home because I'm an active young lady, and I like getting out there meeting other people and that. And since I've been to Aldingbourne that has progressed over more years because when I didn't used to go to Aldingbourne I was very clinging to my parents and didn't want to leave home for the day and my parents said “yeah, you've got to meet other people” because you can't stay with your parents all your life and I really like Aldingbourne. And it's a lovely community.

So, what sort of things do you do?

I attend Aldingbourne on a Tuesday and a Friday. On a Tuesday at the moment, I work with Karen in the kitchen. They show me how to bake stuff and they used to get me to trained up because that all leads to a job in the outside community. When I very first went in the kitchen, I was very shy, and I thought what am I going to do? They showed me how bake a cake. I think when I very first went in the kitchen Val taught me how cook. Now, since we have the new building it's marvellous, the new building, I love it and I think it's a good thing for Aldingbourne and now Karen just gives me a recipe and tells me to get on with it on my own. And I didn't used to do that, I used to always [have] someone with me because Cerebral Palsy and I struggle carrying stuff like boiling hot water and that. And they just train me up and I like [to] help the staff [to] do it all. Since I've been to Aldingbourne with all my lovely colleagues and friends I have [be]come more independent at home because when I lived with my family, I was very clinging at first and they thought I wasn't able to live independent and actually I proved them wrong. I live independent now, got my own lovely house. I love living independent. I didn't used to go on the trains and that, like travel. Now I'm getting used to all that trains now. I didn't used to do, and I think that[s] a marvellous thing I do now, and I do like my own independence. And I think it's good for me, to live my life.

You talked about liking the new building at Aldingbourne and working in the new visitor café there, can you tell us why you like it?

Why I like it [is] because, we get public in and I talk to the public and I also have a little part time job outside of Aldingbourne, a paid job and when I didn't used to see any public, I was shy and since I was at Aldingbourne I like dealing with customers and that now.

Because I got all the skills

from Aldingbourne and my part time job.

What is it you like about working with the customers?

I like talking to them, I like helping them, if they struggle in the Café, I go up to them and I say to madam or sir, "do you want me to help you?" and I talk to them and some of the customers feedback to Karen about me, how polite I am and that.

You talked about being trained up by the Café team, to do these things, are they the sort of things they trained you to do?

Yes, they have, in a big way, because I didn't used to do any of that. They train me, I used to do a little bit on the till, in the front, serve customers and I just like working with the customers and that. Because I think I'm very good with them all.

As you've been trained up to get the skills and you've got more confident, you've then gone on to get a paid job?

Yes, yeah and I just want to say, I do want to say a big thank you

to Aldingbourne because this how I progress to get myself a little part time job and my parents said I wouldn't [be] able to get out there to work in the community and I proved them wrong, I could. And I did the Co-Op to college for Work Experience, done four weeks with them at the Co-Op at East Wittering where I live and I asked them for a little part time job and they said yes, we will take you on because you are very good in the shop with customers and that. And I've been there 20 odd years now.

I started there in 2002 and I really like my job and I really love going to Aldingbourne to see to communicate with other people with my disabilities, because if I didn't have any of that I would be just shut in my house and not see anybody. And I really hope that will continue because if it doesn't for my benefit, I will be so sad, and I won't see anybody. And I don't want that to happen to me because I see other people doing that sort of thing and I think how they didn't even get out in the community. I just say it's marvellous, Aldingbourne came along with me because Aldingbourne done tremendous with me over the years, and I just love it there.

Would you say that it's helpful to keep doing the training and the work you're doing at Aldingbourne and that helps you with the paid job that you do?

Yes it does because I'm still continuing talking to customers that helps me in my Co-Op job and also I've been, recently, we've got the 5 item tills in the Co-Op and I really want to have a go at them, since I've been to Aldingbourne in the kitchen, Karen and that [have] been teaching me the tills and that, so I can go on and do them in my job, it[s] all helping me in so much way. With that old café, where we are now, it didn't bring us enough business in because we were small, compact and we wanted to expand it.

So, since we got the big building, it is just fantastic for everybody. I think we are all so happy with it because we, now we can bring more customers in and it will bring in more money for us all. And we're just making the site bigger, because we used to all have a small farm, now the farm is growing, bigger and bigger. We've got a nice outbuilding where the woodwork department is, I think that's doing very well. I don't work in there I'm just saying what I think of it. I used to also work in Organics, Horticulture and I saw that I was seeing that growing so marvellous because when I very first worked in Horticulture it was so tiny and we expanded that, bigger and bigger.

The Trust's commitment to Social Value is unparalleled and this project was no exception, here are some further examples of that Social Value.

Sustainable design

From the roof to below the ground, the Quarry Building has been designed to make the best use of nature with clever, comfortable & sustainable design.

The roof: has solar panels which generate up to 2.8kw per hour – enough to power 20 kettles.

Insulation: the building is well wrapped up, with 300mm insulated panels, to keep users warm in the winter & cool in the summer. The 42,000-cedar shingles came from a renewable source & add to the thermal efficiency (the 'R Value' is twice asphalt, four times better than cement fibre). The building is warmed by a biomass boiler, providing hot water & heat for under the floors – one of the Centre's enterprises collects waste wood & saves it from landfill. Some of this wood is used to heat the building. The ETA biomass boiler is rated at 60kw and we burn waste wood generated from our Wood Collection business (part of the Community Wood Recycling Project) On average we collect over 300 tonnes of waste wood each year, most of this is recycled, sold, or used to make products to sell in our shop, the remainder is used as fuel for our biomass boilers which heat the building instead of using fossil fuels. We are BSL (Biomass Suppliers List) registered which demonstrates that the fuel we use meets sustainability criteria for the Renewable Heat Incentive. The whole building has a concrete frame which acts as a thermal store.

Light & ventilation: the building makes use of natural light & windows to save energy. There is an air source heat pump which provides cool air in the summer & warm in the winter. The building uses LED lights for low energy & long life (30,000 hours). Lights are sensitive to movement & switch off automatically. The addition of tinted windows helps control the heat in the building.

Decking & bridges is made from recycled car tyres.

Water: the building collects rainwater to flush the toilets. The taps are sensor controlled & turn off automatically. Underneath the car park there is a 280m³ holding tank & soakaways for water to naturally filter through the chalk strata.

Charging points: The car park has the infrastructure below surface to provide some electric car charging points.

Travel: The Centre operates buses which collect the people they support from areas across Arun and Chichester. The buses reduce individual car journeys by approximately 42 road users per day.

Supporting the local economy

During the build, local contractors were used as much as possible. The architects were based in neighbouring Chichester and main contractor is based in Fareham. Landscaping contractors were local craftspeople.

The scope of business activities at the Centre has expanded to meet increased support and demand. The shop showcases products from local producers (e.g., honey, craft items, ceramics and jewellery). The café also uses local suppliers for fresh produce (vegetables, bread – including artisan suppliers, meat and dairy products). Aldingbourne also employs additional temporary staff during peak periods when a range of events are provided, these staff supplement the cafe and events teams in these busy times. These events also provide additional work opportunities for the people the Trust supports to engage with the local community.

Developing vocational training

The improved facilities for the Trust's administrative staff has also enabled Aldingbourne to significantly increase support for employers across the social care sector, hosting a National Partnership which disburses financial support from Skills for Care for vocational training and developing the

The Trust has supported 5 apprenticeships to date – two in catering and hospitality, one in the wood enterprise, one in human resources and one in marketing.

As a result of offering more facilities to young visitors, the Aldingbourne Trust has also supported an undergraduate placement who was specializing in child development.

The Trust has reached out to the local community, including local businesses and further education. These have included hosting Green Growth Innovation workshops with the Brighton University Green Growth Platform and the Sussex Chamber of Commerce. The Aldingbourne Trust hosted a conference to bring together the voluntary and community sector and the County Council and District Councils.

