

Equality and Social Justice Committee visit to Caia Park Partnership

11 April 2025

As part of the [Equality and Social Justice Committee's inquiry into social cohesion](#), Jenny Rathbone MS (Chair) visited the Caia Park Partnership (CPP) in Wrexham, on Friday 11 April 2025. The visit was led by Jon Stumpp, CPP Senior Manager leading on Children and Young People's Services. There were also number of opportunities to talk to other members of staff and individuals who use the services provided by the partnership.

Background

The Caia Park housing estate includes 5 wards in Wrexham, a total population of approx. 12,000 people / 3,000 households. The most local secondary schools are: [Rhosnesni High School](#), [Ysgol Clywedog](#) and [Ysgol Morgan Llwyd](#) (Welsh Medium School for the Wrexham area). It's one of the largest housing estates in North Wales. There have been tensions in the past, most significantly the riots that occurred in 2003 following clashes between local residents and Iraqi Kurdish refugees. A lot of work went into bringing the community together including equality training.

The Caia Park Partnership Ltd (CPP) was established in 1998 by local residents. It's a community led social enterprise and registered charity. Much of the CPP's work is based on individual project funding which tends to be short term or needs to be re-applied for. Core funding is a concern especially with the rise in Gas and Electricity prices and NI contributions. There are many funding projects where some of the core costs are included in the bi, but it doesn't cover all the costs. *"At one point we faced an £10,000 increase in energy bills but managed*



to get it down to £3,000” Jon Stumpp. Whilst they have been able to minimise the increase in their energy bills, long term, having solar panels and investing in renewable energy would help but are yet to find financial assistance for this.

60 people are currently employed by the CPP. A number of members of staff have grown up in the local community. From taking part in CPP activities as youngsters, they have gone on to gain experience from volunteering and have been supported to gain relevant qualifications enabling them work delivering the provision here, from childcare assistance, youth work to senior management. This bottom up model of development seems to be integral to the success of the CPP as staff understand their struggles, and often have been through it themselves. Trust in the staff, knowing that they can turn to them for support leads to the community supporting the CPP and wanting help with activities and events as they can see that there is a benefit for everyone.

“I found it really rough here when I was growing up I want to make sure that young people growing up here today don’t have to struggle.” Parenting Support Mentor.

One of the young mother attending the parenting group has been coming to the Hub since she was 16, she’s now working here, she’s gained a degree and is part of the team delivering part of the Jobs Growth Wales programme.

Services provided by the CPP

The partnership has a holistic approach to its community development role. It works with the community and partner organisations to identify needs and provide activities, services and facilities to support the residents of Caia Park and the wider area.

“The Partnership is deeply embedded in the community and all we do is underpinned by an ambition to enable people and communities to achieve their potential.” (CPP website [Caia Park Partnership – Caia Park Partnership, Wrexham](#))

The CPP hub includes opportunities to develop life skills e.g. cookery and gardening. There is a regular men’s health group and parenting project a community, life skills flat, housing support, meals on wheels for the elderly, lunch club, youth club and provision for young people who aren’t in education, employment or training.

The partnership has a further 4 other buildings in Caia Park - 3 childcare nurseries who provide 'Flying Start' provision and a dementia daycare centre. We support daycare for 80-100 children across all 3 sites.

Activities and support is available for everyone in the community from the very young to the elderly.

"We believe that a lot of benefits come from our intergenerational work." Jon Stumpp

The community has benefited from an intergenerational approach with children from the childcare provision singing to the elderly residents at the lunch club, to older members of the community volunteering and sharing their expertise in cooking, gardening or woodwork.

"I like to meet people I wouldn't ever meet on the estate if it wasn't for here (CPP). Walking about the estate, older people wouldn't speak to a young person in a hoodie, because of the stereotype, they would be scared. But because we have gotten to know each other here and we talk."

Young People Provision:

Mentoring for 8-18 year olds is available and often the mentoring will include often parents or family members to ensure that a support network is provided for the young people.

Neets / Jobs Growth Wales /MAPs Plus

Working with 16-24 year olds not in employment, education or training has been a success. Many young people from the area don't want to attend a formal education setting and therefore do not attend the Coleg Cambria site. Also a gap was seen where once young people were in the workplace there was no further support given. As a result CPP are working with Coleg Cambria and delivering training and continuing the support once they are in the workplace. Young People from the wider area attend training at Caia Park, their original bid outlines supporting 30-40 young people now sees 130 young people.

"The classroom doesn't look like a classroom it's how they young people want it"

Youth Clubs

A youth club is run here but CPP has a contract to run 12 clubs across the county with some clubs seeing over 40 young people. This only works with funding from

LA and community council contributing, but funding is an issue and contributions by community councils will need to increase if clubs are to continue.

The clubs can be a lifeline for many, by now they are ensuring that there's food available in every session as a number of the young people are going hungry. One young person had been excluded from school, as a result they weren't receiving their free school meals and the family budget wasn't able to stretch to 3 meals a day at home. Knowing that there was food at the youth club was a relief for the young person.

The youth clubs are a way of supporting young people, signposting, developing skills such as cooking activities. Due to tensions within the community equality awareness and training is also delivered in the clubs. As a result there has been an increase in young people from ethnic minorities attending the youth clubs.

Antisocial behaviour is an issue in the town centre. Knife crime and Ketamine abuse has been an issue in the town centre youth club, as a result agencies have come together to try and support the club, to keep the much needed facility open.

A cross county open forum for all agencies involved in youthwork in the area has been set up by the CCP.

"Social value from youth services and mentoring is 10 fold down the line"

CCP have been working with Wrexham Academy of Screen Acting (established by a number of successful actors from the area) to provide opportunities for young people to develop a variety of skills from performing to filming.

CPP have also worked on promoting their work and reaching out to organisations in the area. This has led to Wrexham FC providing grassroots football for youngsters.

Memorial Garden and Gardening Project.

The Memorial Garden was set up as the local cemetery is quite a distance and many residents don't like leaving Caia Park. The memorial garden and the gardening project was pulled together by local people clearing the area and using expertise within the community. The garden has raised beds and a polytunnel for planting vegetables and herbs, fruit trees have also been planted

all with the aim developing gardening skills and for the produce to be used by the Parenting / Cookery club or taken home.

"I've come off my medication over the last two years because of here. I started coming to the Men's Health Group and worked on projects, painting, doing something for the community helps and people come over to chat." New father who regularly attends the Hub.

Parent Group

The Parent Group meet weekly and offer a variety of activities where parents can also bring their children. "What's delivered by the group comes from what the parents need." Parenting Support Mentor

Those coming to the group feel supported, they enjoy learning skills which will help them at home. They also feel supported by the staff, it's a safe place to ask for help. The CPP have created an environment where they feel safe and supported by staff but also each other

"Parents support parents here, especially single parents, it's really hard"

' My daughter was only 3 weeks when she started to come to come here. My Healthy Start vouchers doesn't cover the cost of the milk and with no Child Support Benefit for a third child it's really hard" Mother of three attending the Parenting Group

"My 7year old loves coming to the group when it's school holidays, he loves the cooking and baking. We've had an air fryer course, learning about baking on a budget has been good." Mother of three attending the Parenting Group

" We've made scones with the kids, we've also learnt to make our own playdough" Mother attending the Parenting Group with daughter.

The cookery sessions are led by an older member of the community. "she's 86 and comes every Tuesday to teach us how to make our money go further by making bread, vegetable soup, crumble and scones" Parenting Support Mentor

The cookery sessions are linked to what's available in the community fridge

In addition drop in crisis support is available with signposting to other services. They have a strong community group on social media where they can post if anyone is in need e.g. children's clothes, baby equipment etc. The Hub is an

integral part of the community with residents feeling comfortable asking for help or support.

“They’re familiar faces so people will pop in all the time to ask for help and if it’s not something they do they will always be able to sign pots you”

“I speak to her (Parent Group mentor) every day, when my microwave broke, I was panicking as i needed it to warm the baby’s milk, she was here with one that worked by 8:30” Mother of three

“We all support each other, the staff are there for us we want to help an support them.” Mother attending the Parent Group

Events

The CPP hold family fun activities e.g. Christmas Wonderland and Easter events with activities and food for the whole family. By now the community raises money to fund these events, local personalities taking part in sponsored events because they know the whole community will benefit people are happy to contribute to the fundraising. The fact that no one needs to pay anything on the day is a crucial element to ensure that event in the community feels included.

“Families can’t afford days out to places like Farm Parks so we bring it to them, we come together to make it happen” Parenting Support Mentor.

Caia Crafts / Woodwork

The woodwork workshop facilities is currently being refurbished to provide a multifunctional workshop space for anything from motorcycle repairs to crafts. The hope is that the facility will be used by a wider sector of the community, may help develop a business idea and that groups will be able to hire the facility.

Housing Support

The contract for housing support has been won by another provider. Whilst there are no concerns regarding the quality of support by the other provider and staff will be transferred, there is concern that the service will now be moved to the City Centre and Caia Park residents will be unwilling to leave the estate to get the support they need.