



WILTSHIRE & SWINDON SMARTPLACE PROGRAMME END PROJECT REPORT

Project name eMelksham

Version 1.0

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Version	Date	Summary of Changes
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Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name Position

Contents

Document History 2

Distribution..... 2

Contents 3

Introduction 4

Project Objectives..... 4

Project Deliverables..... 4

Achievement Against Objectives & Deliverables 4

Conclusions 4

Recommendations..... 5

Introduction

1. The Wiltshire & Swindon Smartplace Programme developed from the decision in June 2002 by a range of public and voluntary sector partners in Wiltshire and Swindon to work together with BT to secure the benefits of broadband and related technology for the people and organisations of Wiltshire and Swindon. The programme aims to maximise the benefits from ICT and broadband technology for businesses, learners and communities across Wiltshire and Swindon. It will bring benefits for all sectors, both public and private, voluntary and community, in a holistic way, with particular focus on delivering long-term employability.
 - 1.1. The programme comprises five themes: Business Development, Learning & Skills, Community Capacity Building, Broadband Infrastructure, and Marketing. Each of these themes will be implemented by means of a series of individual projects which, when taken as a whole, will realise the aims and objectives of the programme. This project forms part of the Community Capacity Building theme.

Project Objectives

2. To provide support to existing voluntary and community organisations in the Melksham Community Area in developing the use of ICT to support their own organisational objectives;
3. To develop a sustainable group of volunteers who can offer ICT support and mentoring to local voluntary and community sector organisations via a self organised network;
4. To develop models of good practice for mutual exchange and support between voluntary and community organisations in the Community Area, including use of ICT where appropriate, that can be replicated in other parts of the County and elsewhere.
5. To enhance the capacity of community organisations to contribute to community and civic life in the Community Area by enhancing skill levels and cooperative working.

Project Deliverables

6. Ten IT Health Checks will be carried out in the first year, and a further ten per year of the project.
7. Two training events will be achieved in the first year, and 3 in the second.

Achievement Against Objectives & Deliverables

8. The eMelksham project came across problems with recruiting a suitable candidate with the necessary skills, to perform the required tasks. Considerable knowledge was required to carry out the IT Health Checks. Melksham 1st has now recruited a suitable candidate, who has been in post for two months.
9. Two IT Health Checks have been carried out to date; this is most promising since the Facilitator has only been in place 2 months.
10. Over 50 users have accessed training at Melksham library.

Conclusions

11. The project endured enormous setbacks; recruiting suitable candidates can prove difficult.
12. The Homework Club held at Melksham Library has proved most successful with over 100 users a month.
13. Two IT taster courses were run during Silver Surfers' Week at Melksham Library.
14. It Health Checks are proving difficult to promote; Small Organisations are not always willing to allow outsiders to "criticise" their IT equipment and knowledge.

Recommendations

15. eMelksham will continue after the Smartplace funding has ceased, headed by Melksham1st a Community Trust.
16. This type of project involves a facilitator with a high skill base, so this can demand a higher salary, and should be anticipated in future funding bids.