



Belong : Contribute : Thrive

APPENDIX B

Woodlands Cafe

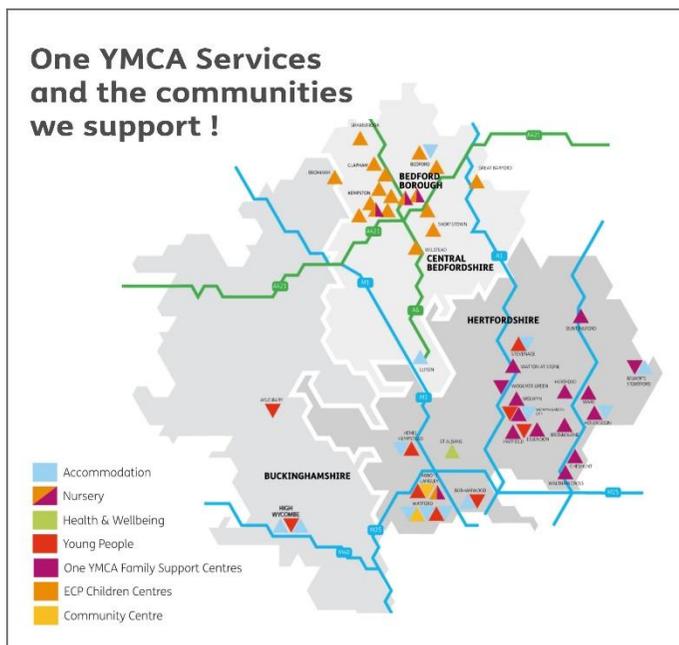
OVERVIEW

A sustainable place to work, socialise and thrive at the heart of the community !



One YMCA is a leading pan-regional charity, providing a broad array of community focused help and support across Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

We provide housing & homelessness, family, domestic abuse, youth and wellbeing support to some of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our communities. On average this sees us support over 148,000 people annually to belong, contribute and thrive.



Our approach is to bring all of our specialisms and services together to deliver the greatest positive impact for those we support. Working with district, county and national commissioners we design and deliver innovative and effective solutions to meet local need.

In the last year alone this holistic approach to supporting those in our communities has enabled us to deliver over £15.7 million in savings to the

public purse and added social value. All whilst working collaboratively with our local charity and third-sector partners.

FUTURES CAFÉ CONCEPT

Our core One YMCA mission is to support those we help towards independence. Independence from the barriers (and reliance on support) that is preventing them from living their life to the full.

As such and during the COVID19 pandemic we realised that all of our communities needed a place, at the heart of the community where everyone could come together to work, socialise and thrive.

We knew that place must be a sustainable 'Top of our Game' place which places community before profit. It should pro-actively bring together everyone from our community, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or social background.

The concept was born and our first Futures Café – *where every cup really does make a difference* – was born !

LEAVESDEN COUNTRY PARK

In the heart of Three Rivers District, Leavesden Country Park (LCP) is circa 66 acres in size and was originally the site of Leavesden Asylum and Orphanage.

It is steeped in history and through a community led and authority / industry supported approach this has been leveraged to secure circa £1 million in National Lottery Heritage Fund grants. This investment and commitment has helped create a local community space that brings heritage, conservation and wellbeing together.

The park sits directly at the heart of the community with residential areas on all sides, making it a true local resource. Its facilities have been well thought out to ensure an attraction and value to everyone in the community and include:

- Outdoor Football Pitches (x 3)
- Heritage Trail & Visitor Centre (HIVE)
- Woodlands Café and Community Toilet
- Early Years Nursery (Outstanding 90 place)
- Natural Woodlands (circa 20 acres)
- BMX Track
- Community HUB and Space Venue
- All Weather (3G) Pitches and MUGA

There is plentiful (free) car parking with good access from multiple transport routes, with level access and disability friendly facilities a constant focus. This includes accessibility within the café, HUB, visitor centre and community toilet.



Working together the LCP Stakeholders Group, led by One YMCA, and Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) have sought to maximise the resources of the park for the benefit of the community.

Taking the community and local voice into the heart of the process we have been able to design and deliver a huge variety of 'added value' activities. Where necessary securing additional funding and resource or facilitating local community group set-up including:

- Junior Park Run
- Nordic Walking
- Friends of Leavesden Country Park
- Park Rangers (Play Rangers for Children)
- Carols in the Park at Christmas
- Nature & Heritage Walk Group
- Holiday Play Schemes

It is in part thanks to this joined up approach and commitment to the community that LCP has received the prestigious Green Flag Award for publicly accessible open spaces / parks.



WOODLANDS CAFÉ

The Woodlands Café sits at the heart of our overall offering at the LCP. It helps bring everything together, the nursery, visitor centre, community HUB and all the amazing outdoor activities including hosting numerous local community events.

It is dog friendly, offers free WiFi and lap top charging points and has an overarching commitment to providing wholesome healthy and of course tasty quality food and beverages. All of course at a genuinely affordable community price point.



It was clear from the very outset of the project that this was not about creating a community café. It was about creating a sector leading, destination visit café (at the heart of the community), that happened to be operated by a charity.

Our model is an ethical one, where any surpluses made within our trade making activities are re-invested back into our charitable programmes for the benefit of local people. We estimate that for every £1 spent in our Café, 20% is reinvested back into the local community.



Alongside its usual café function we have also made a solid commitment for Woodlands Café to provide employment and training to local young people and those far from the job market. Three FTE young people will be commencing their workplace training at Woodlands Café supported and accredited by West Herts College.



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