

WHITSTABLE   
**UMBRELLA**  
CENTRE

# Strategic Plan 2023-26



**The Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre is a vibrant hub in the heart of Whitstable providing versatile, safe and accessible space for a range of inclusive activities, projects and services.**

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Background.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. About the Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.1 The building.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.2 The team .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.3 Service delivery.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.4 Outcomes .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Mission and values.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.1 Mission.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.2 Values.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Overall Theme for 2023-26 .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6. Strategic Priorities.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7. Objectives and Activities .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8. Contact Details.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre (WUCC) Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026

### 1. Introduction

This Strategic Plan sets out Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre's mission, strategic priorities and objectives for 2023-26, and the core activities the Charity plans to deliver to support them.

The Strategic Plan will enable the Trustees and staff team to plan and ensure that all work is aligned with WUCC's mission and objectives to achieve the best outcomes for the Whitstable community the Charity is set up to support.

The aim is to give clarity and guidance whilst allowing the Charity to remain flexible and responsive to the needs of the Whitstable community.

This Strategic Plan has been developed with valued input from the staff team and Trustees taking into account feedback from volunteers, partner organisations and the Whitstable community.

It has been written for the team, partner organisations, supporters, funders, beneficiaries and all who are interested in the mission, priorities and impact of the Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre.

### 2. Background

Whitstable Umbrella Community Support Centre was set up in 1986 and became a registered charity (No. 1097884) in 2003. The Charity Commission registration states:

*Charitable objects:*

To promote (without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or political, religious or other opinions) any charitable purpose for the benefit of the inhabitants of Chestfield, Seasalter, Swalecliffe, Tankerton and Whitstable, Kent (the area of benefit) and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, in particular:

- to relieve mental or physical sickness, disability, or disorder, and to relieve the aged.
- to protect and preserve mental and emotional health and stability.

*Activities:*

'Whitstable Community Centre exists to facilitate all such activities and voluntary services as together provide a Centre for the whole community.'

### 3. About the Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre

#### 3.1 The building

The Centre's historic building is rented from Canterbury City Council and is situated in a central location in Whitstable, with ample parking nearby. It comprises several spaces for use and hire:

- St Mary's Hall - a large, fully accessible hall with a stage and kitchen
- Lounge/Meeting Room - a flexible meeting room seats 10-12 people with or without tables.
- Garden Office seats 4
- Community Garden
- Cafeteria space
- Hive Coworking

#### 3.2 The team

The paid staff team consists of 3 employees (1 full-time, 2 part-time), 5 Trustees, a hands-on Chair, and a number of regular volunteers including gardeners, reception/office, group facilitators, maintenance.

#### 3.3 Service delivery

Whitstable Umbrella Centre is much more than just a space for hire. The building is a tool which enables the Charity to host, facilitate and promote a wide variety of activities, services, groups and projects to benefit the Whitstable community.

Current service delivery includes:

*Activities* – Regular and one-off classes and groups to support the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of the Whitstable community.

*Projects* – Providing space and/or support to long-term initiatives helping the Whitstable community.

*Space* – Ensuring a variety of safe and accessible spaces for people to hire or use for free to support the community.

*Events* – Hosting or facilitating a diverse range of one-off events such as fundraisers, music events and parties for people to come together in person.

*Support* – Providing friendly and welcoming staff and volunteers to help and support anyone in the community who needs it, sharing information and sign posting to internal & external services.

#### 3.4 Outcomes

As a result of our work, we want people in Whitstable to:

- Feel less isolated and more connected to others.
- Be supported when they need it most.
- Experience improved physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing.
- Be empowered to help themselves, by signposting to relevant information and services.

## **4. Mission and values**

### **4.1 Mission**

The Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre is a vibrant hub in the heart of Whitstable providing versatile, safe and accessible space for a range of inclusive activities, projects and services.

### **4.2 Values**

All our work is driven by our core values, to be:

- Supportive – practical and emotional support.
- Responsive – always listening to our community and responding to their needs.
- Accessible - space and equitable opportunities for all the Whitstable community, including those who may find it difficult to access community life elsewhere.

## **5. Overall Theme for 2023-26**

- Continue to support and maintain the range of activities, projects and services on offer.
- Continue to work in partnership with local organisations and community projects whose values align with WUCC.
- Raise awareness of the work of the centre to ensure we reach people who need us.
- Respond to the diverse needs of the local community in these challenging times.
- To continue to provide free and subsidised space for charities and community groups to the value of at least £18,750 per annum.

In three years' time we hope to see a happier, healthier and more connected Whitstable community with the Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre at its heart.

## **6. Strategic Priorities**

Over the next three years, Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre will concentrate on the following eight priority areas:

1. To put WUCC onto a sound financial footing, to ensure the continuation of the work of the centre by securing grants/fundraising to address:
  - i. The day to day running of the centre to secure the viability and stability of the charity.
  - ii. The backlog in repairs and upgrade facilities (to both modernise and reduce running costs)
2. To support the delivery of services and activities for the Whitstable community.
3. To provide a signposting service for the public.
4. Increase local awareness of what WUCC has to offer.
5. Provide safe and accessible spaces for the Whitstable community.
6. Strengthen the charity to increase its resilience and long-term sustainability.
7. Increase the environmental sustainability of the centre in response to climate change and becoming carbon neutral.
8. Fundraise to buy the freehold to secure the Centre's future.

## 7. Objectives and Activities

Set out in the following pages are the objectives for each of our priorities, plus draft activities to achieve each priority. Each year, an Operational Plan (see template below) can be created with clear and measurable objectives and activities to meet the strategic priorities.

*Please note:* To ensure the Charity remains responsive to the needs of the Whitstable community, activities may be changed or adapted.

### **Priority 1: To put WUCC onto a sound financial footing, to ensure the continuation of the work of the centre.**

Objective:

- a) To secure grants for the day to day running of the centre
- b) To secure grants/funding for the backlog in repairs, upgrade facilities (to both modernise and reduce running costs)

#### **Activities to include:**

- Create an income and expenditure budget for each financial year.
- Develop a fundraising strategy to support WUCC's objectives and action plans, including multiple income streams to reduce the reliance on funding from space hire.
- Increase unrestricted income from Trusts, corporations, and individuals.
- Secure restricted grants to deliver projects, including a contribution to running costs.
- Maintain monitoring system for tracking grant applications, funding allocation and spending.

### **Priority 2: To support the delivery of services and activities for the Whitstable community.**

**Objective:** Provide facilities for a range of high-quality and inclusive activities, projects and services for the Whitstable community, in response to their needs, to support their physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing, and to reduce social isolation.

#### **Activities to include:**

- Maintain a varied programme of regular activities for the Whitstable community, particularly those who may find it difficult to access other provision.
- Seek funding to fully resource and deliver a youth project designed in collaboration with potential service users. (Y2)
- Seek funding to resource the recruitment, management and support of volunteers.
- Plan and deliver one-off events to bring people together in Whitstable i.e., Open Day, Quiz, Barn Dance, Christmas Fair etc.
- Carry out regular consultation with the Whitstable community to identify their needs and seek partners to deliver activities, services, projects and/or events to meet that need.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation of service delivery to assess and demonstrate the positive outcomes and impact of the Charity:
  - i. Conduct regular consultation with groups who use the centre
  - ii. Establish a robust feedback system for delivery partners and organisations.
  - iii. Support groups with monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of their work.
- Provide space free of charge when cost is a barrier to beneficial activity to a value of at least £18,750 per year.
- Offer a reduced hire fee to enable charities and not-for-profit organisations to afford space to deliver their work for the Whitstable community.
- Explore options around use of the cafeteria space.
- Explore options for continuing provision of a social pantry.
- Work collaboratively on joint funding bids with community partners with a mission to support people in Whitstable.
- Continue to offer support to community groups with aligned missions to broaden the support available for people in Whitstable.
- Work in partnership with organisations in Whitstable with a similar mission.
- Continue to support hirers with marketing and promotion, via print and online, to increase their reach.
- Set up opportunities for hirers to network, share tips and resources at annual open day.
- Offer ad hoc and ongoing support to anyone hiring space to benefit the Whitstable community.

**Priority 3: Provide a signposting service for the public.**

**Objective:** Provide a safe and welcoming space where members of the community can ask knowledgeable staff or volunteers for information about internal and external activities and services.

**Activities to include:**

- Staff and volunteers to be available during office hours 4-5 days per week for signposting members of the public to internal & external activities and services.
- Staff and volunteers to maintain up to date knowledge about relevant local organisations and services.

**Priority 4: Increase local awareness of what Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre has to offer.**

**Objective:** To reach all demographics across Whitstable and to increase awareness of what the Charity delivers and how people can get involved.

**Activities to include:**

- Host twice yearly meetings and consult with partners and organisations in Whitstable to identify gaps in provision and areas of greatest need.
- Seek to recruit a Trustee and a volunteer(s) with a PR/Marketing background to run focus groups with the local community to inform marketing and comms plans and to develop a Marketing Strategy to raise profile and awareness online, onsite and in the community work to create a clear, consistent, and compelling Charity brand identity. Create a PR/comms strategy, including local press and radio, to expand reach.
- Gather demographic information from service users via surveys and analyse/action the gaps.
- Ensure funding applications include marketing/promotion in the budget.
- Regular communication with key stakeholders, service users and supporters.



- Identify and approach potential Patrons and/or Ambassadors to raise WUCC's profile.
- Position WUCC as a central community hub for partnerships, collaboration and networking.
- Develop a folder of positive case studies and quotes from service users for the annual impact report.

#### **Priority 5: Provide safe and accessible spaces for the Whitstable community.**

**Objective:** Provide and maintain a variety of safe and accessible spaces at the centre for individuals, groups and organisations to support, entertain and bring the community together.

#### **Activities to include:**

- Secure a long-term lease from Canterbury City Council to be eligible for grant funding to renovate and maintain spaces within the Umbrella Centre building.
- Secure option to buy the freehold.
- Commission a full condition survey of the building with recommendations of prioritised works.
- Ensure all spaces within the Umbrella Centre are safe, well-maintained and well-managed.
- Identify where improvements and renovations are needed and create a plan for delivery.
- Establish documentation/review system for maintenance and safety works for the building.
- Ensure all internal & hirer risk assessments are up to date.
- Upgrade heating/cooling system and lighting in main hall.

## **Priority 6: Strengthen the charity to increase its resilience and long-term sustainability.**

**Objective:** Ensure the Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre is a sustainable and well-resourced Charity in order to meet objectives, deliver plans and achieve the best outcomes for the Whitstable community.

### **Activities to include:**

#### *Robust governance:*

- Offer training opportunities for new and existing Trustees.
- Recruit new Trustees with specific skillsets, including HR and PR/Marketing
- Ensure diversity of the Board of Trustees reflects the Whitstable community.
- Set up sub-committees to focus on specific areas, such as Finance & Fundraising, with regular meetings.
- Include a fundraising section in all Trustee reports.
- Regularly review all policies and ensure they are up to date.
- Upload annual accounts to Charity Commission & Companies House before the deadline.

#### *Investing in people:*

- Ensure diversity, equality and inclusion are central to all centre activities.
- Provide staff with terms of employment and contracts.
- Ensure staff team receive regular 121s and any supervision they need for their job role and wellbeing.
- Ensure staff receive training opportunities relevant for their job role and development.
- Secure a grant to fund the development of a robust volunteering programme to:
  - i. Increase the number of volunteers.
  - ii. Create job descriptions for volunteer support roles.
  - iii. Seek experienced volunteers for those roles.
  - iv. Recruit, support and manage volunteers.

#### *Effective systems and processes:*

- Consider a basic CRM to streamline bookings and storing information.
- Review and update donation thanking procedures to ensure donors are appropriately thanked.
- Improve the resilience and continuity of business systems within the centre.

**Priority 7: Increase the environmental sustainability of the centre in response to climate change and becoming carbon neutral.**

**Objective:** To reduce the adverse impact of the Centre on the environment, arising from energy and water usage & production of waste

**Activities to include:**

- Increase glass recycling.
- Work towards STEM certification
- Drought tolerant planting
- Maximise use of environmentally friendly cleaning products
- Maximise use of recycled paper products
- Explore secondary/double glazing options.
- Upgrade heating/cooling system for hall and explore options for rest of the building.
- Insulation – explore viability of cavity wall insulation.
- Explore possibility of photo voltaic installation.
- Install water collection for garden.

**Priority 8: To fundraise to buy the freehold to secure the Centre's future.**

**Objective:** By end of December 2025 to have raised sufficient income and/or have secured a loan to enable the freehold purchase of the centre from Canterbury City Council

**Activities to include:**

- Create a fundraising plan to buy lease
- Capital investment for building works

## **8. Contact Details**

### **Whitstable Umbrella Centre**

10 Oxford St, Whitstable, CT5 1DD

Tel: 01227 274880

E-mail: [office@umbrellacentre.co.uk](mailto:office@umbrellacentre.co.uk)

**Registered Charity Number: 1097884**