

Green
+ Healthy
Frome

LEARNING INSIGHT #5
POWER IN PARTNERSHIP
MAY 2026

POWER IN PARTNERSHIP



Green and Healthy Frome is a partnership made up of the following



Funded by:



WHAT IS GREEN AND HEALTHY FROME?

Frome is a market town in Somerset, known for its enterprising and independent spirit and for community-led initiatives. It is the home of Green and Healthy Frome¹ (GHF) which was both a project and a partnership of Frome Medical Practice², Frome Town Council³ and Edventure Frome⁴ (a community, learning and social enterprise hub). GHF was funded by the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund⁵ for a two year development phase (April 2021 to March 2023) followed by a three year full award (April 2023 to March 2026) to upscale our programme.

Our mission was to engage the community of Frome to make changes which are good for the planet by highlighting climate, health and/or cost of living benefits. We did this by:

- Modelling and embedding sustainable practices into existing systems and structures, both at community and organisational levels
- Promoting community engagement and network building by working with community groups, individuals, and other organisations to enable action on climate and to amplify our impact
- Providing free resources to individuals, families and households, enabling them to make choices which are good for their health and good for the planet, often saving money too
- Using storytelling to promote behaviour and culture change within and beyond Frome
- Using evaluation to share our insights, learning and impact



PLANET



POCKET



HEALTH

¹<https://greenhealthyfrome.org/>

²<https://www.fromemedicalpractice.co.uk/>

³<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/>

⁴<https://edventurefrome.org/>

⁵<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-programmes/climate-action-fund-our-shared-future>

GHF's core message was that 'people's health and the health of the planet are firmly linked - if we improve one, we'll also improve the other - enabling everyone to share in a better future'.

You can explore [Green and Healthy Frome](#)⁶ to find out more about what we did, what we learned and what happened next in Frome.

Our partnership was unusual because primary care [Frome Medical Practice](#)⁷ was a key delivery partner in our community-based project, with [Frome Town Council](#)⁸ and [Edventure Frome CIC](#)⁹ as equitable partners - three very different organisations with a shared purpose. We believe that our partnership was 'greater than the sum of its parts' and would like to share our successes and learning at a time when this work is urgently needed.

"As a medical practice, it has been a real honour to be part of this partnership. Health and climate are inexorably linked, and being able to work collaboratively to make a real difference in our community has been incredibly important to us."

*Karen Creffield,
Managing Partner Frome Medical Practice*

This learning summary was authored by Becky Lovegrove, Project Manager of Green and Healthy Frome (GHF) and employed by Edventure Frome CIC, the 'co-ordinating partner' of GHF. The summary draws on our final [Project Evaluation](#)¹⁰ undertaken by the [Conscious Project](#)¹¹.

⁶<https://greenhealthyfrome.org/>
⁷<https://www.fromemedicalpractice.co.uk/>
⁸<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/>
⁹<https://edventurefrome.org/>
¹⁰<https://greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learning/>
¹¹<https://www.theconsciousproject.org/>

INSIDE

04 Executive Summary

06 Part 1 - Project Design

06 The Preconditions

07 Does Size Matter

08 Does Shape Matter?

08 i) Partnership Structure

11 ii) Management Structure

12 iii) Project Structure

16 Part 2 - Learning

16 i) Sub-contracting

17 ii) Storytelling

20 iii) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

22 Conclusion



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout this document you will discover what went well and what we learned during our five year programme, and why we have reached certain conclusions about what constitutes an effective partnership. Instead of summarising all of our findings in this section, we will describe the key characteristics of the partnership we might choose to create if we were to start again:

THE PARTNERSHIP

- There is a lead contractor and the interlinked functions of project management, storytelling and evaluation are held by the lead or by a project management unit
- The partners have an agreed set of core values and objectives which frame and guide the programme and which are subject to review based on learning
- The partnership is built on the strengths and competencies of the partner organisations and the assets of the wider community
- A detailed Partnership Agreement sets out the values and behaviours of the partners and the mechanisms for effective communication and collaboration
- Each partner is adequately resourced to enable senior managers to be actively involved in structures promoting partnership and programme effectiveness
- Where there is turnover of senior staff, handover of responsibilities relating to the partnership and the programme are carefully managed to ensure cohesion

THE WORK PROGRAMME

- The work programme and work packages arise from agreed shared values and objectives. Ideally each work package involves and relies on multiple partners.
- There is a small number of well resourced work packages so that the team has capacity to collaborate, engage diverse communities, monitor, iterate and innovate
- Where the partner organisations require expert support to reach their objectives, they seek out and sub-contract with local or expert partners
- Consideration is given to implementation tasks when setting up or expanding a project - e.g. recruitment, induction, training, premises, systems, monitoring frameworks - creating a strong foundation for longer term impact

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

- MEL is well resourced in terms of both management, specialist staff and/or contractors and capacity for MEL activities at all levels of the partnership
- The MEL framework ensures robust baseline data and ambitious and achievable impact measurement across work packages, driving continuous improvement

COMMUNICATIONS

- There are clear agreements about storytelling and communications across the partnership, including strategic direction, leadership, ownership and oversight
- There are agreed mechanisms to enable effective collaboration and joint working across the project, partners, delivery leads and community contributors

Green and Healthy Frome has shown what becomes possible when you connect the everyday realities of people's lives with the bigger challenges we face. By working across community, health and local government, we were able to meet people where they are — not with abstract climate messages, but with practical, meaningful action that improves lives now. At the same time, this partnership has challenged us. It has revealed how much intentional design, shared capacity and trust are needed to truly work across systems. For Edventure, the learning is clear: if we are serious about community-led change at scale, we must invest as much in how we work together as in what we deliver. That is where the real transformation lies."

*Dr Samantha Evans,
Co-Executive Director, Edventure Frome*



Our [Project Evaluation](#)¹² shows that on the ground we made a tangible difference in Frome, and that we have built a movement across the partnership, the community and wider systems to enable further work on climate and health. We have found ways to take this movement to regional and national audiences. We have also learned that a stronger focus on scaffolding - partnership, management and systems - could have made us a stronger and more strategic whole. Whilst such a focus would draw funding away from the 'frontline' work on climate and health, we believe that capitalising on opportunities for collaboration and continuous improvement could realise greater benefits in the longer term.

The [Project Evaluation](#)¹³ draws a similar conclusion:

The evaluators recommend that future projects should prioritise developing partnership agreements that document the relational behaviours that support collaboration, and allocate budget to this. We emphasize the need to establish high quality baseline data collection systems, embed real-time evaluation and develop clear metrics aligned with national initiatives and with robust reference values.

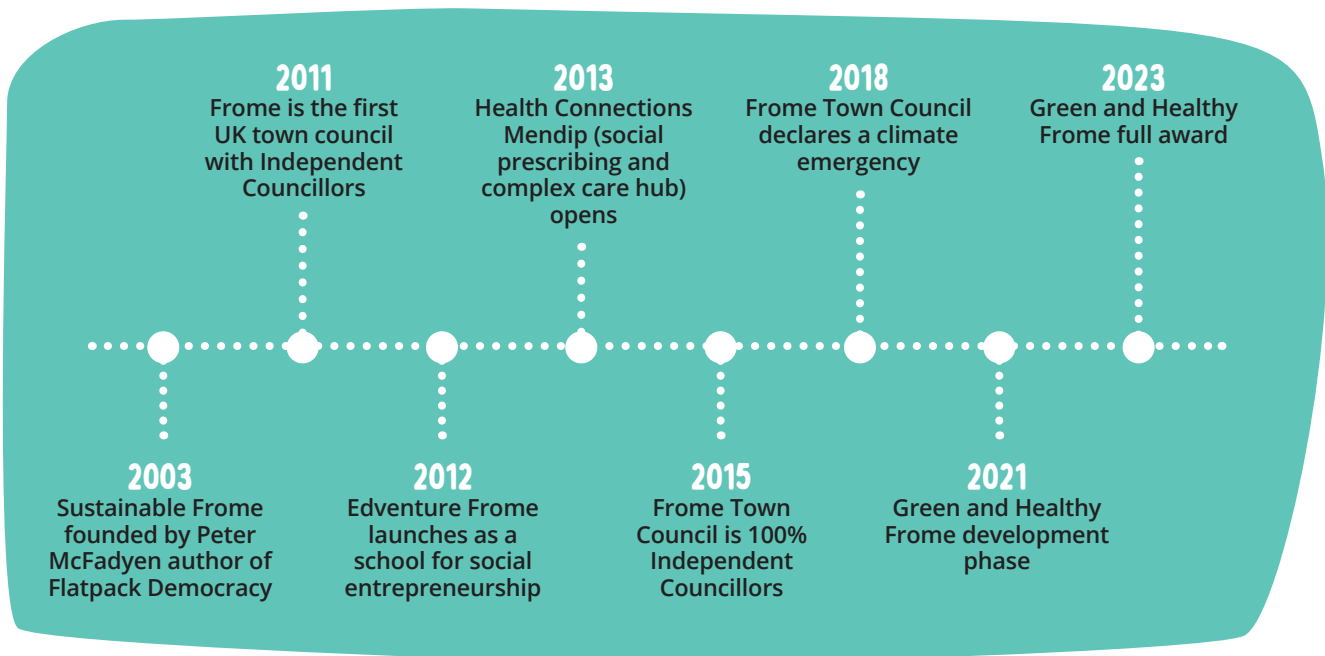
^{12,13}greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learning/

PART 1 - PROJECT DESIGN

THE PRECONDITIONS

We know that each city, town or community will have its own unique conditions, assets and opportunities which together become the starting point for an effective project or partnership. At our awayday in February 2025 we mapped those conditions for Frome, populating a timeline which included the period before Green and Healthy Frome (GHF) was conceived. This showed us the specific assets - organisational, relational, geographical, social, financial or cultural - which created the context for the development of our partnership.

This timeline shows some key moments over the course of twenty years in Frome when there has been an upswell of interest in, and commitment to, action on climate. It is these cultural shifts, and the associated leaders within our organisations and communities, which both generated our project and supported its success.






DOES SIZE MATTER?

Frome is a market town in Somerset of around 28,000. We are on the border of Wiltshire and relatively remote from the county town of Taunton. Frome has a history of activism and protest. Recent examples include the townsfolk backing a local development plan (Mayday) for the central Saxonvale site (which resulted in a national developer withdrawing their successful application) and the purchase of Whatcombe Fields by the Town Council and people of Frome to permanently protect this beautiful pastureland from developers.

Frome is an ideal size for a partnership of civic, health and community enterprise, all within walking and cycling distance of each other. At the same time there are dozens of community groups in Frome whose activities overlap and for whom there is no central hub in terms of a building or shared resource. In terms of the partnership, the constituent organisations are very different shapes and sizes! This is both a strength and a challenge as we will explain in the following sections.

Figure 1 Structure and Culture

ORGANISATION	STRUCTURE	CULTURE
	Statutory body Elected representatives and employees Funded by people of Frome (Council Tax) Some grant funding and grant giving Circa 50 employees	Independents for Frome Councillors (non-national party political) Civic duty Public accountability Commitment to climate action (lead councillor role, Climate Lead and team, strategy and workplan)
	Community interest company established 2013 Community building and social enterprise Funded by Somerset Council, donors, grants, revenue from co-working Circa 10 employees/freelancers	Non-institutional Community-led Innovative Opportunistic Values driven Community-messaging – project-led approach
	NHS General Practice Single practice primary care network Commissioned primarily by Somerset Integrated Care Board Small % of income grant funding Circa 150 employees	Universal service Trusted authority Patient-led Green/social prescribing and lifestyle medicine expertise National leader in sustainability in primary care Targeted messaging – individual health needs

WHAT WORKED WELL

- A partnership of a GP practice funded by the NHS, civic and community interest organisations providing opportunities for cross-pollination
- Asset-based community development - building on existing initiatives and relationships and incubating new projects visioned by our community

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Cross-sector working is challenging - as a team we need to work on relationships and create spaces and structures to work together

WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

- In the sections below we look at how we would improve our strategic and operational model with the benefit of hindsight

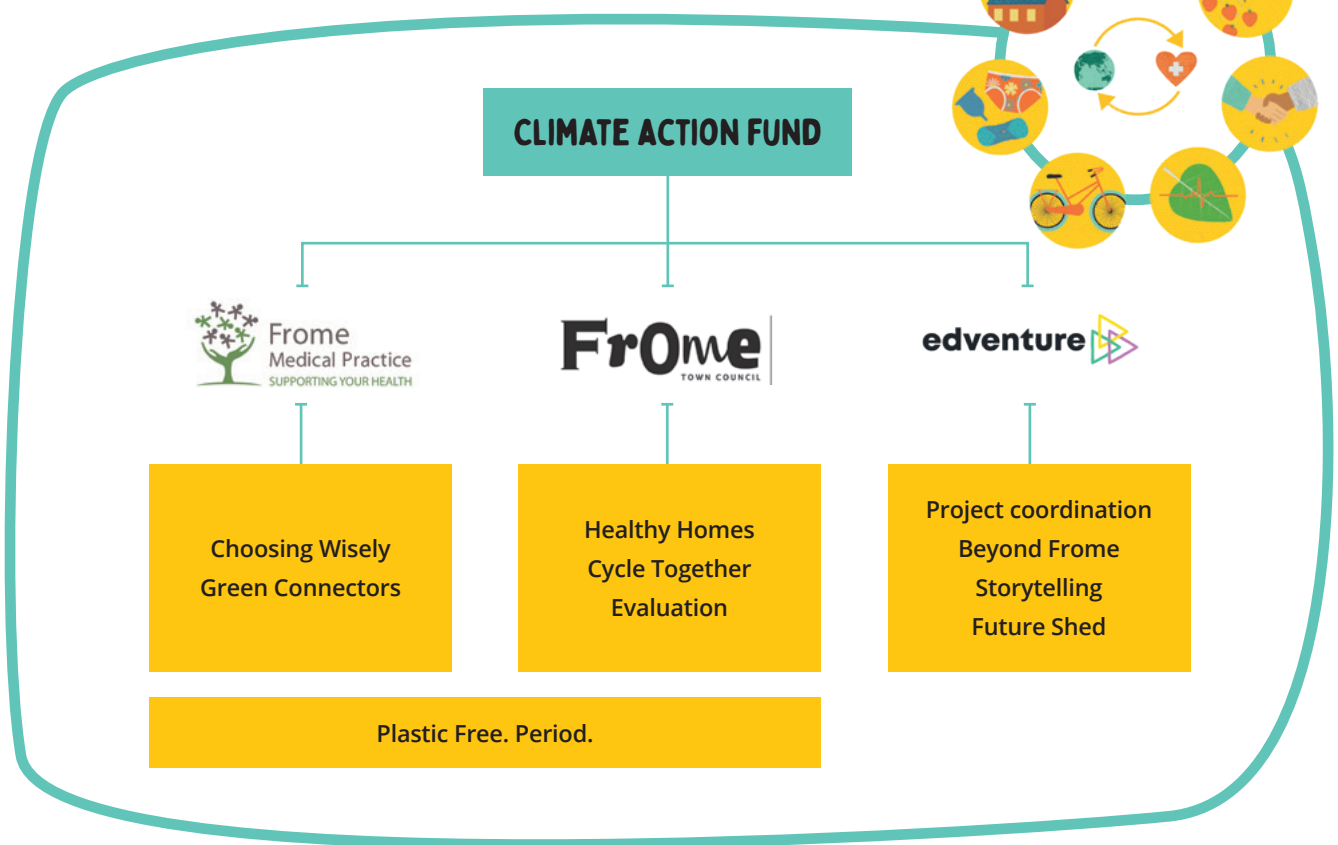
DOES SHAPE MATTER?

I) PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

Green and Healthy Frome (GHF) was an equitable partnership of three organisations. Within our structure, each partner contracted individually with the Lottery to deliver specified work packages (highlighted yellow Fig 2).

In line with Lottery requirements, the Project Manager prepared a progress report for the Lottery on a six monthly basis and financial reporting was completed for each organisation on an annual basis.

Figure 2 Project Structure



Edventure Frome was the co-ordinating partner and employed both the **Project Manager** and **Storytelling Lead**. There were various roles within the project:

- **Delivery team** leading on delivery of the public facing work packages
- **Evaluation** as an overarching function, with the evaluation lead role employed by Frome Town Council and dedicated evaluation capacity within Frome Medical Practice
- **Management team** comprising senior staff and decision makers from across the three organisations
- In each partner organisation a Lottery 'Senior Contact' and 'Main Contact'
- **Project Advisory Group** (previously the 'Board')

We successfully delivered GHF within our project structure, relying on strong working relationships and a focus on collaboration at 'ground level'. However, due to the design of our partnership, there have been missed opportunities for identifying and amplifying collective impact.

During delivery of GHF we were regularly reminded that there is considerable overlap between the three key functions of Evaluation, Project Coordination and Storytelling:

- **Evaluation** identifies outputs and impact, contributing to our stories and informing work programme review and subsequent improvements
- **Project coordination** promotes continuous improvement across GHF and supports an evolving and cohesive approach to storytelling and communication
- **Storytelling** draws on internal and external narratives, from our team, stakeholders and beneficiaries, which in turn feed into evaluation

We have fed back to the Lottery that our Project would have benefited from support with monitoring, evaluation and learning from design through to implementation and review. This support could have enabled better opportunities for continuous learning and improvement within the Project and informed our wider sharing beyond Frome.

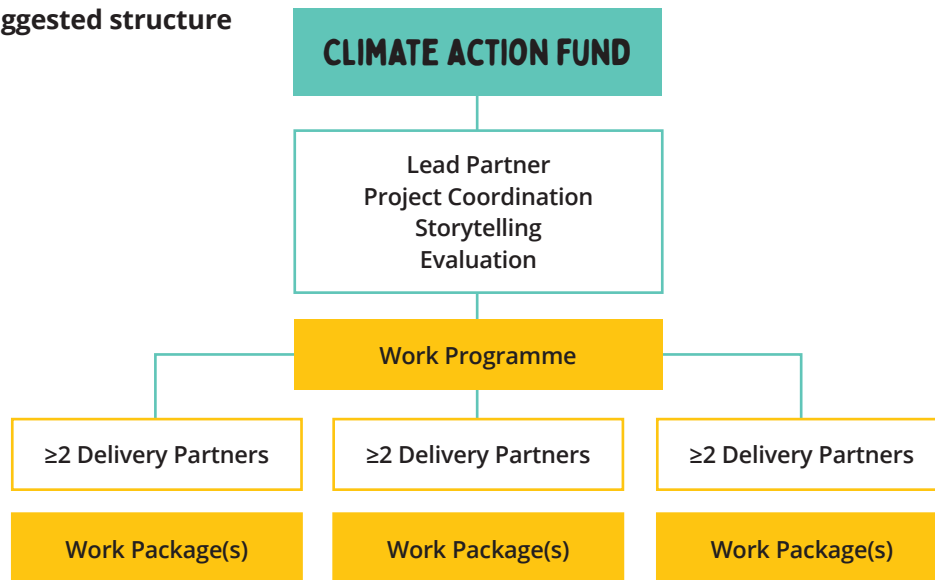
We are immensely proud to have been a part of the pioneering partnership of Green and Healthy Frome. By stepping outside of our silos and working closely with partner organisations – Frome Medical Practice and Edventure - that are quite different from ourselves, we have been challenged to think in new ways and approach problems from new angles. We have learnt a huge amount that will inform our work going forwards."

Fiona Barrows,
Chair and Leader of Frome Town Council



Based on our learning we would consider a different structure where a single lead organisation contracts with the Lottery and holds the core complementary functions of project management, storytelling and evaluation - as well as any work packages which are 'best fit':

Figure 3 suggested structure



Within the above model it would be important to:

- create a Partnership Board to ensure that delivery partners were included in strategic as well as operational decision-making (see **Governance** p.14)
- allocate an adequate budget to both management and project management functions across the partnership (see **Management** p.11)
- develop a Partnership Agreement which clearly outlines partners' commitments with a tangible commitment to cohesive and collaborative working (see **Governance** p.14)
- schedule regular sub-contract review meetings with delivery partners to explore and address any strategic or operational issues

- embed a culture and practice of continuous improvement based on evaluation findings, wider best practice and the strengths of the team and community

This suggested structure would enable a single line of accountability to our funders the National Lottery instead of three contracts, three budget formats, a total of six nominated 'senior' and 'main contacts' and multiple 'requests for change' to the Lottery in terms of evolving work programmes and budgets during the lifetime of the project.

More importantly, the effectiveness of the overall work programme would be strengthened by harnessing the expertise, scope and reach of multiple partners to collaborate on shared work packages, thus ensuring integration during the Project's lifetime and potentially beyond.

II) MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Resourcing and consistency of management differed across the three partners and in this section we explore the impact. The key structural differences were as follows:

- Frome Town Council and Frome Medical Practice absorbed management of project delivery staff into existing management structures at zero cost to GHF
- Edventure Frome CIC pursued 'full cost recovery' in their Project budget by hosting the Project Manager and including a proportion of core/organisational staffing overheads (CEO, Operations Lead, Communications Lead)
- At Frome Medical Practice, the two senior leaders were in role for the duration of the Project
- Edventure saw turnover in key roles (CEO and Project co-founder, GHF Project Manager, GHF Communications Lead)
- Frome Town Council had a recruitment gap of one year in the permanent Climate Lead role in addition to staff turnover in delivery and evaluation roles

Unsurprisingly there was a clear advantage for Frome Medical Practice, with consistent senior staff in post from the bid development phase onward to hold and maintain the foundational vision and values of the Project. This ensured that GHF contributed to sustained system and culture change, both within the Practice and in primary care and health services more widely. At the same time, staff turnover within the delivery team provided opportunities to review and regroup. For example, at Frome Town Council the team redesigned the Retrofit support programme when the Retrofit Lead left her post, moving from comprehensive retrofit assessments to a model of retrofit 'lite' assessment, telephone follow up and in person support for Retrofit projects.

The most significant management challenge for the Project was the recruitment gap of one year for the Climate Lead role at Frome Town Council. With three work packages and three sub-contracts to oversee, it was difficult for the Council's senior management team to cover these functions and to maintain detailed oversight of the Project. When the new Climate Action Lead started in autumn 2024, it was necessary to both handover the Project and rapidly review and reconfigure work packages and sub-contracts ahead of Year 3 of the Project. Some of this work fell to the Project Manager as the only team member with the knowledge and skills to provide support and guidance specific to the Project.

Linked to the Partnership learning above and Governance below, a key finding of Project evaluation is that there was inadequate ring-fenced management capacity within the partnership to allow for regular meetings or other mechanisms to discuss and implement cross-sector integration, collaboration and continuous learning cycles. The external evaluation recommendations are to consider in future partnership proposals:

- ***Budget for collaboration / partnership activities - Future partnerships must have specific budget / resources assigned to maintaining the partnership at the highest level of the partnership (in this case lead contacts) for example in the form of regular review meetings and joint activities that promote and enable collaboration and maintain effective communication channels.***
- ***Project management approach - Future collaborative projects should consider budgeting for and establishing a dedicated project management unit which has equal ownership and representation by partners from a decisional level of management and which supports integrated programming and delivery and the operational implementation of project workstreams.***

WHAT WORKED WELL

- Each partner ‘playing to their strengths’ and autonomous in negotiating reflexive changes to budget and work packages with the Lottery
- Consistency in senior management (Frome Medical Practice) and Project Advisory Group roles

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Managers across the partnership need to have both the capacity and commitment to proactively support partnership working, continuous improvement and collaboration, both through formal partnership mechanisms and within their own organisations
- The Project needed agreed mechanisms to enable effective partnership working, including a suitable Governance structure (p.14) and an effective Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning model (p.20)

WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

- A main contractor model led by the co-ordinating partner (holding project management, evaluation and storytelling) and sub-contracts with remaining partners, ideally delivering work packages which rely on multiple partners
- Carefully consider the number and nature of sub-contracts (p.16)

III) PROJECT STRUCTURE

During the two year development phase of Green and Healthy Frome (2021-2023) we piloted a number of work packages which embodied our core principle of harnessing climate and health co-benefits. In our successful bid to the Climate Action Fund for our full award (2023-2026), we extended our project to eight work packages including Beyond Frome which enables reciprocal learning with other communities and organisations outside our town. Evaluation is a further cross-cutting theme (Fig 4) - see also Evaluation (p.20).

We included a new Retrofit strand in Healthy Homes and an Evaluation post at Frome Medical Practice, recognising the particular opportunities and challenges of Choosing Wisely as a work package which can influence primary care nationally and which needs to meet standards of clinical research. In our final year, a Renewables work package was added to the Healthy Homes offer at Frome Town Council.

Our eight work packages are split across the three partners and two sub-contracts with Frome Community Bike Project for Cycle Together and the Centre for Sustainable Energy for Healthy Homes and Retrofit. Each partner and each work package has their own identity, purpose, marketing strategy and audience and our overall offer spans system change, customer-facing services and community engagement. In Storytelling (p.17) we further explore the opportunities and challenges of diversity and divergence.

In retrospect, we could instead have scaled up the most impactful work packages piloted during the development phase - ideally collaborating across the partners for maximum impact (in practice Plastic Free.Period. was the only work package which relied on two partners). In this model, each work package would have expanded scope and reach via bigger, fully integrated teams.

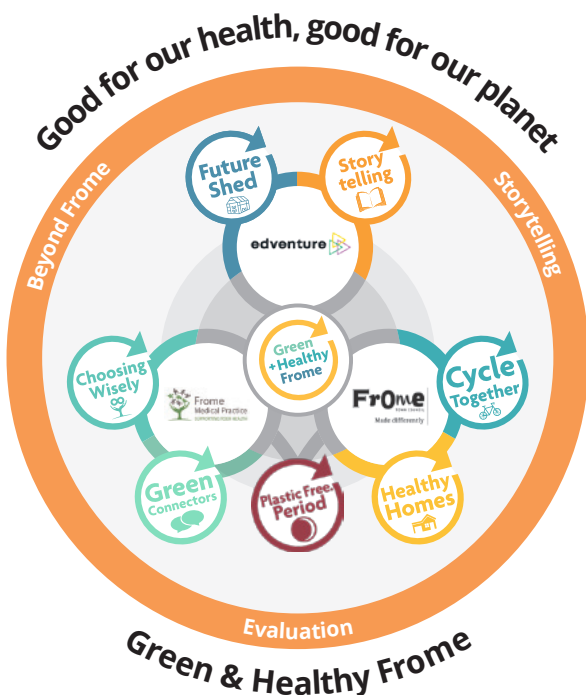


Figure 4 GHF Work Packages

This more targeted approach has the potential to increase the effectiveness of cross-cutting project objectives:

Engagement

- Increased outreach, inreach, training and cascade (via communities, organisations and professionals) to reach new and target audiences
- Testing of key communication strategies with target audiences
- Exploration of interfaces between work packages, including collaboration, co-location signposting and referral mechanisms

Evaluation

- Greater capacity for detailed monitoring, evaluation and learning by diving more deeply into fewer work packages
- Fulfilling our initial ambition to complete a social return on investment analysis
- Development of detailed case studies, highlighting our approach to harnessing climate co-benefits (health and cost of living) and linking to Storytelling
- Exploration and evaluation of system change and movement building - our bigger picture aims

Continuous Improvement

- Real time activity and impact data from evaluation, including beneficiary feedback, to drive continuous improvement for each work package
- A more structured 'test and learn' approach, iterating and improving each work package over time and cataloguing our learning journeys

Beyond Frome

- Increased capacity to share, learn and collaborate with allied projects

Within the original Project structure (Fig 2) our Future Shed Lead (Edventure) and Community Sustainability Lead (Green Connectors, Frome Medical Practice) both had a remit for 'joining the dots' across partners/work packages and bridging from partner organisations into the community. As the [Project Evaluation](#)¹⁴ demonstrates, these ground level roles were clearly effective in identifying and capitalising on cross-cutting themes and opportunities, enabling integration and co-location, facilitating joint messaging and increasing awareness of green and healthy action amongst staff, volunteers and the community.

WHAT WORKED WELL

- Our broad offer across three partners appeals to different members of our community: we have many 'touchpoints' and opportunities available to the people of Frome, allied professionals and stakeholders
- Dedicated roles for community engagement and integration have created opportunities for collaboration, increasing our reach and impact

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Project wide functions such as project management, storytelling and programme evaluation would benefit from better integration
- By decreasing the breadth of the project we could have increased the depth of opportunities for partnering, learning, sharing and continuous improvement*

WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

- A main contractor model and a bid development approach which crystallised our core, shared objectives and values and designed collaborative work packages accordingly

**These findings are strikingly similar to the evaluation findings for Climate Action Leeds¹⁵ – valuable learning for both future CAF Projects and the funder the National Lottery*

¹⁴[greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learnings/](https://www.greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learnings/)

¹⁵https://www.climateactionleeds.org.uk/_files/ugd/6c95b1_fcaf13e238cb4e23b221a2efcd9bc14b.pdf

IV) GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

After the full award, the GHF management group agreed a revised governance structure which included replacing the 'Board' (which had no formal decision-making powers) with a 'Project Advisory Group' (providing independent advice to the team) and regular management meetings to discuss operational issues and partnership working. However, it was difficult for managers to regularly attend meetings due to the capacity issues identified in **Management Structure** (p.11). Our external evaluators identified weaknesses in the Partnership Agreement which did not comprehensively outline the 'how' of working together over the course of a three year programme:

The partnership agreement between the three main partners did not extend to the behavioural / relational component of the partnership. A 'Project Charter' which formalises behavioural and managerial expectations, provides a simple internal code of conduct and makes explicit the roles and functions of the Advisory Group, Management Team and Delivery Teams, would have served the project well, especially when key staff moved on from their roles. It would have provided clarity about organisational obligations to share communications messaging and Beyond Frome reach across the partnership, and helped to identify meaningful ways to collaborate.

During the latter part of Year 2 management meetings focused on 'legacy planning' with four facilitated workshops to explore our collective ambitions post-Lottery funding. In Year 3 the project moved to ad hoc thematic, task-oriented meetings attended by key stakeholders to address the tasks and challenges of our final year including storytelling, conference planning and evaluation.

Whilst this was a pragmatic approach, we no longer gathered for regular management meetings to review partnership working and effectiveness. This was likely a factor in partnership relationships becoming frayed at times, in particular around accountability for shared objectives such as evaluation and storytelling.

Figure 5 Evolution of GHF Governance

<p>2023</p>	<p>Development phase governance structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly delivery team meetings ● Quarterly 'board' meetings with delivery team, managers and board members ● Annual awayday
<p>2024</p>	<p>Full award governance structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bi-weekly delivery team meetings ● Six weekly management meetings ● Quarterly 'project advisory group' meetings ● Annual awayday
<p>2025</p>	<p>Final year governance structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bi-weekly delivery team meetings ● Ad hoc thematic/task-oriented meetings ● Annual awayday

REPRESENTATION

We recognise that co-production with our community is the gold standard - as embodied by Edventure's Future Shed work strand where we supported community networks to amplify climate action across our town¹⁶. In our bid we had envisaged our Board/Project Advisory Group representing the wider community, with a high number of named 'target groups' for engagement. The Project Manager made a case that our bid commitments, the diversity of our work programme and the complexity of our partnership meant that it would be difficult to meaningfully involve the community in steering and improving the Project. A collective decision was made not to push engagement of the wider community in Project leadership, but instead to maximise opportunities for our community to co-create and benefit from the Project. Direct participation included the Future Shed community climate networks, the Green Connectors programme (both community outreach, via Frome Medical Practice and across wider regional health networks) and volunteering opportunities across the partnership including Energy Advice Champions and Frome Community Bike Project.

WHAT WORKED WELL

- A reflexive approach where we could build a team around a project, for example our conference working group

WHAT WE LEARNED

- It is difficult to establish and maintain effective governance within a 'flat' partnership structure and with limited management capacity
- Meaningful participation relies on effective structures for continuous improvement - people need to see that their views make a difference

WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

- Develop a stronger framework and leadership commitment around joint governance, reflected in a comprehensive Partnership Agreement
- Draw on learning from funders and other partnerships at project design phase and seek support to resolve any issues during the project lifecycle



¹⁶greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learning/

PART 2 - LEARNING THEMES

1) SUB-CONTRACTING

Within our project there were originally three sub-contracts, all of which were within Frome Town Council's remit. The management of these sub-contracts required considerable time and effort, including during a year-long recruitment gap in the Council's Climate Lead role. Aside from limiting the number of sub-contracts that each partner should ideally commission and manage, the key learnings are as follows:

- We initiated a **social return on investment (SROI)** sub-contract with a national provider. Through no fault of the provider, we decided to terminate the contract. During the set up phase we realised that the complex nature of our Project meant that SROI methodology would not be effective across all work packages, nor within the Project timeline.
- We continue to have a sub-contract with the Centre for Sustainable Energy in Bristol whose expertise added significant value to the energy advice, retrofit and renewables strands of our Healthy Homes work package. The Retrofit work package in particular developed considerably as we uncovered the barriers and opportunities for householders. To further strengthen this kind of partnership, we would implement regular contract reviews from day one so that adjustments to delivery, budget and monitoring could be made in real time.
- The final sub-contract was with Frome Community Bike Project (FCBP), a CIC launched in 2022, for an active travel work package called 'Cycle Together'. Within this work package, resources were allocated to public facing activities and events, with inadequate staff time allocated to coordination, team management, governance and communications. There was also a 'lead in' period when recruitment was under way and the premises were being completed - coinciding with the summer 'peak' for cycling. Learning from Cycle Together has enabled FCBP to better understand the 'full cost' of implementing and delivering a menu of cycling support, which is helpful for future business development.

WHAT WORKED WELL

Specialist sub-contractors added value to our Project, both in terms of delivery and capacity building:

- CSE provided not only public facing services, but also professional development opportunities for our team and volunteers and events for the community to raise awareness of opportunities relating to retrofit
- FCBP provided a range of volunteering opportunities and skills-based workshops for community members

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Sub-contracts require both management capacity and an understanding of effective contract management (contracting, monitoring and review cycles)

WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

- Carefully consider the number, scale and scope of sub-contracts in future partnership initiatives
- Ensure management capacity and best practice in sub-contract management to ensure value for money



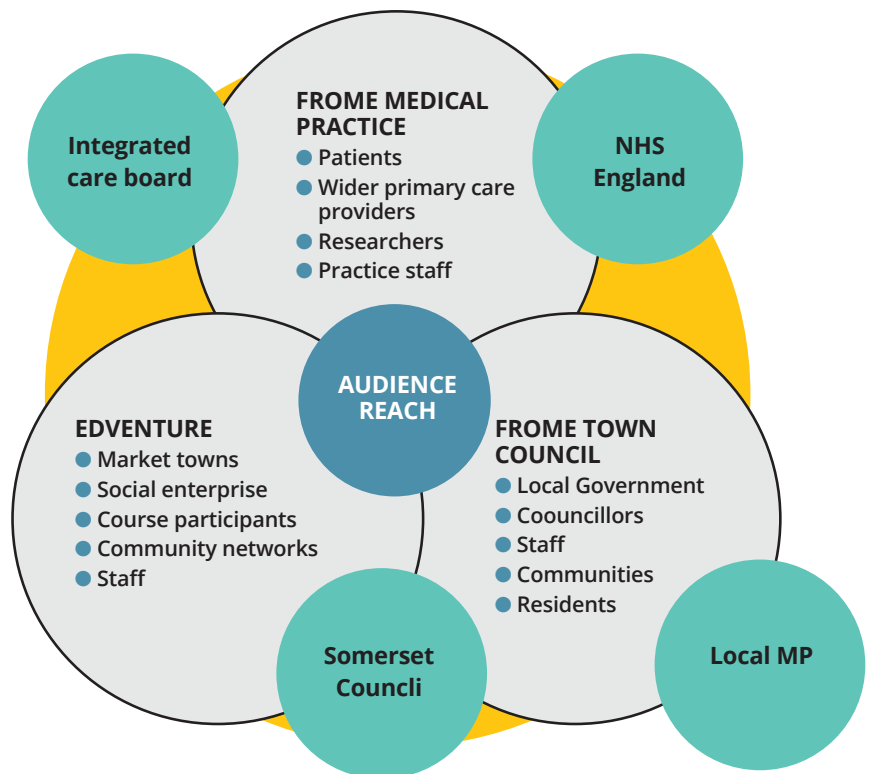


II) STORYTELLING

We have published a separate [Storytelling learning insight](#)¹⁷, however the particular opportunities and challenges of Storytelling in the context of partnership are explored here. GHF's Storytelling Lead is based at Edventure and oversees communications for the Project as a whole, providing strategic direction and co-ordination across the partnership. Further communications capacity for the Project is folded into the overall comms contingent at both Frome Town Council and Frome Medical Practice.

Our partnership enables great scope and reach across many audiences, both within our town and beyond:

Figure 6 Audience Reach and Scope



¹⁷greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learnings/

Across our work programme, Green and Healthy Frome had both a hyperlocal focus on action which can be taken at individual, household and community levels, and a regional and national voice in system and culture change in primary care, local government and community. Each partner had a unique tone, voice and audience. Equally each work strand had a specific audience and 'call to action'. For example:

- In all patient-facing communications, Frome Medical Practice forefronts personal health, whereas the climate and cost benefits of health interventions can be highlighted to professionals in general practice, wider health provision and in health commissioning
- In our Healthy Homes work packages there were both universal offers of energy advice and direct support, and more targeted offers of retrofit assessments and renewables advice for homeowners, landlords and businesses

And of course each partner and each member of our delivery team had a vested interest in how their work was publicly represented! Overall, this complexity and multitude of stakeholders meant that our Storytelling Lead had to navigate a wide range of agendas and opinions, which could be both time consuming and frustrating.

The upside of this complexity was that we had a plethora of platforms and channels where we could post, share and amplify our work, reaching audiences which we could not have reached from a singular base. We had further reach via community engagement work and our public events and activities across the programme, with the Storytelling Lead curating events which spanned our work packages including 'Green Hacks Day' and a 'Riverside Walk and Talk'.

An ongoing conundrum within the partnership team has been about achieving consensus on the content, tone and voice of our overall messaging around climate. Our team and many members of our community are acutely aware of the impact of the climate crisis, and we understand the wider impacts and drivers of the climate crisis globally. However a 'head on' approach, highlighting the enormous challenges which we face, would risk alienating the wider public and there is little evidence from research that this approach would motivate behaviour change amongst people who are uncertain about taking action on climate^{18,19}. Instead we identify smaller problems and proffer local solutions, we amplify positive stories and we lean into the co-benefits of health, cost and community.



¹⁸<https://climateoutreach.org/>

¹⁹<https://www.climatemajorityproject.com/>

"In these uncertain times, we are discovering that climate action needs to be reframed to land well with people. Green and Healthy Frome opened new channels for us to connect with people who need support. In many cases, a health angle is a more compelling route to communicate with clients around damp and cold homes than climate. Overall, our experience with the project has taught us the importance of always focussing on the co-benefits of climate action and the ways in which we can help improve lives by taking decisive action now."

Peter Wheelhouse, Town Clerk, Frome Town Council

GHF's conference in 2025 was a great example of effective partnership storytelling. During the morning we offered 'tours' across three locations, highlighting the work packages of each partner, and in the afternoon we ran sessions on the cross-cutting themes of storytelling, evaluation, community engagement and partnership working. Lunch was brought to us by [Canteen](https://www.fromefoodnetwork.co.uk/canteen)²⁰, a 'pay as you can' pop up restaurant serving hyperlocal and seasonal food which came into being as part of GHF's Future Shed work package.

GHF is particularly proud of our creative partnership with [OpenStoryTellers](https://openstorytellers.org.uk/)²¹, a local charity led by learning disabled artists. This collaboration has resulted in:

- A successful exhibition '[An All Round Hullabaloo](#)²² in a local arts centre, where the artists developed multimedia exhibits exploring the impacts of climate change on disabled people through themes of plastic, plants, wool, rivers, food, transport
- One of the exhibits - a short film '[Journeys Through Time and Climate](#)²³ - winning multiple awards
- A further film, 'The Making of An All Round Hullabaloo²⁴, which premiered at Frome Festival 2025

WHAT WORKED WELL

- Our new suite of vibrant and highly recognisable illustrations coinciding with our website relaunch under the pillars of planet, pocket and health (Year 2 of GHF)
- Broad scope and reach of messaging across three trusted organisations, sub-contractors, work packages and community networks, via multiple social media channels and print media
- Harnessing the current evidence base about 'what works' in climate comms

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Complex partnership projects require a highly co-ordinated and collaborative approach to comms, with clarity about review and sign off where necessary
- Climate is a highly emotive zone of work and it is important to establish and adhere to agreed parameters about content, tone and voice

WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

- Establish core roles and responsibilities at project initiation and agree co-working and co-ordination structures for comms personnel
- Embed integration across Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Storytelling, enabling us to highlight impact and learning in communications to key audiences
- Establish brand guidelines early in the project to ensure that core Green and Healthy Frome branding is forefronted and to minimise our 'logo fiesta'!

²⁰<https://www.fromefoodnetwork.co.uk/canteen>

²¹<https://openstorytellers.org.uk/>

²²<https://openstorytellers.org.uk/2024/11/08/an-all-round-hullabaloo-an-exhibition-by-openstorytellers/>

²³<https://vimeo.com/1062533608>

²⁴<https://vimeo.com/1073854732>

III) MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

In our bid to the Climate Action Fund we set out our overarching Evaluation work package which encompassed key aims:

- To evaluate the impact of our programme and project activities
- To facilitate learning across the partnership and our national network
- To give voice to the community in the development of the project and informing systemic change
- To demonstrate value to stakeholders across the community, NHS and government sectors as a key foundation to inspire action and affect systems change

Whilst we partially achieved these aims, the overarching evaluation function has proven to be the most challenging for our Project, mainly due to the complexity of GHF. Structural barriers included the fact that:

- GHF encompassed multiple work packages - each with their own aims, objectives and audiences and each evolving and developing over time
- The scope of work packages was hugely varied, for example we record everything from each touchpoint of advice and information in Healthy Homes (with some interventions lasting minutes) to the activity and impact in our Future Shed residencies (with some residencies lasting years)
- With the exception of Frome Medical Practice, where MEL is embedded in quality improvement mechanisms, the project team did not have the capacity or resources to collect data, review impact and embed learning
- The challenges of measuring carbon savings are widely documented and we found it difficult to gather follow up data relating to medium term behaviour change. In practice, survey return rates were low even with voucher incentives in place. We therefore needed to make projections and assumptions to identify potential carbon savings and our evaluation findings are caveated accordingly.

- We undertook a townwide survey in the development phase of our project, and our intention was to repeat this in the final year to measure townwide/systemic impact. This was cancelled as the complexity and ambition of the project's various strands did not align with a universal approach.

It is also important to note that the Project's evaluation lead (Climate Action Researcher based at Frome Town Council) did not have access to evaluation expertise via line management or other professional support (e.g. specialist supervision), making a difficult task harder still!

After our Climate Action Researcher left early in Year 3, Frome Town Council commissioned the Conscious Project²⁵ as external evaluators to undertake the final evaluation of GHF. Their report²⁶ highlights significant learning about the planning and execution of MEL:

A more traditionally structured MEL framework underpinning the project as a whole, incorporating thorough planning, identification of indicators, live theory of change, real-time evaluation and learning cycles, and detailed outcomes expressed in qualitative and quantitative terms, would have better served the project in tracking change.

Given the significant obstacles involved in calculating overall carbon savings in a complex systems-based project, future projects might create several evaluation sub-projects and focus on specific activities within one workstream at a time. This would enable a baseline and specific indicators to be established, a standard set of assumptions agreed with validated reference value ranges, and robust, relevant data to be collected, from which it could be possible to elicit learnings and guide project progress.

²⁵<https://www.theconsciousproject.org/>

²⁶greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learnings/

In the final year of our Project (2025-26) the Climate Action Fund's learning partner (led by ARUP) published an evaluation framework which references impacts across the domains of environment, economy, community and health.

This framework resonates with our learning about co-benefits and about the importance of recognising the broader impacts which are generated by action on climate, especially for those work packages where carbon saving metrics are difficult or impossible to measure, but where we see shifts in engagement, behaviour and community cohesion.

WHAT WORKED WELL

- Within the 'Choosing Wisely' work package at Frome Medical Practice, it was relatively straightforward to collect reliable data via clinical management systems and accurate 'unit costs' in terms of CO2 and financial savings.

WHAT WE LEARNED

- A multi-modal Project like GHF requires a bespoke monitoring, evaluation and learning framework, which requires significant staffing capacity and design, development and delivery expertise
- Partnership and management structures need to harness MEL to embed continuous improvement and learning through the Project lifecycle (see also **Management** and **Partnership** above)

WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

- Ensure that employed evaluation staff are supported by skilled and experienced professionals - alternatively a similar project could engage an academic partner to undertake Project evaluation
- Develop a realistic and robust monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework for the full programme, implemented during project initiation and regularly reviewed throughout
- Work closely with funders and other stakeholders to identify relevant guidance and support within the sector to ensure that our MEL framework was fit for purpose and based on current best practice



CONCLUSION

The lead external evaluator for our [final evaluation](#)²⁷ was Abi Green, working alongside Ben Emmens, also from at the [Conscious Project](#)²⁸. Abi also acted as our voluntary Project Advisory Group facilitator during years 2 and 3 of the full award phase.

Abi and Ben drew similar conclusions to Becky, Project Manager, about our partnership learning and we hope that their findings (below) neatly ‘bookend’ the Executive Summary.

LEARNING FOR THE PARTNERS (EDVENTURE, FMP AND FTC)

1 Be bold and embrace non-typical partnerships, which strengthen projects by bringing together different perspectives and ways of doing things, engage different types of people and organisations and thus expand the range of possible solutions at sticking-points

2 For effective collaboration across sectors, adopt a neutral political position and use stakeholder profiles to identify the best lens by which to engage multiple different profiles of people.

3 Maintain high levels of multi-direction multi-channel communications to ensure that gaps and duplication are avoided and that opportunities to work together are seized.

4 Pay attention to all aspects of partnership agreements e.g. financial, managerial, interpersonal. Plan approaches for handling things that don't go well.

5 Ensure that there is a role in a core team / project management unit that actively seeks out initiatives to connect with the project both inside (e.g. organisational strategic priorities) and outside the partnership (e.g. businesses, sports and recreation clubs, academic institutions etc.) Identify when and how to approach them to amplify impact.

6 Take time at the start to plan core project activities (management, decision-making structures, communications, inclusion, psychosocial support for the team, integration in the core work of each partner, monitoring and evaluation) for the project lifetime.

7 Make creating effective ways of measuring impact a distinct stage in designing activity workstreams, including answering the question ‘what happens at the end?’

8 Embed real-time evaluation in projects, planning thoroughly from the outset so it can be used to ensure project activities are responsive to community needs and priorities throughout, and providing evidence for reallocation of resources as necessary.

9 To make the task of evaluating more achievable and embed it better in complex projects, create mini-evaluation projects to examine individual components or activity streams over very short time-frames (e.g. the impact of one group bike ride). Share results with participants quickly and gain their input on how to amplify the effect.

10 Where possible use the same goals and indicators as similar projects and initiatives to align the work of local projects with national and international efforts. Seek co-working opportunities.

11 Expand Frome's Green Directory / Green Business page to include other sustainable businesses, community networks and links to tools and apps to support individuals, households and businesses wanting to reduce climate impact and improve their health and financial expenditures

²⁷greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learning/

²⁸<https://www.theconsciousproject.org/>



WITH THANKS TO:

- The author and Project Manager, Becky Lovegrove
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- Our evaluation team Abi Green and Ben Emmens from the Conscious Project²⁹

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You can find our other learning insights and toolkits in Green and Healthy Frome's 'Our Learnings' resource.³⁰

Green and Healthy Frome is a partnership made up of the following



Funded by:



²⁹<https://www.theconsciousproject.org/>

³⁰<https://greenhealthyfrome.org/our-learnings/>

