

## The 'Calne in Tune' Community Project [Calne Central](#)

[Calne In Tune FB Group](#) - [Calne In Tune FB Page](#)  
[Calne Music, Arts & Media Community Resource Group](#)  
[Calne Music, Arts & Media Community Resource Page](#)

### The History:

Calne in Tune Charity has operated since 2015 when musicians came together to put on live music in the form of Open Mics, Music Showcases, Jams and Karaoke Sessions. These regular events were at the White Hart, The Talbot Inn, London Road Inn, The Lansdowne Strand Hotel, The Wheatsheaf, The Jenny Wren, and some of the Social Clubs. We also worked with and supported Calne Town Council activities & events. We partnered with 'Calne Community Hub' Community Volunteers to put on regular Arts & Crafts Activities and Exhibitions in various venues in Calne Town.

Our objective was to encourage these creative and recreational activities on a regular weekly and monthly basis. This was to prepare and encourage more local musicians, artists, and crafters to engage in the regular yearly events. We provided equipment and technical expertise to these venues (including Calne Town Council), promoted the various the events, and publicised the Musicians, Artists, Crafters, as well as the Venues involved.



To this end I set up the social media sites like the Groups & Pages listed here:

[Wiltshire Gig Guide](#)

[Calne Events Guide](#)

[Wiltshire Music Gig Guide](#)

[Wiltshire Musicians & Bands](#)

[Wiltshire Music Entertainers](#)

[Wiltshire Music Venues](#)   [Wiltshire Music & Arts Venues](#)

[Wiltshire Open Mic & Jam Venues](#)

[Wiltshire Performing & Creative Arts Directory](#)

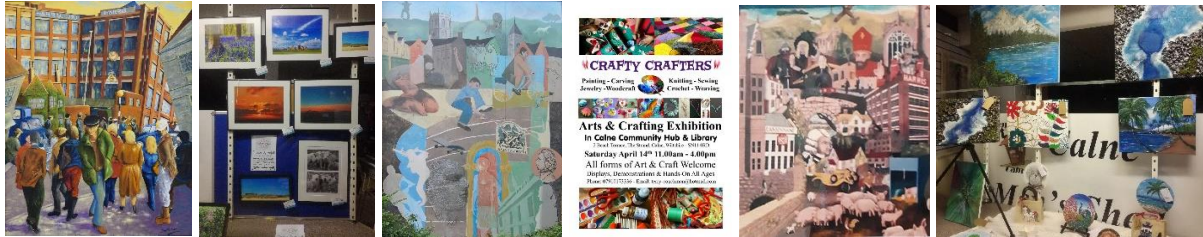
[Calne In Tune Website: https://calneintune.com/](https://calneintune.com/)

[Calne Central Website: https://calnecentral.com/](https://calnecentral.com/)

Our mission, from the very beginning, was to support and promote regular (weekly) participation in Music, Arts & Crafts activities across the Town and to also promote Calne Music, Arts & Crafts productions across Wiltshire. To this end, a major objective of the Project (which I have stuck with to the end) was to establish a Music, Arts & Crafts (including Trade Crafts) Facility for wider Community

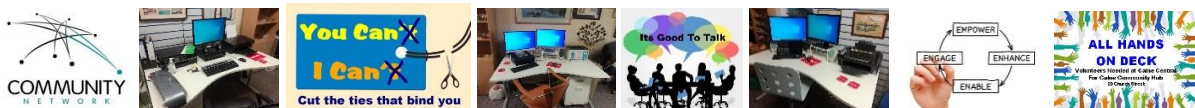
use, modelled on The Pound in Corsham and the creative resources in Frome Town, Somerset. Apart from various forms of creativity being entertaining, participation is socialising and therapeutic.

The idea was to maximise the use of these expensive facilities and equipment for the benefit of everyone in the community. We had already collected a significant amount of equipment from donations. We invited community groups and individuals, who could creatively & productively use these facilities, to join us. We then worked together to the advantage of the Calne Town and Wiltshire in general. We then sought to obtain everything else that you would need to engage in these diverse artistic & creative endeavours. We offered access to our equipment, technology and technical skill, to other community groups for their various community purposes.



For the next 5 years 'Calne in Tune' and 'Calne Community Hub' Partnership supported many community groups, activities and events in the Town and joined in with other groups and venues across Wiltshire, seeking to bring creative opportunities to those communities. Our focus was firstly on Music, Poetry, Drama and Comedy. We next supported the Arts, Crafts, and recreational activities in cooperation with Calne Community Hub. Initially this was in their own premises and later in the Calne Library, Calne Town Hall, and other venues, often working with Calne Town Council.

In February 2020 we had the opportunity to rent 20 Church Street, Calne – SN11 0HS, at an affordable rate, from Stibbard Developments (while Stibbard awaited planning & development decisions, or for its Sale). This is a large 3 story building, famous as FM Furnishings, and previously Dixons of Calne. We installed our basic furnishings & equipment and opened to the public, just before the first Lockdown. We decided to focus upon the essential Community Services with the help of our 'Calne Community Hub' Partners, aiding people struggling financially, disabled in various ways, with mental health challenges and those who became homeless & penniless.



### Working Together:

When their previous accommodation was lost, we agreed with Calne Men's Shed to establish themselves in our building. We agreed to provide them with this space until circumstances improved (when they would be able re-locate to an industrial unit). They paid the running costs that result from their use of these resources, and they helped us repair and develop the Community Spaces. We were able to provide Hot Meals as well as refreshment to our vulnerable visitors. With the equipment and funds that Calne in Tune provided, Calne Community Hub were able to continue their Coffee & Company, Mental Health, Disability, Benefits, and 24/7 Community Fridge & Larder.





We used the Trade Craft skills of Volunteers to Repair Bikes and small Domestic Equipment for recycled low-cost sale. We decided to operate as a charity shop for the duration that the charity shops were close (because of the lockdowns), selling essential clothing; small furnishings; domestic equipment; baby & kids' equipment & toys. This allowed us to stay open, providing community support to all ages. With the help of some incredible volunteer, we opened 7 days a week for 6-7 hours per day. Restrictions on these kinds of facilities were less stringent, but we continued to insist on sensible & safe arrangements. Every table/surface became a 'Sanitation Station' (and still is).



Although we were unable to engage in the usual Music, Arts & Crafts activities much of this time, we were able to lawfully continue normal community support services for all ages & abilities because of essential services we provided. We had an average of 35 people visiting per day, but because of our rigorous commitment to Health & Safety, we had no cross infections in 2 years of operation during the Lockdowns. We continued our commitment to serve those most in need throughout. This was despite criticisms from prejudiced individuals, and risk averse attempts by some professionals, who wanting to stop us working with young people (who had little access to appropriate resources).



During the breaks in the emergency rulings, we have been able to re-introduce things like Band Practice; Art Classes; Guitar, Drums & Piano tuition & practice; Craft Groups; and even put on some small Events. We have done this for donations only, to help people get back out and engage in these therapeutic activities. The lockdowns have had a devastating impact on people's general mental health & wellbeing, so the demand for support has sometimes been overwhelming. We have worked with Calne Community Hub, Calne Men's Shed, Calne Pop-up Pocket Park and Calne Free Church, each of our volunteers assisting each other to make ourselves and Calne more enjoyable and safer.



In the months February – March 2022, we are celebrating surviving 2 years of intensive operation at Calne Central Community Facility, 20 Church Street, Calne. We have worked together with other committed community groups to make our facility even safer and better equipped throughout. We also celebrate 7 years of Calne in Tune's work in Calne Town, with Calne Community Hub and others, to provide Music, Arts & Crafts opportunity on a regular weekly basis. We engaged with other groups across Wiltshire to seek to improve the quality of life in Wiltshire and make it more enjoyable and sustainable. Neighbour helping Neighbours. Nothing magical, just committed teamwork.

As we come out of this crisis, we are now seeking further funding and more volunteers, to establish a long term, multi-use, multi-purpose facility for community groups and the people of Calne. We have managed to get by with generating some of our income, but we now need to meet the demands of normal commercial rates for use of the building we occupy. We also need to recognise the exhaustion experienced by most people in the community (Including volunteers, professionals, & business owners). We are still in a crisis, but it is now one of recovery. This is true for everyone, everywhere, but recovery is best done at home, within the local, cooperating communities.

**The current situation with Calne Central:**

The Rental value of the 'Calne Central' building is £1700 per month. We then have the additional costs of Heating, Cooking, Lighting, Water, Council Tax, Licenses, Insurance & Maintenance. We have been offered the option to purchase the building at £345,000, which is very affordable. We would also need additional funding for repairs, improvements & developments. In all, for us to buy and develop the existing building, we would eventually need £500,000. In the meantime, we would need to get funding of £1700 for the rent and an additional to help cover the running costs in the region of an average £600 per month. We currently generate just over £1000 for ourselves.



The other thing we need to consider is the Volunteer situation. Volunteers generally have been meeting the demands made on them, but they have also been impacted by the challenges of the last two years. We are exhausted and having to meet the increased needs of ourselves and our families. Volunteers generally are in short supply and the Statutory Services are also often understaffed and under resourced. At the same time, the demands and restrictions place on people are increasing. Something needs to change if effective community services are going to survive all this.

It is generally agreed that Calne Town needs a Multi-Purpose, Multi-Function, Multi-Use Community facility and we have proven the need and this potential over the last two years. It is clearly the most cost-effective way of providing community services. It comes with its challenges also; it means that organisations must accept a more cooperative arrangement. It will not work if any one individual or organisation wants to be in control or seeks to compete with other groups. That has already proven to be non-viable method of running community services. There is little room for egos.

My suggestion is that an independent Trust be set up, with contributions and representative from the Councils, Statutory Sector, Business Sector, Charities, and diverse Community Groups. These various organisations need to work together to provide the services and activities currently needed and desired by the community. An appropriate Trust must be willing to adapt to changes over time and seek to renew itself. This is achieved by bringing in new, young blood as it becomes available.

Without this dynamic (organic) approach things can become stale and projects like these then fail to meet the changing needs of the community.



We need to meet the challenge of recovery right now and have something in place in the next few months. It is a time of renewal, and we cannot afford to miss this once in a lifetime opportunity. Calne Town needs better opportunities for all ages, abilities, and dispositions. It is surprising how many people from outside Calne enjoy what we provide. Chippenham Community Hub was established on our model and visitors from as far as London, Home Counties, Wales, even abroad, say they wish they had a similar multipurpose facility - Neighbours Helping Neighbours.

Calne in Tune and Community Hub Volunteers are willing to keep things going for as long as they can, but there are limits, and those limits are coming to an end. This is due to lack of support and difficulties of funding over the last year. We need new people to engage and work together to renew the project (and the community it supports). That is a challenge for everybody. It is not helpful to sit on the margins and criticise. People need to get involved and do something positive. The alternative is to start from scratch, rebuilding the essential community support at some time in the future.

We have survived a devastating crisis in recent years and people's spirits are at a low ebb. The fact that the clinical crisis is nearly over does not change the reality that the consequences for people will be with us for months (perhaps for years) to come. We must help our communities recover from the personal, family & social consequences of the last two years and build up the resolve for dealing with day-to-day life and prepare for the possible impact of a new crisis in the future.

**Emergency Plans:**

We need to get involved in developing a new Emergency Plan for our communities because it has become clear that such plans rely heavily on the support of Community Volunteers (many of whom were not properly consulted in previous plans). Community groups are in the process of change all the time, as are the communities they support. Established community groups fade away and new ones are established, established volunteers retire and we need them replaced by fresh, younger volunteers, able to take on the new challenges. Ideally this should be an ongoing process of growth.

One thing is now blatantly clear, the role of Volunteers and Community Groups in supporting community efforts, and dealing with crises like these, is an essential. The statutory services, even with the involvement of the army, are not adequate to meet all the need of the community during an emergency. They never have been and more especially now when staffing and funding has been reduced. We need to get back to the situation where Community Volunteers are respected for their insight and commitment. They are not (and never were) an extra, they are core essential workers.

We are there for our local people because we are committed to the communities we support. Not because we are paid to do it, and certainly not because we are told what to do and how to do it. Many Community Volunteers have been professionals or managed businesses of various kinds. They often have more experience than the paid professionals in knowing what the community needs, where the most vulnerable are, and how best to deal with problems. It is time to acknowledge that

Community Support is highly reliant upon Volunteers & Community Groups. It is best we support & include them as equal partners. They have local insight as Neighbours Helping Neighbours.

History tells us that Local Communities were coming together to support each other long before most professional services were invented. Many of our established professional services evolved out of such entrepreneurial Community Initiatives. We exclude these committed individuals and groups from the decision process (and important role they can play) at our peril. Exclude them, ignore them, override them, disrespect them, and/or fail to support & appreciate them, you will lose them. The community then loses the valuable contribution they collectively make every day of the week, every hour of the day, all year round, dealing with crises big & small.