

12 Camelford and Delabole Development Trust



Camelford and Delabole Development Trust has demonstrated how two distinct geographical areas are able to come together for the benefit of their respective local communities. The organisation has established participatory governance techniques that enable a consensus-based decision-making process, and accountability to the local communities.

What it Does

The Development Trust has been established to act as a secretariat for two smaller community associations, to administer and manage the Market & Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI) programme for the area. The initiative is one of four for the Cornwall area, and intends to help market towns and their surrounding communities to develop vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities.

The Development Trust covers the two distinct geographical areas of Camelford and Delabole in Cornwall. Each of these areas has their own community-based group, the only members of the Development Trust.

The Development Trust acts to represent the two communities in developing projects and initiatives which respond to community needs to encourage sustainable development in the local areas, in line with the MCTI programme.

How it Came About

The Development Trust has been created from the vision of the two community associations – both of which were formed and developed to respond to community needs.

Camelford Town Forum was set up following health concerns by local residents relating to an incident involving the accidental contamination of local water supplies.

Local people established a forum to enable and encourage the local community's desire to take ownership of plans and action to create a more sustainable local community.

Delabole Development Group was established in 1998/99, following a similar model to the Camelford Town Forum, with the intention of developing local community-based forums to discuss, agree and deliver plans of action for development.

The Development Trust was established to help support and facilitate the implementation of the associations' plans for local development, partly through the MCTI programme.

Following a lengthy period of discussion and consultations with the Charity Commission, and development bodies, the Development Trust made the decision not to become a charity. This decision was largely based on the group's experience of dealing with regulatory and advisory bodies during the process, and weighing up the costs and benefits of charitable status, with the size, capacity and stage of development of the organisation.

The Development Trust states that it does not feel disadvantaged by its decision, and in fact feels that it has taken a good strategic decision, given the charity reviews being carried out at the time of the discussions.

Governance Structure

The governing document, the Memorandum and Articles of Association for the Development Trust, state that the members of the Trust are Camelford Town Forum and Delabole Development Group, as associations.

There are currently no individual members of the Trust, and no-one from outside the two distinct geographical areas of benefit are able to join. The Development Trust is

Facts & Figures

- Organisational Type – Development Trust.
- Legal Form – Company Limited by Guarantee
- Date Established – June 2001.
- Location – Camelford, Cornwall.
- Number of Members – Two.
- Number of Workers – One part-time Administrator.
- Turnover – £40,075 for the year ending August 2003.



The Development Trust is active in consulting with local communities, for a number of local regeneration projects, ensuring local people are involved in decisions which affect their local areas.

aware that it may need to revise the governing document as the organization grows and develops.

Camelford Town Forum and Delabole Development Group are member-based organisations, with 35 and fifteen members respectively. The members of each of these associations attend open members' meetings, in the case of Camelford Town Forum once a week and Delabole once a month. There are no elected/appointed managing committees for the associations, with decisions being made collectively at open members' meetings by all members present.

Each of the associations nominates and informally elects their respective representatives to the Board of Directors for the Development Trust.

The Development Trust has a board of seven members, with four Directors elected from one association and three from the other. The number of Directors for each association is alternated on an annual basis, to ensure one association does not have greater representation than the other, over a given time period.

The Board of Directors meet monthly to discuss the management and operational aspects of the organisation. Due to the size and capacity of the organisation at present, the Board of Directors currently undertake a large part of both the governance and management of the Development Trust.

The Board of Directors have the responsibility of informing their respective associations of matters and issues discussed by the Board, along with bringing to the Development Trust Board issues that are raised by their own associations at members meetings.

Participatory Practice

The values, nature and history of the two associations have been driven by the needs of the community and responding to these needs at a local level. This is especially so with the Camelford Town Forum, where local people have developed ideas and plans for development which focus on meeting their needs in a sustainable manner.

These values have been articulated in the number of ways decisions are made by the Development Trust, and its two member associations. For example, within the associations, all meetings are open members' meetings, which are held either weekly or monthly. These meetings are also open to the wider community residents in the area of benefit.

Issues are openly discussed at association meetings and if necessary fed into the Development Trust Board of Directors' meetings, and then reported back to association members meetings. In this manner, the Development Trust and member associations ensure that information flows both to and from the Board of Directors in an open and transparent way.

The Development Trust, at the time of writing, is in the process of introducing joint meetings between the association members, and the Development Trust, to enhance the decision-making process and to reduce the meeting time commitments for members.

New members of the Board of Directors are informally given induction training. This is largely based on the national Development Trust Association induction pack, which provides an introduction to Development Trusts and the roles and responsibilities of being a Board member. The Development Trust recognises the skills required for the



A community event involving local people.

Board, and has been fortunate to date, in being able to recruit and retain appropriate skills and competencies on the Board of Directors.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Development Trust recognises the importance of engaging and involving a range of stakeholders in its work and development. These stakeholders have included local authorities, both at district and county level, alongside regional development bodies and other statutory bodies such as the Countryside Agency.

The level of stakeholder involvement may be in part due to the MCTI programme, and the Development trust's administration of the initiative in the locality. However, the organisation recognises the range of stakeholders and makes efforts to ensure they are aware of the work of the Development Trust.

The organisation considers its primary stakeholder to be the communities in which it operates, and ensures that these communities are actively involved in consultations and decision-making wherever possible. The Development Trust employs a Planning for Real technique to consult and help local people to develop options for the physical regeneration and development of local areas.

Measures of Success

The organisation is relatively new and considers its activities to date, involving administering and developing the MCTI initiative with the local communities. The organisation, however, is proud that in the time since its inception, it has managed to sustain and positively maintain good working relationships between the two distinct geographical areas, which have had a tradition of rivalry, and encouraged decision-making between the associations based on consensus.

The Development Trust reports that in governing the organisation it has rarely had to deal with internal tensions between Board members, largely as a result of good communication and trust being developed over time between Board members.

Key to Success

The Development Trust states that its success to date has largely been due to the clear recognition, dating back to the establishment of the local community associations:

"... that decisions that are made, are made at the community level, in an area which is geographically isolated, with communities which have strong traditional ties. The tenacity of the community to continue to challenge and move forward to achieve its longer term vision."