

the  
little  
book of

# Healthier Fleetwood

*connecting professional  
stakeholders to support  
the growth of the  
community*

Alejandro Moreno-Rangel<sup>1</sup>, Emmanuel Tseklevs<sup>1</sup>, Mark Spencer<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Imagination Lancaster, Lancaster University

<sup>2</sup> The Mount View Practice

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# What this little book tells you?

This Little Book tells you about how the Healthier Fleetwood programme from the perspective of professional stakeholders. It explores what Healthier Fleetwood is and how it positioned itself in a way to connect and support the local community in the UK coastal town of Fleetwood. Finally, it tells you some key insights to replicate the programme in other UK towns moving forward. The Healthier Fleetwood series has two titles. This is the first title in this series and the second title presents the views from the community and their key insights.

# Who is this Little Book for?

This Little Book is for organisations, policymakers, local authorities, public health organisations, NHS professionals, and relevant stakeholders with interest in developing a community programme to support the community. As the name suggests, Healthier Fleetwood's focus is on health and well-being of the community. However, other areas are also supported, making this a holistic approach. Finally, this book is also aimed at members of local communities to promote a healthier lifestyle. This Little Book will help you identify the key components to replicate this programme.

# The Healthier Fleetwood Programme

The relationship between residents and organisations is built on the community's feeling that has been listened to. Thus, they trust the organisations. However, there is a real disconnect between what is really important to people and what services they want to be provided on many occasions.

Healthier Fleetwood was born in 2016 as a way to be between the town's residents and with local support and services as a means to improve health and well-being. Hence, [Healthier Fleetwood](#) is a point of contact for the community, supporting residents to improve their physical and mental health.

Healthier Fleetwood is independent of but works closely with the NHS, local authorities, businesses, the education, faith and voluntary sectors. It supports the delivery of social prescribing, making a positive difference in the long-term well-being of individuals and families and the community.

Since the start of Healthier Fleetwood, the initiative has connected individuals and groups to increase their confidence and take more control over their health and the decisions that affect their lives. The success of this approach and its impact on health has been reflected in encouraging trends for reduced GP and A&E visits by Fleetwood residents and also recognised by awards from the NHS and extensive, positive media coverage for the town.

# HEALTHIER FLEETWOOD

## connecting our community



Figure 1. Healthier Fleetwood logo. Source: Healthier Fleetwood.

Up to 2022, the Healthier Fleetwood programme has partnered with over 64, including local & regional authorities, the NHS, several charities and local businesses. The complete list is available on [Healthier Fleetwood's website](#).

The Healthier Fleetwood Partnership is made up of organisations active in the Fleetwood community, supporting residents to lead healthier, happier lives. The partnership includes representatives of the NHS, local authorities, businesses, schools, the voluntary and faith sector.

Informal bi-monthly meetings (initially in person but held online during the COVID pandemic) are an opportunity to share ideas and successes and the group also receives regular newsletters and information distributed by Healthier Fleetwood.

The Healthier Fleetwood programme is based on Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's theory of self-determination.<sup>1</sup> They said that in order for someone to keep highly self-determined and self-motivated, they need to feel like they are in *control, confident and connected* – also known as the 3Cs.

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1 Deci, E. L. and Ryan, R. M. (2012) 'Self-Determination Theory', in Van Lange, P. A. M., Kruglanski, A. W., and Higgins, E. T. (eds) *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology: Volume 1*. SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446249215.n21>.

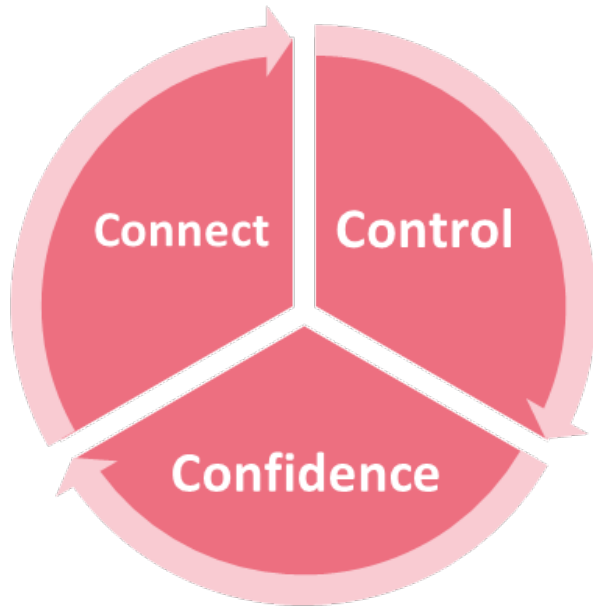


Figure 2. The 3Cs (Control, confidence and connectedness).

In the case of Healthier Fleetwood, the 3Cs were applied at a community level and in the context of health. This approach seeks to empower and listen to the community seeking the answers they need. In other words, the primary involvement is the residents with the aim to stimulate and initiate different initiatives by themselves.

The 3Cs in the community context have a similar meaning to those at the individual level. Control relates to the level of choice that the community has and how they influence the community and the person's feelings over stuff that concerns them (i.e., the control they have over their health).

Confidence relates to the community's ability to perform a task successfully by supporting other individuals. Finally, connectedness relates to the quality of relationships and partnerships within the community at individual and organisational levels, thus aligning and giving purpose to the community activities.

Healthier Fleetwood identifies itself as "a point of contact for the Community." Healthier Fleetwood connects residents to each other, the services available



from local partners, and the inspirational network of local groups, activities, and events. They provide a forum for ideas to emerge from the community, encourage residents to take control of their health and well-being, and by growing in self-confidence to lead healthier and happier lives.

Healthier Fleetwood is seen in the community as a medium to support them, helping them to achieve what they need and want to do. Working as a listening mechanism, Healthier Fleetwood is able to evolve and adapt as required by the community needs.

While Healthier Fleetwood is not actively organising activities, one of the key areas of support they offer is to help connect individuals with organisations and people that will help them to make something happen (i.e. establish a group or activity). Hence, instead of being an organisation with established activities to run, Healthier Fleetwood is a facilitator who empowers the community to take ownership of their health and needs.

An important part of Healthier Fleetwood is working with the community. As such, they have also established a community hub in one of the local shopping areas. This has given visibility to the programme and allows them to have a presence in a highly visited pedestrian area where people can go seeking support.

The hub is equipped with information about the activities and how the programme's partners can support individuals. At the hub's heart is the highly motivated staff that acts as a face to the public and manages the digital media.

The community meets regularly with the partners, and they update each other on the different activities happening across the town. These meetings open to everyone are also great opportunities for networking making short the bridge between the community and the organisations. Individuals get the opportunity to talk directly to people in these organisations, but it is also more important to get to know the people in charge of the services they will need.

Health is the central area in which Healthier Fleetwood shapes, but they take two approaches, unlike other programmes. One, as mentioned, is to support individuals to take ownership of their physical and mental health, increasing peoples' self-confidence in doing this. The community-led activities' major role is to support physical activities and social interaction. Indeed, these points came across when talking to community representatives about health and community involvement.



Figure 3. Healthier Fleetwood community meeting. Source: Healthier Fleetwood.

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The first of these approaches as mentioned, is to support individuals to take ownership of their physical and mental health, increasing peoples' self-confidence in doing this. The community-led activities' major role is to support physical activities and social interaction. Indeed, these points came across when talking to community representatives about health and community involvement.

These activities play a vital role in the community. They are organised in 11 themes:

1. Out & About,
2. Sports & Fitness,
3. Music & Dance,
4. Arts & Crafts,
5. Make New Friends,
6. Volunteering,
7. Adult Learning,
8. Veterans,
9. Yoga & Relaxation,
10. Gardening, and
11. Community Events.



Figure 4. Healthier Fleetwood community activities (singing and football groups). Source: Healthier Fleetwood.

Activities such as the walking or singing groups make their members get out of home joining others for some light physical activity. Moreover, social interactions happen within and around these activities and people start connecting to each other.

Mental health is also an important component of these activities. For instance, they support stronger social connections, reduce loneliness and anxiety, boost self-confidence, and even provide a new sense of purpose. These activities also provide a good networking environment and get closer to the community for organisations.

The second health aspect is that the program has, to a degree, a level of social prescription embedded into it. In this instance, social prescribing does not seek to take the role of reacting but to prevent health problems through community activities. An interesting element is that some of the social prescribers also attend these activities. As people get to know them better, they are often more open to the idea to talk with them, making referrals more productive.

# Key insights from professional stakeholders at Healthier

Professional stakeholders are an important part of the programme and its success. Up to 2022, the Healthier Fleetwood has partnered with over 64 organisations, including representatives of the NHS, local authorities, businesses, schools, the voluntary and faith sector.

The way these organisations get involved impacts the success of the programme, but for organisations to get involved, a clear path needs to be reflected. Although we could not gather the views from all 64 organisations, the next lines will present some of the findings we collected through interviews with different stakeholders.

The partners involved in Healthier Fleetwood believed that it is important for the community. They identified three key areas in which the impact of Healthier Fleetwood is reflected:

- improving the sense of community,
- developing social opportunities, and
- serving as a mechanism to approach professionals to the community.

These three key elements feed on the organisation's support for the community. By listening to what the community wants and needs, they can provide better support and improve the quality of life. For instance, a common agreement was that Healthier Fleetwood empowered the community and increased hope for the future, particularly during COVID-19.

The desire to help the community is all the partners had, a drive to get involved. However, it also served to establish new partnerships bringing together new potential to offer different services to the community. By finding out what people needed and how the stakeholders could invest in people, the community felt supported and elevated the sense of community that was much needed to respond to mental health, support for long term conditions, engaging with young people and COVID-19.

Healthier Fleetwood was an important mechanism to support the community during COVID-19. Through the established partnerships and community life, Fleetwood thrived during these hard times. Having these partnerships established made it easier for the organisations to work together, rather than commencing together at the beginning and establishing self-trust in each other.

As Healthier Fleetwood became embedded in the stakeholders' organisations, they started seeing more benefits not only to the organisation but also to the community. For instance, by having the partnership already established, it was easier for the partners to apply for external funding to develop social programmes that helped the community and regenerate the town and brought them closer to the community.

Perhaps, the most important benefit perceived by the stakeholders is enhanced communication between the partners and the community. Nonetheless, the benefits can be classified into three categories:

- local residents,
- community, and
- other organisations.

The stakeholders mentioned that they have seen some important changes among the local residents. These changes were improved self-confidence,



*Figure 5. Fleetwood community and partners interactions. Source: Healthier Fleetwood.*

During the life of the programme, the quality of life within the community has improved and the sense of the 3Cs within the community has been increased. These made the community start making things happen, as individuals and organisations work together for the greater good of the community. These activities are crucial to empowering the community, developing different 'informal' support channels and boosting the sense of belonging.

It was clear that the programme has improved the way the participating organisation relates with the community and the other partner organisations at the organisational level. Hence, providing a trustworthy networking platform allows them to get to know the community better.

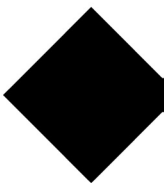
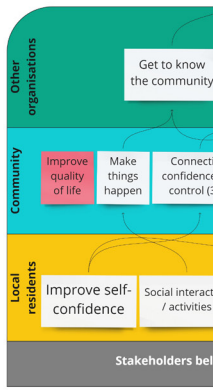
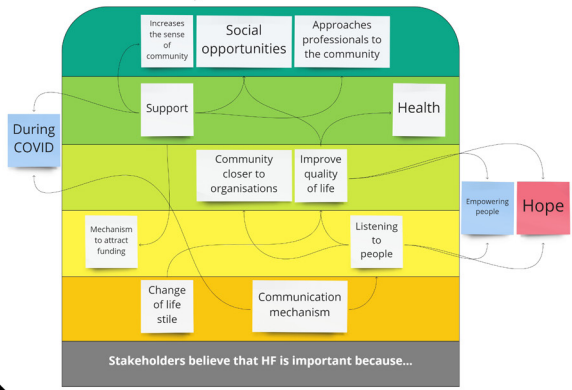
The stakeholders also recognised that participating in the Healthier Fleetwood programme has benefits for their own organisation. For instance, the programme helped them focus resources where they really needed to support a range of other services while developing community leadership. Moreover, they were able to provide support complemented by other organisations helping them to access services.

This was clearly perceived through economic growth, making it easier to deliver better services and improve their credibility. Finally, some of the stakeholders also recognised that Healthier Fleetwood also served as a Public Relations platform. The most important benefits for the stakeholders' organisations were connecting with the community, improved health and networking.

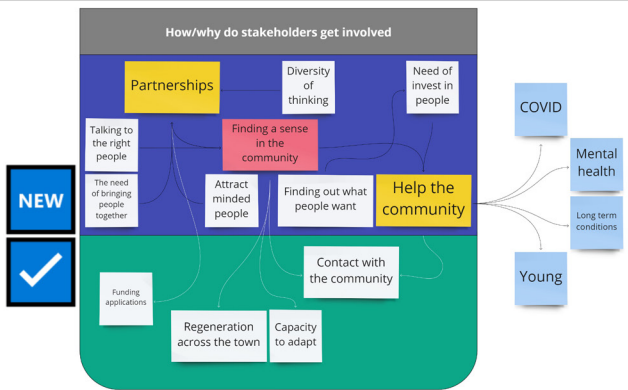
As in any other kind of partnership, some barriers and challenges were also recognised. Perhaps the biggest challenges they had were how to deal with big organisations (i.e., NHS) and how to capture the social benefits of the programme, particularly those related to young community engagement and elderly oriented benefits.

Another of the challenges that were recognised as the way of thinking. For instance, some organisations had some difficulties losing control over certain activities or community-led services. This created another way of services going from universal services to tailored to individuals. However, this change was difficult in some instances as it would be in other organisations. Finally, the three most significant barriers were time, funding and resources.

HF is based on the 3Cs (confidence, control and connected) to empower residents to lead what they want to achieve



HEALTHIER





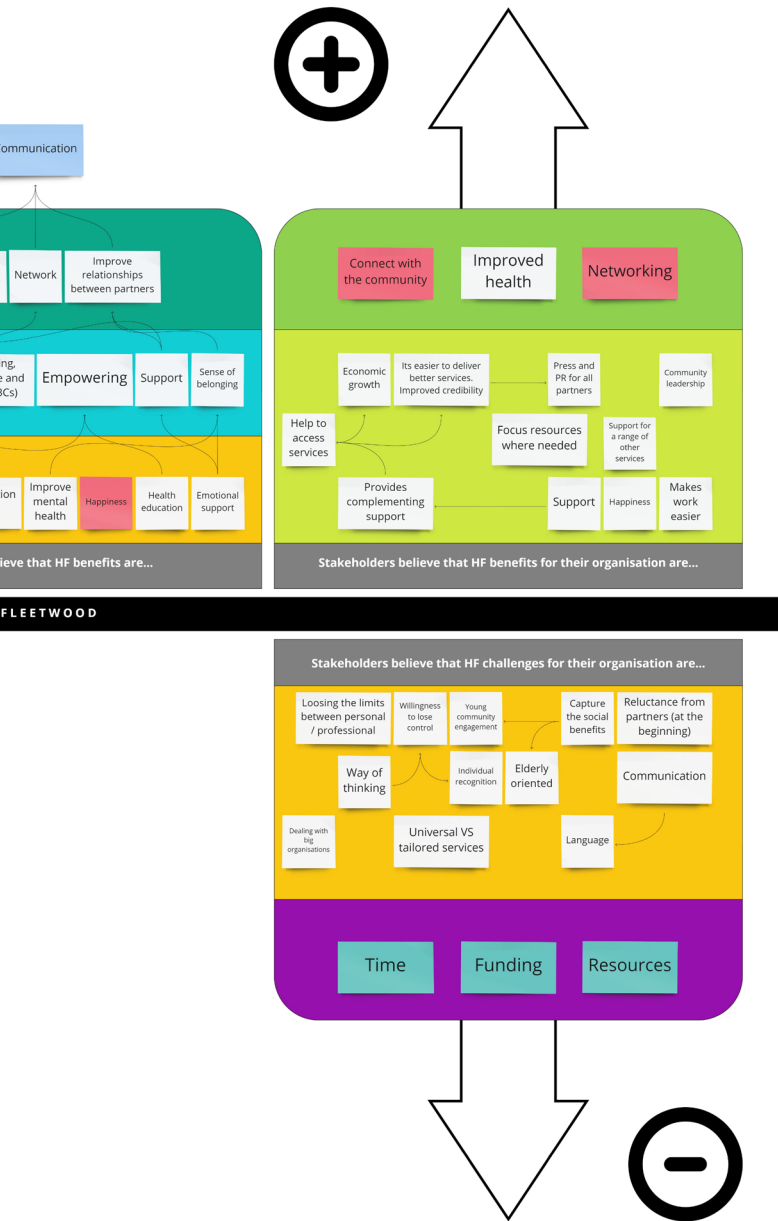


Figure 6. Summary of the views from the different Healthier Fleetwood partners.

# Moving forward: recommendations for other UK towns

As presented before, the program's benefits are varied, not only for the stakeholders but also for the community itself. As we move forward, it is essential to recognise the Healthier Fleetwood programme elements that impacted its implementation. Although the points raised in this chapter are applicable for Healthier Fleetwood as our case study, they could be adapted to the different towns depending of their particular circumstances. In other words, their application in other communities, for instance, will vary depending on their needs and resources.

The elements for the implementation of similar programmes are discussed in response to the following questions:

*What could be done differently during the Healthier Fleetwood implementation?*

*And what are the key elements that are important to scale the programme in other UK towns?*

But before we start answering these questions, it is essential to understand the structure.

As mentioned before, the organisation is not actively organising activities but providing support to the community and individuals to achieve their goals, mainly where there is a clear impact on health.

Healthier Fleetwood, in its structure, is organised differently from other similar organisations. Healthier Fleetwood is not constituted as a Charity or Business; instead, it relays on its partners' goodwill to come together for the greater good of the community. This gives them the flexibility to evolve with the town's needs and re-shape themselves as needed, serving as a communications bridge between the community and the organisations.

In this way, many of Healthier Fleetwood's partners feel very comfortable with how it is managed to provide support for the community. Hence, many of the professional stakeholders said that they would change nothing or very little about the way it has been developed.

Communication with the community is an important factor for the programme, and some stakeholders said that consulting more with the community could be advantageous when setting up similar organisations. This could be used to engage with people and organisations differently.

As one would expect, Healthier Fleetwood's focus is on health. Some of the partners expressed that perhaps starting with a wider orientation at the beginning and letting it evolve and shape itself into something could be advantageous. They also recognised that in order to have better success being involved with the local council from an early stage could bring clear benefits to the programme.

Healthier Fleetwood has a physical hub that promotes the activities for the community and the different services available within Fleetwood. However, this was recently established and having a physical presence in the community is important. This could be a similar hub, but the main aim is to have a place where the community and the partners can meet and discuss giving the programme a heart within the community.

Finally, the stakeholders recognise that engaging with different groups within the community is advantageous. One of the groups currently underrepresented is the younger population. So, it would be of interest to develop some early-stage mechanisms that would allow future organisations to engage with younger populations and secure a well-



Figure 7. Healthier Fleetwood community hub. Source: Healthier Fleetwood.

balanced representation of the community.

Moving forward to scale the project in other towns, the stakeholders considered several factors necessary. The first one is to identify a person or group of persons passionate about the community. Ideally, these persons should have connections within the community and organisations. This last factor is essential because some of the barriers to implementing the project are building up relationships takes time.

Once the core group of persons has been identified and formed, identify key partners to begin the programme. These key partners should include representatives from the local partners and more prominent organisations such as the local council and the NHS. The potential partners and key individuals should meet informally to start the network and start identifying the local identity for the programme.



Figure 8. Healthier Fleetwood community leadership (left to right – Tony O’Neil, Mark Spencer and Pauline Kennedy at the NHS Expo 2019). Source: Healthier Fleetwood.

This local identity should be formed in constant consultation with the community, opening communication channels and identity that will form the bridges between the organisations and the community. This will also help identify the community’s needs so that the partners involved can start responding to the community’s needs.

The partners must be aware from the beginning that whatever develops should be organically created in constant communication with the community, hearing and responding to their needs. Hence, the partners need to be open to different approaches that perhaps they have never used or feel comfortable with and let the programme form and evolve.

To a degree, the partners should show restraint on trying to control or force the conceived ideas they may have and lose control. However, the balance needs to be found as the partners should have enough room and interest to engage actively and care for what the programme will become.

Finally, the stakeholders identified three main aspects that were essential to creating the programme. The programme should represent leadership within the community. As such, the individuals and organisations participating should have well-established roots within the community. Secondly, establishing earlier partnerships will allow the programme to support better the needs of the community. And finally, and perhaps the most important, the community voice. After all, the community created this programme for the community!

In summary, the strategy described above follows the principles below, which the stakeholders identified as essential within Healthier Fleetwood. These are:

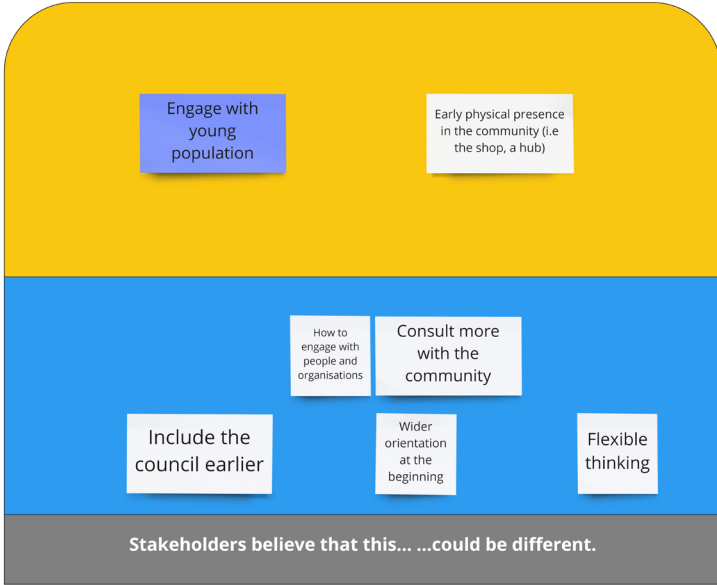
1. identify individuals that are passionate about the community – better if these individuals are well connected within the community,
2. building relationships take time,
3. establish the local identity,
4. seek partners that are engaged and care for the community,
5. the partnership could be an informal network (i.e., there is no need to set up and register an entity, such as a Charity),
6. identify and the support from the key partners at the beginning, additional partners will follow,
7. establish an open communication channel with the community, stakeholders and partners,
8. listen to the community to identify their needs,
9. involve the NHS and other big organisations,
10. allow the programme to evolve and do not start with a preconceived idea of what it should be or provide,
11. be prepared to lose control of the programme, but show leadership,
12. be open to different approaches and welcome changes,
13. have a physical presence within the community (i.e. a hub for the programme's activities), and

14. engage with all different groups within the community from the beginning.

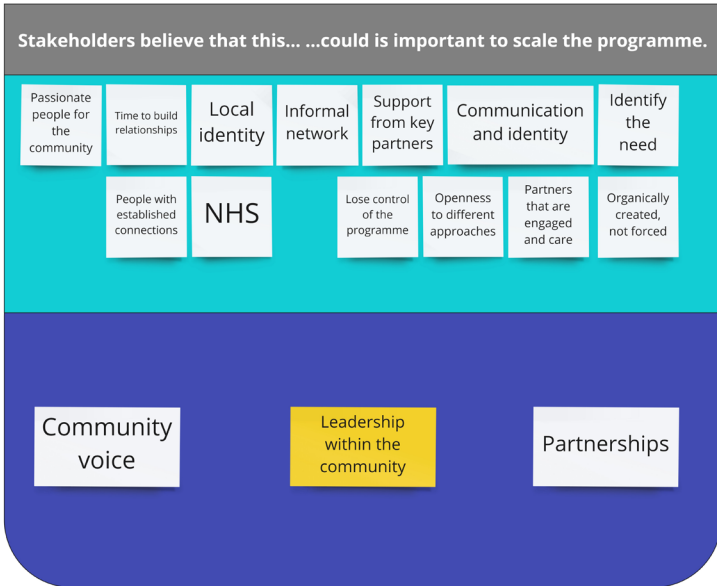
The stakeholders recognised that these key aspects are essential to scale the programme. The programme should, therefore:

1. show leadership within the community,
2. allow partnerships' development,
3. give the community voice, and
4. listen, listen and listen more to the community!

*Figure 9. Summary of the views to move forward from the different Healthier Fleetwood partners.*



**MOVING FORWARD**





# Healthier Fleetwood Team

Although Healthier Fleetwood is organised by the community to the community, there is a core team of people who supports the networking meetings, takes care of the community hub, communicates the events organised by the community and deals with the day-to-day activities among other duties. This team is formed by Mark Spencer, Pauline Kennedy, Karen Boylan and David Gore.

The contact details for Healthier Fleetwood are:

E-mail: [listening@healthierfleetwood.co.uk](mailto:listening@healthierfleetwood.co.uk)

Tel: 07399 093835

Web: [www.healthierfleetwood.co.uk](http://www.healthierfleetwood.co.uk)

# Summary

Healthier Fleetwood is an independent organisation that works closely with Fleetwoods residents to help them to improve their quality of life. Healthier Fleetwood connects residents to each other, the services available from local partners, and the inspirational network of local groups, activities, and events. They provide a forum for ideas to emerge from the community, encourage residents to take control of their health and well-being, and by growing in self-confidence to lead healthier and happier lives.

Healthier Fleetwood works for the community with initiatives from the community. Its primary role is to connect the residents with different partners. These partners are an important part of the programme and their involvement reflects an improvement of the sense of community, develops social opportunities, and serve as a mechanism to approach professionals to the community.

For the organisations involved, the most important benefit is enhanced communication between the partners and the community. Nonetheless, there are other several benefits at local, community and organisational levels.

Although, the conditions in Fleetwood may be different from other UK towns, it may be possible to replicate the programme in other areas. These aspects are:

1. show leadership within the community,
2. allow partnerships' development,
3. give the community voice, and
4. listen, listen and listen more to the community!