

## Circular Malton & Norton notes for NYC Wider Partnership Conference 2025

### CMN

Circular Malton & Norton is a Community Interest Company formed in 2021. The Vision is to create the UK's first circular economy market town, developing collaboration and behaviour so products and materials are kept in circulation, reducing waste and saving energy and money.

The result will be a thriving place bringing economic, social and environmental benefits.

The strategy involves town wide initiatives where everyone can get involved whatever the scale, and specifically reaching the hesitant majority, so inspiring businesses and residents in their first steps of action.

Initiatives underway (at various stages) include:

- (1) Plans to take local commercial food waste, put through a community led anaerobic digester they will build on a nearby business park to create energy for the neighbouring Eden Camp Museum as well as other businesses located there. This has gained such significant support that the plan is being further developed to add multiple renewable technologies to power and heat the whole business park off grid, offering business tenants energy at known prices avoiding market unpredictability as well as enabling them to decarbonise without individual capital investment. A national showcase of a positive circular future.
- (2) A circular hub on the high street that inspires everyday shoppers and community groups to visit and experience multiple circular opportunities – buy unique upcycled items made by volunteers from furniture and materials donated instead of going to landfill, or shop for pre-loved clothes, take part in upcycling workshops and learn new skills, gain home energy advice to reduce bills, discover Library of Things, Repair cafes and the many other partnership initiatives that the Hub promotes.
- (3) Have local businesses co-design an innovation enterprise hub for them, that helps owners get started on the sustainability journey, see their innovative ideas become a business or access the fantastic resources and support found in cities or university campuses, but often inaccessible when based in a rural area.

All of these projects has CMN working with partners bringing expert knowledge and skills to design and deliver transformational impact.

CMN recently won the VISA national award for being the UK's best circular town champions and is a DEFRA Pathfinder, contributing to the UK Government's circular economy task force.

Sue Jefferson is one of the co-founders and directors, working as a team with over 20 volunteers ranging from 13 to over 60 years old who share CMN's mission to make it fun to make a difference.



### **WHEELGATE high street project**

In May this year, CMN moved to Malton's traditional high street of Wheelgate and opened their Circular Hub.

Like so many high streets, Wheelgate is seeing an increasing number of shops close down and more disrepair so becoming a cycle of decline.

Successfully securing funds from the first phase of YNYCA Mayoral fund for vibrant and sustainable high streets, CMN is working with partners to lead the revitalisation of Wheelgate.

### **Key points I will EXTRACT from here to share in workshop (and could circulate afterwards)**

#### Partners

Clerk of Malton Town Council, lead with Malton in Bloom and on street initiatives

Wheelgate business owner

Totally Locally champion of other town projects

Estate manager of Fitzwilliam Estate – major landowner in town

PhD lecturers of University of York St John – living lab and Institute of social justice dept

Newly met and not all known to each other

#### A very short time line

First meeting July. To be designed, implemented, assessed and completed by December.

Clear purpose – re-engage locals and visitors esp young people in shopping in Wheelgate

Brainstorming

Ideas from elsewhere

Benefits of ideas

Feasibility of ideas

Visit EVERY business on Wheelgate, tell them of project and invite interest

Hold Event to engage and Q&A

Quotes

Independent research

Finalise ideas based on public feedback, costs, ability to deliver and in time

Activate – August+

Permits, designs, approvals, plan for risks and mitigation

Rebrief EVERY business with public feedback and activities – invitation to participate

Deal with curve balls – other activity, non approvals, premises availability, variable costs based on uptake, negative minority, more non approvals, scaffolding!

Go public with plans – feedback heard and reflected in plans, drive awareness and behaviour

Report drafting

Monitoring & reporting

Budget management – claim back post expenditure

Research second stage

Evaluation and completion



### New Initiatives for the high street

**Theme** – be bold - *putting the Wow into Wheelgate*

**Research** - what want to do with outputs – current views, response to concepts, steers, verbatims, numbers, priorities

**Passport** – loyalty card – simple, appealing, rigour, manage risk, tested, briefed for execution

**Map** – create awareness of what is in Wheelgate – linking messages to research feedback & adding some WOws

**Pop up shop** – brings interest – recognise why empty shops or failure rate - so try before you buy – together with wraparound business support – hold competition

**Spruce up look** – style, banners, bollards, seating and planters, lighting, window displays, empty shops

### Learnings

Rationale for ideas linked to overall intent and behaviour to see

Consistency of theme and style

Prioritise

Stay focused on key purpose as well as outputs and outcomes

Budget management

Project management

TIME plan and then assume longer!

Be pragmatic - Adapt and reset repeatedly

Be on top of plan, monitoring and reporting

Decision making at speed and not by committee

Lean on partners and their expertise – though delegation not always welcomed

Importance of and Construct of research, listen and adapt plan

Communicate and communicate - different stakeholders - keep informed

Have physical place to enable project to be touched/ views of public and business heard

Buy local, source local

Don't ignore but assess naysayers, if & when to respond and how

Ideas capture imagination and opportunity

Pop Up shop potential now as ongoing incubator hub for first time retailers before launching into first tenancy

Wraparound business support awareness and offer to more than winner

FOMO – more hesitant businesses coming forward

Need a committed lead

To be sustainable – plan 3 year vision with several other ideas for future and plan for paid project manager post initial stage

Why?

Need 3 year plan else shopper negative response and ineffective business impact

Business owners have NO time

## Useful Questions

### Top Tips?

**Choose your team of partners carefully** and how you will work

Who and why? Blend of skills. Leverage diversity of thinking **WITH** Inclusive way of working.  
Process? Decision making authority in own areas? Meeting purposes? Listening skills.

**Use Planners** – project, activities, budget mgmt., communication

**Embrace risk management** – it can be your best friend!

Plans better designed and adaptable decision making easier – minimal sleepless nights

**Embrace adaptation**

**Be bold (and with enthusiasm)** - if want to make a difference and want others to believe

### Watch outs?

**Permissions and permits** – what, what's reasonable, worth paying for, time to secure

**Variable costs** and how to manage them – redemptions on loyalty card

**Time lines** – it takes longer

### If a magic wand?

**A project manager** – doesn't need to be full time, can be shared, can be a project for development – but choose/ appoint with same importance as partners

**A traffic solution** (unintended consequence of increasing footfall in the high street, is the increased pedestrians wanting to cross the road...multiple issues and solutions are beyond our project feasibility – but not beyond our influence, will just take longer

### Expected Impact?

We don't know!

We are hoping for no further shop closures in the short term and ideally a new venture appearing on Wheelgate

Hoping for a positive shift in attitude by shoppers and visitors – verbatims and ideally a numerical shift (in only 6 weeks of there being something new and tangible to see and comment on!!)

We have already had positive feedback by shoppers – on line and in store on day 1 of going public...(as well as businesses)

And...a very exciting pop up business coming soon

**WOW!**