

52 painless things your community can do

52 Things is a UK charity campaign aimed at inspiring communities across Yorkshire (and anywhere else in the world) to have a go at something new and kickstart activities.

Below are some of the best examples of ideas in action (not all 52!) and tips on how to go about them, including fundraising ideas, connecting with young and older people, bringing more tourism and trade to your town or village, and making it an even greater place to live.

Here are the ideas....

- Start a local hen-keeping or bee-keeping scheme
Eggs and honey and a chance for old and young to interact with one another.
- Look after a community orchard...
You can save and restore old trees and plant new trees or a whole new wood.
- Then buy a community apple press (make cider!)
Make use of all of those spare apples!
- Set up a Community Hub
A 'hub' is the central point of community life.
- Move your fish and chips van to the village hall car park and open the hall to eat together
Open up the village hall as a space to eat together, like a community cafe.
- Begin a Good Neighbours scheme.
- Apply for a grant to do good things
Make something better in your community or do something new.
- Grow a community allotment or shared vegetable patch
You could even have a monthly "plot to plate" event in your village hall or community venue.
- Bulk-buy your essentials together
This could be soap, nappies, toilet paper, wood, chimney cleaning, oil etc...
- Start a local history club
This could be family history trees or history of the local area.
- Round up a guerrilla gardening task force
*Turn unused space into a place to grow food, decorative plants, or a space for wildlife.
Make sure you have sought permission from the landowner first!*

- Organise a 'Good Life' event or village gala
This could include workshops on how to keep chickens, bread-making, and celebrate all things rural life.
- Carry out an accessibility check in your community
Identify potential hazards or barriers for people with disabilities.
- Have a community book exchange
Begin a "book bank" - perhaps in the village hall or a shop.
- Run monthly luncheon clubs
These could be for everyone and not just for older people.
- Set up a community choir or orchestra
Use the choir and orchestra to put on small concerts for free, or for a small fee, or help others to learn to play instruments and sing.
- Hold a monthly 'share a talent' class
One person could pass on their knowledge or skill. Every community is full of hidden talent.
- Get ready to go on community bike rides & walks
Raise money for a local cause.
- Start a community bike shed (a bit of bike TLC!)
Use volunteers to perform safety checks and teach others how to care for and fix their bikes.
- Begin a community newsletter or website
There are many cost-effective ways to do this, get in touch if you need some help.
- Make your own community film
This could be about the history of the community or the area.
- Develop a 'village welcome pack' or directory
This could be for new residents, containing local services, info, businesses, clubs, events and contacts. It's also a great way to get to know your neighbours.
- Host a children's treasure hunt or teddy bear's picnic
An alternative to playgroup and there could be prizes!
- Have a scarecrow-building competition
These could be themed - for example Christmas, Halloween, notable dates and anniversaries...

- Start a 'Ramblers' or walking group
You could also create "waymarked walks" taking in points of interest, and market these to visitors and tourists.
- Host 'Open Mic' Nights at the village hall
Poetry, performance, song and storytelling - the opportunities are endless.
- Begin a film club or community cinema
Licensing guidelines are available from council.
- Install a defibrillator
If your hospital is more than an hour away, this could be a great way to help your community.
- Set up a dog-walking club
Community dog-walking, or perhaps any other service that is in demand.
- Set up a Silver Surfers club and share IT skills
Try using volunteers from nearby to teach - you could even ask local schools for help.
- Play a fitness DVD together to save on hiring an instructor for exercise classes
This is a lot cheaper. Make sure your health and safety policy is up to date first though!
- Get a Facebook account
Or any of the other social media platforms, such as Twitter. They are great free advertising and networking for your community.
- Look at creating a Winter Weather Scheme
If your community struggles in the winter, or when snow hits, this is a great way to make sure the most vulnerable are taken care of.
- Undertake a Community Led Plan or survey - set a vision and actions to improve your area
This could be a user-survey for your building, or a community-wide consultation.
- Run an Open Gardens event
Based on opening residents' gardens to the public to raise money for local causes.
- Put on a Murder Mystery Night
These are always very popular, use your imagination and get dressed up!
- Invite the press to cover your event
Give local interviews, invite the press to cover your event and take photos, or make use of local "What's On" columns and social media streams such as Facebook and Twitter.

- Tap into local expertise and give free talks
There are people in all communities that have had interesting careers or led interesting lives.
- Advertise your venue
Increase usage and income - you could also advertise for specialist things like weddings and receptions.
- Publish a book on your community
Write down residents' memories, find some old photos and put them together for a local printer to bind. This could accompany your community film!
- Organise a local festival
Publicise the assets of your community, drive in more income and tourists, put yourself firmly on the map.
- Run an antiques roadshow
Ask a local antiques shop to donate their time and expertise.
- Have a village bake-off
Who can make the best carrot cake?
- Hold a wine-tasting evening
Get the wine, cheese, and French bread donated by a local supermarket and raise funds for local causes.
- Set up a car-sharing scheme
Be kind to the environment and reduce fuel costs. It might also get older people or those that can't drive out and about!
- Open a Pop-up Restaurant on any theme
Any cuisine could be on the cards!
- Open a community recycling centre and/or worm farm
Apply for a government grant from the Waste Minimisation Fund to set one up. Re-use and re-purpose items and decrease waste to landfill.