



COVID-19 Survival: supporting the people of Winchester

Raised £18,504 from 86 supporters

+£7,500 +Extra funding from Power to Change Community Business Crowdmatch

Winchester's Unit 12 is at the heart of the community, bringing people together from all walks of life through a variety of activities and support groups. So when the pandemic closed their doors and left them facing an uncertain future, the crowd stepped in.

Based in Winnall, [Unit 12 is a community interest company on a mission](#). They believe in sustainability, equality, diversity, and equal access to mental health services. They support their community by offering a safe and secure environment for people of all ages and abilities to come together to learn, socialise and develop new skills.

Through their array of community programmes, including dance, drama, counselling, physiotherapy, support classes, role play and much more, they support over 600 people per week. Needless to say, this beloved hub has a special place in the heart of the city.

When the pandemic hit the team were forced to close their doors to the public, leaving them in a vulnerable position. The centre relies on the venue hire of their studios to make up 49% of their income and without it they were left facing serious financial troubles.

To help ensure their vital community hub would be there to support future generations in Winchester, the [team set up a crowdfunding campaign to raise £15,000](#). Jamie Robinson, Unit 12's Building and Community Manager, told us: *"I heard Crowdfunder was a productive funding site and was a very easy platform to use with the addition of extra funding pots."*

They shared the campaign with their community and [offered a wide range of rewards](#), including a cup of tea or coffee with a bacon roll in the cafe, a Nerf or Laser party for 15 children and studio hire.



Within 77 days, they smashed their initial target and went on to raise an incredible £18,504 from 86 supporters. This included £7,500 match funding from [the Power to Change Community Business Crowdmatch](#) programme, £1,500 from the [Winchester Town Community Fund](#), and £2,000 from the [Winchester Greener Future Fund](#).

When asked about the funding from the Community Business Crowdmatch programme which supports emerging, new and existing community businesses, Jamie explained: *“This had the biggest impact for us and enabled us to flourish and grow as a community building. To be able to offer free mental health services and improve our carbon footprint meant we could really support the community in the middle of a health crisis.”*

He continued, *“The community has benefitted from the opportunities that we can give them in their hour of need thanks to the Crowdfunder. They have seen the idea, the funding and then the completion. This is really important as a lot of people don’t always see the end product. It has given the community a hub of activities and projects to come back to after a horrific year.”*

Not only did the Crowdfunder mean that they raised the money they needed, it also showed the love the community had for the building and the Unit 12 team. Their [comments section was filled with good luck messages](#), and countless people let Jamie and the team know just what the hub meant to them.



One supporter said, *“Unit 12 is an invaluable space for the Winchester community, and will play a vital role in rebuilding the arts post-pandemic. Good luck Jamie, Charlie and team... we're rooting for you!”*

Another commented, *“I really hope people get behind this and dig deep, you are such an important organisation/space and it would be a tragedy to lose it. Good luck.”*

After such a positive and successful experience of crowdfunding, Jamie left us with his top tips for anyone out there looking to start a campaign of their own.

“I think the key thing is to make your front page story captive and include a really good video to explain your projects to funders and fundraisers. Also be creative with rewards so end users get something back for giving.”

Thinking about crowdfunding? You can [raise funds for your idea on Crowdfunder](#) and find out more about Power to Change’s support for community businesses [here](#).