



COMPANY AND DIRECTOR PROFILES

The **BeanBag Café** Community Interest Company (**CIC**) is a social enterprise. Its purpose is to help and equip community groups, charities, faith groups and other organisations to start and successfully run sustainable café projects that enable them to deliver social outcomes according to their own organisational objectives. BeanBag provides advice, guidance, training and support to these “community cafés” at various stages of project development. We also provide ad-hoc consultancy and training to existing café projects, particularly those that are struggling to be sustainable have other operational challenges or looking to expand.

Our mission is to help create and contribute to a national network of locally run community cafes as places where those who are disadvantaged, or are in need of help, have improved quality of life by being better supported and more integrated into society.

We will also work in or directly run community and commercial coffee shops and cafes as opportunities arise to enhance our experience and to generate income to support the core purpose of the enterprise.

Founder and Director **Roy Laming** worked in corporate organisations in the public and private sector for 28 years, culminating in being marketing director of a software company with a £multi-million turnover. After selling his interests in that business, he proactively sought to utilise his skills and experience in the third-sector and developed a particular interest in community cafés as environments which could deliver a variety of social benefits in a sustainable way. He ran a successful county-town youth café for four years, organised and worked in a pop-up community café in a local church for five years and ran a refectory in a county-council adult education centre. He has also supported a variety of other projects including a coffee-cart trial in a public library, a London-based social enterprise coffee shop providing work experience to former drug and alcohol addicts and a regional volunteer support organising using an empty café to bring together and showcase projects for the elderly in the area. Separate from BeanBag he also works as an award manager for a national charity supporting social enterprise start-ups with funding and business development support.

Director **Rebecca Green** was manager of a mainstream high-street coffee shop for eight years. She assists with administration of BeanBag as well as getting involved in various projects as needed. She is also currently focusing on a project in her home town which sells pre-loved branded clothing to women whilst discretely and sensitively providing emotional, practical and clothing support to women referred from other agencies who are in challenging or disadvantaged circumstances.

On the following pages are summaries of some of the projects in which BeanBag has been involved or supported.

CURRENT & PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Switch Youth Café, Maidstone

Much of the learning and experience that brought about the development of BeanBag Café CIC came from the founder's earlier experience in launching and running this county town youth café. It provided an after school safe-haven, a wide variety of health and wellbeing educational projects, and was used as a private-hire venue by many different community groups. www.switchcafe.co.uk



Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone



KHLC is an edge-of-town facility housing the historical archives and registration headquarters of Kent County Council, as well as being the county town's main library. In early 2016, the Council wanted to explore the demand and options for refreshments services as none currently existed. BeanBag developed a bespoke coffee cart and ran a 10-week trial in collaboration with the Council; staff included workers from the local open prison rehabilitation scheme. The facility was popular with centre users and the trial concluded that such a service would be viable if ran by a mix of part-time paid and volunteer staff.

BeanBag Café, Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre

The refectory space in this well used adult education centre had been out of action for some months after arrangements with the previous food service provider came to an end. BeanBag was successful in bidding to relaunch and directly run this facility which created a much more welcoming space in which centre users could gather. After 18 months of successful direct operation we were able to transfer the business to the project supervisor as her own business so BeanBag could concentrate on advice and training services.



Café at the Free Church, Staplehurst



This large rural village is generally lacking in good quality community facilities. During a church premises rebuilding project, the idea arose to use one of the multi-purpose spaces as a pop-up community café to contribute to social cohesion in the community. The cafe operated on term-time Saturdays throughout the year, entirely run by volunteers and was very well used by a variety of demographic groups from the local community. BeanBag team members were directly involved as volunteer coordinators and workers.

Paper & Cup, Shoreditch and Poplar

This social enterprise provides training and work experience to those in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction and associated homelessness. The beautiful and popular coffee shop is run by the Spitalfields Crypt Trust, a leading recovery charity operating in East London. BeanBag supported the charity management over a 15-month period on improving commercial sustainability, professionalism and procedures. www.paperandcup.co.uk



The Link, Ramsgate

The philanthropic offer of use of fully fitted, empty, high street café premises created an opportunity for the Thanet Volunteer Bureau to bring together and showcase projects for senior citizens in the town. It also gave the opportunity to identify the interest in, and benefits of, creating a more permanent community café facility and hub. BeanBag facilitated two workshops, involving around 40 representatives of various potential stakeholders and community groups, to plan and maximise the use of the café in the trial period.



Abbie's Café - Abbey Community Centre



This vibrant community centre in Kilburn serves a multi-cultural and disadvantaged area of North London. It provides a diverse range of discrete activities for different user groups so the idea of a Saturday pop-up café was to improve social integration and expand the services and grow the users of the Centre. BeanBag utilised its Community Café Blueprint to develop an operational manual for the staff and volunteers of the café project along with training and support. The Café successfully opened within just a few weeks of start-up funding being secured. www.abbeycommunitycafe.org.uk

Café in the Park, Portsmouth

The Society of St. James is a Hampshire-based homelessness charity, providing accommodation and support to over 2500 people each year. The Café in the Park is SSJ's latest social venture which, as well as providing a great community facility, aims to provide employment and training opportunities to local people with histories of homelessness and substance misuse. The BeanBag team helped the charity submit a successful tender to the Council to secure the lease of the building then, supported the project team with business planning, building layout, staff recruitment and training, and business systems and procedures.



www.ssj.org.uk/social_enterprise/cafe-in-the-park

Ellington Park, Ramsgate



Ellington Park is undergoing complete regeneration through £1million of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Part of this project includes the building of a new café and multi-purpose community space. BeanBag has so far supported the lead community organisation, the friends of Ellington Park, in the early stages of this project. We have undertaken a peer review of the business plan and in particular helped the group consider the future operational structure of the café, including whether run directly or outsourced. www.friendsofellingtonpark.org.uk

Discover-U, Wollaston, West Midlands

Discover U is a charity specifically designed to help people who have difficulty finding or getting employment. With its lovely tearoom, shop, crafts production spaces and workshop it provides quality work experience to adults with learning or physical disabilities. The BeanBag team undertook a business development review looking at staff structures, business systems and the retail offer to assist the charity management team prepare for potential expansion into multiple premises across the Dudley region.

www.discoveru2015.org/tea-room



Coram's Fields, London



Uniquely run as a private park for the benefit of children and parents in Central London, Coram's Fields is a seven-acre site in Bloomsbury with large grassed areas, play-spaces, sports pitches and several children's and youth services. It is a vibrant and diverse venue with a real sense of community and visitor numbers vary from several hundred every day to many thousands at large scale events. After being unsatisfactorily run by third-parties in previous years, the BeanBag team worked with the park management on options to bring the empty café back as a 'pilot project' for the summer of 2019. This would hopefully be as a stepping stone towards implementing a permanently sustainable facility.

Cornubia, Par Bay, Cornwall

A dance hall built in the 1930's, which then became an auction house for many years, was brought back into community use through National Lottery 'Big Local' funding as 'Cornubia'. The building is well used for private hire for various wellbeing and leisure activities but there was no meaningful space where local people could frequently gather. The BeanBag team advised on the reconfiguration of the ground floor to create kitchen, servery, seating area and community workspace which would be operated by an enthusiastic team of volunteers.



Peel Park Pavilion, Little Hulton, Greater Manchester



Also being supported by the Big Local funding scheme, residents in Little Hulton are supporting and developing a number of initiatives to improve life and circumstances for local people. Part of that vision is the adoption and reconfiguration of a council owned pavilion building which is rarely used. The BeanBag team advised the local partnership board on legal and business models for running the café within the new community hub. We also make proposals on how the building could be extended and organised in a manner that embedded the café into the daily activities within the building which would increase its impact and improve its income and sustainability.