Birmingham Children’s Community Venture
Chair: Sir David Winkley
Charity No: 258768
Company No: 0953582

Donor Prospectus 2017
**Introduction**

The Birmingham Children’s Community Venture (BCCV) was established in 1969 to provide high quality outdoor and residential education for non-privileged primary school children. BCCV is currently working with 20 schools and approximately 12,000 children in some of Birmingham’s most socially and economically deprived communities. There is strong demand for this programme, which has served the young people of Birmingham so well for the last four decades. Having completed the build and provided the basic equipment so the BCCV could open its doors to pupils and staff the trustees are now seeking funding to expand the experiences of those who visit the new building.

BCCV has been successful in securing funding to re-build its hostel at Merevale, following serious damage by an arson attack in 2005. The building is now complete. Ten years of fund raising raised £250,000 and the donations of £100,000 from member schools has helped to achieve the building of a new hostel (The BrigHouse) which was handed over to the trustees by the builders at the end of November 2015. The BCCV now have a building fit for purpose, modern and robust with suitable basic equipment. As of January 2016 our membership was full and we now have a waiting list of schools wishing to join. The BrigHouse opened its doors to staff and pupils on 12th September 2016 and trustees were pleased to record approximately 2,000 pupils visiting in the first term and the BrigHouse is fully booked during the Spring and Summer Terms 2017.

Having used all available funding to build and equip the building trustees now need to raise £20,000 to assist in offering a range of activities and to extend the experience of all the pupils.

To this end the trustees are seeking sponsors / donors who might wish to assist the BCCV to achieve its target of £20,000 to enrich the experiences of pupils visiting the BrigHouse through the coming years.
The Problem and the Opportunity

There is considerable evidence demonstrating the positive impact outdoor and residential educational activities can have, especially for those from deprived urban communities. In 2008 OFSTED reported that “learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupils’ personal, social and emotional development.” The same report identified an increasing reliance nationally on commercial providers for residential learning experiences.¹

The National Foundation for Education Research reviewed a wide range of published research in 2004 and concluded that:

“There is substantial research evidence to suggest that outdoor programmes can impact positively on young people:

- attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions – examples of outcomes include independence, confidence, self-esteem, focus of control, self-efficacy, personal effectiveness and coping strategies

- interpersonal and social skills – such as social effectiveness, communication skills, group cohesion and teamwork.”²

Whilst the benefits are clear, the opportunities available for the non-privileged children of Birmingham are limited. There is no cost-effective statutory or local authority provision; until the arson attack of 2005 the BCCV Merevale Hostel was uniquely the only opportunity of this kind available to Birmingham’s inner city primary schools.

Unsurprisingly, there has been a strong demand from local schools and communities for the reintroduction of the BCCV hostel at the earliest opportunity. There are now 20 partnerships schools, reaching 12,000 children, who are unanimous in their support for the work of the BCCV and The BrigHouse Project. This clear demand underpins the business plan that shows the financial viability and sustainability of the hostel.

Given the context in which the BCCV partnership schools work, the hostel and its programmes will be highly targeted to the communities and children of Birmingham most in need of this kind of support. The partnership schools have an average Free School Meals rate of 30%, compared to a national average of less than 15%.³ Six of the schools in the partnership have FSM rates in excess of 50%.

BCCV will also work in partnership with other local providers to ensure the greatest possible impact for The BrigHouse. The trustees are in negotiation with prospective partners to realize these objectives.

¹ Ofsted (2008) Learning outside the classroom - How far should you go?
³ A useful proxy for deprivation as it signifies household income of less that £15k per annum
The History of the BCCV Merevale Hostel

The Birmingham Children’s Community Venture was established by a group of volunteer teachers in 1960 and as an independent Hostel since 1969. The group received financial support from Atherstone Rotary Club, local farmers and charity events such as sponsored walks to fund the building of the Hostel. The land was offered to the BCCV by Sir William Dougdale at a ‘peppercorn’ rent of £1 annually.

The original aim of the Venture was to establish a small residential centre in the countryside close to Merevale (Warwickshire), where school children could visit, have residential stays and participate in supervised outdoor educational activities where there is no equivalent statutory provision in the area.

Since its origin the Centre has been gradually developed to create a safe warm and secure environment for children between the ages of 4 to 18 to stay. A member group of 20 schools have been able to send 30 children to stay overnight and week-ends, (approx. 2,000 per annum) and a further 7,800 children (approx.) were able to take advantage of day visits each year.

The children who use the Centre all live in inner city urban environments, the majority of whom are from minority ethnic communities with high levels of social exclusion and unemployment. A large number of pupils who will attend the new centre are entitled to free school meals. Spending time at Merevale Children’s Centre will enhance considerably the life experience of children who otherwise would not have this opportunity. The experience of staying at the Centre will enable children to develop their social, emotional and interpersonal skills as well as their self-esteem. Partnership schools pay an annual subscription to BCCV and children’s families are charged minimal costs.

In December 2005 the Hostel was set on fire by vandals and the building was destroyed; the first time the building has had to close since 1969. Since that time the trustees have endeavoured to get a new building built as quickly as possible. It has taken the trustees ten years to achieve this and on the tenth anniversary of the fire that destroyed the old building the new building was handed over to the trustees.

The insurer paid the full insured amount and BCCV secured planning permission for the redevelopment of the site. However, major changes in legislation had added costs to the building over and above those that had been expected. To reduce the centre’s carbon foot print and to comply with up to date Health and Safety Laws the trustees were faced with a short fall in order to complete the project and have a new building, equipped and in the right external setting.

The trustees have overcome the shortfall of money needed to build The BrigHouse with the help of local and national Charities and Trusts and membership donations and have been able to install appropriate equipment which ensured that the building was opened at the beginning of the new school year – September 2016.
The BCCV Programme

The Birmingham Children’s Community Venture enables partnership schools to deliver out of school learning in a purpose-built rural environment. For many children, it will be the only opportunity they have to explore a non-urban environment and to set their learning in a wider context.

The value of such a programme to a child’s personal and emotional development is clear. It will also enable teachers to deliver hands-on experiential learning alongside classroom work in Geography, History, the Environment, Art and Craft, Maths, English and Science.

Examples of specific exercises and activities:

- Compare and contrast rural and urban environments
- Study of farming and agriculture
- Study of transport such as Watling Street (a Roman road), canals and railways
- Map reading
- Woodland walks and the study of plants and trees
- Study of the growth and decline of coal mining
- Study of Merevale Church and local history
- Abbey Farm and Abbey ruins
- Use of digital cameras and computer technology
- Reporting and presenting of findings to schools, parents and families
- Use of drawing, painting, clay and sculpture
- Astronomy and star-gazing
- Merevale as a base for visits to Bosworth Field, Tamworth Castle, Kingsbury Water Park, Twycross Zoo and Atherstone an ancient hat making town.
The Building

The new BCCV Merevale Hostel will provide a stimulating learning environment that can be accessed by some 12,000 children from Birmingham’s most deprived communities.

The new hostel has two designated sleeping areas for a total of 30 pupils per visit. These dormitories are equipped with bunk beds and adjoining toilets and wash facilities. Within the building there are separate rooms for staff accommodation. The building is designed to allow for children with varying needs and requirements with a separate washroom for pupils and their carers.

The central communal area is a multi-purpose area it can be, the dining, indoor study area, a classroom and a recreational area. The purpose built kitchen is used by school staff that have been trained in catering at the hostel and includes all necessary cooking, washing and drying appliances.

The study space will be equipped with internet access and the infrastructure needed to communicate and present work back to the host school. It will also be an indoor leisure space equipped with board games and art and craft materials.

The immediate surroundings of the hostel have been landscaped and will feature a study/teaching space, picnic space and leisure area.
• Now open to pupils the number of groups and children accessing the facility will be monitored and data regularly analysed by the charity.

• The number of children/groups who have special educational needs/physical disabilities using the facilities will be monitored. Currently we are adopting the site to accommodate pupils with impaired/no sight and for those with mobility problems.

• Each group accessing the Hostel will be required to complete an evaluation form after each visit to provide feedback to the committee.

• By regularly monitoring the demand from schools and groups for places the Committee will be able to measure the success of the project, and undertake any marketing activity necessary to remedy any under usage. The aim is to utilize the Hostel for as many days of the year as possible. The project is very cost effective, and schools are expected to make minimum charges for children’s trips. Schools will (i) make an annual donation to costs (ii) cover transport expenses (which are low, as the hostel is not far from Birmingham and the Black Country and (iii) for food etc.

• By the production of the annual report circulated to all members identifying common issues and sharing information, which can be discussed at A.G.M. to be held in late November each year.

• The BCCV acts as a non-profit making co-operative, managed and run by a membership team representing their participant students. Members of the Venture meet quarterly to ensure there are opportunities to deal with changing circumstances as quickly as possible.

• Trustees meet when needed but at least 4 times a year in addition to the 3 termly meetings of the membership.
About Us

BCCV is a registered charitable organisation No: 258768 and a company limited by guarantee No. 953582.

Several of the present Management Committee have been with BCCV for many years. An early decision was made to Incorporate the organisation and this was achieved in May 1969, as company number 953582, and charity registration was completed (No. 258768) in June 1969.

Trustees have revised Articles of Association 2017 to be lodged with the Charity Commission.

Details of the present Committee Officers are as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Experience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Sir David Winkley</td>
<td>Chairman &amp; Trustee</td>
<td>Founder of Merevale Hostel-Retired Head teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher Smith</td>
<td>Vice-chairman Trustee</td>
<td>Retired Head Teacher 25 years on BCCV Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Twells</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Retired Head Teacher &amp; Inspector of School. 25 years on BCCV Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Jones</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Retired Head Teacher 35 years on BCCV Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pamela Matty</td>
<td>Trustee</td>
<td>Serving Head Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gillian Sparrow</td>
<td>Trustee</td>
<td>Serving Head Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerensa Neal</td>
<td>Trustee</td>
<td>Serving Senior Teacher</td>
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</tbody>
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The committee is elected by representatives of the member schools at the AGM. Each of the current 20 member schools has a voting place on the Committee. Meetings have been well attended and normally meetings are held termly as well as the AGM held in November each year.
The Demand for BCCV

All member schools have catchment areas which collectively are in some of the most socially and economically challenging areas not only of Birmingham but also nationally.

The trustees have currently secured 20 partners to become actively involved in the Venture and awaiting the opening of the centre. The trustees aim to secure other schools and community groups to form partnerships with the BCCV to ensure the maximum use of the building and equipment to extend the pupil usage of the BCCV and through their donations to help secure the financial needs of the Venture.

Currently schools on the waiting list are offered the opportunity to take up any vacant days during the school year.

The BrigHouse Outline of future needs

Following discussions with members of the BCCV the trustees identified a number of resources needed to develop the range of experiences offered to the young people visiting the site.

Although the trustees manage to secure the outside areas with fencing and made safe the land by clearing building rubble, levelling the land and grassing all areas there is now a need to:

1) Seek advice from appropriate landscape architect on how best to develop the site.
2) Create pathways and access routes for wheel chair and walking frame users.
3) Seek hedge planting advice from tree surgeon.
4) Hedge planting with students - Purchase of plants and labour to plant the boundary hedges – would seek school involvement in this planning and planting so children can learn the plants which will encourage wildlife and also be part of the native plants found in the area.
5) Development of identified external areas.
6) Fire pit installation
7) Outside movable furniture – to use for outside classroom work and picnic areas.
8) Secure storage area.

The BCCV has had internet access installed with the intention of pupils being able to access information quickly and easily to support work undertaken by groups. To this end the membership has identified the need for:

1) An interactive white board to support learning activities and to connect with peer groups back at school to share experiences and involvement of different groups both back at base and at the centre.

2) To set up a BCCV website to share activities, news and learning activities – web designer

Also requested a selection of board games and puzzles.
Future Funding.

The BCCV have historical evidence and experience of how the hostel and Venture works and how it was financed and feel confident that the Venture will be self financing in the first full year of the Hostel opening.

Sustainable Future.

As the Venture has no staffing costs because, staff are volunteers from member schools, the day to day running costs and administrative costs such as insurance can be met by school membership fees and fund raising. As the building is new the trustees anticipate that there will be few costs for the running of the building and therefore it is hoped that during the first five years the BCCV can build up a contingency fund for future expenditure.

The BCCV have confirmation of continued support from the enrolment of new member schools. Historically BCCV has detailed evidence of its ability to be self-sufficient and also that it will have a waiting list of schools that would benefit from our Venture.

Future Associate Partners

The Trustees have recognised that there is a need to associate partners now the new building is in operation. An audit of usage of the building before the fire indicated that there were days and weeks when the member schools where unlikely to use The BrigHouse. As BCCV has already agreed to maximise the use of the building the Committee therefore could obtain further revenue by seeking community partners who could use the building outside the school day and during holidays. This would serve to widen the user groups.
Friends of the Birmingham Children’s Community Venture

The Birmingham Children’s Community Venture wishes to thank the Trusts and Charities who have supported us in the current project of re-building our Hostel. Without their support BCCV would not find itself in the position they are in today with a new building and pupils using it.

Our thanks to:-

The Roughley Trust
Baron Davenport Trust
Lord Austin Trust
The Garfield Weston
The Michael March Charitable Trust
Saintbury Trust
William Cadbury Charitable Trust
Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust
Cash for Kids
The Henry James Sayer Charity
The Joseph Hopkins Charity
The James Fredrick & Ethel Anne Measures Charity
Birmingham Lord Mayor’s Fund
The George Henry Collins Trust
Eveson Charitable Trust
The Bernard Piggott Trust
The Leadbeater Charitable Trust
The Rowlands Charitable Trust
Views from the BrigHouse
The grounds of the BrigHouse
Interior Views

The Kitchen Area

Common Room
Dormitory Area One

Shower Room One