

2018-  
2019

# Flo's social impact “A sense of place”



Social impact report

People, Place and Participation Ltd.

2018-2019

## Our Social Impact: A Sense of Place

Flo's is a unique community benefit hub arising as a phoenix from a decommissioned children's centre, formed from the entrepreneurial vision of a small group of local people with deep sensitivity to the social and cultural needs of the community.

The strength of our model is the development of a place in which so many sectors of the community feel served and welcome. As a selection of examples from just this week's visitors show, each person who visits Flo's will have their own story to tell:

- ❖ A new parent facing hardship gets donations of baby clothes and equipment, can use the phone to unlock her gas meter, gets breastfeeding support from the midwives and is linked into the foodbank.
- ❖ A hardworking local young couple get high-quality affordable childcare ...and a great local alternative to chain coffee shops!
- ❖ A recovering mental-health client from our neighbouring project Restore gets to broaden his work experience and social contacts through helping in the garden.
- ❖ A group of isolated young Asian mothers attend a peer group to develop co-counselling skills and support from our intern, Suffia.
- ❖ A local grandmother caring for toddler twins whilst her daughter-in-law goes to work has somewhere to come and sit and chat to others and a safe space for play any day of the week.
- ❖ An 86-year-old finds a place to meet with peers – and start a board games group! She regularly volunteers and is delighted to do her shopping at the plastic-free Refill Shop.



PPP Ltd has been driven by a passion to create a more connected community and vibrant space for collective action. The closure of the children's centre due to funding cuts in 2016 created a gap in support and a concern - especially for vulnerable young families. This concern also created enormous energy and dedication to create something new for the community. As such, Flo's provides an exciting example in several ways:

- **Collective action** of a small group of local people can result in a previously local-authority-run centre becoming a phoenix centre of social enterprise, when supported with resources, people and skills to do so.
- **Being open 7 days a week now**, Flo's offer is less targeted than the former children's centre, but allows for a **more inclusive, natural mixing of people of different ages, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds**.
- **Co-operative principles in action** are demonstrated at all levels from the membership-owned governance structure (over 100 members) to the flat staffing structure and culture of co-creation with socially-driven enterprises and other charities and volunteers
- An example of social enterprise and **locally sustained economy**: people spend their money on eg food, childcare and room hire and that, in turn, enables other services to be provided from the building, generating local jobs and reducing dependence on other funding sources. £50K of initial capital was raised from the community in the form of a **community share offer**.



## In the first 10 months of opening Flo's has:

45

volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds including: 14-86 year olds, people with learning difficulties and professionals who donate their time.

events which range from children's book events, to groups supporting vulnerable mothers to fundraising concerts

23

106

different organisations and groups have hired our spaces



56

children were accepted into the nursery, including government funded 2, 3 and 4-year-olds

customers per week in the café, many of whom arrive with families, friends or colleagues

530

1100  
50

women per year admitted to the Isis Community midwives.

mothers or expectant mothers seen per week at Flo's



## In their words – a selection of feedback from some of our regular visitors:

**Amel** a newcomer to the community: *“I am new in Oxford and I discovered Flo’s one day. Eya is my first baby and she was 15 months old. I meet a lot of parents who explain to me their experience of education and tips. Eya is my first baby and someone gave me advice about sleeping. I meet people and discover other services in the centre. I held the birthday of my daughter too in this place. All people are welcome, no age, no difference in this centre and all is done for feeling good.*”



**Mim** a local resident: *“For me, Flo’s is a wonderful workspace. I bring my laptop and sit working in the cafe, have meetings with others and often buy lunch. As a professional with no fixed workspace, this allows me to reduce potential social isolation which can come sometimes with working at home. Eva also goes to the nature nursery at Flo’s, which she totally loves. I have noticed that both my girls feel really comfortable in the space that Flo’s provides. They move around the space with confidence, knowing they are welcome there, and to be able to spend regular time somewhere like that, without spending lots of money, is great. Flo’s meets our need for flexibility, for belonging, for play, for access to healthy food, for desk space, for company and a place to meet, for a place my whole family can enjoy; a place to be professional, mum and me all at the same time!”*

**Alex**, a father of twins who uses Flo's frequently said: *"When you have kids your life changes – you don't meet up with your mates so much and I also work nights so finding a place where I can be with my twins when I have care of them during the day is a life-saver."*



**Beth** who is new to the city with two young children. Her eldest son took up one of our reserved spaces for 2-year-olds whose families are entitled to targeted government funding at 2: *"I haven't found anywhere else that offers the community inclusion that Flo's has, and it made moving to a new city much easier. Opportunities to volunteer with keeping the space tidy for other families have been good for helping me feel like part of the community, which normally I can't do as I'm looking after my younger child, but at Flo's she can play whilst I work!"*



*\*some names have been changed*