

ANOTHER RENAISSANCE MARKET TOWNS SUCCESS STORY

Mytholmroyd Shared Space and Enterprise Centre, West Yorkshire



The Region's
Development Agency

Mytholmroyd Shared Space is an innovative project which offers a flexible space for events and car parking. Together with the Enterprise Centre, which provides small businesses access to facilities and advice; and the Erringden Room, a community hub, the projects have provided Mytholmroyd with a popular new centre for the town.

The project also highlights a successful collaboration between Yorkshire Forward, The Church of England and Calderdale Council.

The project location

Mytholmroyd lies 1.5 miles east of Hebden Bridge and 6.7 miles west of Halifax. The town is perhaps best known as the birthplace of the Poet Laureate Ted Hughes.

Since the decline of the textile industry, Mytholmroyd had suffered a crisis of identity, a mill town without mills and a market town without a market. In 2003, Yorkshire Forward initiated the first Renaissance Market Towns (RMT) programme in the Upper Calder Valley and Mytholmroyd was one of the five towns included (the others being Walsden, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge and Sowerby Bridge).

Through the RMT programme, following a long consultation which engaged the public, a valley masterplan was published. The masterplan suggested that a new heart for Mytholmroyd should be created, incorporating a new marketplace. The shared space scheme and Enterprise Centre are the culmination of works to create such a space.

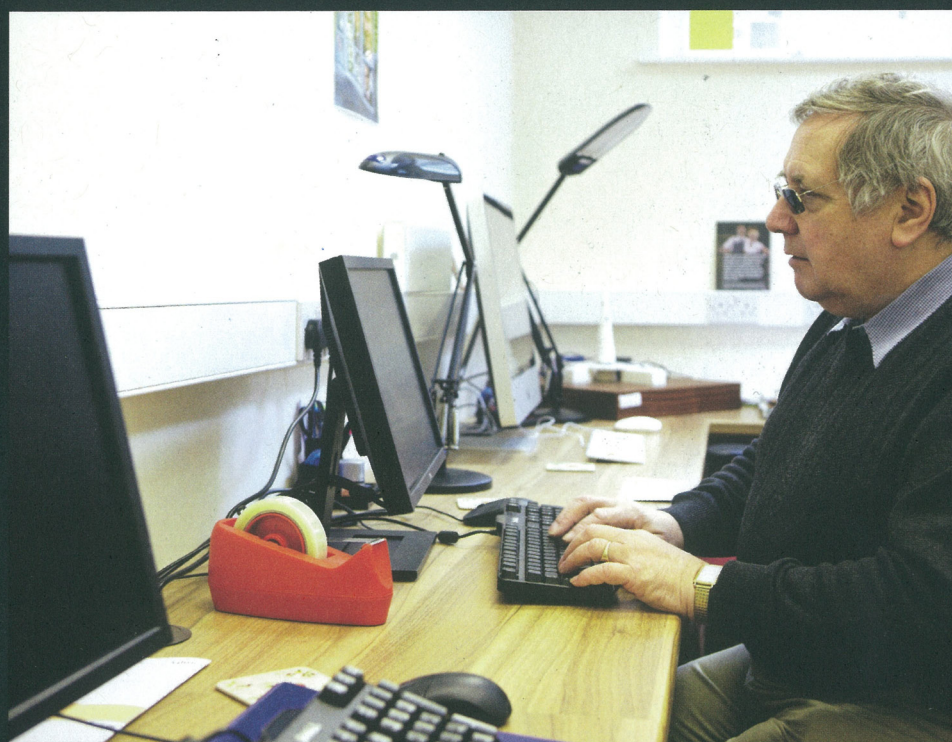
History of community facilities in Mytholmroyd

Provision of community facilities in Mytholmroyd is long established. In 1895 St Michael's Church Institute Hall was built and provided the community with three classrooms offering 'improving' courses, a bowling green, tennis court and firing range! The square in front of the building provided the town with a meeting place, but became a car park in later years.

While reinstatement of the firing range was not a consideration, it was the Church once again which played a key role in transforming the town.

Project development

The project developed in several phases. St Michaels Church started the development with the creation of the Erringden Room as community hub. Phase One saw the construction of a new entrance foyer for the Parish Hall, leading out onto an existing car park, the replacement of male and female toilets and provision of disabled toilets, the construction of a new extension to



house a cafe/meeting room and the relocation of the parish bar to the ground floor.

Phase Two of the project included the development of the Enterprise Centre for local businesses. The centre was built as an extension to the rear of the Church Hall and provides office space for small and start up businesses and also provides four hot desks and office facilities.

The final phase of the project was improving the public realm using "shared space" principles, creating a market square with seating and raised planting beds. Natural Yorkstone paving, traditional reclaimed setts, and granite setts defining parking bays, are used throughout the space in conjunction with contemporary stainless steel street furniture and tensioned wire riverside railings. Eight new trees, six reflective canopy street lights and feature steps from the adjacent main road also feature.

The square is a modern market square used on a daily basis for short stay parking, but has the flexibility to be closed off and used for community events, farmers' markets and festivals. A design competition was organised to design a sculptural centerpiece, and the public were invited to vote on their favourite art work. The winning design by sculptor Nicholas Moreton is a modern take on a market cross and provides the square with a focal point. The sculpture is the final element of the shared space project.

Shared space

The idea for shared space came from a study tour organised by Yorkshire Forward to Holland in 2008 to look at the European approach to public realm including pedestrianisation and shared space. This is where cars and people use open space on equal terms. Canon James Allison, Chair of Upper Calder Valley Renaissance and vicar of Mytholmroyd, attended the study



tour and was inspired to create a shared space in Mytholmroyd.

Given that the concept of shared space is not widely used in the United Kingdom, it was important to consult widely on the proposals for the area. The Council and Parish Church successfully engaged with the local community and population and gained their support.

Now the scheme is completed it is making a real difference to residents and people who work in Mytholmroyd. The square is well used and people can often be seen sitting and chatting on the new benches, enjoying views of the River Calder and the stunning landscape of the Upper Calder Valley, which greatly inspired Ted Hughes in his literary work.

Other services

The Enterprise Centre is also home to Hour Car, a not-for-profit community car share scheme. This is currently one of only two rural car share schemes located in the north of England, and the first to run its cars on environmentally friendly bio-diesel.

It is also anticipated that Business Link will run advisory drop in sessions in the centre providing business support and advice.

Collaboration

The Parish Church Council led on the creation of the Enterprise Centre, and Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council led on the delivery of the improved public realm and creation of the Town Square.

Funding

Yorkshire Forward	£500000
Church of England	£200000
Calderdale Council	£100000

Key successes

- The scheme is a good example of a faith group engaging with the local community and public sector organisations to develop a scheme which all members of the community are able to benefit from.
- Both the shared space and enterprise centre are already well used. The centre is generating interest as a venue and has hosted events and workshops run by WiRE (Women in Rural Enterprise) and Silver Entrepreneurs.
- The unconventional shared space parking layout has been used successfully by the public, and the use of traditional paving materials in a contemporary manner has been a popular concept.
- Following on from the opening of the square, a competition was run to design a sculptural centrepiece, and the public were invited to vote on their favourite. The winning design by sculptor Nicholas Moreton, is a modern take on a market cross and provides the square with a focal point.

Lessons Learnt

- Problems with a burst water main (twice) during construction – allow sufficient contingency for unforeseen problems during construction.
- One new tree was demolished by a reversing vehicle, which in hindsight was inevitable being on a channel line – the vulnerability of new tree locations must be assessed in future.

Project delivery

Shared Space

2008

January - March Preliminary designs optioned by Council Highways and Planning Regeneration Teams in conjunction with the Church

June Focus upon desired option, support sought internally for radical new contemporary layout

July Public consultation event

July Final design completed and put out to tender

September Successful appointment, the Councils own Term Contractor Amey Highways (former Direct Labour Organisation)

November Works commence on site

2009

April Works completed (Phase 2 regeneration works to Hub forecourt were undertaken contiguous with main Sq when additional funding became available, hence extended contract period)

October Formal opening of the scheme

2010

Spring Installation of sculpture

Enterprise Centre

2005

April Designs approved

June Public consultation and approval
Detail designs completed

July Planning permission granted

2008

May Put out to tender

July Contractor appointed

October works commence

2009

June works completed

September Building open to the public

October Official opening

2010

February Sculpture installed



CONTACT US

If you would like to know more about our work in the region's market towns contact our rural capitals team on 0113 3949600 or email holly.forquilha@yorkshire-forward.com or visit www.yorkshire-forward.com/markettowns

More about this success story

To find out more about the Mytholmroyd Shared Space and Enterprise Centre, please contact:

Louise Harrison
St Michaels Enterprise Centre
Church Street
Mytholmroyd
HX7 5DS

01609 533806

Steph Hiscott
Victoria House
2 Victoria Place
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS11 5AH

0113 3945792
stephanie.hiscott@yorkshire-forward.com

Yorkshire Forward
Victoria House
Victoria Place
Leeds LS11 5AE
www.yorkshire-forward.com