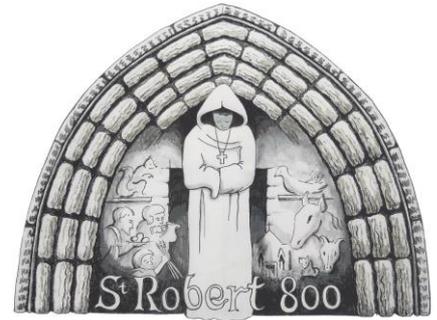


Ethos and values statement¹

Where did Connectors come from?

In 2018 the town of Knaresborough commemorated the 800th anniversary of the death of St Robert². **Knaresborough Connectors** is a legacy project arising from the numerous events held across the year. It has been developed as a practical way of working out many of the things that St Robert demonstrated during his life, and that the people of Knaresborough celebrated in that anniversary year. Despite the popular image of a hermit St Robert was well connected to the people of the town, to those in positions of power and to the God he served, something you can read about in [Tales of a Celebrity Hermit](#).



What informs our value base?

As well as the example of St Robert Connectors draws on two sets of ideas in a blended and creative way. The first draws on research into what makes for good relationships in organisations, communities and the systems we all find ourselves a part of. The second is that of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), a set of ideas and practical work that has again been evidenced as a positive way to build community. These approaches underpinned our work during COVID to create a positive and energising network of people showing what can be achieved to support people at times of crisis. Whilst the nature of the challenges we face changes over time the underlying values and behaviours that they generate, remain at the heart of what we do.

What does it take to build strong relationships in a community?

The relational thinking that underpins the work of Connectors came from research into improving outcomes for vulnerable people receiving care and support from the statutory sector and their families and carers. It can be summed up in the little phrase '*practical love*' and exemplifies a caring community, although applications to business and environmental issues, for example, are not difficult to find.

Underpinning this relational approach is a recognition that because we have all benefited from the love, care and opportunities that our family, communities and wider society have provided for us that we also have an obligation to give back in ways that match our skills. **Giving back** is therefore our way of saying that people are willing to support the work of Connectors in providing a way of channelling these gifts for the benefit of the community.

A relational approach, underpinned by the desire to give-back, can be seen in the way our actions:

- Build **integrity** into how we work together, i.e. a consistency and reliability that connects all those involved, leading to...;
- A strong sense of **respect** toward and between everyone involved, i.e. recognising the experience and knowledge that we all have to share with each other;

¹ Last updated July 2023.

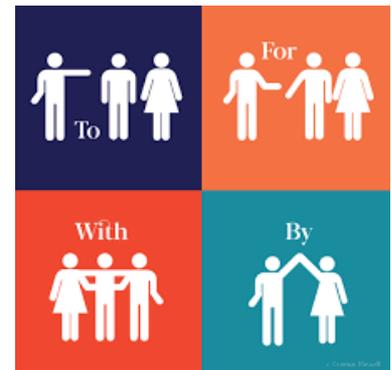
² www.strobertofknaresborough.org.uk

- And it plays out in an acute sense of **fairness**, and where necessary a revulsion and opposition to injustice and disadvantage that can result from non-relational systems and processes;
- Which in turn translates into compassion or a deliberate striving to achieve understanding and **empathy** between everyone involved...;
- That ultimately builds **trust** into the relationships, processes, behaviours and out workings of our **Connector** goals by encouraging us to go beyond an expressed need to build on the strengths that every one of us possesses.

These principles drive how we work together, and how we connect with the people of Knaresborough – a mutuality that builds community in a new and sustainable way.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

[ABCD](#) is an approach that recognises everybody's potential to contribute to building community. It works in ways that enable rather than control how communities evolve and flourish. In the diagram opposite it occupies the 'with' and 'by' quadrants rather than 'to' or 'for'. One underlying value of ABCD is that we see people as **needed not needy**, which means that the work of Connectors is in large part a road of discovery undertaken with individuals and groups to enable the release of new capacity and capability across the Town.



In line with the ABCD approach Connectors:

- Recognises that everyone has assets and gifts that can contribute to a thriving community and that identifying and releasing these gifts is the best way to inclusivity and improving the overall health and wellbeing of a place.
- That bringing people together to discover our respective gifts and passions, if coupled with the relational values outlined above, creates a virtuous cycle of creativity and new opportunities to build community in an inclusive way.

This way of working underpins the decisions and behaviours of Connectors at Board level and amongst those have specific responsibilities in the Connectors team. We welcome the fact that many people find this approach natural, which we celebrate, but we also work to encourage others including our Members and the wider community, to adopt these values and ways of working.

What this means for Connectors

How the relational and asset-based approach works out in practice is reflected in many stories and initiatives over the life of Connectors. These can be seen in our first Annual Report published in April 2023 to mark the end of the first year (and a bit) of Connectors being incorporated as a Community Benefit Society (CBS). We chose to become a CBS over a charity because we felt that local ownership was key and that the opportunity to work out our values and ethos could best be achieved with a strong membership base learning and celebrating the approach outlined in this document.

What this all means for Connectors is that:

- We will seek to benefit everyone in the local community irrespective of whether they are formal members of the CBS or not;
- Employees and representatives of Knaresborough Connectors will conduct themselves at all times in the light of this ethos and values statement;
- Directors of Knaresborough Connectors will give of their time, skills and effort out of a duty to give back to their local community and will not seek to benefit personally either financially or in other ways arising from their role.