

Digital Youth

Manor Walks, Cramlington

The Venue, a digital youth project at Manor Walks in Cramlington, is setting a new benchmark for intergenerational community engagement. Praised by Downing Street, the project has received the Northumberland High Sheriff Award for 'Services to the Community' as well as the Newcastle Building Society's 'Community Team Award'.

In contributing a retail outlet, Hammerson enabled social enterprise company Digital Community Youth to launch this unique service in Cramlington. Within nine months, over 31,000 visitors had made use of The Venue.

The Venue provides

- A multi-media suite
- Video diary booths
- Digital graffiti wall
- Games room, Snooker and Air Hockey
- Music entertainment area
- IT training suite
- Diner
- Music / green-screen recording studios.

The Venue has grown far beyond its original purpose of providing a place for young people to develop creative skills. It is a focus for all age groups in the community, and its popularity has led to a second floor expansion.

Its positive impact on the wider community has seen youth and antisocial behaviour crime figures down by 30%, while private sector businesses keen to engage with the project, have contributed £33,000 in funding.

Now established as a long-term community project, The Venue is beginning to generate its own income. A new £25 per year membership scheme entitles free entry to the upper floor, discounts on games, competitions and computer repairs, as well as discounts on mobile disco hire. The Venue can also be used as an incubator space for fledgling businesses to trial their concepts.

The Venue proves that young talent can flourish through rewarding and interactive means. Using the setting of Manor Walks to learn about the business of retail has inspired a number of school projects.

“The Venue’s popularity has exceeded all expectations, and has given Manor Walks a special place at the heart of the community. Its appeal to all age groups makes this flagship enterprise unique in the UK.”

Mick Harland, Digital Youth Project Manager

Business Soap Stars

Year 9 students researched products at Manor Walks and set up a pop-up shop selling soap products, raising £170 for Cancer Research UK.

The Apprentice Programme

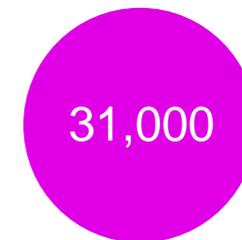
Year 10 students used demographic research about Manor Walks to establish a shopper profile, demand and pricing for a T-Shirt design.

Retail Strategy

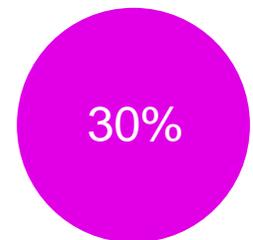
Year 10 students use the centre to learn about retail, managing cash flow, marketing and customer service.

Christmas Market

Year 9 students created a range of Christmas products for a specific cause, resulting in a two-day Christmas market.



visitors in nine months



reduction in youth and anti-social behaviour crimes