LOVE Project – Final Reflections Report

Introduction

Following a two-phase community engagement process that was initially scoped out with Little Ouseburn Village Hall Trustees with Alan Graver (independent social researcher) in August 2021, this report marks the conclusion of an endeavour which has comprised:

- A mixed methods listening exercise that resulted in 42 households (representing over 100 residents/40% of the population) completing a detailed (50 question) community booklet¹ detailing what matters to them, what they LOVE about their community, what gifts and strengths they have, their volunteering behaviours and 'energy'.
- Opportunities for residents aged 6 to 90 to participate through words (the questionnaire), stories, photos, pictures (Amelia aged 6 won the competition) and memories.
- An inclusive approach that sought to encourage people of different ages and situations give voice to their ideas and feelings (booklets were returned from 11 different household 'combinations²' and we received opinion from families, single people, married/couples, newcomers to the village, 'young at heart', people dealing with transitions, retirees, those approaching retirement, busy professionals, active people, people who said they felt isolated, lonely people, teens and children).
- A process of reflecting on the community's stated preferences about the village hall leading to communication feedback loops ³so that people across the villages of Little Ouseburn, Thorpe Underwood and Kirby Hall felt their time spent giving views had been heard, respected and understood.
- Trustee 'growth', in terms of taking the time to understand what matters to people in their community and to find ways of developing three clear options for the future of the Village Hall, culminating in a well-attended, engaging resident conversation session on the 24th of March 2021 which also considered drawings and plans previously created to stimulate discussion and suggestions for a way ahead.
- A polling methodology, developed to empower residents make a decision about the Village Hall alongside Trustees an exercise of ceding power and giving voice rarely enacted to such a courageous level at a hyperlocal level.
- A new persona (potentially) for the Little Ouseburn Village Hall and Trustees having been regularly communicating with residents for a sustained period during the Covid-19 pandemic a chance to build relationships for the future, and to invite the energy of local residents into the new life likely to evolve for this important community resource in years to come.

¹ The booklet comprised a total of 50 questions of which 38 were open text requiring a vast amount of qualitative narrative coding and analysis

² From those living alone to those with 3 adults and 2 children living together with permutations in-between

³ Trustees, led by Zen Yaworsky, summarised the 98-page slide deck produced by Alan into a 2-page headline summary that Trustees agreed, and shared this with the residents via a household 'leaflet' drop in March, via the village email system, village Facebook medium and March Parish Magazine coverage.

Different voices have been heard.

- That residents love the area, the countryside and rural setting, the space, the peace, the tidy and beautiful appearance of the villages, the people and the community spirit
- That the villages were at their best when they came together to make change, improve their neighbourhoods and celebrate being a community, whether through Open Gardens, VE Day celebrate, parties in a local field, regular quizzes and supporting one another through Covid times
- That many social connections have been developed as a result of children growing up in the villages, and that as they grow up retaining that strong sense of connection becomes more difficult
- Despite that, 83% of residents feel a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood (much higher than the 63% national average)
- However, only 1 in 4 (24%) feel they have as much social contact as they would like (compared to 46% nationally), and 1 in 3 (33%) know someone in the village(s) that is lonely; including 1 in 4 (24%) who say someone in their own household is lonely in 2020/21.
- Encouragingly, 9 in 10 believe that social action people coming together to address issues that matter to them really can make a difference to the way things are done locally.

Taken together, these discoveries suggest that perhaps there is a social mission for the Village Hall to play in the Parish, and to contribute to improving quality of life for residents now and in future

The next set of discoveries were around the skills, gifts, talents and energy of residents.

- Most respondents were actively volunteering, whether formally or informally, and between them had an array of skills (practical, vocational, technical, domestic, holistic and professional)
- If the conditions were right, and they were made to feel welcome by the Village Hall, 33 out of 38 said they would be willing to support it in some way in future.
- Interestingly, some people with evidence talents didn't feel they had confidence to use them to share with or show others; and some had talents and willingness to support but weren't sure exactly how

These discoveries suggest that the Village Hall has an opportunity to develop its own skillset in order to engage with resident talents and energy in future, perhaps in ways not tested or tried before.

There is not enough to do locally that is interesting or affordable to residents.

This was a very clear message coming from the engagement exercise.

- 18 different 'segments' of the local population were considered and at best only one segment was felt to have enough to do locally (by 50% of residents) – people with higher incomes. Those living with a disability, who were lonely, isolated, teenagers, people living alone, older people, newcomers, young adults and careers were all felt to lack things to do (felt by over 80% of respondents).
- Having said this, residents weren't entirely sure how many people were in the village from these different segments, nor what was actually available or happening more generally suggesting a latent demand for different, regular communications about activities and happenings post-Covid

There was no shortage of ideas for what could be imagined for the villages though!

- 88 suggestions for ways of bringing people together and offering a schedule of activities twice as many as were offered up one year earlier when Trustees undertook their 2019 consultation with the residents using a 'closed tick box' approach⁴ - some ideas were prevalent in both 2019 and 2020 (linked to food / cooking / baking, keeping fit, yoga/pilates, dance and gardening, but many suggestions were new, more specialised and making use of both the indoors and outdoors.
- 44 different ideas for starting or joining existing groups, clubs or activities.
- All linked to 5 ways to wellbeing, predominantly aligned to the themes of CONNECT (socialising), LEARN and ACTIVE⁵.

Taken together, many of these ideas would be possible within the Village Hall either in its existing (improved) footprint, or any agreed extended footprint. Some residents feel though that the Hall is 'cliquey' and needs to be brave to trial and offer diverse activities to bring different types of resident in for the future – to make them feel like they belong too.

Finally, residents have given their views about the Village Hall itself. It was well known and most had been it before so could talk from first-hand experience of how it made them feel.

- Just over 1 in 2 (54%) felt the Hall was welcoming, meaning that just under 1 in 2 (46%) felt it wasn't as welcoming as it could be. 34 different ideas for making the Hall more welcoming were suggested, some requiring only time and imagination (but not money), others requiring time, expertise and money on a graduated scale from small, incremental improvement to renovation and upgrade.
- Ideas ranged from removing the parking barrier chain, having plants, flowers and fairy lights at the entrance to having free books and magazines inside the Hall to a new noticeboard
- Some wanted creative ideas to open up the outdoor space and give it a sense of community there e.g. a community garden, something that the village could grow and nurture together with families
- Most wished to see the inside of the Hall redecorated with vibrant / inviting colour schemes
- Some wanted more comfortable seating; a number wanted new heating
- Many comments were made about the need for a modernised kitchen correlating with the way in which 'food', 'drink' 'café', 'baking' and 'cooking' suggestions would bring people together socially
- More regular events were what some people wanted rather than infrastructural changes
- A small number could see the advantage of major or radical renovation requiring different flows and space configurations (upstairs, downstairs, internal and external)
- Some felt any improvement should be eco-friendly and accessible

The Hall evoked mixed emotions; warm sentiments and affection certainly in both 2019 and 2020 and residents gave an honest account of turn-ons and turn-offs. They would like to see a warm, safe, inclusive, welcoming community resource that has heart and is at the heart of the community.

⁴ 68 responses were received to a short survey form used in 2019.

⁵ The other 'ways' are GIVE and TAKE NOTICE – the latter finding some support from those who felt there was a niche that the Village Hall might be able to carve out for itself locally compared to other halls and venues (e.g. around mindfulness, appreciating nature)

Next Steps

Trustees will consider all the insights and opinion gathered since 2019 where 68 households provided a consultation response, the 2020/21 LOVE Project engagement exercise (42 households responding to the community booklet), and more recently the views expressed by 29 residents (including Trustees) that attended the open conversation session on the 24th of March.

They will use the recent polling exercise in order to help make a decision about the way ahead for Village Hall at their forthcoming AGM which considers these 3 options:-

Dispose of the Hall and create a community fund from the proceeds. (We heard from you that this wasn't an option that many of you were keen to pursue, but some people may have a view that needs to be heard.)

Form a working group in the village to raise funds from grant-awarding bodies and trusts to carry out a development extend the footprint of, and the space available to the hall, improving its appearance and updating its facilities. This could involve applications for grants for sums between £100,000 and £400,000 depending on the direction and guidance of the working group

working group.

Seek modest grants to improve the existing facilities (for example the kitchen and toilets, and redecoration) without extending its space.

At the time of writing this report no resident supported the idea of disposing of the Village Hall (i.e. selling it), something that had been considered a likely possibility by some Trustees when the LOVE Project commenced in August 2021. This suggests therefore that the Village Hall will seek to endure in the future, and find ways of working with residents to meet their preference for improvement and development over time.

Taking into account the external advice and encouragement also being provided throughout this Project from North Yorkshire County Council's Stronger Communities Programme and Community First Yorkshire, Trustees will decide on an appropriate scale of improvement through further discussion and, importantly, continue to communicate with and actively involve residents in any decision and action plan that emerges as a consequence of a decision being made in April 2021.

Key Learning

- It is possible to have inclusive community conversations despite Covid-19 lockdown
- Residents from diverse situations will come forward and give a view if welcomed
- There is value in a listening exercise to build trust and confidence in a community
- The community is better prepared, and willing to help make a decision about their neighbourhood, and make an informed choice if they are first asked what matters to them
- Preconceptions and individual bias or preference have no place in community-empowered social action activity being open, transparent and willing to listen are vital traits.

The LOVE Project – in pictures and moments!

Exhibit 1: The LOVE Project Community Booklet – 16 page A4, professional design and print

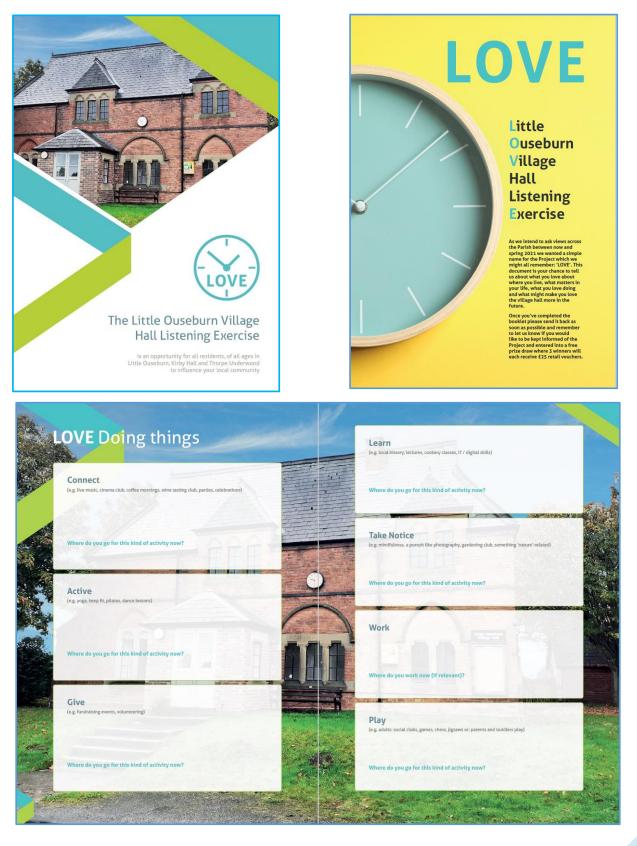


Exhibit 2 – The LOVE Project Website, a repository for messaging from Trustees (including Trustee film), photos, competitions, suggestions for getting involved, drawings and plans and the listening exercise results

www.skyblue.org.uk/love

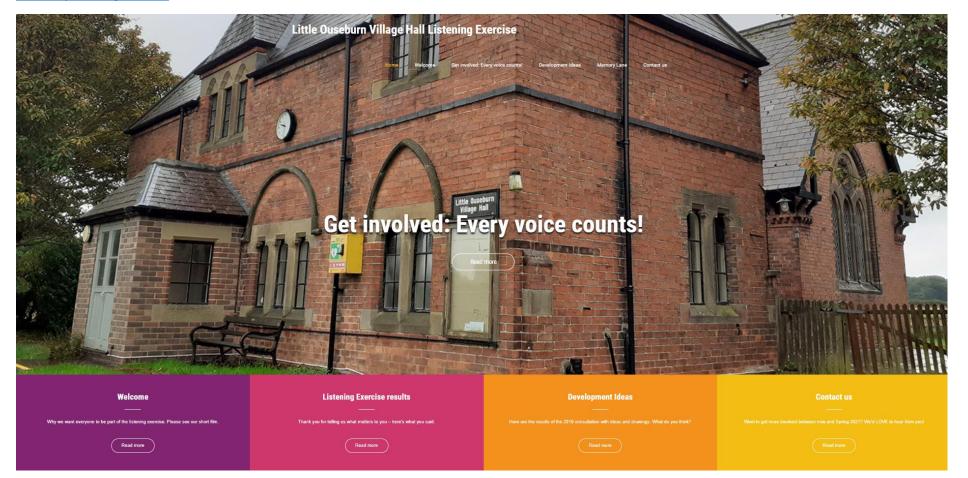


Exhibit 3: The colouring competition, young voices heard in an engaging way



obviously." 🔊

blue roof,

Frank.

colouring

Exhibit 4: Padlets - engaging ways of giving views in a visual way that others can see too

Little Ouseburn Village Hall Listening Exercise (padlet.com) and Re-imagine – Little Ouseburn Village Hall Listening Exercise (skyblue.org.uk)

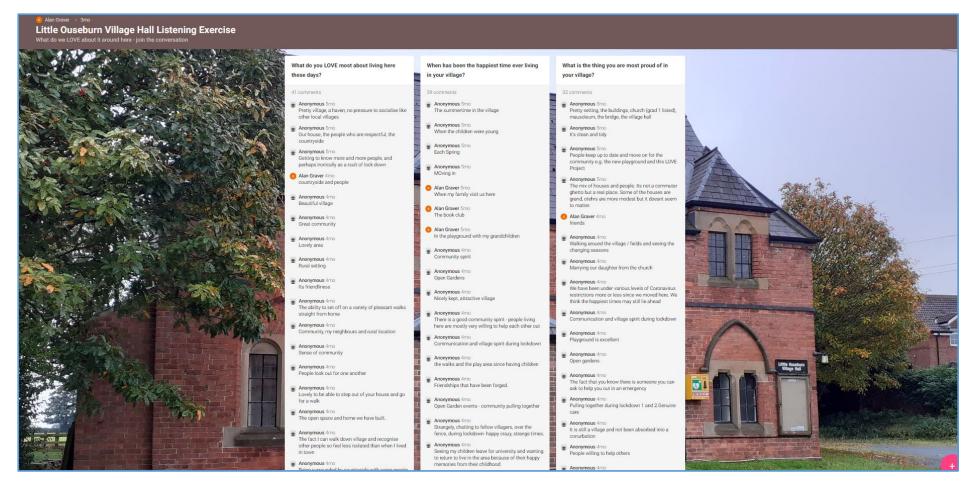
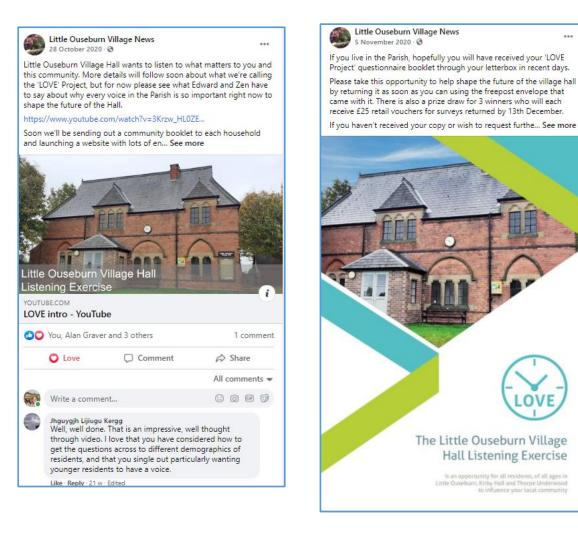


Exhibit 5: Facebook Posts, building the conversation slowly and steadily







...

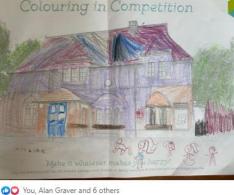


Exhibit 6: The Listening Exercise Results



Listening Exercise results - Little Ouseburn Village Hall Listening Exercise (skyblue.org.uk)

Exhibit 7: Feedback Loops – Trustees communicating the results to residents

Listening Exercise results – Little Ouseburn Village Hall Listening Exercise (skyblue.org.uk)



THE PARISH NEWS

NEWS FROM AROUND LITTLE OUSEBURN THE PARISHES

VILLAGE HALL SURVEY

Little Ouseburn Village Hall ran an engagement exercise before Christmas to engagement exercise before Christmas to hear from its community what the feeling was about the hall and its role, in order to determine its future. This summary outlines the response that was received.

The purpose of the exercise was to listen and to continue the conversation with the villages to determine the most appropriate villages to determine the most appropriate future for the Little Ouseburn Village Hall.

But the table cuseoun what the table cuseoun what the table cuseoun, what the table cuseoun what the table table cuseound what the table cuseound table tabl industry standard for a self-completion survey is 5 - 10%.

What it means is that there is strong data from a large number of the residents of the hall's catchment area

Here are some, but not all, of the highlights:

- · Echoing the 2019 survey, respondents
- Echoing the 2019 survey, respondents were keen to express how much they love and are proud of the villages served by the hall. They have strong memories of when the villages and the Hall have been at their best, whether that be village social events. Open Gardens, or how been at their best, whether that be vinage social events, Open Gardens, or how there was strong mutual support during the flooding in 2015, and how many people volunteered, and continue to

volunteer, to offer support services to the

villages in the current Covid pandemic. Despite being motivated to get involved Lespite being motivated to get involved there was a clear view that there was not enough to do locally for people. Latent demand for activities is very strong (with 89 suggestions made for clubs, activities or ground). but their europhics unable or groups), but their supply is weak!

 Nearly three in four say they do not have as much social contact as they would like and nearly three in five say they, or someone they know, is feeling lonely.
 Some people expressed a desire to do something about it and raise the question whether the Hall could be a part of the hether the Hall could be a part of the solution in future.

 The villages are blessed with people who already volunteer across a really broad area of skills and activities ranging from area or skins and activities ranging from working with relugees, helping in charity shops, through to being school governors or working with York Theatre Royal.

.9 in 10 respondents believe that when 9 in 10 respondents believe that when they undertake social action i.e. doing something together that matters to them, that can really affect the way the community is run and improve the quality of life in the villages. This local energy is something perhaps the village hall can connect with in future and is something we want to exolore more with you. we want to explore more with you.

· Nearly half of those who responded felt Neary hait of those who responded reti-that the hall was unwelcoming, either because of the building structure (cold, dreary, outdated) or the social structure (cliquey, elitist, separatist).

 People appear to have lots of ideas about People appear to have tors of tiless auour how the hall might be used and what they would really like to see happening. They are also strong in their views as to how the place should feel. A lot of the responses were made up of ideas about wellkeins through connection – meeting wellbeing through connection - meeting

others, engaging in joint activities; being active and learning together.

. There is a strong wish to know more about the progress of the LOVE project and the current plans for developing the Hall, and to be involved in Zoom meetings and focus groups in the next phase of the project

The Next Phase ...

· Over the next six weeks the plan is to Over the next six weeks the plan is to work with the data and responses that have been given and to involve as many people as possible in discussion.

 An appropriate future for the village hall An appropriate future for the whitege ham should be determined by the residents of the villages and so there is a need to mobilise the talents, enthusiasm and ideas that the survey tells us are present in abundance.

· Over the coming weeks some (virtual) meetings will take place to address some of the ambitions that are expressed and deal with the real concerns that are felt.

By late March, after further discussions By late March, atter turther discussions, there should be a really clear sense of what the appropriate use of the hal is and how to respond to what has been said in the survey. The Covid restrictions that have so far constrained the activities of the Little Cuseburn Village Hall may, by have so far constrained the activities of the Little Ouseburn Village Hail may, by then, just be beginning to ease. This might involvement from the villages then a clear plan to transform the Village Hall into a strong community resource and hub can strong community resource and hub can be developed.

If there any questions or a desire to pick up on any of the issues raised then please write to lohalimgt@emaildodo.com The Trustees of

Little Ouseburn Village Hall CIO

THE PARISH NEWS

ANY GOOD AT HOMOPHONES?

Just for a bit of fun, a pal of mine devised these for a group he belonged

to. Have a go at solving them; answ will be in the April edition of the Parish News

- 1. Think of dwellings
- 2. Mass hiatus
- 3. sugary collection
- 4. terrible colour maker
- 5. liquid coffin
- 6. Genuflect to part of the tree 7. dispense with acknowledgement
- 8. transferred beyond
- 9. aware of something tresh
- 10. site of fish
- 11. Tonic for a weekly 'Zoom'er
- 12. entwine an idiot
- 13. followed a piece of land
- 14. neutered tool
- 15. rotate a part 16. looked at with satisfaction
- 17. exhaust the wheel covering
- 18. plant an ingredient

19. equally matched flow of water

Finish with an English/French homophone (especially for Marjorie) 20. Stop the number



Exhibit 8: Inviting the village to an open conversation (March 2021)

The Little Ouseburn Village	The Little Ouseburn Village
Hall Listening Exercise	Hall Listening Exercise
<section-header><section-header><text><text><text><text><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></text></text></text></text></section-header></section-header>	 Disposal of the Hall, a community fund being established from the proceeds. We have heard from many of you that this wasn't an option you were keen to pursue, but some people may have a view that needs to be heard. We shall be sending a Zoom invitation to all those who are on the village email list. (<i>if you would like to be on that list then please send an email to lohall@btopenworld.com</i>) If you are not a Zoomer, then you can still comment and highlight your preference on the three options by putting a tick next to any of the options and popping the page into an envelope and sending (for free!) to: Freepost RRLK-LTHZ-JYCE, Skyble Research, 41 Wetherby Road, York YO26 5BU And, if you are not a Zoomer but would like to vate online then you can do that by going to <i>http://kyble.com.ukdove/index.phybol</i> Every person in each household in Little Ouseburn, Kirby Hall and Thorpe Underwood can express a preference, no matter what age. If you are going to use the Freepost or the online option, then please let us have your preferences by 24th March. Many thanks, and we very much look forward to hearing what you have to say about how the Village Hall should be used and improved. The Trustees of Little Ouseburn Village Hall CIO

12



Exhibit 9: Residents voices being heard and sharing ideas for the way ahead (24th March 2021)

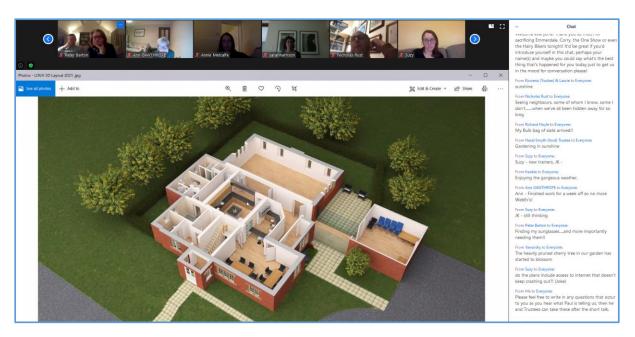
Questions from the chat (examples only);

How do the trustees envisage that the building development will meet the ideas and enthusiasm gathered from the community's ideas?

The biggest question is how do we know that the Hall will be used more post any alterations?

If the option to extend and refurb is chosen what happens if the money can't be raised?

What does dispose of the Hall mean?



Questions and comments about the drawings

What is the projected cost of this extension/rebuild?

Will the new kitchen be windowless and with no immediate access to outside?

For a health and safety point of view, does there need to be a fire exit out of the kitchen?

How many people would the new main hall accommodate, and how does this compare to the old main hall+ small hall joint area?

Presume the proposed cost is when it's all delivered for us by a third party. What if (at least part of it) we build by ourselves? We are a couple of hundred people.

Agree modular approach seems the best way forward.





"Ours is a very linear village and to have a hub is particularly important."

"I would agree that as a newby to the village, the hall was certainly an attraction, especially as there is a lack of pub, shop etc. I think it is an important space as a hub of the community."

Acknowledgements

Report prepared by Alan Graver on completion of the LOVE project. Huge thanks to the Little Ouseburn Village Hall Trustees and residents of the Parish that participated.

Special thanks to Zen Yaworsky who has skilfully managed the process, to Edward Pearson (Chair) for direction and clarity when it was required to Liz Meade and her support (time, expertise and £1,000 grant) to support the exercise, and Nicola Smith (Community First Yorkshire) for her original match-making between LOVH Trustees and Alan and ongoing counsel since that time.

If you have any questions about the LOVE Project or community engagement more generally please contact Alan Graver (<u>alan@skyblue.org.uk</u>) on 01904 340942 or visit <u>www.skyblue.org.uk</u>



The LOVE project website will remain in place during 2021 and can be found at <u>www.skyblue.org.uk/love</u>

Disclaimer: Information is presented in this document in good faith and is thought to be accurate at time of publication (25th March 2021), but the author cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.