

ECONOMIC (IN)JUSTICE

FACTSHEET - STORY

Name	Jessica Prendergrast
Details, area of experience	Jess previously set up a youth social enterprise in Watchet, establishing Contains Art , artist studios and exhibition space in shipping containers. She and others set up Onion Collective CIC, a social enterprise , in 2013, when plans for a major development of flats on the quayside in Watchet had just fallen through. Jessica and the collective decided the community ought to make decisions about which developments might take place to benefit the community.
Interview date	December 2020
Issues addressed	Lack of jobs, opportunities for young people; needing a place for community to connect; replacing old manufacturing industry with something more 'green'/ecological.
Injustice category (linked to economic injustice)	ability <input type="checkbox"/> age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> class <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> faith <input type="checkbox"/> gender <input type="checkbox"/> neuro-diversity <input type="checkbox"/> race <input type="checkbox"/> sexuality <input type="checkbox"/>
Dates mentioned	2013, 2015 local paper mill (only industry) closed. July 2016 new Boat Museum opened. Biomanufacturing begins in mill in 2021.
Locations referenced	Watchet
Campaigns, movements, protests	Two months of asking people 'What does Watchet need for a stronger future? Consultation showed community felt they could address the above issues through community development of this newly available land. From this evolved the Boat Museum Project.

	<p>Previously the Contains Art, a social enterprise project, had been set up = 3 shipping containers providing artists' studios, a space for exhibitions etc and a networking centre.</p> <p>Biomanufacturing project to create jobs in closed-down mill. Mill to re-open 2021.</p>
Historical context	Events following financial crash of 2008 and closing of only local industry in 2015.
Tactics	<p>Open consultation with local community; Direct action through workshops, schools, market, talking to people, asking and listening to community; local council involvement, partnerships with ethical groups/industry/businesses; gain trust of local community. Pool local skills and resources; Influence other organisations to become social enterprises.</p>
Key words	<p>Regeneration Biomanufacturing Social enterprise</p>
Key points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open consultation with community ● Issues of rural, isolated communities ● Importance of participating in the arts whatever your economic background ● Working with community groups and council on the priorities agreed by the community ● Social enterprises use commercial strategies to make a positive difference for socially excluded groups ● Regeneration should not just be about economics. It's about social and environmental justice

Story summary	<p>Jess Prendergrast, along with others in 2013, set up Onion Collective CIC. She tells the story of creating a Visitor Centre and Boat Museum and, in partnership with Biohm (a London firm), bringing a biomanufacturing project to a closed-down mill in order to create local jobs.</p> <hr/> <p>When some land became available in 2013, Onion Collective didn't want more commercial development with no community benefit. They realised that by pooling skills and resources they could help empower their community to make the decisions about the re-development of the land. It was clear from a consultation that they held with local people that the priority was jobs, opportunities for young people, tourism, and places for the</p>
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	<p>community to connect. From this, the project to build the Watchet Visitor Centre and Boat Museum began and took just 2 years, from initial concept ideas to build completion.</p> <p>Contain Arts, a not-for-profit social enterprise, was also founded in 2012/2013. It was created in the context of the social and economic challenges of Watchet, in the belief that what you have, and where you live, should not restrict your opportunities to participate in significant arts activities. A current project for Onion Collective has been the re-development of old paper mill, which closed in 2015 causing the loss of many jobs; it was the only industry in Watchet. Working in partnership with Biohm UK* (a London firm) Onion Collective aims to bring 'bio-manufacturing' to the site. The mill is about to open 5 years on. It will be environmentally friendly and a community industry. Profits made will be re-invested back into the community to address original issues, creating a miniature circular economy.</p> <p>*Biohm has been researching and creating materials using mycelium - the roots of mushrooms - to consume other materials that would normally go to landfill such as dried agricultural waste, fruit and vegetable peels and create soft insulation for buildings.</p>
Stand-out quotations	<p>"People here are beginning to believe that they can make a difference."</p> <p>"Community is a really valuable economic resource."</p> <p>"A big win for us is influencing other organisations to become social enterprises and create meaningful work."</p> <p>"All we are really doing is trying to build businesses and get things to happen to make a better world."</p>
Main themes for learners	<p>Listening to people's views about the needs of their community</p> <p>What is an economy? Who should benefit?</p> <p>What is a social enterprise?</p> <p>Importance of finding allies</p> <p>Are there issues specific to rural communities?</p> <p>Intersection of economic, social and environmental justice</p>

<https://www.economicinjustice.org.uk>