



Case Study: Mother Zen CIC

Tori is a midwife and founder of MotherZen CIC, a midwife-led social enterprise based in Ramsbottom which launched in June 2024.

Her ambition was to support new parents by creating a nurturing, welcoming environment where they feel supported and connected to the local community. Tori's initial idea was to test demand through pop-up sessions and ultimately create a permanent 'play cafe' space offering support groups, classes and a community hub for parents and their children.

Tori had a strong vision and passion for supporting new parents, but lacked clarity on how to turn her ideas into a structured, sustainable business.

She was unsure where to begin in terms of business planning, budgeting, staffing, legal responsibilities and funding. After hearing from peers about Bury VCFA's support for social enterprises, she reached out for guidance soon after registering as a CIC.

E26 Thematic Areas:

Bury VCFA's Capacity Building Officer supported her in preparing for her first pop-up events, advising on insurance, feedback forms and local marketing strategies.

Tori received 1:1 mentoring from Bury VCFA's Development Officer, who supported her in creating a business plan, developing her ideas into a viable model, and understanding the financial and staffing implications of running a CIC. Tori was also connected with a local social investor to begin exploring social investment opportunities for 2025.

Financial and Legal – she was supported in navigating budgeting challenges and introduced to key topics such as insurance, employment, and sustainable income models.

Outcomes:

Tori successfully hosted a series of sell out pop-up events at the Eagle and Child pub in Ramsbottom in August 2024, building a track record and public profile for MotherZen. Following on from the successes and feedback from the pop-up events, in October 2024 Tori took the plunge of opening a premises to give MotherZen a home in the heart of Ramsbottom. MotherZen now provides a family play café and community hub for parents to meet, build local connections and boost family wellbeing.

She gained new confidence in managing her budget, seeking investment, and operating her CIC. Tori is now "enterprise ready" and better connected with local partners and funding networks.

Insights and Lessons:

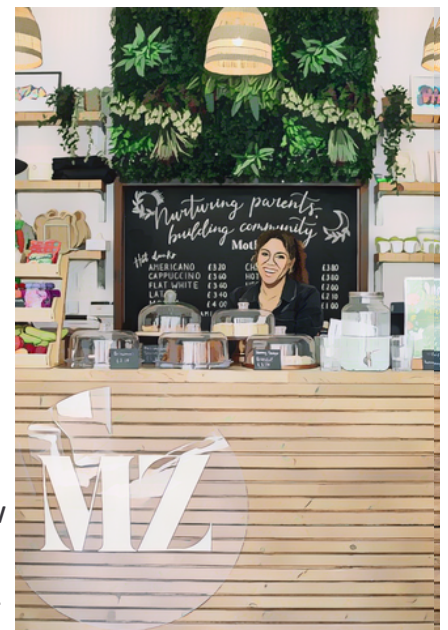
The importance of planning and mentoring are key to creating something from an initial idea.

Testing ideas through low-risk, community-based pilots, such as pop-up's, are an effective way to build on ideas and gauge interest.

Questions for other Social Enterprise organisations:

What support networks or funders can you build relationships with now to help with long-term goals?

Do you understand the legal, financial and staffing implications of your ambitions?





Case Study: Mother Zen CIC



Reflections:

"The support from Bury VCFA has been fantastic. I had passion and an idea but no idea how to actually execute it. Owen at Bury VCFA was a great support. He listened to my ideas and helped give them focus and shape my CIC into what it is today."

I think the area I struggled most with was budgeting and how to organize my passion into a structured and sustainable company. The meetings always left me feeling more in control and empowered to keep on with the project."

As well as a friendly face and confidence boosting support, I gained a lot of practical tips from my meetings with Owen and was connected to other helpful local services and social investors."

Link: <https://www.wearemotherzen.com/>

Contact: Bury VCFA – Owen: owen.hewson@buryvcfa.org.uk

