

RE-IMAGINING COMMUNITY FACILITIES BOOKINGS



HOW COUNCILS CAN
CREATE A
BOOKABLE ONLINE
ECOSYSTEM TO
MATCHMAKE THEIR
COMMUNITIES TO
LOCAL SPACES.





A MANIFESTO FOR REIMAGINING HOW OUR COMMUNITIES BOOK AND USE LOCAL SPACES

The question of how we make it easier for our communities to access and use community space has never been more relevant. In a world where isolation and polarisation are growing concerns, the antidote to many of these issues is bringing people together. We've all felt the connection, growth and friendship that comes from being part of a community - be that for sports, arts, business, causes or just shared interests, situations and hobbies.

THERE IS A COMMON PROBLEM STATEMENT THAT APPEARS IN EVERY LOCAL BOARD AND DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING PROCESS. HOW DO WE PROVISION, MAINTAIN AND MANAGE ENOUGH COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE TO MEET, PLAY AND CREATE TOGETHER?

Councils have a mixed portfolio of community facilities. Some are managed by council and others are community lead. Many councils are looking at how to create better online journeys to improve the booking of their own managed facilities.

WE BELIEVE THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCILS TO THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT THESE JOURNEYS, SO THAT THEY CAN CREATE A BOOKABLE ECOSYSTEM OF A RANGE OF LOCAL FACILITIES.

This can create a network effect of increasing provisioning, without capital expense, and enabling much more accurate data. Ultimately we want to help council enable ALL community spaces to have great customer journeys, so that the wider matchmaking issue of communities and facilities can be solved.

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WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE?

We've packed this guide full of inspiration, stories and tips to help you make it easier for your communities to use local spaces. Whether you're looking for a new council facilities booking system, wondering how to make booking reserves easier or looking at how to open up school facilities, there will be something in here for you.

THE STATUS QUO

PG 3

- 📍 Current challenges in enabling communities to use and book local facilities

AN (ACHIEVABLE!) MANIFESTO FOR THE FUTURE OF LOCAL FACILITIES

PG 5

- 📍 A vision for a connected network of bookable, affordable facilities across Aotearoa

CREATE TANGIBLE AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITIES

PG 7

- 📍 10 opportunities for councils who are looking to take an innovative approach to unlocking their community spaces

SEE THE CHANGE IN ACTION

PG11

- 📍 Case stories from pioneer councils and community lead spaces

MAKE IT HAPPEN

PG 15

- 📍 How to get started in opening up your community facilities to more bookings and utilisation

LET'S HELP PEOPLE CREATE
THEIR COMMUNITIES IN
LOCAL SPACES



THE STATUS QUO

Why is it so difficult to find and book local spaces?



FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

There are thousands of committed and passionate humans who run or would like to run community activities that educate, inspire, connect and bring joy. But the below barriers make it harder to do their mahi.

Communities want more space for events, recreation and sports in their local neighbourhood. Increasingly they are also looking for spaces to work locally to meet new people, avoid commuting (and their children!).

The process of finding space is time consuming and hard. Many community spaces don't have availability, pricing and information online, finding space can involve multiple phone calls to do the mental maths of what's free and the right cost for the budget.

Manual booking processes that involve long paper forms and telephone conversations mean these spaces are inaccessible to migrant communities who struggle with English, people who can't call or visit during working hours and people with mental and physical disabilities.

Because the process of finding space is difficult, many great ideas for new ways to bring people together simply do not get off the ground.

" I'D LIKE TO TAKE MY MEET UP FOR FEMALE DATABASE CODERS TO OTHER LOCATIONS, BUT I DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO GO THROUGH THE HASSLE OF COLD CALLING ALL THE VENUE OPTIONS"

Kim, Meet Up organiser, Auckland.
Interviewed in our research



The people who work in spaces that are operated by council and trusts are working at the coalface of our communities. These challenges prevent them working on more meaningful activities that could grow the impact the space has in community

Administrators are drowning in bookings admin. Their day is filled with paper forms, checking availability, sending invoices, taking and returning bonds and chasing unpaid bills.

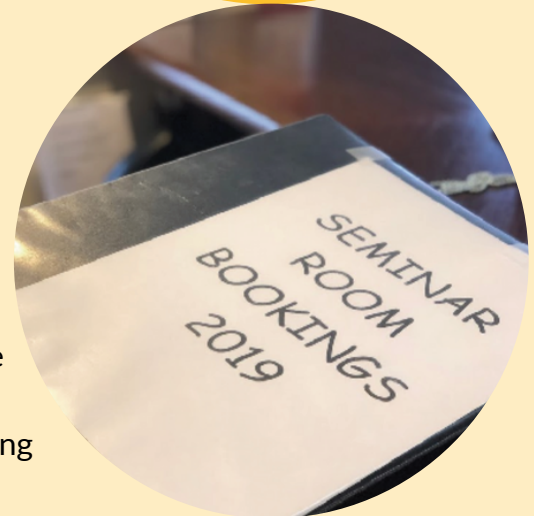
Many of these spaces are under-utilised, or suffer from peaks and troughs in demand at key times of day.

Managing payments is a nightmare, particularly when it involves interdepartmental processes. For small organisations, understanding their cash liability or predicting revenue is impossible.

Data handling is highly manual or inefficient - for example managing a physical bookings 'BOOK' or entering data in multiple systems. This can lead to human error, a frustrating process for customers and staff bottlenecks.



FOR COMMUNITY SPACES AND FACILITIES



FOR COUNCILS, AND ELECTED MEMBERS

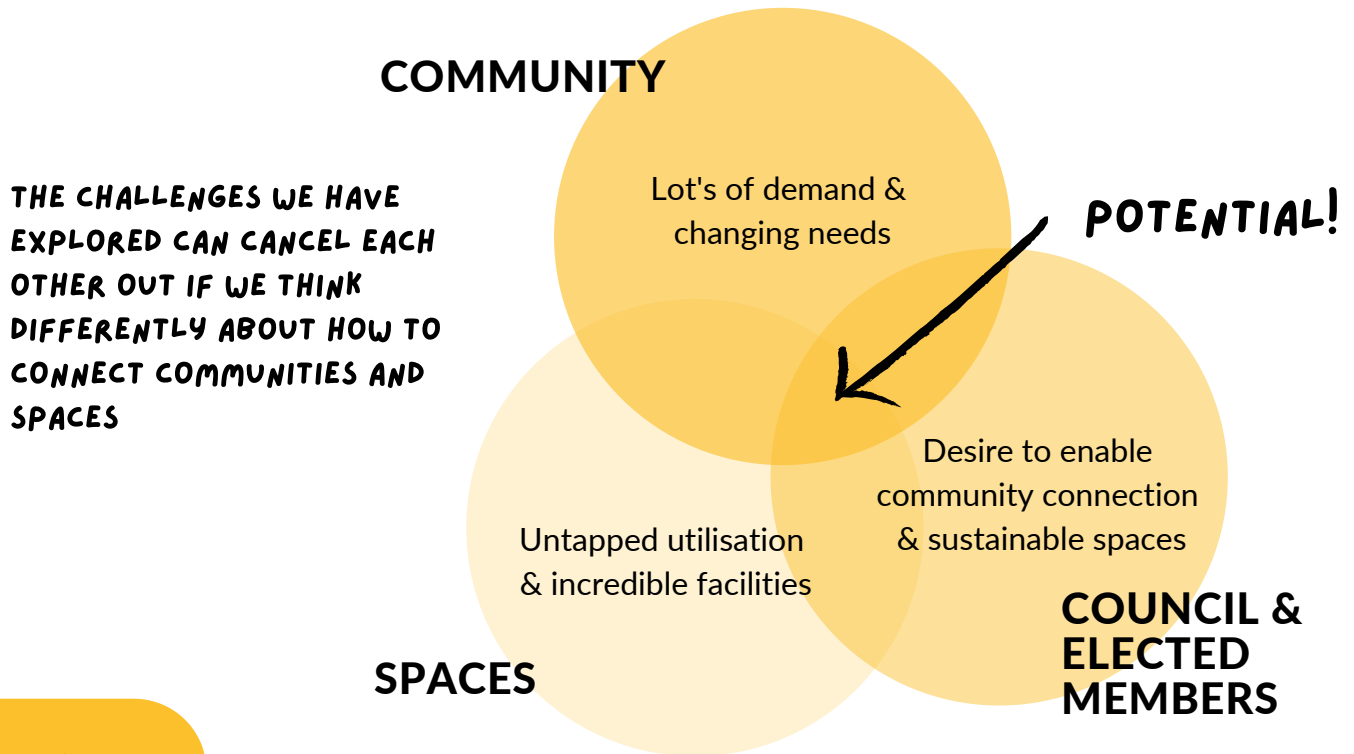
The above problem statements will be all too familiar to all local board members and those in council who manage and broker connections between communities and spaces.

It is not sustainable, feasible or affordable to keep provisioning local facilities to respond to community demand. It's almost impossible to get accurate data of what facilities the community are using and what they need.

Councils are looking at how to digitise bookings processes, especially with COVID disrupting operations. But budgets are tight, the revenue does not justify the return on investment in new tools, and finding the right tool is a minefield, especially if council want to support more than just their own spaces in modernising processes.

THE 'BOOKABLE ECOSYSTEM'

A vision for how to connect communities to the space they need.



IDEA!

It's understandable for councils to consider how they make it easier for citizens to find and book their own facilities, like community centres or reserves.

But if we think about communities need and want, it's **access to browse and choose what they need from a wider network of spaces.**

For example, a parent looking for a kid's birthday venue could use a community hall, but equally a sports clubroom could also work.

The network effect is becoming increasingly prevalent in solving seemingly impossible challenges. Can you remember how much harder it was to find holiday accommodation before being able to find and compare so many options on Book-a-bach or Airbnb?

If council could easily enable a marketplace for community spaces, then suddenly so many more options can become visible and usable for local residents.

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The network effect helps grow activities and transactions between all the players participating.

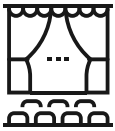
IMAGINE IF...



Council could enable school facilities to become bookable outside of school hours.



Rural halls could have the same booking process across all committees. **Council could key compliance data** and make it easy for processes like fire warden allocation and insurance to be followed.



Instead of a static page of local venues and phone numbers, councils could have a **searchable, bookable easy to use directory of spaces**

Sports clubs that lease council properties could easily share their facilities and grounds with local communities



The process for booking a council facility was as easy as booking a bedroom on Airbnb, and all key info was captured and policies followed.

Council could see data for booking reasons and usage across all types of local facilities - from clubs to churches.



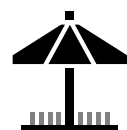
Local organisations like churches, maraes, shops and cafes could **create new revenue streams** by sharing their spaces

A RISING TIDE LIFTS ALL SHIPS, AND FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES THE ULTIMATE NETWORK BENEFIT IS THAT COMMUNITIES DO MORE TOGETHER



It was **easy to rapidly enable access and bookings for new community assets**, like trailer hire, accessible vehicles or market stalls

Councils could **simplify processes for booking free resources** for wedding gazebos, domains, BBQ areas and picnic sites.



CREATE TANGIBLE AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITIES

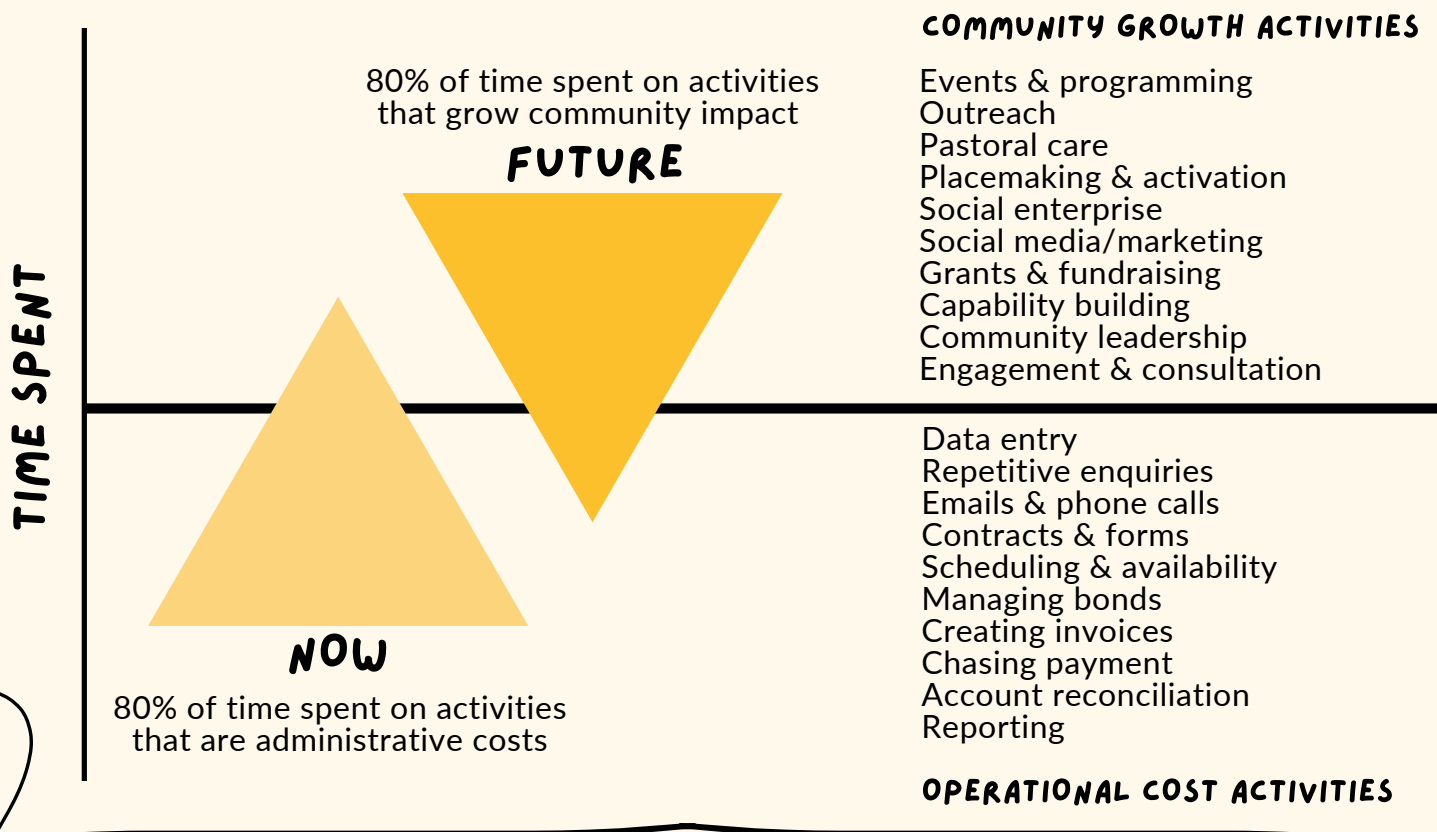
10 opportunities for councils who are looking to take a new innovative approach to unlocking their community spaces



EMANCIPATE YOUR PEOPLE TO DO HIGHER VALUE, MORE MEANINGFUL WORK

Not many people choose to work in the public sector because they LOVE admin. **It's because they are community minded people who want to make a difference.** But for those who work at community facilities, the reality is that up to 80% of their day job is repetitive admin.

When we make it easier for communities to self serve and we automate things that can be done better by technology, what we gain is TIME. **Unleash your people do activities that grow and nurture their communities** - rather than simply transact with them. Imagine if instead of requesting bonds to be returned, people could be actively reaching out to newly formed community groups, programming new activities or building engagement on social media!



2

PLUG GAPS IN FACILITIES PROVISIONING ACROSS OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

Not every neighbourhood can have a purpose built community centre, but many have existing facilities that could provide a decent and affordable alternative. Imagine the possibilities if we can 'switch on' existing local facilities like halls, churches, schools, colleges and sports clubs for more community use?

Not only will those facilities benefit from new revenue, it naturally increases the opportunities available to locals. For example, enabling a newly qualified yoga teacher to easily book out a regular spot in the local rugby club, means suddenly that neighbourhood gets a new fitness class. Unlocking more local spaces also helps create more walkable cities, with people being able to access more programs and services nearer their house.

**3**

ENABLE COMMUNITY ORGANISERS TO DO MORE

There's a movement across local government to enable a 'community lead' strategy. This means empowering communities to come up with their own solutions and create new opportunities for themselves.

For many communities, there is no lack of spirited, motivated individuals who want to be the change they want to see. But there is a huge challenge in finding the space to do it in! By making it easy for our community leaders to use local spaces, we catalyse social change.

**4**

INCREASE REVENUE AND UTILISATION FROM COUNCIL FACILITIES

When you make it easier for people to self serve and book council facilities, they do it more! This means revenue increases, bringing in much needed income to support operational costs and fund more community lead projects - like murals or new kids holiday programs. Those initiatives bring more people in contact with the space, creating a virtuous cycle of new revenue generation.

8

5

SUPPORT GOVERNMENT IN SERVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

One of the biggest customers of affordable community facilities is national and local government. Every day Oranga Tamariki need to find neutral welcoming spaces for family counselling. DHBs need space for community health programs. Local boards need to consult on budget decisions. Electoral commissions need venues for voting and counting. The current process of finding and paying for these spaces is fraught with long winded processes and payment issues. Imagine if it was efficient and easy for government to book spaces to deliver these critical citizen services?

6

BUILD SOCIAL COHESION AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Breaking down divisions and polarisation in communities can be achieved by bring people together more to connect and hear each others stories. Events, classes and community groups are a simple way to bridge intergenerational, societal and racial divides as simple pleasures like art classes or choirs appeal to those of all backgrounds.

People can also widen their horizons by spending time in more diverse spaces. It's a great opportunity to learn more about different cultures and traditions by spending time in spaces like churches, maraes and schools.

**7**

BUSINESS CONTINUITY & FLEXIBLE WORKING IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY AND CHANGE

Even before COVID, it was becoming increasingly important to empower teams to work flexibly and remotely. With modern software that enables anytime, anywhere access to information, it becomes possible to have a lot more agility about how facilities are managed.

Lockdowns can be managed remotely with no need to have teams come into centres. bookings can be managed centrally and staff can easily switch between centres. Management can get data without needing to request it.

**9**

8

TEST & LEARN TO UNLOCK MORE FOR YOUR COMMUNITIES

When it's easy to spin up new spaces to share, you can be a lot more nimble and experimental with what assets a community can access. Global movements like placemaking have shown the benefits of test and learn methods like tactical urbanism to discover quickly and cheaply what works and doesn't work for communities.

If you have a new playground or splash park you can test making it bookable for kids parties and easily measure the results. You can even experiment with pop-up space ideas like summer gazebos or youth hubs.



9

CREATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCALS

When council enable a marketplace, they also enable other local businesses and organisations to jump onboard to. The local community theatre can hire out their foyer for community meetings. The pub function room can have people from out of town find it as a venue for hire. The church hall can be hired out by a travelling theatre group looking for rehearsal space. But the benefits go further than just the spaces that offer hireage. The book group that uses the rugby club room might stop for a coffee at the neighbourhood cafe. The cafe with a courtyard that starts hosting small weddings could partner up with the local florist.



10

BE PART OF A BIGGER PICTURE, A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

The ecosystem doesn't just stop at connecting people and spaces - it can also connect councils too! We're so much more impactful when growing and learning together. Why not be part of a connected group of councils who are sharing and innovating together? Imagine learning and connecting with global councils regularly to get new ideas and solutions to shared problems.

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SEE THE CHANGE IN ACTION

Councils across New Zealand and Australia are embracing and growing from thinking differently and innovating for how they connect communities to spaces



**BLOCKHOUSE BAY
COMMUNITY CENTRE,
AUCKLAND**



♥ **INCREASED REVENUE BY
50%**
♥ **SERVING MORE OF THE
COMMUNITY**

Blockhouse Bay Community Centre (BHBC) is a Community Lead facility for Auckland Council. The centre has 3 large halls, 3 seminar rooms and a heritage building. They were overwhelmed with enquiries, yet had under-utilisation across the spaces. They wanted to grow how the space could be used by the local community, but not at the cost of the small tight knit team of 3 part time staff who were managing 3.5K annual bookings through email and Outlook.

By becoming part of a network of other community lead spaces, who are all taking bookings on the SpacetoCo website, BHBC has significantly grown the bookings they are taking from new and existing customers. This means there are more things happening locally for this community, like new fitness groups, seniors sessions and kids holiday programs.

The main outcome for the centre is how much more time Miriam, Maree and Sonarli have to focus on the projects they really care about. Because the repetitive admin has been automated, they can now spend more time on programming, sourcing new regular hirers and telling the communities stories on social media.

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**CITY OF VINCENT,
PERTH**

♥ **31.7% YEAR ON YEAR
INCREASE IN BOOKINGS**
♥ **2.5 YEARS OF ACCURATE
BOOKINGS DATA**

The City of Vincent has a wide range of facilities, parks and other public spaces available for the community to connect through meetings, activities, programs, events, classes and other services. In 2016, a review of these places and spaces identified that they operated at 20% occupancy meaning they were under-utilised for a staggering 80% of the time. While the City identified a range of facility management and asset improvement strategies to address this situation, the inability for the community to easily find and book a space emerged as the key constraint.

Today over 90 City of Vincent spaces have live availability and are bookable online 365 days of the year. These spaces include a diverse range of facilities that make it so much easier for residents of this forward thinking city suburb to get out and do things together. These spaces range from ovals to toy libraries, wedding gazebos to community meeting rooms, free spaces and paid spaces.



Michael Quirk
Executive Director
Community & Business
Services, City of Vincent

**WE SHARE THE VISION WITH SPACETOCO OF
CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH SPACES. THEREFORE THE
AVAILABILITY OF OUR AMAZING SPACES ON THE
SPACETOCO PLATFORM IS AN EXCITING WAY FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND TO WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS
WANT.**

INSPIRATION!

We love these stories of how Councils and their communities are benefiting from creating an ecosystem of bookable spaces.



AFTER STRUGGLING FOR MONTHS, LEAH DISCOVERED A FREE SPACE TO START A WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP IN OWAIRAKA



A THEATRE TROUPE FROM UPPER HUT FOUND THESE REHEARSAL ROOMS TO PRACTICE AHEAD OF A SHOW IN AUCKLAND



HEATHCOTE CULTURAL PRECINCT HAVE A PAPER FREE BOOKING SYSTEM HELPING THEM REACH SUSTAINABILITY GOALS



THE TOWN TEAM MOVEMENT COLLABORATED WITH LOCALS TO MAKE A NEIGHBOURHOOD SPACE FREE TO BOOK FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS IN INGLEWOOD

EVERY FEW MONTHS WE RUN A COLLABORATIVE HUI ACROSS OUR NETWORK OF INNOVATORS TO LEARN AND GROW TOGETHER...



EVERYTHING WE CREATE COMES FROM FEEDBACK & LEARNINGS FROM OUR PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY...



PARK ZONES

Hyde Park locals can see availability, book online & submit required docs for their event

TRAILER HIRE

Serpentine Jarradale made it much easier for communities to book and access their free trailers



BOOK-A-BEACH

The Shire of Broome has opened up park spaces for events next to the crystal clear Indian ocean



COMMUNITY PLAYSPACE

A church in West Auckland has made it's outdoor playspace bookable for the local community



**EXPLORE REAL
LIFE BOOKABLE
SPACES BY
SCANNING THE
CODES!**



BBQ SPACES

The citizens of Kwinana can book a public patio and BBQ area for family gatherings

MAKING IT HAPPEN

It's easier than you think to get started making your facilities more available to locals.

START HERE WHAT PROBLEM ARE YOU LOOKING TO SOLVE?

Take bookings online & improve processes for council managed facilities

Enable better systems and booking data from community Lead Facilities

Open up access to non council facilities like schools, sports clubs and churches

Make a specific asset easier to book by the community

NEXT WEEK

Book a demo of SpacetoCo

Book a workshop with key stakeholders & committees

NEXT MONTH

Do fees and charges need simplifying?

Trial a few simple spaces

Identify a trial cluster of spaces

Jump online and set it up now!

YES

TEST & LEARN

Measure outcomes

ANYONE CAN START SHARING SPACES!

3-6 MONTHS

Fees & charges consultation

Proceed to full rollout

COUNCILS CAN ROLLOUT IN LESS THAN 4 WEEKS

NO IT REQUIRED!

Set up spaces

Enter bookings

Training & onboarding

Promote through your channels e.g. facebook, website, local news

6-12 MONTHS

Increased revenue

Save 6+ hours a week in admin

Reduce cash liability

Happy customer & staff journeys

Data! Data! Data!

Increase access to facilities and other assets

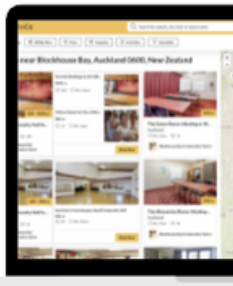
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BECOME A PARTNER IN COMMUNITY

Whether you're looking to improve how council facilities are booked or open up new spaces in the community, it's easy to get started.

SpacetoCo has co-created our platform & toolkit with councils and community lead spaces so we know it works for many of the more complex use cases required in public governance & facilities management.

A MARKETPLACE



Communities can discover, check availability and book spaces online

EASY BOOKING SOFTWARE



Spaces can accept bookings, automate payments and bonds and share info between stakeholders

We help councils overcome the barriers to sharing their spaces by providing a simple platform that means any facility can start taking bookings online without any IT, special training or big upfront costs.

By enabling network of bookable community spaces, councils help all spaces become more 'findable' in order to grow their revenue, utilisation and the wellbeing of their communities. They can save hours a month with automation of repetitive processes and simplification of payment flows.

We also help unlock key data so you can track growth, revenue, bookings and community engagement, across a full range of facilities. This helps with provisioning and reporting.



IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES IF WE THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT HOW TO CONNECT COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL FACILITIES?

LET'S GET STARTED

You read all the way to the end! Well done!
We hope this guide has inspired you to think about how your council can create more opportunities for their staff and citizens by opening up more facilities to communities.

WE WOULD LOVE TO PARTNER WITH YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY. THERE ARE LOT'S OF WAYS WE CAN SUPPORT YOU...

DOWNLOAD OUR GUIDES FOR COUNCIL & COMMUNITY SPACES

Head to <https://spaceto.co/guides> to download our helpful resources for how to activate local community spaces

EXPERT ADVICE & WORKSHOPS

We can run workshops or community hui on:

- Mapping customer journeys
- Fees & charges
- Re-imagining community facilities sharing

or... let us know what you need!

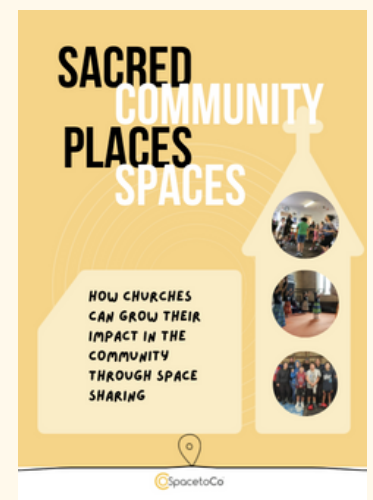
Find out more:

<https://spaceto.co/workshops>

BOOK A DEMO

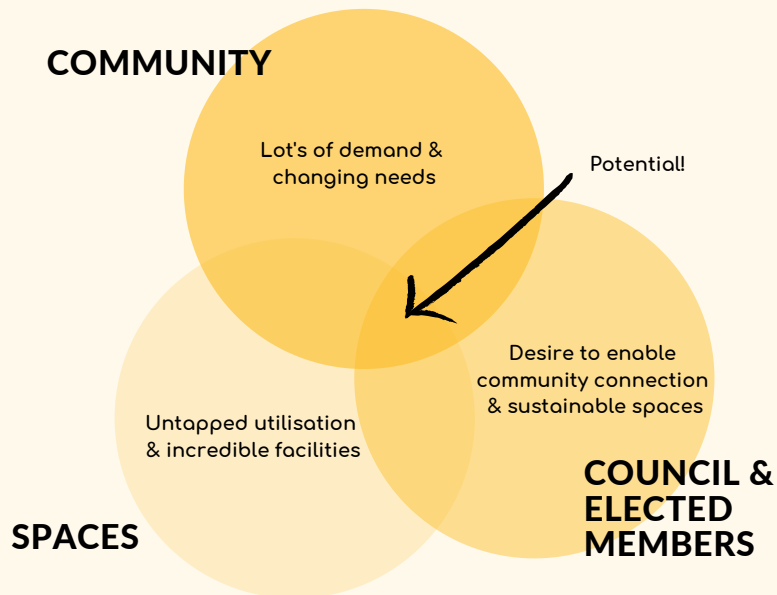
Come see behind the scenes and play with ideas for how your spaces could be unleashed for communities, and see how the most innovative councils are automating and detonating admin processes.

<https://spaceto.co/demo>



SCAN TO
DOWNLOAD THE
GUIDES





**WE HELP PEOPLE CREATE THEIR
COMMUNITIES IN LOCAL SPACES**

**COUNCILS & ELECTED MEMBERS
WORK WITH US ON UNLOCKING MORE SPACES FOR
COMMUNITIES**

[SPACETO.CO/COUNCILS](https://spaceto.co/councils)

COMMUNITIES

FIND SPACES!

[SPACETO.CO/FINDSPACES](https://spaceto.co/findspaces)

GET IN TOUCH

ELLE@SPACETOCO.COM

