# Lydbrook’s abandoned sofa project captures community spirit before sudden end



In the village of Lydbrook, Gloucestershire, an unexpected community project blossomed around a cream-coloured two-seater sofa that was initially abandoned in the middle of the village. The sofa, dumped on a patch of waste ground beside a road with woodland as its backdrop, caught the eye of local resident and amateur photographer Alex Elton-Wall. Although he did not approve of the fly-tipping, he found the sight amusing enough to inspire a quirky creative endeavour.

At the beginning of April, a few weeks after the sofa appeared, Elton-Wall posted a message in the Lydbrook village Facebook group, inviting residents to come and sit on the sofa for portrait photographs. What started as a spontaneous idea took off quickly, with Elton-Wall spending an entire day photographing locals from morning until evening. He described the atmosphere, saying, “People were just having so much fun, and it was so bizarre what we were doing.”

Since then, Elton-Wall has organised further photoshoots, capturing more than 170 people alongside the sofa, as well as a few animals, including a tortoise, a chicken, and even a horse. The sofa evolved into a surprising focal point for the village and a minor tourist attraction, climbing to become the second most recommended activity on Tripadvisor for Lydbrook—second only to an alpaca farm. It also garnered its own Facebook page, Lydbrook Lounge, where visitors continue to share images from their visits. “It’s become a real community and feelgood thing,” Elton-Wall said. “You know, life’s tough, the world’s pretty crazy at the moment, but people have really embraced this.”

The sofa setting attracted further additions mysteriously placed around it, such as a side table with a plant pot, a hat stand, a lampshade, a rug, a coffee table, and a magazine rack. Elton-Wall suspects a local artist known as Tumpsy, who previously added googly eyes to objects around Lydbrook, may be behind these enhancements.

Reflecting on the ongoing project, Elton-Wall remarked, “I kept meaning to stop taking photos, but people kept asking me.” Among the portraits were the village’s kids' football team, staff from the local café serving afternoon tea, and even the owner of the nearby timber yard posing with chainsaws. He has captured a wide variety of scenes, including children jumping on the sofa and two men enjoying pints after being ‘kidnapped’ from the local pub.

Having lived in Lydbrook for nearly two decades, Elton-Wall has decided to compile the photographs into a book, which he plans to sell at the village fete during the summer, with proceeds aimed at funding new playground equipment. “It was just this amazing opportunity to capture a snapshot in time of the community,” he said.

However, the project abruptly ended yesterday when the sofa and all accompanying items disappeared without warning. Elton-Wall is uncertain who removed the items and expressed mixed feelings about the closure. He emphasised that while the fun gathered around the sofa was cherished, fly-tipping is not acceptable. He noted, “People in the village were always clear that it would be disposed of properly.” One comment on social media resonated with him, stating: “Don’t be sad it’s over, be glad it happened.”

The Guardian is reporting on this unique community phenomenon, which reflected a blend of creativity, local engagement, and camaraderie centred around an otherwise discarded piece of furniture.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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