

Why? How? Who?

**Community engagement
in countryside and urban greenspace
management**

2006 Seminar Proceedings
of the
Countryside Recreation Network

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Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

'WHY? HOW? WHO? COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT'

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Andy Maginnis
Countryside Estates Manager
Worcestershire County Council

Most organisations involved in countryside and urban greenspace management are aware of the benefits of engaging local communities in their work. These include:

- Improving participants' physical and mental health and well-being
- Enabling the organisation to increase operational capacity
- Opening up funding opportunities
- Increasing community ownership
- Decreasing anti-social behaviour
- Providing opportunities for participants to learn new skills
- Gaining an insight into local wants and needs

To some extent this summarises why an organisation would want to engage local communities but how do you go about it? Well, certainly one size doesn't fit all. Indeed, the reason that I was asked to run this seminar was because of my well-known frustrations that, for some funding and strategic bodies, community engagement was being regarded as synonymous with having a friends group for your site, trail or project. This had resulted in some organisations not receiving awards or funding because they did not operate a friends group, despite having made considerable effort to engage people in other, often more effective ways.

How to engage people is inextricably linked with who you want to engage and who you consider "the community" to be. Clearly your starting point should be to engage everyone with an interest, or potential interest. This includes current users, potential users, neighbours and other stakeholders. Care should be taken not to simply default to the usual suspects, valid though their participation is too. It is also important to appreciate that whilst engagement is likely to entail participation and empowerment at one end of the spectrum (e.g. a group directly managing a site), some people only want superficial involvement (e.g. being consulted on a proposal to fell some trees near their home) at the other.

To engage the widest spectrum of the community you need to employ a range of techniques, which might include amongst others:

- Open days – formal and informal
- Surveys – on site, telephone, neighbourhood, shopping centres etc
- Volunteer activities
- Friends Groups

- Staff with community engagement as part of their remit
- Citizens' Panels

The key thing to remember is that one approach alone will not engage everyone. It is important when planning an engagement strategy to overcome barriers such as people's mobility restrictions, physical or mental limitations, child-care responsibilities, work commitments, cultural and language considerations etc.

During this seminar we will hear from a range of speakers using case studies and conceptual models to illustrate how they have gone about engaging communities. Ultimately, making the effort to engage the local community is not only beneficial to that community, your organisation and your sites, trails and projects – it is essential.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

'WHY? HOW? WHO? COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT'

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - WHY BOTHER?

Elaine Gibb
Development Officer
Greenspace Scotland

This paper addresses 3 key questions in relation to community engagement in greenspace.

1. Why? - Focusing in on the issue of quality in looking at the reasons for community engagement
2. Who? - Looking at what we mean by community and who are the people we are seeking to engage
3. How? - Exploring what we mean by engagement and how we actually go about it

Why Community Engagement?

If our goal is the delivery of quality greenspace, can we do this without engaging the community?

Quality can mean different things to different people and professions. It is often taken to mean the physical standard or condition of a place. For example if there is a play area in a park, is it clean, well maintained and of high specification, or has the local environment been made more attractive by planting trees and flower beds? From this perspective it can be easy for organisations involved in planning, managing and improving greenspace to say that they can and do deliver quality.

But it is not that simple. Quality in terms of greenspace should not just be about specification and design standard. This is a part of it, but this should not be the driver for greenspace or be the outcome that we seek to deliver in what we do.

Greenspace Scotland defines quality greenspace as greenspace that is 'Fit for Purpose'. By fit for purpose we mean greenspace that meets the needs of the community and stakeholders.

Greenspace Scotland have further expanded this to embrace the following key elements:

- Quality greenspace should contribute to local strategic priorities
- It should meet local needs, values and aspirations
(*and be flexible enough to continue to meet these needs in future*)
 - quality greenspace should be in the right place and easily accessible;
 - be safe, inclusive and welcoming;

- be well maintained and actively managed

If meeting local needs, values and aspirations is central to the definition of quality greenspace then we cannot deliver this without finding out what local needs, values and aspirations are, and we cannot deliver quality greenspace without engaging the community.

Where community engagement does not occur, this can translate into the inappropriate creation and management of greenspace; and resources that are put into improving greenspace wasted as they are not used to respond to the expressed needs and aspirations of the community; or to respond to why a space is, or is not, being used.

High spec, off-the-peg design solutions do not necessarily deliver quality greenspace. If we don't find out what people want and need from their greenspaces we can't create sustainable local environments, sites can fall into disuse and even misuse, and the process of decline can become established. It's common sense; if we don't engage with communities and find out what they want we won't deliver what is needed and we can't deliver quality greenspaces.

In addition it is also important to be aware that that decisions that are right for one community may not be appropriate for others. There is not a one size fits all community greenspace model that we can roll out; needs, interests and aspirations for greenspace are different not only between local areas, but also between the different interests, ages, and cultures that make up communities.

Who Is The Community?

Who is our customer? Is it the people who use the park? The people who could use the park? Is our customer the community? Who is the community?

It is too simplistic to define in this way:

In the context of community engagement in countryside and urban greenspace management practitioners often deal with people from a certain geographical area. A small piece of disused land, could for example, be only of any real interest to the people living within a certain radius of it. Or with the case of a neighbourhood park, geographically it may take in a number of local areas.

However, even within a small area there will be people of different interests who live and work there. These are often referred to as "communities of interest" such as young people, mothers and toddlers or people from a specific ethnic background. It could be that they may share a common need for a better environment but their needs, circumstances and reasons for this may be very different.

The community is not one homogeneous group, but a diverse mix of people with different needs and aspirations, at different life stages. What is clear is that it is our challenge to find out the different interests, needs and perspectives of the people and groups of people who we call communities.

Not only is it important to recognise different groups and individuals who make up communities, it is also important that when we do reach out to people, that we listen to what they have to say and reasons why they may have become excluded and do not come forward. If people feel they have been ignored and that what they say will not make a difference then they may question the whole point of taking part. However good our intentions may be, a community may have had bad experiences in the past and these are issues we need to be aware of and confront.

It can be challenging to engage beyond the usual suspects, however there is an ever growing body of good practice and new and innovative methodologies are being developed and explored all the time.

However, we also need to be aware of the appropriateness of our engagement techniques. Plans that are put on display in the local library will not really reach a wide audience; but if like Green Inverness when they were recently seeking views on greenspace, you locate yourself in local shopping and leisure centres on a Saturday, you will reach more people and a wider range of people.

Case Study - Fallside Young People

In Fallside, North Lanarkshire, the community worked together to transform the site of the Fallside Destructor (a waste incinerator and landfill site) into a Nature Park with paths for walking and cycling. It was a real community project, but when they looked back it became clear that although most sectors of the community had been involved, the consultations and work to date had not had any real impact on young people in the 11 - 16 age group. They had proved difficult to engage through traditional approaches and had the potential to be a source for anti-social activities on the site. The answer was an art-based programme that engaged the youngsters through videos, computer imagery and photography and enabled them to put their mark on the site whilst exploring their issues and experiences.

It is important to recognise that misunderstanding and lack of awareness between different people and groups of people in local areas can also be a barrier to engaging everyone. Greenspaces have a key role in bringing people with different views and values together, giving them a common focus and a reason for working together to create spaces that meet the needs of young and old, people from all ethnic backgrounds and of all abilities. Making spaces for sports, community and arts events, for quiet reflection, for active recreation, and for nature study etc.

Combining all of this, often in the same space, calls for negotiation between different communities of interest to develop an understanding of each group's needs, fears and aspirations.

Case Study – Beardmore Park

Glasgow's newest urban park started out life as a one hectare site lying derelict for decades and voted one of the worst eyesores in the East End of the City. It is now an extremely successful space that meets a range of needs as a result of engagement work led by Kelvin Clyde Greenspace who have been extremely successful in engaging a wide range of communities of interest in the project. The engagement process brought together all parts of the community to reach a negotiated agreement on what they wanted to do in

the park and what it would look like. Older people began to understand the needs (and fears) of younger people and vice versa.

Working together on projects builds the confidence, skills and capacity of individuals and communities and greenspace projects can often be the start of people taking a more active role in the life and the decision making processes of their communities.

What Is Meant By Engagement - How do we go about it?

We need to be clear that consultation is not engagement. Engagement is about all stages of the process. It's not just about a community ratifying an idea or a plan we have come up with. It is more than consultation. It is about involving people in sharing and identifying what is needed and what needs to change to address their needs and their aspirations.

People are more likely to come forward where local people generate initiatives and projects, and the needs of the community are truly the driver for change.

- At the planning stages the community should be involved in determining what needs to change; how this will be done; who will do it; how they can help and contribute; what resources they can bring; and who else needs to be involved.
- At implementation – it is not just about the community planting trees or participating in events, the community can have an active role in overseeing greenspace projects.
- In determining success - who is better placed than the local people who use greenspaces to tell us if we have achieved what we set out to do; and if not why? How could we do it better or what do we need to do now?
- In the longer term the community can also be involved in the management of greenspace. At Beardmore Park the community is now managing an ongoing programme of events; an activity which would have previously been the role of the Kelvin Clyde Greenspace Trust

It is important to have a commitment to community development. If we are going to seek to engage the community and if we want people to become actively involved in their local environments, we have to understand that their reasons may be different to ours. We have to commit to realising their reasons and offer support, training, and confidence building throughout this whole process.

However engagement should go beyond building the capacity of the community. Professionals need to build their own capacity, and the capacity of other professionals, to engage with communities, rather than the focus being on building the capacity of the community to engage with us all the time. This could simply be about changing the language we use.

'Placemaking' is an approach to the revitalisation of public spaces that Greenspace Scotland has been piloting, on a number of sites in Scotland, working in partnership with PPS, a US based not for profit organisation with over 30 years experience of working with people and places. 'Placemaking' takes this concept further; a core principle is that the community is the expert. The community have the in-depth knowledge of local areas, they

know which greenspaces feel safe, and which do not. They know how local greenspaces are being or could be used. 'Placemaking' challenges us as professionals to engage communities and stakeholders on their terms and for their reasons.

We know we need to engage the community if we want to deliver sustainable, quality greenspaces. We know that by seeking and engaging those who are harder to reach that we need to understand their issues. Most of all we need to be prepared to put the community in the driving seat.

However, all this suggests an intensive role for greenspace practitioners, and a key question will be how we find the time to do all this? But greenspace practitioners don't necessarily need to do it all by themselves. We need to look to the different approaches, solutions, partnerships and wider mechanisms available for engaging the community. For example what other events, projects or consultations are happening, and can we join up with them, or get them to consider greenspace issues too?

Case Study – Sustainable Back Courts Initiative, Glasgow

A project to transform back courts in Glasgow resulted from the issue of rats in the bin stores. The Councils environmental health team was involved in liaising with the residents to find out how to deal with the untidy bin storage areas that had resulted in fly-tipping and rat infestation. Kelvin Clyde Greenspace then got involved in a project to transform the back courts at a stage where the issues and needs had already been uncovered and people were already coming forward. So the community engagement was actually generated by environmental health officers

Case Study – Inverclyde Greenspace Audit

In Inverclyde community agents enabled the Council to undertake an extensive liaison with communities in an audit of greenspace in which they identified locations and made recommendations for community greenspace development and enhancement over a three year period. Many of the usual suspects were involved in reaching out to those who would not normally come forward. The main aim for Inverclyde Council was to get an action plan for greenspace that was based on what the community wanted; but at the same time in taking this approach they also increased levels of community involvement in their own neighbourhoods and enhanced links between communities, the Council and other local agencies.

Another innovative idea to generate engagement resulted from the recognition that what motivates people is often a threat, or perceived threat, such as a planning application. This is something that we can use to our advantage, although we need to carefully consider how we can mimic this threat without putting up spurious claims for landfill applications or tree felling notices. The Kelvin Clyde Greenspace Trust developed an interesting approach to mimicking threat and getting people to come and talk to them about a garden in the West End of Glasgow.

The greenspace team arrived on site early on a Saturday morning and revved up a chainsaw to start making a sculpture. This generated a huge amount of interest, in the initial form of concern about noise and that they may have been taking down mature trees. However once people realised that this was not the case they then found themselves

engaged in a conversation about the garden and the initial engagement and interest was sparked.

Partnership is crucial in realising community engagement and in being able to respond to the wide ranging issues and needs that can be uncovered; combining our actions to support community development and deliver wider outcomes for the community.

A project in South Ayrshire involved a group of tenants who lived in flats surrounding a communal garden area. The condition of the properties was poor, more than half were un-let and boarded up and the communal area was full of old furniture, rubbish and dog mess. A few of the tenants got together to try to clear it up, but as soon as they had done this, it quickly declined again and the group struggled to get anyone else involved or interested.

Only by addressing the bigger picture: the un-let boarded up flats; the dirty, dark, untidy closes; and the fact that the people who lived there felt they had been abandoned by the authorities; or were just passing through as a stop gap enroute to a better home; was success eventually achieved.

A beautiful garden that is maintained by an ever growing and proactive local community was created, but it was only made possible by a combined process of:

- the housing department working with the group to create a local lettings initiative to attract people into the flats
- a long process of communication and relationship building between the tenants, the Council and other authorities
- working with the police to address crime and anti-social behaviour
- the tenants group negotiating improved maintenance and increased investment in the flats
- the local community forum offering training and capacity building
- an extensive programme of youth activities and outreach

When the group then looked at the external spaces the community were much more interested, believed in their abilities and were ready and willing to participate. None of these activities on their own would have been sustainable thus demonstrating the importance of working in partnership and the need to stop and look at the bigger picture. This also includes looking at the wider needs of the people and being part of a range of other co-ordinated actions.

By linking up to what else is happening in terms of community development, support, regeneration and consultation, greenspace actions and activities and their benefits can be embedded into a wider context of community support, information, resourcing and capacity building. Giving greenspace activity more impact and relevance across a range of areas and organisations who may not initially see it as solely relevant to them, but who are actually key partners as they share a common goal in engaging communities to identify, and realise their needs and aspirations, and improve their quality of life.

In Conclusion

Community engagement is common terminology and has been a bit of a strategy buzzword, at least in the past. Very often the people that wrote the strategies had no idea of what it involved or meant.

However more and more, authorities, the public sector and voluntary bodies realise that community engagement is not just the easy job of posting up some leaflets to announce a community meeting and relying on the opinion of the 6 people that turn up. We have a whole range of techniques and approaches for engaging with communities to identify their needs, asking the friends of group or putting out a neighbourhood questionnaire is just not enough.

We know the cost of not properly engaging the community; unsustainable communities and greenspaces that continued to decline and who sometimes resented our intervention because we did it to them, not with them. Our understanding of the reasons for community engagement has grown and we now know that we cannot create greenspace that is 'fit for purpose', that meets the needs of the community and stakeholders, without properly engaging them.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

'WHY? HOW? WHO? COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT'

INVOLVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF A COUNTRY PARK

Rachel Datlen
Greenspace Manager
Worcestershire County Council

Engagement is important for reasons of community ownership, social inclusion, health and wellbeing and lifelong learning.

The Countryside Service manages 22 greenspaces, including Country Parks, Local Nature Reserves, Forest Parks, Riverside Parks, Picnic Places, SSSI's, old railway lines and redundant quarries. That represents over 1000 acres of land that is accessible to the public 24 hours a day. The big question is how do we involve them in doing this?

Many of the community involvement examples outlined are applicable to any site, whether it's a formal park or a small picnic place, but all have been tried and tested on two of our flagship sites, Worcester Woods Country Park and Waseley Hills Country Park. Both are Green Flag award winning parks, one running for 2 years and the other for 3 years. Both are urban fringe, and visitor numbers range from between 250,000 to 500,000 visitors a year.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a major form of community engagement and all sorts of people do it for all sorts of reasons. The physical and mental health benefits of 'green exercise' are well-known. We are facing an epidemic of global depression, with 1 in 4 people suffering from it at some point in their lives and 1 in 6 people being treated for it. People also volunteer to learn new skills and gain experience, whether they are starting out in their career or changing it for quality of life reasons. It may provide a contrast to people's normal working day. People meet people and develop new friendships from volunteering and it allows them to 'put something back' into their local area. Finally, it allows tasks to be done that may not otherwise happen due to cost; so many people know that if they help out in their local greenspace, it helps to get valuable work done.

Different types of volunteers exist, including individual volunteers who act as unpaid members of staff, with a uniform and a role description. Others work in workparties, supervised by a member of staff or a trained volunteer workparty leader. Some may be student placements, either in their year in industry or on a one-day a week placement. Duke of Edinburgh students are also volunteers, and can carry out projects from scrub clearance to litter picking to dog poo surveys. Specific groups can also volunteer such as staff on 'away days' or a group with learning difficulties from a local college.

Community Advisory Forums

What format you use for these depends on what type of site you have, whether there is a contentious issue that is likely to arise and what facilities you have available. A formal meeting allows for a structured, chaired session with agenda, minutes and question and answer sessions. This format can encourage discussion successfully among participants. A more informal drop-in session is flexible, allows for one to one discussion and feels less intimidating to those people not so confident at talking in public. It is also possible to organise some children's activities that can allow parents to participate in the event, without being distracted by their children. Both types of events are ideally run annually or twice annually. What you must do, whichever format you choose, is publicise the event well, with press releases, on-site posters and written invites to councillors, police, neighbouring landowners and technical advisors such as Natural England if the site is a SSSI. Present information on professional looking colourful displays that include 'meet the staff' photos, your response to views people expressed last time and an outline of recent and upcoming works on the site. It is also important to gauge people's views through something like a short questionnaire.

Comments Cards

The café in a Country Park provides an ideal opportunity for engaging the community and the key is to attract people to what you are doing while they are in there. Simple, professional looking comments cards for people to complete during their visit, are great tools. These can be positioned near to the door of a visitor centre and deposited in the feedback box or posted freepost back to you. Importantly, feedback should be distributed to all the relevant people, not just Countryside Service staff, but cleaning contractors and café franchisees.

Visitor Surveys

These should be done every 3-4 years by a professional outfit, such as the tourist board or a local university. Ideal surveys are through face to face interviews carried out in all seasons and on different days of the week and times of the day. The disadvantage is that you are only capturing the views of people who visit your sites, not those that don't!

Informal Day to Day Visitor Contact

The value of informal day to day visitor contact is greatly underestimated. An on-site presence by uniformed staff demonstrates accessibility. Regular visitors are the eyes and ears on the ground of a greenspace and they are often real allies. Listen to their views and keep them updated on the work that you are doing.

Special Events

These can be targeted to specific groups (particularly those who are under-represented) or open to everyone. Examples include Apple Day, Fun for All Day, Woodlands Alive, Halloween Walk, Winter Fair, Multi-cultural Picnic, Youth Carnival, Environmental Art Workshops and Guided Walks for particular groups.

How to deliver it

If possible, have a dedicated community liaison officer who leads on engagement. Historically such posts have been funded through grants such as Wildspace and now the Big Lottery have a funding stream focussing on involving local communities.

Community engagement deserves to have a significant section in any greenspace management plan. It should be given equal status as landscape, biodiversity, recreation and access.

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'WHY? HOW? WHO? COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT'

DOORSTEP GREENS

Pete Johnstone
Project Manager
Natural England

The Doorstep Greens initiative was launched by the Countryside Agency in April 2001. Its aim was to provide grants from £10,000 to £150,000 to local communities, to help them to create and manage their own special local space. The Big Lottery Fund's Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities programme provided almost £13 million with a further £15 million donated from other funders.

New open spaces, play areas, nature reserves, village greens and generally more safe areas are now helping to improve the quality of life for people in communities from the inner city through suburbia to the rural countryside, and by the end of 2006 the initiative will have achieved 194 individual Doorstep Greens across the country.

The decline in our public open spaces both in rural and urban areas is well documented and has been attributed to a number of factors. Reasons for the decline include budget cuts from local authorities, Compulsory Competitive Tendering brought in the 1980s, and a reduction in the staffing levels in parks and open spaces. Development and the pressure for housing have affected decline in rural open space, in and around villages. In some parts of the country intensive arable farming has meant that there has been little opportunity to enjoy accessible green space outside the village environment.

The idea of a community led regeneration scheme is not new. There are many programmes that have sought to create and restore green space, with varying degrees of success. In devising Doorstep Greens, the Countryside Agency aimed to harness the best aspects of these programmes, while addressing some of the inherent problems to create a blueprint – or 'greenprint' – for others to follow.

In devising Doorstep Greens the aim was to allow the community to take the leading role in the green's planning, design, creation and long term care. Project Preparation Plans or feasibility grants of up to £3,500 were offered initially to help communities compile a proper proposal, to include extensive local consultation. This process, although time consuming ensured that all projects had the support of the local community. Without these first stage grants there would be the danger of funding projects that were not well thought through or did not have the full support of local people.

Project Preparation Plans – Lessons Learnt

In some cases it took community groups a long time to produce a plan, longer than expected– this knock on effect put pressure on a time limited initiative such as Doorstep Greens.

Community expectations need to be managed. This is particularly true when behind the scenes planning work is being undertaken, with little obvious 'improvement' work taking place on site. So it is important that local people need to be kept informed and involved, through word of mouth newsletters and events.

Many projects will run and spread across financial years. Although the careful planning of funding bids can reduce the stresses and strains brought about by different grant conditions from grant aiding bodies, it is still important that grant funders are patient and helpful when working with community type projects as plans do not always work out as expected. So it was particularly helpful that Big Lottery Fund, as the main grant funder, allowed us to move funds across financial years.

Fifteen million pounds levered in on the back of Project Preparation Plans. The time deliberating and planning the project was in most cases time well spent. The completed plans were used extensively as a bidding document, by the project organisers, to seek and secure funds from other grant schemes such as landfill tax and living spaces grants. The plans were useful in that they showed the consultation process, landscape drawings and costings and where additional partnership funding was required.

The Creation of the Doorstep Green

Wherever they were created – on agricultural land or industrial wasteland, on the site of derelict housing, or in place of parks, which had fallen into neglect – Doorstep Greens had a remit of change. By applying the outcomes from extensive community consultation to the design process, vibrant new public spaces began to emerge.

Through design, Doorstep Green groups were able to:

- Increase accessibility for all
- Address social problems such as crime and drug use
- Enhance the local landscape
- Create a welcoming space
- Encourage wildlife
- Reflect the community's natural and industrial heritage
- Encourage community interaction and generate community pride.

The Creation Phase - Lessons Learnt

Projects will have peaks and troughs. There is clear evidence from Doorstep Greens and previous initiatives of a similar nature that projects will have periods of highs and lows. This includes the project team running Doorstep Greens as well as the groups running the individual projects themselves! This is natural and to be expected as the project will undoubtedly hit frustrating times when things do not go right. However, groups should be

made more aware of the fluctuating emotions at the start of the project. Forewarned is to be forearmed.

Record your progress. It is important to record your progress as you go. This could be through stories from people on what the place was like before any improvements had taken place and what needed to change, or it could be through a series of before and after photographs. Either way having told your story, people can then reflect and see what has actually been achieved.

Tell people what you have done – report it! What many people achieve on projects like Doorstep Greens is remarkable and yet more often than not, the 'good news' stories do not get told. Therefore it is important to put some time aside to tell local authorities, the press and the funding bodies what has been gained through the development of your Doorstep Green.

Doorstep Greens is yet another initiative. Although there have been some great gains over the last 6 years with the Doorstep Greens initiative, it is still yet another community initiative funded for a limited period only. In time, there will no doubt be another grant funded initiative which will have its own rules and grant conditions, all of which will have to be learnt by groups, community facilitators and supporting agencies all over again.

We in the 'industry' need to get better at learning from past experience and build in the best from the previous schemes that have gone before. For example, a common grant funding structure to include the option for funding a preparation plan as well as capital and revenue funding will, I am sure, be well received. This coupled with longer term funding of programmes, such as for 10 years enable greater clarity and sense of purpose.

Sustainability of Green Space – Lessons learnt

When dealing with land – the security of land tenure is important. With Doorstep Greens a legal framework protected each community's right to continue using its Doorstep Green for a minimum of 25 years. Although this sometimes meant lengthy delays in negotiating the lease or purchase of land before work on site could progress, it did ensure that each project, once a creation grant was issued, was secure.

Revenue funding, and how to sustain your green space in the long term, should always be considered from the outset. Doorstep Green groups are managing the long term land management in different ways, some district and parish councils are involved in the management of the green space, in others the greens are managed by the communities themselves through a combination of community fund raising events, volunteer activity and gifted time.

Apply for a Green Flag award. Applying for a Green Flag award in a scheme run by the Civic Trust is a good way of getting your Doorstep Green independently assessed. If the green meets certain quality standards then it will be awarded a Green Flag for a local authority managed site and a Green Pennant for a community managed site. The status of a Green Flag for a park is increasingly being recognised as a way of ensuring that each publicly accessible green space is of good quality in all aspects of management including health and safety, sustainable land management, nature conservation and indeed community engagement.

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National Audit Office, Enhancing Urban Green Space, The Stationery Office, 2006

The Parks Agency, Doorstep Greens Evaluation for the Countryside Agency, 2005.

Photographs of Doorstep Greens taken through out the life of the six year initiative can be viewed at: <http://www.doorstepgreens.org/photos>

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'WHY? HOW? WHO? COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT'

WORKING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES ON THE DROITWICH CANALS RESTORATION PROJECT

Edward Moss
Community and Special Projects Coordinator
British Waterways

The aim of the Droitwich Canals Restoration Partnership is:

To create a linear park centred on the restored Droitwich Canals, which will seek to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment and provide a range of informal recreational opportunities for local people and visitors, thereby generating economic benefit and contributing to the well being of the people of Worcestershire.

At the heart of this is social inclusion with the canals being restored for local people and visitors, for the benefit of and in consultation with local people.

The Partnership consists of British Waterways, Droitwich Canals Trust, Worcestershire County Council, Wychavon District Council and The Waterways Trust. Principle funding is from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Advantage West Midlands and the partners with support from a number of other local and national organisations.

Communications and partnership planning has also identified a wide range of stakeholders ranging from national bodies to local groups and individual residents. By the nature of the project with its high level of environmental and heritage interest. Coupled with the needs and aspirations of the local community, the project is a balance between the three different needs, ensuring that the significance of each is optimised.

What will the project do for local people?

The project will:

- Restore 12 km of waterway of which 1.7 km is new cut
- Restore 16 locks (including 4 new locks)
- Build 1 major bridge crossing over the canal
- Work with local people to encourage community participation
- Enhance and mitigate for any change in the natural environment

The key outputs from the project include increased visitor spend; increased job opportunities locally; increased visitors to the canals, managed in the most effective manner; increased volunteering and training opportunities; education resources and activity weeks; and arts and interpretation projects along the canals.

Why involve local communities?

The principle driver for the project is people: restoring and making accessible the heritage for people; enhancing and managing the natural environment and making it as accessible as possible for people to enjoy; and improving people's understanding of the project through active participation.

The project has come out of a community led campaign to restore the canals. Thirty years ago, the Droitwich Canals Trust promoted and carried out physical projects to restore the canals and much of this original enthusiasm and drive continues in its members today. Besides the fact that the local community wants to be involved, the Partnership as a whole has particular reasons for working with them:

- Local decision making through consultation encourages a sense of ownership and increased civic pride in the local canals
- Increased use improves attitudes towards safe use of the canals
- Greater intellectual access through interpretation and arts projects increases awareness and understanding of local heritage
- Greater community involvement will help protect the canal through reduced vandalism in the long term
- Volunteering and training will assist local skill development in the local labour force

How are local communities being involved?

Bearing in mind the different needs of differing local groups and people, diverse projects will aim to involve people at varying levels of participation.

Interpretation and Arts Strategy

This is aimed at local schools, principally secondary, consulting them in a series of different projects promoting the significance of the canals. Young people are involved with research and planning for the projects as well, and in some cases, their implementation. Key projects include the creation of a mosaic by a community artist working with 3 schools in Droitwich Spa.



The Wych Barge Project engages older children with the Youth Service and adults with learning difficulties at Kingfields Day Centre. The project has also engaged people of all ages, doing oral history research into people's memories of the canals.

Whilst volunteers of the Droitwich Canals Trust are a key group within the project, volunteers will be targeted from a wide range of groups and as individuals. Work has already begun with the Prince's Trust, Worcester College of Technology, Connexions and E2E. These represent younger people to whom the canal is a brand new experience. This will not only broaden the base of popular interest in the canal but it will also build relationships for the canals management and community participation beyond the restoration.

Communications and consultation

Members of the local community will also be informed and consulted throughout the restoration with regard to its planning and implementation. This will offer benefits to both the local people in influencing what will happen in their locality and the Partnership in learning and gaining support from people local to the works taking place.

The restoration project is aimed to be completed by 2009 with the canals being reopened for full navigation; towpaths improved for all users; and facilities created and improved. Once opened, the canals will pass into the management of British Waterways but the Partnership and its relationship with the local community is planned to continue. The Canals' Trust are already looking at their aims and objectives and changes that they may need to make to promote an operational canal rather than aiming to restore it. It seems likely that local community interest will only increase over the next two years ensuring long term sustainability of the Droitwich Canals.

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Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

'WHY? HOW? WHO? COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT'

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

John Hole
Chief Countryside Ranger
Caerphilly Borough Council

Community involvement in all aspects of a project from the development, implementation, management and long-term strategy is essential to ensure that the project is successful and sustainable.

Sounds easy but in practice it is

- a) Scary
- b) Frustrating
- c) Life enhancing
- d) Career threatening
- e) Time consuming
- f) Exhilarating
- g) Financially expensive
- h) All of the above.

I will let you decide on the answer: a 50/50 won't really help; you may phone a friend; but the best solution is to ask the audience or in this case, the community.

- Always be honest from the beginning with people about the limitations and aspirations of the projects never promise what you cannot deliver.
- When we ask communities what they want we often get wish list of excellent practical projects and solutions with varying financial costs, but we also get some impossible suggestions "I want Manchester United's training ground to be in my village" said one community member in south Wales.
- When consulting with the community make sure you hear what the community wants and the community knows exactly what you are going to do.
- Try and give them what they want and what they or the site needs if this is possible (Manchester United training ground was a little bit beyond what I could achieve).
- Communities that surround your local reserve can be an incredible reservoir of knowledge that will help in the management of the site.

- By talking to people on their local knowledge you can find out about past management of the site for example:

Q. What was that old field used for?

A. 20 ponies from the mine used to graze in it up until the pit closed in 1975

One simple question has given you the past management of the site, the stocking levels and then when grazing ceased, all of which will help in deciding the future management.

- Make them involved in decisions such as using the local names for the different compartments of your local nature reserve (LNR). For example: Black Pond Field was a name given not because the pond was dark and gloomy but Mr Black used to graze cows in the field with the pond, a much more charismatic name than M25c.
- The Humpty Dumpty Meadow was named after children thought that yellow meadow ant mounds look like Humpty Dumpty.
- Regular users of the site may have a good knowledge of the natural history, but don't realise that their sightings are of value for conservation efforts so getting people to report what they see is great way to build up community links and information.
- It also means you gain additional security of the site as more eyes and ears are about in the LNR and are more willing to tell you about negative activities.

Simple things like this help to bind in the community to the LNR and feel that they are being listened to and what they are saying is important and useful.

Farmers are a great source of working knowledge and very useful for future management e.g. grazing or access to machinery. If you were using contractors for hay making, could you get local horse owners to take away bales for free? This shows that the LNR has a real benefit to local people.

Local businesses may want to be involved in the site management work as a team building exercise or offer financial help as they are a local employer and keen to be part of the community.

Access

How do local people access the site?

- Involve the communities in an access audit using all user groups and aged access - e.g. schools, ramblers, over 55s club, disability groups, mother and toddlers etc. to get a good picture of their specific needs.
- Path vegetation can be kept cut back by local dog walkers and regular users by handing out cheap secateurs so they can snip as they stroll.

- Also look at what the local vernacular for gates and styles is and keep to it, to increase a sense of 'localness'.

Interpretation

Who are the users of the site should be answered by previous consultations but what are their interpretation requirements?

- If the site is predominately used by local people, then there may not be much call for interpretation panels as they are repeat-visitors but there may be a need for guided walks, arts events with artists - such as watercolour painting or getting them to produce temporary and/or permanent art work to display on site.
- Family orientated events to get them involved in producing interpretation material the local people can become involved in this process, and actually interpret the site themselves (with help).
- But one off visitors will also gain something from it too such as nature trails, circular walks and leaflets could be designed with local knowledge as to which paths do local people walk and why, what do they see when they walk along them, etc.
- Some sites may require a "Welcome" board, with a map of the site and its main important aspects and relevant information to remind locals and inform new people moving to the area, as well as one-off tourists, why the site is valuable

The Five Ball problems

Litter

- Good access provisions and site boundary work can prevent fly tipping and general site litter can be used to initiate a local awareness clean-up tied into a national event and set up local litter volunteers, or a river care group.
- You can also look at the recycling facilities in the local community and see if they can be improved at the same time and this may help.
- Perhaps organise a best-kept village or street award for local communities. It may solve your problem in the LNR.

Fire

- Burning can be a serious localised problem causing damage to infrastructure and habitats. It can be hard to find out who is setting fire to the site and their reasons, local knowledge from your communities may help.
- Education via schools and community centres can help. At one site during the summer holidays we ran a Flame academy play scheme to highlight the damage fires do to the local environment and wildlife.

Shooting

- This can be a persistent problem and very hard to eradicate, as it tends to happen when few people are on site.
- Again local knowledge as to when, where and who is shooting could help. Another option could be to speak to a local landowner who is willing to allow shooting and redirect anyone on the LNR to shoot legally.
- Try to engage those troublemakers. Set up a laser clay pigeon event in the area and educate the people who attend the event as to why it is important that they don't shoot in the LNR.

Motorbikes

- This causes serious damage to habitats and species and erosion of footpaths, as well as noise and danger, and spoils the enjoyment of the site for locals.
- Local Access Forums have been set up to involve all sectors of the community, and along with the police, can offer advice and possible solutions.

Vandalism

- Again this can be a source of frustration as it is difficult to detect exactly who is carrying out the vandalism and when.
- Local eyes and ears help to reduce the incidents, but it may also be worth looking at what is being vandalised and whether it could be made more resistant to damage or if it is really needed at all.

Site management.

- Think about impact works to show the community that you have started to manage the site. Three sheep grazing in a meadow will go unnoticed by most people but if you have laid the main boundary hedge the local community would see real progress happening.
- Seasonal wardens on a voluntary basis will learn important transferable skills to go on and gain paid employment; also train up volunteers to stay on in the local area, if possible.
- Skills include practical conservation/traditional skills such as hedge laying, dry stone walling, etc.; as well as office based skills such as IT and organisation, plus communication i.e. talking to people and writing reports.
- Another social aspect of the LNR – local people may be able to gain training and skills necessary to obtain employment in conservation.
- Temporary contracts are an important step to “getting your foot in the door”. Try and turn it into an event or a series of conservation days.

Education

Education is probably your greatest solution to engaging the community and preventing future problems but this is a long-term commitment.

- Get the local schools to use the LNR as part of the National Curriculum for all areas of learning, and not just environmental education but arts projects, poetry, music, dance, crafts, and numeracy or literacy trails.
- Two way links with schools. Involve the school in the LNR for educational purposes, but also go into the school to help them with their projects on their grounds or take school assemblies.
- Also in your education strategy you need to include everyone and not just schools so try to involve as many different groups or communities as possible.

Designation and Launch

By getting the LNR designated you are recognising the site's importance for wildlife and raising its profile locally. It also emphasises the site's importance to the local community and to others who didn't realise what was on their doorstep.

- The publicity associated with its designation will help to increase awareness and may get further local interest – volunteers and more user groups, such as additional schools from further away to come and use the site for field work etc.
- But try to get local people (particularly children) in the photos as you may cause resentment if the launch photos are just a big star and the local council chief who will only visit the LNR once.
- Think about the date of the launch - does it clash with community events or a local rival rugby match.

Conclusion

The main focus for an LNR should be the wildlife and the local community, and if they are not included in all the processes of the management of the reserve then they will not value it or respect it. Without long term community involvement the management of a local nature reserve is not sustainable

By involving the community we benefit in terms of shared workload, ideas, fundraising, reduction in problems and sense of achievement; but the community also benefits by improving the local environment they live in, having pride in the local environment, improved quality of life, increased health benefits and a growing sense of the importance of their community.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

'WHY? HOW? WHO? COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT'

DIVIS - ENGAGING A SEPARATED COMMUNITY

Dave Morton
Community Engagement Officer
National Trust

A bit of background

The Divis and Black Mountain site is one of The National Trust's most recent and significant acquisitions, consisting of one and a half thousand acres of species rich grassland, upland heath, blanket bog and mire rising to 1562 feet above the infamous North and West of the City. The summit affords views across Northern Ireland, Scotland, The Isle of Mann and even Wales to those lucky enough to make their way there on a good day. In addition, the presence of abundant and in places unique archaeology, as well as landscape and geological features makes the site of huge interest and value for broad ranging and innovative engagement and educational purposes.

To the sceptic all of this may very well be interesting, but arguably not unique. The National Trust does, after all, look after other such areas each with an impressive portfolio of what they can offer or what they protect for the nation. The difference on Divis however lies in the setting and historical context of the site. Two things are important here, the first being the lack of legal access to green open spaces in Northern Ireland (without the enclosures act and subsequent evolutions including right to roam, NI has been left largely devoid of public footpaths and associated public access networks) and the second being the well known backdrop of the Northern Ireland political situation or 'The Troubles' within our communities. These two issues are the defining context in which community engagement functions on the Divis and Black Mountain site.

What is community?

Looking at this question within the traditional context of The National Trust conjures up amongst many images of WI meetings, cake sales etc. Within the context of a challenging urban fringe site like Divis one may think more of louts, youths and ASBOs - so what does that leave us with? In reality our communities are often both, and many variations beyond depending on how deep we look and on what we focus. In the Divis context, which is true for many urban fringe sites, it is often not identifying our communities that cause the problems, but moreover which sections we choose to target and to what degree. The temptation, possibly fuelled in part by funding bodies is to develop a strategy that disproportionately focuses on the 'hard to reach' groups while neglecting traditional markets who, as some of our best allies and supporters, should be given our due attention. The vision of bus loads of 'difficult youths' suddenly invading conservation sites in the name of community engagement is also often what raises the defences of site managers,

and need not be the case - community engagement should be representative of the communities in which we exist.

What is *real* engagement?

Community Engagement is a term widely used at present, but often its implications are not fully understood. When we aspire to true community engagement it means that the groups above, good, bad or otherwise are not just identified, superficially involved, contacted, informed etc. but more that they are given real ownership of what is in reality their community resource, and from this be guided and empowered to be a valued part of a decision making team that shapes long term management.

Why bother?

Now we have identified that we have a hugely diverse community base with ties to and interest in the site, and that engaging them means not only a lot of work, but also means handing over a degree of control and decision making to those maybe without our level of professional conservation training, we may well ask, why bother? From a conservation point of view life would indeed be easier if we simply locked the gates and looked after the environment without public interference or input, but without communities, conservation and long term protection of our heritage would be to what end?

Community engagement initiatives on sites such as Divis and the Black Mountain are valuable for many reasons. One may be that often this type of work will attract funding and for good reason. Conservation work does not happen passively but requires resources of time and money so community engagement should not be any different. If it is to be done well, then it should be well planned and funded as a valued part of the overall site management package, not simply an optional bolt-on to another role. Community engagement is inherently important to the long term sustainability of our sites, without it our reason to be ceases to exist. If we do not look after these sites for the public of today and the future to enjoy and learn from then for whom do we do it and why? If we want to leave a legacy of care and sustainable management that will live on into the future then we need to educate and inspire, and to do this we need to engage.

How is it done then?

Like myself, I imagine this is the point in an article or presentation of this type, that the pens and pads are poised to jot down the secrets and answers of how community engagement is successfully carried out. If there is an all encompassing recipe for success then I haven't found it yet! It can be argued that all communities are unique in their make up and circumstances, as are the organisations or individuals attempting to engage with them. With that in mind the best I can offer in the 'how is it done' section are a few pointers that from experience I have found helpful.

- **Always do something!**

Even with limited resources or a spare few minutes, a quick phone or knock on the door of a local community group helps build up relationships. These relatively informal interactions are rarely wasted and often produce disproportionately valuable results.

- **Build partnerships**

Following on from the first point, use contacts to build partnerships. All too often we try and reinvent the wheel by setting up initiatives that already exist rather than building up working relationships with organisations who have these in place already.

Many successful relationships have been built between The National Trust on Divis and community groups including cross community youth initiatives, disabled rambling groups, fitness groups and many others. Rather than trying to build or develop these groups afresh, we need only provide the resource for their inclusion and engagement.

- **Value your volunteers**

A well resourced and planned out volunteering element will make delivery of a project much easier and also promote further engagement. A core team of a few well trained and dedicated volunteers can really make a project work. On Divis we found the recruitment of core volunteers from sectors such as the medical professions and fire-fighters to be very successful. These individuals are often shift workers with free days in the week, are often well trained in health and safety and leadership and given the high stress and clinical nature of their work, enjoy a day of something very different!

- **Steal ideas!**

While no 'one size fits all' solution exists, networking and communicating with other projects can often help develop good ideas and promote the sharing of best practise. Talking over what works, and especially what doesn't, saves a lot of time and frustration in the long run, and I have certainly found that people from other sites are not precious with ideas, plans, strategies or other nuggets that can help build a worthwhile and successful project.

Success?

To finish off, the final area to look at is that of measuring success. Often the collection of hard data to measure against targets etc. is difficult in community engagement work, but is obviously of value, and frequently required by funders or managers. All sites and projects are different and may need bespoke solutions to their problems, as was the case with Divis.

On the Divis site we have developed a system based around a set of ten community engagement standards to which we aspire to meet, each standard in turn has a set of key actions, which, if carried out, will lead to the associated standard being met. Our strengths, weaknesses and targets auditing system, carried out every six months, measures the degree to which this occurs. Once up and running, this audit system measures where we are doing well, or where we need more focus. From this a detailed work plan is created to guide all elements of engagement works.

Complex though it may sound, with regular record keeping, the entire process takes around one day per six months, a small outlay when the by-product of increased focus and efficiency is taken into account, as well as structured quantifiable targets to allow managers and funding bodies to gauge success and all important value for money.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

'WHY? HOW? WHO? COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT'

FORESTRY COMMISSION'S TOOLBOX FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN FOREST AND WOODLAND PLANNING

Max Hislop
Project Leader - Environmental and Human Sciences Division
Forestry Commission

Over the last decade or so Community Engagement has become the core activity for the Forestry Commission (FC). These activities provide people with education and learning, volunteerism, management planning, recreational, community development and health and well-being opportunities as well as improvements to the management of the public forest estate. The current extent of these activities is testament to the 'sea-change' that has swept throughout the organisation to ensure that public forestry remains relevant to society in the 21st Century. Twenty years ago a FC Ranger would be largely responsible for controlling deer numbers in the forest. Now the organisation boasts community rangers, education rangers, recreation rangers as well as wildlife rangers, and these employees make up a substantial proportion of the organisation's front line staff. In addition staff with a responsibility to develop forest plans must engage with communities in their development.

For the 'traditional' forester the change hasn't necessarily been easy. How does someone trained to 'talking to the trees' actively engage with diverse interests and communities? The 'toolbox' was developed as part of the resources available to existing and new staff to help them to consider some of the principles of community engagement and the range of methods that they might use to facilitate engagement.

This presentation introduced the toolbox and some of the concepts it contains. The full publication *Involving People in Forestry: A toolbox for public involvement in forest and woodland planning* can be downloaded online at

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox>

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

'WHY? HOW? WHO? COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE AND URBAN GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT'

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES

Donna Carter and Angela Morgan
Groundwork UK

Trying to get the community to come to one of your events or take part in a project will be difficult

- My first recommendation is to forget trying to get them to come to you and actually go out and meet them.
- Meet them where they are at, show your commitment to them before expecting them to make a commitment to you.
- Listen to their needs before giving them a list of your needs. Help them and build up a relationship of trust.

However, if you are looking to hold a meeting/consultation/fun day and wish the community to attend en mass, the following points will need to be considered.

Pre-requisites for community participation

- **People are more likely to participate if they feel the issue or activity is important.**

This can be most effectively achieved if the community themselves have been able to determine the issue or action, rather than having it imposed by an outside agency. Remember NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard). The closer to home the more important it seems to be.

- **People like to feel that their actions will make a difference.**

Some people think that no matter what we do it will be spoiled by the few vandals in the area. Convincing people that changes will be beneficial can be a challenge. If, however, the local community has played a part in identifying the needs for their area, they already recognise that change is required.

If a single resident can see others sharing the same concerns and see that they are part of a group rather than being isolated, they are encouraged to press forward. Also having support from partners and agencies strengthens the sense of unity and the belief that people can collectively bring about real change in society for the benefit of all.

- **Different forms of participation must be acknowledged and valued.**
Activities such as child-minding, cooking, painting and gardening are just as important as committees, formal meetings, and other traditional procedures. Knowing the value of their contribution makes people more likely to volunteer and participate, and more willing to use the skills that they have to help others.

It is also fundamental, for ownership of a project, that all sections of the community (residents, stake holders and businesses) have the opportunity to become involved at the early stages i.e. discussion/planning/design/consultation.

- **People must be enabled to participate, and supported in their participation.**
If you want as many people as possible to attend your event, it is necessary to consider the following:

Transport and location – Would you be able to get there if you had no car or couldn't walk far? Two consultation 'Fun Days' were held simultaneously – one a great success the other a disaster. Both events had the same activities, were on at the same time and were advertised well. The difference? The location. Try to choose locations that are non-threatening, unbiased and regularly well used by the community.

Child care – Parents with small children often won't attend if they feel their children would be disruptive. Having a crèche facility not only makes them feel that you understand their needs but also allows meetings to go ahead without disruptions from the young children in attendance.

Timing– Remember people work shifts including weekends. In order to include as many people as possible, it might be necessary to have a couple of sessions that cover a day time, an evening and a weekend.

Promotion - Before promoting events such as consultations, **research** the area to see if any special requirements are needed. For example, if there is a strong population of Urdu speaking residents, have the poster also translated into Urdu. Make posters with as many visual clues as possible for those who are unable to read well or use the spoken word.

Fun - Last but not least, try to make it fun – people like to have fun.

Conclusion

Going back to my original recommendation: Go to the community, introduce yourself, explain what you do and build a relationship with the community. This takes time and effort but always achieves the best results, dedication, commitment and sustainability.

APPENDIX A

Why? How? Who?
Community engagement in countryside and urban greenspace management

DRAFT PROGRAMME

09.30 Registration and refreshments

10.00 Welcome and Introduction by Chair

Andy Maginnis, Worcestershire County Council

10.15 Community Engagement - Why Bother?

Elaine Gibb, Greenspace Scotland

10.40 Involving the Local Community in the Management of a Country Park

Rachel Datlen, Worcestershire County Council

11.05 Refreshments

11.30 Doorstep Greens

Pete Johnstone, Natural England

**11.50 Working with Local Communities on the Droitwich Canals
Restoration Project**

Edward Moss, British Waterways

12.15 Question and Answer Panel Session

12.40 Lunch

13.25 Local Nature Reserves for Local People

Jon Hole, Caerphilly Borough Council

13.55 DIVIS - Engaging a Separated Community

Dave Morton, National Trust

14.20 Refreshments

**14.35 Involving People in Forestry: A toolbox for public involvement
in forest and woodland planning**

Max Hislop, Forestry Commission

15.00 Community Engagement in Deprived Communities

Donna Carter and Angela Morgan, Groundwork UK

15.25 Question and Answer Panel Session

15.45 Summary (Chair)

16.00 CLOSE

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

**'Why? How? Who? Community Engagement in Countryside and Urban
Greenspace Management'
The Priory Rooms, Birmingham
22 November 2006**

CHAIR

**Andy Maginnis
Countryside Estates Manager
Worcestershire County Council**

Andy Maginnis is Countryside Estates Manager for Worcestershire County Council and represents the authority on the Worcestershire Wardens Partnership. A former chair of the Countryside Management Association, he now represents CMA on the Country Parks Delivery Group. Andy is the Local Government Association representative on the Countryside Recreation Network and has a liaison role with the Local Government Association Access Advisory Group.

SPEAKERS

Elaine Gibb Greenspace Scotland

Elaine's career has spanned a variety of roles within the environmental and public sectors, all with a focus on supporting and developing work with communities.

In her first role as a volunteer with the Groundwork Trust in 1996 she supported communities to improve their local environments and was later responsible for the development of the Green Connection Project, one of the first developmental projects to specifically engage ethnic minority communities within environmental action in the UK.

Moving back to Scotland in 1998 with the Black Environment Network, Elaine was responsible for establishing their first developmental project in Scotland and develop the ethnic environmental participation agenda.

In 2001 she joined Regeneration & Housing Services at South Ayrshire Council where her role focused on the development and implementation of the Councils Tenant Participation Strategy.

In her current role as Development Officer with Greenspace Scotland she is involved in supporting the development of strategic greenspace partnerships across community planning areas and in delivering support to Greenspace Scotland's wide network of greenspace practitioners.

Rachel Datlen Worcestershire County Council

As Countryside Greenspace Manager for the Countryside Service, Rachel oversees the management of 25 sites across Worcestershire including Country Parks, Nature Reserves, Forest Parks and Picnic Places. The other half of her Team delivers biodiversity, landscape and greenspace management projects in the wider countryside through community engagement and partnership working. Rachel has worked with Worcestershire County Council for nearly 8 years, starting out as a Countryside Projects Officer. Previous to that, Rachel volunteered full time with BTCV for 6 months following graduation from university. Rachel also gets involved in the community outside of work as a Parish Councillor, village hall trustee, member of the WI and company director for 'Cleobury Country', the local market town initiative.

**Pete Johnstone
Natural England**

For the last five years Pete has been programme manager for Doorstep Greens, an initiative funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the Countryside Agency (now Natural England). Previous to that Pete has been involved in the development of Community Forests, Millennium Greens and a range of green space related topics including helping to establish two urban nature reserves. He continues to search for the most sustainable community managed green space - one that is self financing, has plenty of volunteers and community involvement and no vandalism....

**Edward Moss
British Waterways**

Edward Moss works for the British Waterways' Regeneration (South) Team, restoring the Droitwich and Cotswold Canals, both on behalf of wider partnership. He has worked for BW for 8 years after doing a Masters in Heritage Management at the Ironbridge Institute. Over the past 8 years, he has worked on a variety of community outreach projects including education projects based around working boats in the Midlands; interpreting the restoration and history of cast iron aqueducts; running events programs in rural and urban areas; and working with volunteers in a variety of roles.

**John Hole
Caerphilly Borough Council**

80% of the county of Caerphilly is rural yet still people's perception of the valleys are coal tips, coal mines, smoke and heavy industry, which have all long gone. Even local peoples attitudes to the countryside are still affected by the way the heavy industry had little regard for the environment.

Within this challenging area I have been involved with local authority countryside services for 15 years developing projects and working with communities to enhance the wonderful natural environment of the county for the benefit of everyone.

Before moving to Wales I grew up in rural Dorset and had various careers such as a self employed builder, lorry driver, ran a photographic shop, sold life insurance and worked for the body shop selling shampoo but these were always a second career to my voluntary work with the Wildlife trusts, RSPB and Forestry commission.

Moving to Wales I started as a volunteer at the Caerphilly mountain project, before becoming employed by the county council in their countryside service on a temporary contract for six months. 15 years on I am now the chief ranger.

Dave Morton National Trust

Dave Morton, Community Engagement Officer for the National Trust, Divis Mountain.

Dave has worked with The National Trust in Belfast for around four years, initially as a countryside warden and now as community engagement officer on the newly opened Divis site.

Previous to working with the Trust, Dave studied Geography and Archaeology at Queens University, while working part time alongside families within the Maze and Maghaberry prisons.

Max Hislop Forestry Commission

Project Leader of the Social Research Group, Environmental and Human Sciences Division. Responsibilities include the design, execution and management of social research in support of public participation in forest planning.

Max Hislop studied forestry at Cumbria College of Agriculture and Forestry, Newton Rigg and joined the Forestry Commission as a forest manager at Lorne Forest District, Argyll in 1985. In 1990 he became one of the Commission's first Community Foresters when he joined Thames Chase community forest in Essex and East London. In 1995 he joined Forest Research and pioneered the development of social research within the agency, in response to a growing demand for an understanding of the social dimension of sustainable forestry within the traditional forestry sector. Max gained an MSc in Social Research from the University of Edinburgh in 2004.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX D