

# how to build...

## persistence

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

### checklist:

First of all you need to have clearly identified goals so you can keep your programme on track and also demonstrate progress. This will help maintain enthusiasm and commitment when you face a setback or when things seem to be taking too long. This also means you need a good monitoring system in place right from the start.

Then you need to get off to a good start:-  
1. Organise visible events to raise your profile with the community  
2. Publicity, publicity, publicity!  
3. Work through/with existing groups.

From this early activity find volunteers with determination and passion.

Do not let these early volunteers become overburdened. Make sure they are supported not exploited. Also continually look to widen community engagement to take the pressure off the early volunteers.

Equally important, and equally challenging throughout is continuity. A lot of neighbourhood work is based on relationships and so it is essential those relationships are maintained.

Keep building a body of evidence of what you have achieved – a diary of events, resident participation etc. If you can keep showing that you are making a difference the more residents will stay involved. It will also help bring services on-board.

It is important to maintain standards of service and joint working. This can be done through agreements but also needs to be done by insisting on standards of behaviour from all stakeholders involved. For example:-

- Share success
- Do not be quick to judge
- Value input from all parties.
- Acknowledge that successful working relationships rely on give and take.

## jargon buster

Neighbourhood working is about changing services so they are more responsive to local needs and about supporting communities to take real ownership of their circumstances..... and there is no shortcut for achieving this.

Culture change takes time.

Not only that, it is fraught with challenges and setbacks. This means persistence is going to be essential.

## Top Tips

How to judge if your neighbourhood working is going to persist:-

- Do you have clarity of purpose?
- Can you demonstrate you are making a difference?
- Is the programme growing and evolving?
- Are the numbers of residents involved continuing to increase?
- Is it clear who is accountable for what?
- Are people having fun?

# where it worked

## Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

**Staffordshire Moorlands Local Strategic Partnership established three Neighbourhood Partnerships in their three most deprived communities (Biddulph East, Hammersley Hayes and Haregate) in 2005. From the outset these Partnerships were coordinated by two dedicated officers employed by the District Council.**

In each community these officers helped local organisations and local residents (via the Residents Associations) to work together to achieve a shared vision for each community.

The neighbourhood partnerships have never benefited from any area based grants. This has actually been a source of strength for these partnerships because they have not been focused on money. Rather, the partnerships have been bound together by the long-term commitment and passion of everyone involved – residents and officers alike.

By persisting with this approach of valuing people, partnerships and passion over money all three partnerships have delivered so many achievements it would be impossible to list them all here. These, however, are some of the highlights:-

- Biddulph East now has a community based amenity, the Biddulph Resource and Information Centre (BRIC), which provides advice and support to local residents and acts as a base for community activities and projects. The centre also has a community café staffed by local people. In 2010/11 Biddulph East Community Association (BECA) made a successful application to the BIG Lottery's Reaching Communities Programme for £197,849 which will fund BRIC for five years from 1st April 2011.
- In Hammersley Hayes anti-social behaviour has fallen by 58% and overall crime by 32% since the neighbourhood partnership working started in 2005. This has been achieved by a combination of activities driven by Hammersley Hayes Resident Action Group (HHRAG) which has included:-

- Large scale landscaping and fencing improvements.
- Campaigns about road safety and dog fouling.
- Engaging the whole community in winning a Britain in Bloom merit award.
- Setting up a Junior Youth Club.
- Getting a Multi-use games area (MUGA) constructed on the estate.
- Setting up and sustaining strong links between HHRAG and the police.
- Establishing a Neighbourhood Watch.
- A concerted effort to improve the lives of older people on the estate through a luncheon club, trips out, parties and social activities.

- In Haregate one of the priorities has been to improve the built and natural environment. Some of the successes of Haregate Environment and Community Group (HECG) include:-

- Regular street audits where residents and local agencies work together to identify local environmental issues.
- A significant reduction of reported litter and dumping of waste.
- Improvements to the gateways to the estate making the neighbourhood more welcoming
- Unused areas of land being turned into community gardens.
- An area of woodland has been made safe to be a play area.
- An overall reduction in crime on the estate over the 5 year period (burglary down 47%, thefts from vehicles down 60%).

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