

The Participant

2005
EDITION

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WORKING WITH SCOTLAND'S COMMUNITIES

June 2005 Issue No.2 Free

Local experience worth sharing

■ “Public bodies could learn valuable lessons from successful local community groups, like Birse Community Trust” suggests *Robin Callander.*

“BIRSE Community Trust’s achievements have led Scottish Ministers and others to cite it as an example of the type of rural community initiative that should be encouraged more widely. While that involves understanding key strategies that have made BCT successful, the experience of groups like BCT is also a resource upon which public sector bodies can draw to identify the types of public support which maximise both local and public benefits” adds Robin, an independent adviser who has worked with BCT.

Birse is a rural parish on Deeside covering 50 square miles and with 260 households. In 1999, the community set up BCT to tackle local issues and promote community development. In the six years since, BCT has taken on an increasing number of projects and now manages thousands of acres of land and

half a dozen important local buildings, as well as a diverse range of other activities from book publishing to training courses and letting business units.

“BCT has transformed community development locally and is now also a significant local business with an average expenditure during its first six years of £100K a year,” explains Robin. “It buys as much as possible of the goods and services it requires locally. This has amounted to over 75% of its expenditure each year with an average of over 40 suppliers a year, making part-time employment one of the many additional benefits that BCT is providing locally.”

While BCT has increased its own sales in each of its six years, it still derives much of its income from public funds. “BCT is hugely grateful for that support but believes that if the people responsible for those funds had to manage their grants at the community’s end, they would soon go home and re-design their schemes! Last year, BCT was involved in 44 separate grants or similar contracts with a morass of different approaches to matching funding requirements, the timing and conditions of payments and reporting and claim schedules and procedures.”

There are also wider issues with this funding. While communities can get thousands of pounds for a project from several public bodies, it seems



Birse Community Trust – a resource upon which public bodies can draw.
© W Bailey. ABIPP

impossible for communities to get even a few hundred pounds towards core costs from any public body, when that could give a substantial return in the public interest. Another example is that BCT can do the same task for two different public bodies, but in one case it makes out an invoice and in the other, it completes a claim form. “The public sector could learn that, while the amount of public funds involved is the same in each case, one produces greater benefits for community development and the public interest than the other.”

There is also a very mixed pattern in the types of relationships that BCT has been able to develop with public bodies. They span from positive partnership in which each partner gains significant benefits through to those where there is little relationship other than money despite working on the same

project ‘together’ for six years. In one case, BCT is fairly confident that it has more partnerships with a public body than that public body has with communities!

“There is a strong commitment from Ministers to supporting local communities and a remarkable growth in local community action across rural Scotland,” Robin reflects. “In between, there are many public sector players that could learn from the experience of the more successful community groups about the types of financial support and wider partnerships that work best in delivering both local and public benefits.”

Birse Community Trust,
The Old School, Finzean,
Banchory, AB31 6NY
Tel: 01330 850200
Fax: 01330 850750
Email:
BCToffice@birsecommunitytrust.org.uk

Taking community participation out of the box...



LAND managers and foresters have a new guide at their disposal to help them involve people in woodland planning.

A new online resource ‘Involving People In Forestry: A Toolbox for Public Involvement in Forestry and Woodland Planning’ has been designed to help Forestry Commission managers choose from a range of possible methods that can be used to include people in planning decisions.

The toolbox contains a range of downloadable toolsheets and other resources. Author Max Hislop of Forest Research, the Commission’s research agency, explains: “The toolbox has been created to help users make effective decisions and strategies for involving people in forestry. There’s no right way to get people involved,” he added. “Every forest and woodland is unique and capable of delivering

a range of benefits to people to greater or lesser extent.

“The goal should be to make decisions that will deliver the range of benefits needed by people, which are consistent with sustainable forest management. This guide will enable users to identify for themselves whom to involve, which tools to use, when to use the tools and what resources will be needed.

“The toolbox is intended to give people practical assistance and we really want to know how people find it – are there any problems, or do they have ideas on how to improve it.”

The Toolbox can be found at www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox. If you have any comments or ideas for improvements, contact **Max Hislop, Social Research Group, Forest Research, Northern Research Station, Roslin EH25 9SY. E: max.hislop@forestry.gsi.gov.uk**

FCS sparks change in former coal village

Lyndy Renwick
FORESTRY COMMISSION SCOTLAND

WITH 178 fire incidents in spring 2003, the forest plantations around Bellsbank in Ayrshire were a major headache for the local Forest District team, police and the fire brigade alike. But after years of little contact between Forestry Commission Scotland and the local community, a new partnership has been ignited.

Bellsbank is a former mining village on the East Ayrshire Coalfield. Unemployment here is running at almost three times the national average and it has some of the worst health statistics in the west of Scotland.

Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) Community Ranger Lyndy Renwick went to Bellsbank about three years ago in an initiative to reach out to ordinary people and, for the first time, find out what they wanted from their own local forest. “Since the forest was planted, virtually all contact with the community was negative, just dealing with regular fires,” explains Lyndy, who had the daunting challenge of breaking down the barriers that stood between FCS and the community, and hopefully reduce the frequency of fires too.

“The first thing I did was to involve East Ayrshire Council’s Community Development and Learning Unit, which already had well-established links with the community. They helped to ease the way. We ran lots of community meetings, met people on a one-to-one basis and had small informal meetings to try and find out what the community wanted.” Their initial response of ‘You know best’ wasn’t surprising after decades of being told what was going to happen without any participation. But with Lyndy’s reply of ‘No we don’t. We want to know what you want’ the barriers soon broke down.

The community’s list of aspirations soon grew, as did the need for money to fund them. As Lyndy explains, things needed to happen and happen fast if she was to keep the community’s goodwill: “The pace at which the

community wanted to move outstripped the speed at which FCS was used to operating. We had to get some quick fixes in to keep the community on board. One of the first ‘fixes’ was a pond. Local children desperately wanted a pond – they are absolutely fascinated by frogs and tadpoles.” Lyndy agreed that the Forest District should



The pond was top of the community’s wish list.



Leaving this shelter intact was an important step in working with the community.

excavate a pond to community’s specification, and it is now a major draw for the local community.

Another turning point in the relationship happened two years ago. FCS found a shelter or ‘how’ built by a group of friends in the woodland. It was complete with a stove and running water courtesy of water butts. The usual practice in land management would be to demolish such unauthorised and potentially hazardous structures and evict squatters, but Lyndy persuaded the Forest District Manager that to do that would mean losing all the hard won community support. “If we tore it down we we might as well have walked away from Bellsbank,” explains Lyndy. “Keeping it sent out a

good message: we’re changing our outlook and we want you to be involved.”

Later the community identified it needed to raise around £39.5K to fulfil their further aspirations for the woodland. An initial application to Fresh Future’s Transform Your Space Award Scheme was unsuccessful, but a Fresh Futures Project Manager visited the project and advised them on reapplying. The bid was successful and with one grant under their belt, others soon followed. In May this year, the community secured the final £10K to turn their dreams into a reality.

The Community is now building a treehouse overlooking

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REPORTS & COMMENT

The Participant

EDITORIAL

Why we all need to take a participant's perspective

Caspian Richards

SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY (SEPA)

WHILE we receive more and more invitations to 'participate' in decisions of all kinds, it is an unfortunate fact that many people's experiences of so-called participation leave them feeling disappointed, sometimes betrayed. New phrases like 'consultation fatigue' have been coined to describe the sense of frustration and disillusionment that can result, making it more difficult to persuade people to give up their time to become involved in future participatory processes.

Nevertheless, remarkable things have been achieved by those who have succeeded in genuinely involving other people in the kinds of decisions that would otherwise have taken place behind closed doors. A common factor in such successes is the ability of those initiating the process, and those who participate in it, to listen to the views of others. This sounds obvious, but is far more easily said than done, and often involves overcoming considerable institutional and psychological barriers.

Listening to and understanding other people's views also means making the effort to reflect self-critically on one's own behaviour, trying to see oneself through others' eyes. Doing so is essential if we are to tackle perhaps the greatest challenge of participatory approaches, namely to take into account the interests and perspectives of those who for whatever reason do not take part. The most sustainable participatory approaches will be those which stimulate us to think outside the box of our own personal and professional interests, and to consider the impacts of our decisions on all of those who will be affected, whether they are present in the room with us or not.

BREAKING NEWS

Around 60 people from around Scotland attended a Sharing Good Practice event, "Building Relationships with Communities" at Battleby on 7 June. The event was hosted by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and organised in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). Speakers provided The Participant with their insights on how to build better relationships with communities to help them close the opportunities gap.

www.snh.org.uk/sgp

FCS sparks change in former coal village *continued*

the pond. "We're finding more and more locals are going down to the pond and their attitude to the forest has changed." Involving the children has been an important part of the project. Where once they might have set fires, now they want to look after the woodland – their attitude is now "This is ours".

By firing the imagination of the local community Lyndy and her colleagues have brought about an immense change in the relationship between the Commission and the community.

But have FCS achieved their original hope of reducing woodland fires? Lyndy's answer is startling: "This year there haven't been any that caused damage and the community were responsible for preventing both the spread of the two incidents and the prevention of repeat events!"

Forestry Commission Scotland would like to thank its many partners including Mark Gibson, owner of Craigengillan Estate, South West Community Woodlands Trust, the Police and Fire Brigade and others who have worked to assist the Bellsbank Community.

Listening to the local community??



Slow down... go further

Nick Wilding

CENTRE FOR HUMAN ECOLOGY, EDINBURGH

'PARTICIPATION' could begin to sound a little dry. It could easily become the next thing to do on a check-list in a busy day in a rushed week. The pace of life continues to speed up, contributing to jobs that are often more about reacting to impossible deadlines when we could really do with slowing down and reflecting on what truly gives us life in our roles as local people, citizens, consumers and professionals.

Participation is about much more than a tick-box. It's about a radical challenge to a culture that isn't working – at local, regional, national and planetary scales. A culture that has valued profits over people and planet, and limitless consumption over sustainable relationships between people and places. The emerging participatory, ecological culture requires that we find the time for community and conviviality. Practically, that means getting together with our friends and colleagues who we can trust to learn together about both doing participation... and being participative. This needs some practice. And practice needs good, reflective time and a good, reflective space.

This is the message of this short piece, and I'll repeat it in three ways below!

Not change for change's sake...

Many people are working with organisations that have inherited ways of working designed decades ago to meet very different needs than those that are pressing today. Recently, there has been a lot of institutional 'modernisation' and restructuring. Agencies are told to ensure that 'participation' happens and lots of professionals have experienced a lot of turbulence and stress as a result. This isn't exactly conducive to creating a resilient and lively working culture, and shows that you can't change only the structures, but you have to pay attention to the feelings and values and community of people within them.

The best way to do this is to recognise that participation isn't just something that professionals do with others. Instead, we must also see our organisation as a community and practice on ourselves. In this way, we can step outside our 'comfort zone' and begin to be more confident in



Nick Wilding: "Participation is a culture where the experts are on tap, not on top".

taking risks and mastering the art of choosing the right participative tool for the job.

Participation is about listening, learning and letting go

As participation moves beyond rhetoric into action, it implies a shift of power. It's about power-holders letting go of control enough to allow community leaders and 'bottom-up' initiatives space to breathe. It's also about recognising the long history of marginalisation that many people have experienced – sometimes for generations – and being ready to engage with the psychological and cultural impact of this legacy. This is a long-term project that requires that we ask ourselves a lot of good questions on the way. The quality of the questions is more important than the answers!

Some questions I find helpful are connected with understanding participation as a journey of personal and community development. I believe this journey is about inquiring into our personal and collective history, of where we're at now, and of the future we would like to create together. I also ask about how do our values shape our understanding of 'participation'? How do we ensure we respect each other's interpretations? How do I make sure I'm not forcing someone into my understanding of what it means to participate?

For me, participation suggests 'trusting the process' of building relationships with other people, with places, with nature. I see this as helping to heal a broad tendency expressed by professionals and organisations to want to control local people, places and nature, often without being very conscious that this is what's

happening. Furthermore, I sense both tendencies – of letting go and wanting to control – in me. When I'm afraid, I tend to revert to want to control things. When I feel supported and confident, it's easier to let go into allowing what's trying to emerge from the 'grassroots' to do just that.

Ecology and a culture of participation

Finally, I have come to understand that participation and ecology are two sides of the same coin. Ecology is the science of relationship, and participation is about ensuring that people are not cut off anymore in an atomised and globalising world, but able to play our part in building the relationships that sustain healthy communities in a healthy environment. An ecological – or participatory – 'world-view' is one that sees a radical inter-connectedness between all things. Some may associate a particular spirituality with this insight; others may associate it with being in nature and learning her lessons. I like to see it as an opportunity to shape a better world and enjoy the journey!

This article has been about creating a participatory culture of learning by doing, where failures are understood as the best teachers. This is a culture of celebrating successes, of projects that emerge organically as participants slowly build the confidence to accomplish small things first, and then be surprised at how the seedlings flourish over months ... years ... decades. This is a culture where the expert is 'on tap, not on top'. Most of all, this is a culture of (as the Buddhists might say) 'beginner's mind' – that is to say, a culture of learning and inquiry where it's not the answers that matter but the quality and depth of the questions that we learn to ask of our own practice.

Why not invite some colleagues or friends to get together to learn more about participation together over, say, six months, meeting for a couple of hours every month? If you'd like a list of resources to follow up some of the ideas in this article, contact Nick Wilding at nick@energise.org.

Nick Wilding is a culture change consultant and action research facilitator. He is a Fellow of the Centre for Human Ecology, Edinburgh.

He can be reached at nick@energise.org

Is your **Community**  **Webnet**
Group working for a
better future?

www.communitywebnet.org.uk

the one-stop shop for sharing experience and finding information



Making the Links – working together to improve your local landscape with

Greenspace Scotland

At www.greenspacescotland.org.uk



Cameron Maxwell

Cameron Maxwell is Community Policy Advisor for Forestry Commission Scotland. His work involves developing the policy framework for how FCS works with communities through both the public and private sectors. Donald McPhillimy is a woodland consultant who specialises in community and native woodlands; he's a member of the Forests for People Advisory Panel, a facilitator for Woods Work and a Director of Reforesting Scotland.

Cameron: Forestry in Scotland has come a long way since the days when the timber product was all-important. How would you describe the different dimensions of forestry today?

NOWADAYS forestry is multi-purpose. It has to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits and, while in different forests the focus may be more on one benefit than another, none of these benefits should be to the detriment of others.

The days of commercial tree planting being the be all and end all came to an end a long time ago. We've been good at providing recreational opportunities, but sometimes these were accessible to only some members of society. The social dimension has increasingly come to the fore in the past 5 or 6 years and we've been working to take this forward.

Cameron: How has Forestry Commission Scotland responded to these shifts?

FORESTRY Commission Scotland is working to deliver the Scottish Executive's priorities

IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH *THE PARTICIPANT*, CAMERON MAXWELL AND DONALD McPHILLIMY TALKED TO FIONA PRICE ABOUT THE SEISMIC SHIFT IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORESTRY AND COMMUNITIES



Changing cultures ... inside and out

on land reform and social inclusion. One of the first things we did to respond to this shift was to set up the Forestry For People Advisory Panel to give advice on social and community issues. We've been working with them for 5 years now to shape policies and practice. There have been three important developments.

Together we commissioned a report from Mary Hobley to look at how FCS was dealing with communities and make recommendations on how to work with them in future. The panel and FCS set up the Woods Work Rural Development Pilot Project, which works with communities on the ground to establish small-scale economic opportunities and we're about to launch a major new scheme that will give communities the right to buy local forest land from the Commission if they can demonstrate that they deliver increased public benefits.

Donald: You're a facilitator for the Woods Work project. How was the project set up and what difference is it making on the ground?

THE project's based on the idea that modern forestry doesn't create many jobs. As a result, communities aren't very connected with the forests around them. Britain's unusual in that it doesn't have a well-developed forest culture. Most other countries – Scandinavia, France, America – have a much stronger forest culture than we do. We looked to them to see how we could get more jobs in the forests.

We asked community groups if they'd like to be involved, got 18 positive responses and narrowed it down to 3. We've

projects running in Argyll, Northern Sutherland and Galloway. We put in place two facilitators to help the communities develop the economic opportunities.

In northern Sutherland, a Community Trust has been able to employ local people in constructing a wooden building for their offices. In Argyll, the project is working with groups of small-scale wood workers to cooperate on marketing and promoting their work.

Cameron: What will be the benefits for the community and FCS working together and how would you like to see FCS doing this in the future?

THAT's a big question. The benefits of engaging with the community are twofold – a community that's more on board will add more to the development of the forests. And there's a feel good factor, when communities get involved in managing the land around them they care for it more. Getting communities involved lets us carry out our job much more easily. It also gives

communities a voice in what goes on around them.

The big challenge with community participation is to make people aware of it in the first place and to feel comfortable. We are making it more mainstream. Forest Research, our research arm, has developed the Community Toolbox (page 1), and we've run staff workshops on appraising participation, which help staff learn in real situations. It's all about giving them training, awareness and the tools they need.

Donald: How do you think things have progressed in the last few years?

THE social dimension of forestry is relatively new and we've been working with FCS to improve standards and raise the significance of social forestry. The whole agenda has moved forward remarkably in that time with direction from the Scottish Executive. Most members the Forests for People Advisory Panel are delighted with the way things have gone, but recognise that there's still a very long way to go.

Donald McPhillimy at the Scottish Wood Fair



Communities Minister launches new standards for participation

Sue Warner / Tracy Bibb
COMMUNITIES SCOTLAND

UNTIL now, engaging communities and public bodies in joint projects could be a rather ad hoc affair, but with the launch last month of the National Standards for Community Engagement all that is set to change.

"Engaging communities is nothing new, but often participants have become disenchanted as the practice hasn't lived up to the rhetoric," says Tracey Bibb, Regeneration Coordinator with Communities Scotland's Regeneration Division. "The new National Standards are based on common sense. They provide practical measures on how to involve local people to ensure that their wishes and

needs are being met. This is particularly critical in the regeneration of our most disadvantaged communities where local people often feel isolated or unable to get involved."

In launching the Standards, Malcolm Chisholm, Minister for Communities, stressed the Scottish Executive's commitment to giving people a greater say in how local services are planned and delivered. "Engaging with communities makes good sense. Communities harbour a huge range of talents, experience, knowledge and commitment and know what their needs are locally."

The Standards (see box on

page 4) are measurable performance statements that can be used by everyone involved in community engagement. "They're not a magic wand," continues Tracey. "Effective community engagement doesn't happen over night – it takes a good deal of commitment and skill from everyone involved to make it a reality. But the Standards are a useful tool that set out good practice and will help make a difference. We are delighted that they have been endorsed by such a wide range of public and voluntary sector bodies."

Developing the Standards was, in itself, an example of good practice in community

engagement. They are based on principles that highlight the importance of equality and recognise the diversity of people and communities. The Scottish Community Development Centre developed the standards on behalf of Communities Scotland. Stuart Hashagen explains their approach. "First we engaged more than 500 people from communities and agencies throughout Scotland in focus groups and working groups to identify the issues and draft the standards. Then we worked with six pilot projects to test them and work out how to build them into practice.

"We learnt a lot from the

A Rough Guide to Social Entrepreneurs... and how to set fire to them

WHAT ARE THEY, WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE ONE AND WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO SET FIRE TO ONE? JAY LAMB PROVIDES THE ANSWERS.

ALL wood has the potential to create heat through fire and so, I believe, do all people have the potential to create change. When they do they might well be called social entrepreneurs. My work at Scotland Unltd involves supporting emerging social entrepreneurs and I often feel like I'm tending fires. The right intervention at the right time can be spectacularly effective, just as the wrong intervention at the wrong time can be spectacularly ineffective!

Social Entrepreneurs have been around for years, but it's only recently that they've acquired the label. They're individuals who believe passionately in something that will benefit the community, who get their hands dirty doing it and who have the dogged determination to see it through.

I was recognized as one of these about 3 years ago and told "when you decide what you want to do next, let me know and I'll help you out". A fantastic offer of support given that at the time I was stood up a ladder with a paintbrush in my hand and a community education degree in my pocket – as yet unused. The offer of help had come from Lawrence Demarco of Senscot and, as it happened, I was painting the office that would become Scotland Unltd's, where I'm sitting now.

This offer of help resulted in a subtle change in my outlook, I started looking for new opportunities, I was primed. A few months later, I sold Lawrence the idea of Re-Union – a canal barge that could be used as a venue for community meetings and educa-

tion. He offered me the use of a desk in Senscot's office and introduced me to Scotland Unltd. I now had office space and, as an awardee, money to find out if this idea could go anywhere.

What followed was two years of learning and development, gradually gathering the people around that it takes to set up and run a project. During that time, Re-Union received most of its support from Scotland Unltd. This has included money, training, mentoring and advice. It was at its most effective when it was on our terms. I've come to believe that the empathetic understanding of an individual situation is key to effective support. The same goes for fires!

Anatole France once said: "Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire." This sense of carefully targeted supportive action that Anatole France relates to education reflects the essence of effective support for social entrepreneurs.

Looking at the situation as I do now, from the other side of the fence, as it were, I know how frustrating it is to be able to see what an awardee needs to do and be unable to persuade them of the importance of it. However, I also know what a profound waste of time it is to try to instigate action in an awardee that they don't deem important – it's like dropping a spark on a tree trunk and expecting it to catch fire.

Canal barge – Re-Union paint gang



pilots. It's important to get everyone involved in the process to agree to the use of the standards and to nominate someone to lead on their use. It's also important to reflect on why partners are engaged and the experience they bring with them."

The National Standards for Community Engagement represent something totally unique to Scotland within the United Kingdom. "There's nothing like

them in the UK," explains Tracey. "We've had lots of interest in them from the rest of Britain and even from as far away as Australia!"

For further information contact the Communities Engagement Team at Communities Scotland

Tel: 0131 313 0044

www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk

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REPORTS & RESOURCES

Oiling the wheels of regeneration

Anna Stansfield
COMMUNITIES SCOTLAND

SOCIAL Justice – it’s a small phrase for a mammoth task and tackling it takes energy, commitment, skills, money and support. The Scottish Centre for Regeneration was set up in 2003 to provide some of the support needed to take on this challenge. “We’re here to help people involved in social regeneration to share their knowledge and to improve and develop their skills,” explains Anna Stansfield, the Centre’s Network Support Co-ordinator. “The Centre is a hub for regeneration practice. We want everyone involved in community regeneration to be able to link into our work.”

The Scottish Centre for Regeneration supports people and groups involved in community regeneration to improve their effectiveness by identifying what works and what doesn’t work and supporting them to put this into practice. It focuses on helping people and organisations to improve approaches to delivering and accessing local services in deprived communities, reducing health inequalities, increasing access to jobs, increasing the quality of the local environment, and improving education in deprived areas.

“We’re providing practical help for people involved in regeneration,” continues Anna. “We’re encouraging best practice by providing case studies on our web site and by sponsoring the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum awards. Our ‘How To’ guides help practitioners become more effective, while our Learning Points share lessons learned from regeneration programmes, research and evaluation.

In addition to a range of support materials, the web site and its regular E-bulletin, the Scottish Regeneration Centre is supporting innovation in regeneration through its New Ideas Fund. The Fund provides grants of between £100 and £5,000 to community and voluntary groups within disadvantaged areas or working with disadvantaged groups to assess the feasibility of new ideas and to develop and build support for new and innovative approaches to regeneration.

You can find out more by visiting their website www.scr.communitiesscotland.gov.uk By emailing them at scr@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk Telephone: 0141 419 1690

Write to: Scottish Centre for Regeneration, Communities Scotland, Festival Business Centre, 150 Brand Street, Glasgow G51 1DH.

Sharing Good Practice -
The Participant:
SNH, FCS and SEPA

Editor:
Fiona Price
Copywriter and
Interpretation Consultant
01786 871101

Designed by
Objectives (Blairgowrie)
01250 870555

Printed in Scotland
on environmentally
friendly paper


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Have your say about community involvement
.... We invite your comments.
Email:
Lorna.Brown@snh.org.uk

Communities Minister launches new standards for participation continued

10 Standards for
Community Engagement

- 1. Involvement:**
We will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement
- 2. Support:**
We will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement
- 3. Planning:**
We will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken
- 4. Methods:**
We will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose
- 5. Working together:**
We will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently
- 6. Sharing information:**
We will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants


- 7. Working with others:**
We will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement
- 8. Improvement:**
We will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants
- 9. Feedback:**
We will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected
- 10. Monitoring and evaluation:**
We will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement

Net benefits for
for communities

Eilidh Johnson
FORWARD SCOTLAND

COMMUNITY Webnet is a one-stop website for Scottish community groups carrying out projects which improve the local quality of life. The site contains resources and a database of over 350 project examples to help community groups to carry out projects, learn from the experience of others and share their own experiences. There are also discussion forums and expert surgeries to help groups who would like advice or support. Forward Scotland, a national charity which promotes sustainable development, piloted Community Webnet in 2003, and it has now been redeveloped in partnership with BTCV Scotland, Greenspace Scotland, SNH, SEPA, the Scottish Executive and the Sustainable Scotland Network.

David Zabiega, the Forward Scotland staff member who manages the Community Webnet, said that: “Since the new Community Webnet was launched in March 2005, over 100 members have registered to receive newsletters and contact information for other community groups, and many have submitted information about their projects. In the coming months, we will be developing the discussion forums on the site, and running expert surgeries on issues of interest to community groups. Joining the site is free, and we would love to hear your views on how we can make the Community Webnet as useful as possible.”

The Community Webnet can be viewed online at www.communitywebnet.org.uk contact David Zabiega on 0141 222 5607, or email webnet@forward-scotland.org.uk.

CLASSIFIED

A selection of “links” to reach many other useful sites.

Community Futures
is inspiring, encouraging,
supporting and enabling
vibrant communities in
Loch Lomond and the
Trossachs National Park

www.communityfuturespartnership.org.uk

www.partnerships.org.uk

For online information
on building partnership

Make the link with
community planning and
regeneration
www.communityplanning.org.uk

CADISPA

Empowering sparsely-populated
communities

Find out more at:

www.strath.ac.uk/departments/CADISPA

Communities Scotland

Working for housing and regeneration

www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk

The Scottish Community Development
Centre – the National Centre for Community
Development in Scotland

www.scdc.org.uk

Modernising government for
young people throughout
Scotland

Find out what’s happening in your area

www.dialogueyouth.org