

# EMPOWERING young people



Making a difference together.

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## INTRODUCTION

Children & young people have the right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. This is enshrined in much legislation placing a positive obligation on all services & communities, to identify ways to involve children & young people in decision making.

Young people have their own needs, views and aspirations. They represent an important part of every community, yet quite often their voice can go unheard.

Champions are needed in every community to help engage & support the young people in getting their voice heard and to ensure that their views and ideas influence change in the local area. The participation of children & young people is key to a successful and thriving community.

We hope to increase the active involvement of young people in communities by highlighting in this publication the benefits and excellent practice that is already taking place in communities across West Berkshire.

**Sarah Ward (CCB)**  
**Community Council for Berkshire**

**Tanya Honor (BACYP)**  
**Berkshire Association of  
Clubs for Young People**

# WHY IS YOUTH PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

CCB and BACYP felt it was very important to ask young people why they thought they should get involved in local initiatives, what they would get out of it and how the communities might benefit. A focus group of young people were invited to attend a workshop and share ideas and this is what they said:

## WHAT WILL YOUNG PEOPLE GET OUT OF BEING INVOLVED?

- A sense of responsibility and empowerment
- A voice and chance to influence decisions
- New friendships and being part of a team
- Trust and respect from adults
- The ability to learn from and give to others in the community
- Increased confidence and self belief
- The ability to highlight local issues and develop positive solutions to problems
- To learn more about active citizenship and the democratic process

## WHAT WILL THE COMMUNITY GET FROM INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE?

- Greater involvement and ownership of projects by young people
- A true picture of the key local issues for young people
- Better understanding and respect between generations
- New ideas, enthusiasm and energy
- The opportunity to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime through positive action.



# 10 EASY STEPS TO INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE



## STEP 1 Identify a young person's champion

Before setting out to consult or involve children and young people, it is important to identify a community champion for them. This might be a Town or Parish Councillor, teacher, youth worker, community police officer, community development worker, community planner, neighbourhood warden or someone who will be an advocate for their rights and well being.

## STEP 2 Start building relationships with adults

With the help of the champion, establish relationships with key members of the community to raise awareness of the importance of youth participation. Make sure you know how and why you want to involve young people to ensure that you make it meaningful, safe and effective. Arrange to meet with those interested adults to ensure they understand what youth participation is, how they will be involved, what the process is and whether they are willing & able to support the young people with any resulting projects. Do they have the time, resources, finances and commitment that young people will need?

Where adults are involved with young people over a long period of time, consideration should be given to CRB checks. For information and guidance on CRB visit [www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/](http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/)

## STEP 3 Meet young people

Hold an initial meeting with young people in schools and local youth clubs to promote how they can get involved, explain the process and agree the part they could play. Use the opportunity to choose the best time, venue and days to hold the consultation event. Hand out a leaflet they can share with parents or carers about the event that describes how and why their children could be involved.



## STEP 4 Confirm event details

Let the young people know that their ideas have been listened to and that a venue and a convenient day and time have been chosen. Give them a letter or leaflet to take away containing all the details. Hand out registration forms, noting personal and doctors contact details and any health problems in case of emergencies. These should be signed by parents and handed back at the event.

## STEP 5 The event

This should be a fun event. Make sure that you have considered transport, refreshments and timing. If the event is too short, you may not fit everything in. Too long, and people may get bored.

Use creative methods such as drama, film, photography and arts & crafts to capture their ideas. Then ask the young people to present their views to the group and discuss the results and priorities. Ask the young people to start designing a questionnaire.



## STEP 6 Questionnaire designed by young people

The questionnaire should be sent out to all young people in the area with a deadline date and a return address. Facebook and other social media websites can be used to promote the survey and to collect questionnaire responses. The champion should be on hand to lend support with questions and the collation of the results.

## STEP 7 Feedback

The champion should meet with the wider community to feedback the results of the survey. This is a way in which adults can start to understand the young people's priorities and how they may be able to help them.

## STEP 8 A joint event

Arrange a joint event where the young people should feed back the results of survey. Discussions should then follow during which possible solutions to the priorities can be developed. Agree a couple of projects that everyone can work on together.



## STEP 9 Start working in projects

Ensure everyone is kept informed and updated on progress. Keep to timescales and promises wherever possible.

## STEP 10 Celebrate the project!

By working together, you will have achieved some great projects. Celebrate them! Publicise your success in Parish magazines, in the local press and at events.

# IDEAS FOR CONSULTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people will get involved if they feel passionately about an issue. Here are some interesting ways to consult. Let young people choose which methods they would like to use.

## EVENTS

BACYP can support communities to run Speak Out events. They provide an opportunity for young people to work alongside adults to develop solutions to issues. For more information contact BACYP 0118 9231259.

## WALKABOUTS

Around the community encourage young people to talk about what they see, smell, touch, taste and hear on the walk. For example comments on traffic, litter, noise and local amenities could be noted.

## GENERATE A STIR

Involve young people in an activity that gets their issue seen by the wider community.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Ask young people to take photos of the good and bad aspects of where they live. Mount and use at community consultation to generate discussion.

## PETITION

Organise and present to Town or Parish Council.

## USE FACEBOOK

To gather ideas.

## TEXT MESSAGING

Create a mobile phone number for young people to text in their views.

## QUESTIONNAIRES

Designed by young people for young people.

## USE CREATIVE MEDIUMS SUCH AS:

- A GRAFFITI BOARD
- A WISH TREE
- A BRICK WALL OF IDEAS
- A MODEL OF THE COMMUNITY
- A VIDEO
- SOME SOUND BITES
- A SHORT PLAY OR SKETCH
- A PIECE OF MUSIC
- A SINGING WORKSHOP
- SOME WRITING OR POETRY TO CAPTURE THOUGHTS
- AN ART/COLLAGES PROJECT



# BUILDING A MODEL OF YOUR COMMUNITY

This activity is very visual, great fun and really gets people talking about things that matter to them. The model can be made by adults or children and young people, through schools or community workshops. You may have a community that has expanded in size or wants to find out where people feel unsafe or perhaps where a new playpark should be built. Model building is ideal for this.

- In conjunction with the local school recruit some parents to help and build a model of the village with Years 4, 5 and 6
- Materials needed: 2 sheets of polystyrene, lining paper, gaffer tape, Ordnance Survey map of the community, paint, card, felt-tips, glue, aprons and newspaper
- Draw the outline of roads before the workshop
- Work with groups of no more than 12 children. Split them into two groups which can swop over half way through the workshop

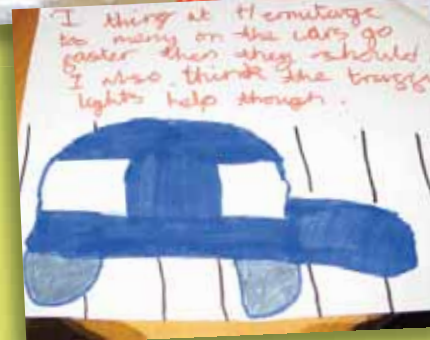


## GROUP 1

- Discuss and identify key features of the community e.g. shop, village hall, school, post boxes, church etc.
- Paint the map, leave it to dry.
- Make houses, letterboxes and other features using card, glue and felt-tip pens.

## GROUP 2

- Discuss likes and dislikes about their community. Capture the results in drawings and writing to put up in a display.
- All the key issues should be noted on flags which can be stuck into the map
- The model can then be used at a community event and the young people should be supported in feeding back their ideas.



# ALDWORTH VIEWFINDER PROJECT

“We’ve got a ball but nowhere to score – we’ll have to use those cricket things again”

In 2009 a group of young people decided to raise the funds and make a film about their village. A community plan was being developed in Aldworth and Mandy Clarke who was leading the project thought it would be a great idea to use the film as the youth consultation.

It was decided to set up the Viewfinder Team and Mandy agreed to support the young people alongside Real Time a community media company [www.real-time.org.uk](http://www.real-time.org.uk)

The project costs of £2,500 were quickly identified and the young people successfully applied for grants. The Viewfinder Team scoped out their story line and started a series of film shoots at the village market, summer fete and in the historic St Mary’s Church. The older residents really enjoyed being interviewed and new friendships were formed between the different age groups. The key issues identified centred on a lack of village and sports facilities, poor transport links, terrible mobile phone reception and the danger of speeding traffic.

The film was finally shown on the 26th February 2010. The village hall was transformed into a cinema and pop corn and drinks were served. The showing was a great success and the young people were praised for all their hard work. The key organisations attending such as the Parish Council, Village Hall Management Group and a number of outside agencies all offered their help.

Those involved learnt that they can make changes and can improve their village but that it does take time. Everyone said they had fun, had made friends and had developed a number of new skills through the project.



***“I am thrilled with the results, it was really fun and it was fascinating to learn about the village, it turned out really well and was a great experience. It has given me some new life skills, it was spot on”*** Rory.

The young people have since applied for and been awarded a grant through the Empowering Young Citizens Programme to buy goal posts for the recreation field.

**To watch the film log onto:**  
[www.actionforall.org.uk/engagingyoungpeople/Films](http://www.actionforall.org.uk/engagingyoungpeople/Films)

**For further information about this project contact:**  
Mandy Clark, Project Leader  
[mandymonkcom@hotmail.com](mailto:mandymonkcom@hotmail.com)

# HUNGERFORD S.O.S. SAVE OUR SKATEPARK PROJECT

For further details about this project contact:  
Sue Edgar, Area Youth Worker  
West Berkshire Youth Team  
sedgar@westberks.gov.uk



The S.O.S. project came about when Hungerford Town Council could not afford to replace the Bulpit Lane skatepark. It had been closed as its structure was rotting and dangerous and had been frequently vandalised and needed constant repairs costing the council money. Young people aged 12 – 18 were supported by the West Berkshire Council youth service to set up the S.O.S. committee and they decided to ask the Town Council if they could raise funds for a new skatepark and design it themselves. The Town Council agreed to this and pledged to maintain the area if the young people took responsibility for reporting damage.

The S.O.S committee met with skatepark designers and chose a design that all users were happy with. Apart from a youth worker on hand to help them record decisions, they ran their own meetings. They raised the fantastic amount of £60K that was needed so there was no cost to the Town Council.

The relationship that built up between the young people and councillors was very positive. The S.O.S. team has since raised further funds for a youth shelter in the park.

The young people got involved on site and learnt a lot about project management. They raised all the funds they needed and learnt about budgeting and how to access funding. They took into account the ongoing maintenance costs by choosing a structure that was made of metal, with a 25 year guarantee so that the Town Council would not incur ongoing costs.

The S.O.S. committee members have achieved Duke of Edinburgh Award and Berkshire Award certificates for their contribution to the community. The different age groups have learnt to listen to each other and to appreciate each other's needs and differences.

Working together brought harmony to the skatepark where once there was not. They learnt that you can get what you want if you put together a reasonable argument for your cause and if you are prepared to go to Council meetings and talk to the members about your ideas. It was not a comfortable thing for these young people to do but those that spoke at Council meetings were made welcome, put first on the agenda, and the boost to their self esteem that a positive outcome brought, was so valuable.



# BRADFIELD YOUTH AWARD PROJECT

In 2009 Kimiko Dearing joined Bradfield Parish Council. She agreed to take a lead in representing the young people of the parish. One of her first tasks was to make sure that there was a regular youth item on each Parish Council agenda and over time this encouraged a more positive attitude to the young people in the village. A youth shelter was installed and insured by the Parish Council and they agreed to contribute towards the lighting costs of a hard standing play area.

The committee, with the Parish Council's support, has established a youth award, for those young people who have positively helped within the community. The 2010 winners were individually rewarded for their help snow clearing for the elderly and for running sports sessions during the school holidays.

The youth committee has been awarded a grant from the Empowering Young Citizens Programme to purchase cameras, which can be used to film their activities throughout the year. The film and photos will be placed on the Bradfield website and shown at the Parish Council AGM in an effort to increase the young people's skills and show some of the positive activities of the group.

***“People often moan about young people and I felt that I was someone who could stand up for them in a positive light. My role has helped increase the involvement of young people in local matters and at the last Annual Parish Assembly there were many more young people attending than in previous years.”*** Kimiko

With the help of her Dad, Martin Parsons and other enthusiastic volunteers a youth committee was set up with the expert help of the Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People (BACYP). The committee has supported the resurrection of the village football team and has paid for it to be registered in the local league. It also supports regular activities for young people in the village.



For further information  
about the Bradfield Youth  
Award please email  
Dr. Martin Parsons  
[m.l.parsons@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.l.parsons@reading.ac.uk)

# GREENHAM'S CHAMPION

Greenham is a semi-rural area on the outskirts of Newbury. It developed a Parish Plan in 2010 and even though a thorough youth consultation was carried out the Parish Council felt that there was more to learn. It therefore was keen to develop a youth forum for the area and was delighted to welcome 16 year old Scott Milligan and his youth worker Jenny McIntyre to one of their meetings.



Scott who has lived in Greenham all his life, had begun to feel that he would like to do something with his friends that would make a real difference to his local community. The Parish Council was very encouraging and asked Scott to help them think about the future development of an open space called The Diamond which houses a portacabin where community groups meet.

Scott was supported in making a successful application for a grant from the Empowering Young Citizens Programme. This was used to buy a laptop for both the Diamond Youth Club and the Family 2 young parents group that meets in the portacabin. During this time Scott's self-esteem grew and he felt a valued part of the community.

Greenham Parish Council hopes to support the establishment of the youth forum alongside its younger residents in the coming year with Scott's help.

For further details about this project contact: Jenny McIntyre, Youth Worker  
Community Youth Project  
[jenny@communityyouth.org](mailto:jenny@communityyouth.org)



# HAMPSTEAD NORREYS PLAYPARK A WINNER

Hampstead Norreys is a small West Berkshire village. It has a population of 830 people of which 32% are under 25 years of age. In 2007 the community developed their Parish Plan and one of its key actions was to increase the number of interesting activities and outdoor pursuits for young people.

The Parish Council therefore decided to apply for funding for a new playpark in Dean Meadow and they agreed to involve young people in its design. They held two consultation events, one at the village primary school for those aged 8 and over and the other at the Downs School in neighbouring Compton for children aged 11 to 15. The schools were very keen to be involved and made all the arrangements for the Parish Council to meet the young people.

In session 1 the children gave their ideas for the sorts of playpark equipment that they might like to have. They were encouraged to think widely and imaginatively through discussion. In addition they were also shown other designs, which they had not thought of.

Their responses were analysed by the Parish Council and a set of recommendations was put forward to West Berkshire Council's Playbuilders Grant Programme.

Based on these results and the agreement of the Playbuilder Grant Steering Group, the community then identified categories of equipment for further consideration.

In session 2 the young people made their final selection voting for their top playpark design.

The playpark was built with £50,000 awarded through the Playbuilder Fund and a further £4,000 from the Parish Council and it opened in February 2011. This now provides a safe place for young people to meet and play and young people can truly feel that they played a part in developing it.



## The success of the project reflected:

- The importance of building positive relationships with local schools to gain their support
- The ability of the Parish Council to listen to young people and not make assumptions about what they want
- The need to incorporate all the information into the successful bid

For further details about this project contact:  
The Clerk Hampstead Norreys Parish Council  
[clerk@hampsteadnorreys.org.uk](mailto:clerk@hampsteadnorreys.org.uk)

# USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOR BERKSHIRE

[www.ccberks.org.uk](http://www.ccberks.org.uk)

CCB is an independent, not for profit development agency, helping to build strong communities. Working in partnership with government, local authorities, private and voluntary sectors, CCB delivers a wide range of projects that have a positive and long-lasting impact on communities in Berkshire and beyond. CCB is a member of Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and the South East Rural Community Councils (SERCC).

## BERKSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF CLUBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (BACYP)

[www.bacyp.co.uk](http://www.bacyp.co.uk)

BACYP works within local areas providing support to volunteers and communities to develop the network of clubs and projects, enabling the development of a range of quality clubs/projects, activities and opportunities for young people in their leisure time within their communities. BACYP also helps communities set up youth consultation projects. They also support the West Berkshire Children and Young Peoples Trust in embedding participation and developing resources for the trust and its partners to use. For more information contact BACYP on 0118 9231259

## OTHER LINKS

Youth Councils

[www.horshamyouthcouncil.org.uk](http://www.horshamyouthcouncil.org.uk)

[www.aldbourneyouthcouncil.co.uk](http://www.aldbourneyouthcouncil.co.uk)

Good examples of youth councils and their work.

[www.participationworks.org.uk](http://www.participationworks.org.uk)

Participation Works is a partnership of six national children and young people's agencies that enables organisations to effectively involve children and young people in the development, delivery and evaluation of services that affect their lives.

[www.ukyouth.org](http://www.ukyouth.org)

UK Youth is a leading national youth work charity supporting over 750,000 young people, helping them to raise their aspirations, realise their potential and have their achievements recognised via non-formal, accredited education programmes and activities.

[www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk)

The National Youth Agency aims to advance youth work to promote young people's personal and social development, and their voice, influence and place in society.

[www.serep.org.uk](http://www.serep.org.uk)

The South East Regional Empowerment Partnership (SEREP) is the south east arm of the National Empowerment Partnership supported by Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) through the Community Development Foundation. SEREP brings together a range of statutory agencies, voluntary and community organisations, networks and people who are running community empowerment activities.

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- The Bradfield Youth Group, Kimiko Dearing and Martin Parsons
- Greenham Youth Project, Scott Milligan and Jenny McIntyre
- Greenham Parish Council, Shirley Huxtable and Tony Forward
- George Greenham Hampstead Norreys Parish Plan and Caroline Herman Hampstead Norreys Parish Council
- Jenni Nash Sovereign South West Neighbourhood Warden and Simon Jackson Youth Leader
- Debbi Young from Snap Marketing Ltd.

To download this booklet and to find further resources log onto:

**[www.actionforall.org.uk/engagingyoungpeople/home](http://www.actionforall.org.uk/engagingyoungpeople/home)**

This booklet has been compiled by The Community Council for Berkshire (CCB) and The Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People (BACYP) with funding from The South East Regional Empowerment Partnership (SEREP) which is the South East arm of the National Empowerment Partnership, supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) through the Community Development Foundation (CDF). The SEREP brings together a range of statutory agencies, voluntary and community organisations, networks and people who are running community empowerment activities.  
**[www.serep.org.uk](http://www.serep.org.uk)**

