

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT CASE STUDIES



### Case Study – Dulwich Community Council Event

#### Climate Change themed event at the Dulwich Festival - May 2011

#### Background

The feedback from residents included making the Community Council business more accessible.

So in response it was decided to hold an Event in May as part of the Dulwich Festival. The Festival is a yearly event in Dulwich Park which brings together the community in a variety of family activities, entertainment and engagement to tackle local challenges. This year the theme was climate change.

We worked with Dulwich Going Greener and Dulwich Festival organising committee to arrange the event as an integral part of the Festivals last day on Sunday 15 May. A marquee for the DCC event was themed around the environment. We provided a speaker who was a local green campaigner to talk about what more residents and the council could do. He shared what local businesses are doing and good practice in joint working to make Dulwich greener.

#### The Event

In the marquee Members and participants held workshops to flipchart and record ideas on making Dulwich greener and what the council do more.

We had a question and answer session where the youth cc and other residents asked direct questions and suggestions to the Cllrs such as the possibility of allotments in certain areas.

Activities we linked with included;

- Air pollution measuring after the Village Road was closed to cars comparing the days reading to a normal day with traffic ( Linked to the Southwark Clean Air strategy)
- Family activities that encourage carbon footprint reduction: Buggy race, fair, young artists, fun fair with entertainment including wildlife Falconry displays
- Community activities and groups exhibitions from local community groups and green initiatives

A range of different stakeholders participated including the African Education network, Norwood Road/Herne Hill Traders Association, Sydenham Hill TRA, East Dulwich Every Child matters, Dulwich Islamic Centre. The day was a success; it was the first time we did this so lessons were learnt.

Feedback from the residents was overwhelmingly positive. The fair was attended by hundreds of people, the Marquee event itself was attended 42 people. Feedback was very positive with 90% of participants saying that the event had fulfilled its objectives, 97% stating that they had gained something and 84% saying that they would attend another event.

We filmed the event and the video is available to be uploaded into the LBS In my area web pages

**Outcomes**

Various interest and residents groups came together to share their passion to making their area more environmentally sustainable and greener. Facilitation of meetings between the various groups resulted in joint work between the participants; i.e. 3 members of the Dulwich Youth CC will volunteer with the Dulwich Festival next year.

Dulwich Youth Community Council held Q & A session with the Callers, posing several questions and putting forward their ideas on possible resolutions. There were demonstrations on what people could do with waste, how they could recycle more, Air quality measuring, etc... The reading taken on the day will be compared with a normal day and fed back to the DCC meeting in the autumn

Dulwich now has a list of environmental concerns such as the need for Cycle Hire facilities; more supervised activities in Dulwich Park; a play area on Sydenham Hill Street; more recycling information and signposting; making progress to the Dulwich Cycling and walking network; promoting car clubs and increasing access to the Dulwich Park Community Garden rather than looking for new allotment space.



## Case Study: Walworth Community Council Housing Themed Meetings

Wednesday 10 November 2010 - Walworth Housing, have your say  
Monday 24 January 2011 - Your service, Your Choice

### Background

The quality of housing repairs service in has been subject of continual concern for residents and councillors in the area where almost 60% of the stock is Council housing. Housing repairs are both internal and communal repairs around trades including plumbing, carpentry, electrical, roofing, drainage, plastering and void properties.

In the autumn of 2008 the repairs control centre won the prestigious UK Housing Award. Southwark's the key performance indicators (KPIs) on housing repairs showed very strong performance across a range of areas. At the same time anecdotal evidence from councillors' casework suggested serious problems with the quality of the housing repairs service. This disparity raised a number of questions and became the subject of Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-committee review in the summer of 2010.

### The meetings

Walworth ward councillors held **two** community council themed **meetings** primarily focusing on housing repairs. More than 65 residents attended each meeting, voicing their concerns about the housing call centre and the quality of repairs undertaken, issues around appointments not being kept and the repair service generally. Walworth residents asked numerous questions of Cllr Gavin Edwards, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee and Cllr Ian Wingfield cabinet member for Housing and officers. Residents participated in an **interactive electronic voting** exercise on a range of questions relating to the KPIs for housing repairs.

The chair of scrutiny sub-committee Cllr Gavin Edwards attended both Walworth community council housing themed meetings, in the first instance to present the scope and nature of the housing review being undertaken. Cllr Edwards second visit involved thanking residents for their contributions as they provided very useful background information, which **informed the subsequent work of the sub-committee**. Most usefully of all was the results from the electronic voting exercise, which were included the Review of Key Performance Indicators in the Housing Repairs Services report.

### The outcomes

Primarily the main aim of the meeting was to raise awareness how to effectively use the Councils' housing repairs service and to encourage residents to take part in the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-committee review this resulted in the following outcomes:

- **Raising awareness** - residents welcomed the opportunity to hear more about the role of the scrutiny sub-committee and how they could influence decision-making via the review process
- **Influencing decision-making** - this was the first time that Walworth community council held an interactive voting session and produced additional comment sheet. More than 60 residents took part in the voting and the results informed the future work the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-committee.

Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-committee will review the recommendation in 2011 and feedback to the Community Council.

- **Access to Members and officers** - residents welcomed the opportunity to share their experience with ward councillors, Cllr Garvin Edwards, Cllr Ian Wingfield and officers the Housing Repairs and Call Centre team.
- **Information sharing** - there were a number of stalls, which provided information on a range of housing issues.
- **TRA representatives** – there has been a sustained increase in the number of TRA representative attending cc meetings. Feedback has been positive. Representatives find the meetings informative.



## Case Study – Peckham Community Council

### Health and Well-Being theme 2010 – 11



Peckham

## Background

During the last year Peckham Community Council has focused on health and well-being due to the fact that the Peckham physical activity needs assessment had outlined that **the area has low levels of physical activity and a high prevalence of associated diseases** including high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Peckham also has high rates of childhood obesity.

## The Meeting

The agenda kicked off in the September with a **healthy walk** from Wickway community centre to the meeting venue, led by a local walk leader. The findings and recommendations from the study were presented at the meeting demonstrating a need for measures to encourage and support local people to take up more low cost exercise such as walking, swimming, gym, dance and cycling. In the ensuing discussion residents and Councillors provided various suggestions as to how local people can be helped to increase their engagement in physical activity.

In view of the recommendations from the report the next meeting focused on cycling in order to promote more physical activity. Participants brought their rusty bikes for an **MOT by a local bike shop**. The sustainable transport team gave a presentation about the Barclays Cycle Hire scheme and cycling in London. Southwark Living Streets also gave a talk aimed at generating ideas about how to improve cycling and walking conditions in the area with a view towards informing the Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan.

The December meeting concentrated on the nutritional aspects of health, starting with a **healthy cooking demonstration** giving out recipes for cheap healthy meals for the festivities. The meeting also hosted a **health fair** where attendees got a blood pressure check from a local surgery and health related information stalls provided by statutory and community agencies. Presentations were given about the childhood obesity problem in the area highlighting the need for increased access to green spaces, more active travel, healthier school food and closer work with families. The community nutritionist also gave a presentation with information about their school programme and the importance of a healthy, balanced diet.

## The Outcomes

Having a breast screening initiative presentation at the meeting resulted not only in local people getting detailed information about the process but also in Better Days Cancer Care linking up with several local organisations including a church and an HIV awareness group which would then enable them to conduct more grass roots awareness sessions. A *“Breast cancer in the black community”* themed stall was furthermore held at Kings College Hospital as part of Women’s Day in March 2011 thereby reaching even more women.

By putting the physical activity issue high on the agenda the community council acted as one of the catalysts for **further local related work**. The public health and leisure teams report that **uptake for physical activity** in the SE15 area for that quarter was the highest in the borough due to the increased focus on the theme, which effort the community council was an important part of. Another result of this multi-faceted campaign to increase physical activity in the area was that local residents also came forward to be **trained as walk leaders**, something which was lacking before.

The cycling theme also invited interest from a local TRA who wanted to encourage cycling uptake on their estate. The Sustainable transport team worked with the estate and a cycle ride was arranged for Sunday 29 May 2011. People met at the Local Barclays Cycle Hire docking point on at the Bricklayers Arms. Southwark Council's transport department arranged for a ride leader, 2 cycle training instructors, availability of hire bikes and a route using quiet local roads in the area. 8 residents were able to try out the hire bikes, 2 participants had never learnt to cycle so it was decided that a park environment might be better suited for these first steps. In the end 5 people went on a ride which included the Community Council Chair. Issues brought up during the Community council discussions about the school based nutritional work were also used to encourage an up skilling of school nurses to engage better with parents via schools and to have conversations about weight.

Following on from the ride, the Sumner residents started working with a cycle trainer and were looking to apply for the London Cycle Campaign community fund but thought it best to wait until the estate had appropriate cycle storage provision and improved cycling proficiency of the residents. At the moment **20 residents**, mainly, but not all, women, **will be taking cycling lessons, with half of them being absolute beginners**. Links have also been made with the London Cycling Campaign for them to take part in the Age well cycling project. The Livesey Safer Neighbourhoods team will be providing the projects with unclaimed bikes. Work will also be done with the Friends of Burgess Park projects around increasing walking down the Surrey Canal and working with some of the trained walk leaders to conduct walks.



### Case Study - Bermondsey Community Council

#### Employment and Training Fair themed meeting – September 2010



## Background

In 2007, Southwark was the second most deprived borough in London for employment deprivation. The employment rate is 66.6%, behind London (69.8%) and Great Britain (74.4%) and 4.7% of working age population in Southwark are on benefits.

A number of Community Council attendees had voiced concerns over the recession impacting on unemployment, which remains high and disproportionately affects young people and over 40's. It was suggested that the community council could help to **maximise the benefits of the large scale redevelopment** projects that are in the area, and which should be increasingly offering employment opportunities to local people. In response to this demand a **Jobs and Training** Fair was planned for the September 2010 community council meeting.

## The Meeting

In the prevailing economic climate, the number of real jobs available was likely to be restricted. From discussions with various stakeholders, it was recognised that many individuals lack the appropriate skills, and/or the self-confidence to compete effectively in the highly competitive job market.

Extensive research, attending meetings and events, and letter and email communications, ensured that a wide range of agencies were invited to attend the meeting, as well as local employers with jobs to be filled.

## Appendix 1

These included groups that offer training in particular disciplines, volunteering opportunities to build confidence and support for CV writing, presentation, interview skills and related job seeking initiatives.

The addition of a wide range of display and information stands guaranteed diversity of displays which created a busy and productive environment in the Harris Academy School hall venue and the promise of real jobs for local people ensured an excellent turnout for this meeting with **well over ninety people attending**.

The room was set up with a number of “stalls” in the manner of most fairs, which allowed people to speak freely with the various stallholders with a measure of comfort and privacy. Comments on the night were extremely favourable, both from members of the community and also from the various agencies and employers represented. The groups attending were very impressed with the event, as the theme was almost unique in appealing to both young and older residents, and agreed that they would happily repeat the exercise again in the future.

### The outcomes

**Eight jobs were filled on the night**, to the great delight of all concerned, including a 20 yr old youngster who was enrolled into an apprenticeship and a man in his early 60's who was offered a job that suited his skills and experience. Staff from St Giles Trust were also pleased that **volunteers signed up on the night** and several others indicated that they would consider doing so in future.

Many attendees were unaware of the role, or in fact, existence of community councils, and the demographic overview of the meeting suggested that the Jobs and Training Fair was **attracting a group who wouldn't normally attend CC meetings**. The employers and representatives from some of the agencies were also pleasantly surprised at the ways community councils can function in the wider arena. The event was therefore successful in widening awareness and understanding of community councils.

There have been several requests to repeat the Jobs and Training Fair theme, ideally on a Saturday, and also to replicate it in the Rotherhithe CC area.