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Celebrating community involvement: leading lights, moving spirits and lattice-work networks.

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celebrating community involvement

Leading Lights, Moving Spirits and Lattice-Work Networks

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celebrating
community
involvement

foreword

On occasion, I've heard people suggest that development trusts, and community enterprise organisations in general, aren't community organisations at all - not proper ones anyway. Who elects them? They're not accountable! They do things without full consultation!

I've noticed that this sort of thing is said mostly by two sorts of people. Firstly old-school community development "activists", whose grass roots have sprouted weeds for decades. These people are jittery about any community organisation with a can-do attitude, because they are happiest when blaming someone else for nothing getting done. Secondly we have a new breed of regeneration Whizzos with their shiny Community Consultation Toolkits and their sound-bite Community Strategies. They yearn for the ultimate Replicable Model. They don't like it when communities turn out to be a whole lot messier than they're supposed to be.

Nevertheless I hope both groups of people will read this study - and perhaps it will make even them think again. Because in the following pages they will discover that a number of unusually determined and creative practitioners, in the most varied settings, and in the most varied ways, are redefining what it means to be a community-based organisation.

For a start they all reject the notion of a one-size-fits-all solution. Each organisation featured here is engaged in many-layered and evolving interactions with their community and communities, often of a highly sophisticated nature.

Development trusts know that electoral and representative democracy is not necessarily the only or the best way to create energised and enterprising communities (though it is intriguing to note that when development trusts from Bristol to Bradford have held direct elections to their Boards they have often achieved a higher turnout than the local authority).

Most people are poorly informed about their communities and lack of useful information is identified by practitioners as a barrier to participation. Often best relayed through word of mouth and networks of families and friends, good information can promote cohesion in divided communities, and helps people make choices about where to put their time and energy, not least when daily life in poor communities is hard enough.

Above all, development trusts understand that learning by doing - and ultimately this means economic activity - creates active communities. Development trusts demonstrate that even in the most adverse circumstances it is possible to realise social capital by engaging people in wealth creating activity - and by doing so provide long-term social, economic and environmental benefits.

As the report points out, community goodwill is both precious and fragile, and can never be taken for granted. A special strength is that development trusts understand this well, for without community goodwill, few community enterprises would stand much chance of success.

Steve Wyler
Director, Development Trusts Association

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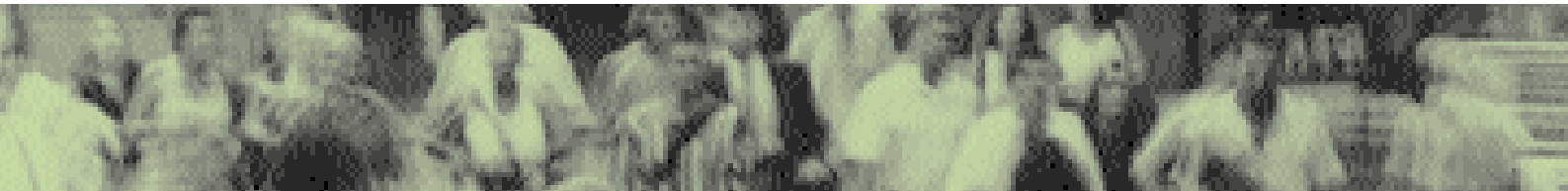
1 Introduction

At the heart of successful community-based regeneration is community involvement (DTA, 1997: 20)

Celebrating Community Involvement

Community involvement in regeneration is increasingly promoted as a 'good thing' and there are many publications offering guidance on how to involve local people in the delivery of sustainable regeneration. The advice generally points out the importance of valuing individuals' involvement whose ideas, energies and time are often invested benevolently. This publication is an attempt to begin to recognise and articulate that value. Through a number of models of involvement, the study brings together a variety of examples of personal discovery, sense of accomplishment and deep social learning that participating in the management of community projects can bring. Thus, this study details the stories of 21 people involved in different ways with their local community development trust as a way to celebrate individuals' contributions to the quality of individual and community life in local neighbourhoods. It begins to tease out what inspires and motivates local people to become actively involved and what practices are used by trusts to encourage, sustain and expand membership and participation in the management of trusts and projects. The richness of the individual stories and depth of insight of the interviewees' experience and learning is reflected in the style of this report which draws heavily on participants' own words, in an attempt to capture the human dynamics at play. The report highlights the very personal nature of individual learning and motivation and avoids the use of what some participants described as regeneration jargon and 'regenerese'. In the main, the report does not seek to universalise some kind of elusive community member experience, but instead respects each individual and their sense of personhood. Thus, this study weaves a collection of tales together using common sense language.

Involving, Including, Informing

The concepts of 'involvement' and 'inclusion' have become guiding principles of practice underpinning all activities that affect public policy-making. Local authorities and community groups are exhorted, indeed often obliged, to carry out programmes of public participation or public consultation and to clarify how socially excluded groups will benefit from regenerative activities. Many explanations are given for providing opportunities for and encouraging community-informed and community-led regeneration, for example: earlier failures of top-down, 'expert-led' regeneration, a belief that 'local people know best', sharing responsibility for and improving the allocation of limited resources, and finding new forms of community service provision. Community involvement and social inclusion are also part and parcel of the wider notion of 'social capital', a term very much in vogue, and which is used to describe 'the institutions and relationships of a thriving civil society - from networks of neighbours to extended families, community groups to religious organisations, local businesses to local public services, youth clubs to parent-teacher associations, playgroups to police on the beat' (Commission on Social Justice, 1994: 307-308). Underpinning these networks are norms and patterns of reciprocity that generate the social trust that is associated with cooperative and collective action (Putnam, 1993).

There is currently considerable interest, too, in strengthening the public good of social capital and finding ways to re-connect societies and to re-connect public services to those societies. The establishment of the Social Enterprise Unit and the relaunching of the Active Community Unit are evidence of the Government's commitment to creating and sustaining a strong social enterprise

sector. In addition to this interest in civil activity and supporting mutual aid practices, the Government is also seeking to revive an interest and restore confidence in our democratic institutions and our civic responsibilities as citizens, following the lowest national election turnout (59 percent) in 2001 since 1918. Thus, community involvement is promoted as a step towards addressing what is sometimes referred to as the 'democratic deficit', as well as contributing to socially inclusive wealth creation. The rhetoric implies that involvement and inclusion are important characteristics of a stable society and a healthy democracy which is less demanding on the public purse.

Notwithstanding (or perhaps because of) the widespread use of the terms inclusion and involvement, these inter-related terms are contested and fluid, rather than fixed, and can refer to the individual or groups of individuals. In this study we apply a common sense understanding to these terms and, for variety, use involvement and participation interchangeably. We discuss a range of degrees of involvement in order to cover very active engagement and one-off attendance at a trust public meeting. One interviewee, Neil Johnston, preferred not to use the words exclusion/inclusion, but to talk instead of those who are 'isolated'. Individuals can be excluded because they do not have access, for a variety of reasons, to employment or leisure opportunities, but they can also be isolated from the social networks and grape-vines that spread information which means that they are excluded from the opportunity of involvement. Inclusion through access to information thus lies at the heart of this study and the study suggests that effective collective practices depend on the extent to which individuals, groups, organisations and projects are included and embedded in the communication networks that spread the word through listening, telling and sharing. Increasingly such narratives are being used to value and disseminate good practice (DTA, 2002).

Individual and Social Learning

Another overarching theme for this study is that of learning. David Blunkett's foreword to the Green Paper, *The Learning Age: A Renaissance for a New Britain* (DfEE, 1998), sets out how learning throughout life will build 'human capital' by encouraging the acquisition of knowledge and skills and emphasising creativity and imagination. The Green Paper highlights how for communities 'learning contributes to social cohesion and fosters a sense of belonging, responsibility and identity. In communities affected by rapid economic change and industrial restructuring, learning builds local capacity to respond to this change' (DfEE, 1998, Para 12). In addition, learning is essential to the nation, for 'a strong economy and an inclusive society. In offering a way out of dependency and low expectation, it lies at the heart of the Government's welfare reform programme. [...] Learning can overcome this by building self-confidence and independence' (DfEE, 1998, Para 13). The Report of the Policy Action Team 16 (SEU, 2000), *Learning Lessons*, stresses the need for greater understanding of how we learn and that 'effectiveness' depends on more than training for communities and professionals. This study sought to examine the use of training and 'capacity building' and the findings suggest that it is dangerous to universalise an understanding of 'community learning'. An important insight is that a deep sensitivity is required when talking about learning, since learning is a very personal and delicate thing. Individuals will grow and flourish in very distinctive ways, intrinsically motivated by idiosyncratic needs and ambitions. They require individually tailored support.

Community Development Trusts: A Model Approach?

Development trusts are well established as 'community based organisations working for the sustainable regeneration of their area through a mixture of economic, environmental, social and cultural initiatives' (DTA, 1997: 1); indeed, their impact has been such that they are now hailed by Government as playing a major role in promoting community regeneration (Commission on Social Justice, 1994). Their regenerative potential is borne out by this study and elsewhere. Indeed, the DTI's *Social Enterprise: a strategy for success* (DTI, 2002) emphasises the need to widen understanding of the immense value of social enterprise beyond the sector. Caterham Barracks Development Trust, for example, has been used as a good practice guide on the Government's web site[1], and Caterham Barracks' approach to community involvement has been replicated elsewhere. Wavehill Consulting, who undertook an independent evaluation of Southmead Development Trust, commended its inclusive approach and ethos. In addition, Southmead has won various regional and national awards for its activities. Given the good record of trusts in community-led regeneration, the purpose of this study was first to increase our understanding of involvement and inclusion in the management both of the trusts themselves and the opportunities available for local people to manage local projects and, second, to identify whether any useful lessons could be learned.

1 http://www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/livingplaces/03/
Living places - Urban renaissance in the South East Technical Report (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister).

Objectives

The research set out to explore:
■ who is involved (and included) in the setting up and running of community development trusts and projects;
■ the range and characteristics of those involved;
■ the extent to which there exist sustainable and democratically accountable mechanisms and strategies for encouraging and supporting community involvement and inclusion;
■ whether any lessons emerge for providing effective and appropriate support for community-led projects, including technical resources, skills development and training.

Methodology

The study used case studies and a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, supported by an analysis of a variety of documents, including constitutions, articles and memoranda and annual reports. The interviewees were actively involved in the trusts. Interviews were taped and transcribed. The seven case studies examined were selected in order to reflect the wide variety of trusts across England, including trusts in inner city and rural locations, asset- and non-asset-based trusts. These are listed (by age) in Table 1. The study covers the asset-based trusts of Southmead in Bristol and Caterham Barracks in Surrey, two Single Regeneration Budget trusts, namely, Paddington Development Trust and King's Cross, both in London, and a City Challenge exit trust, the Nottingham Renewal Trust. One of the trusts is long-established, the Liverpool Eldonians. The Newquay Regeneration Forum in Cornwall is in an embryonic stage. Four trusts are located in inner city areas of major conurbations: Liverpool, Bristol and London, one is in a rural coastal town (Newquay, Cornwall), one is in a London suburb, Caterham Barracks, and

one is in inner city Nottingham. Those interviewed included urban regeneration professionals, volunteers, trust employees and beneficiaries. The objective was to gather perspectives and insights from the the chief executive, employees, trustees and beneficiaries, and to hear the views from a range of individuals, most of whom are volunteers, taking account of age (interviewees ranged from 20 to mid-60s), gender, ethnicity and experience. Nonetheless, the sample is biased in favour of the white, middle-aged male. In each instance, the interviewees were identified by the first-named individual (see Table 1) in discussion with the researchers. The objective was not to concentrate solely on the community 'leaders', the 'leading lights', but to listen to what Gibson (1996) calls the 'earthworms', those 'moving spirits' that loosen and aerate the soil. Through the interviews it was possible to begin to mine the 'thickness' of the community networks.

Table 1: Case studies

TRUST/LOCATION	AGE	INTERVIEWEES/BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Eldonian Group Ltd Liverpool inner city	14	Chris Hart (CEO) Johan Hannah (Trustee) Lawrence Holden (Chairman) A well-established trust which has promoted the redevelopment of a large industrial site. It now runs a sports centre and has a separate company responsible for the housing.
Bristol Southmead Bristol urban fringe	6	Jack Reddall (CEO) Angela Watson (Trustee) John Watson (Trustee) Simon Glover (Trustee) Southmead is a large housing estate with high levels of unemployment and deprivation. The Trust has a large asset base.
Newquay Regeneration Forum Ltd Cornwall, rural, coastal	5	John Murrin (Vice-Chairman) Eileen Bortey (Member) Gill Merrell (Member) A forum of local people with limited council funding promoting the regeneration of the town.
King's Cross Community Development Trust Central London	4	Mark McNestry (Director) Joe Arens (Chair) An SRB-funded project in an area blighted by redevelopment but many ethnic groups in the area.

Paddington Development Trust Central London	AGE 4	Neil Johnston (Trust Director/Company Secretary) Jan (Local resident) Jackie Rosenberg (Trustee and Beneficiary)
		The largest community-managed SRB project in England, perhaps in Europe, providing social and economic benefits linked to the redevelopment of the Paddington basin.
Nottingham Renewal Trust Midlands	2	Andy Turner (Trust Executive) Rob Stephens (Employee) Zulflor Hussain (Trustee)
		A trust promoting community uses in the area, set up as part of a City Challenge exit strategy.
Caterham Barracks Community Trust Surrey, suburban	2	Dick Moran (CEO) Simon Bernacki (Employee) Marilyn Payne (Trustee)
		Formed in response to redevelopment proposals for a large MoD site, the Trust was created through a Section 106 planning agreement .

Models of Involvement

In unravelling the threads of community involvement, a web of formal and informal information channels emerged which was underpinned with emotional and coaching support as a way to tap into community talent. As illustrated in Figure 1, the report places the community development trust board at the hub of a community network and explores the constellation of influence. The following chapters explore involvement at board level and in projects, before addressing strategies for engaging the wider community. Chapter One describes the background and origins of each trust by way of context. Chapter Two focuses on the leading lights and groups who spearhead community trusts, and who *typically* make up the board membership. This investigates leadership characteristics and how such individuals can be supported.

Chapter Three discusses the ways in which 'new' trustees are recruited from the community, through a variety of personal networking, hand-picking or more formal means and how these moving spirits can be supported. Chapter Four looks at the assorted ways in which the local community may be encouraged to participate in local projects which are variously supported by trusts, whilst Chapter Five examines how trusts go about involving the wider community. The story therefore takes us from the 'inner sanctum' of the board, through projects and out into the community. The study builds up an interesting picture of how community development trusts operate as part of a wider network of mutual support, information and social learning (Figure 2). Chapter Eight brings together some reflections and recommendations.

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Figure 1:
Community Trust
Boards: Typical Interest
and Influences

Funding bodies   Central Government

Business sector

Local Government

BOARD

Local politicians

Public sector

Other community
projects

Residents
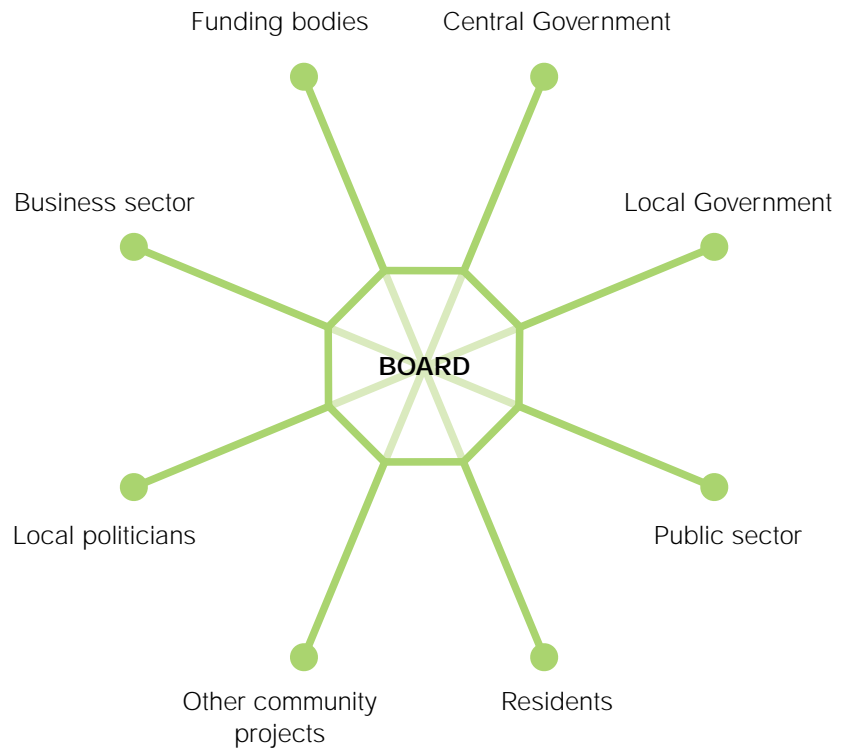
Figure 2:
Community Trust
Boards: Part of a
Network of Support
and Information

Funding bodies   Central Government

Business sector

Local Government

BOARD

Local politicians

Public sector

Other community
projects

Residents
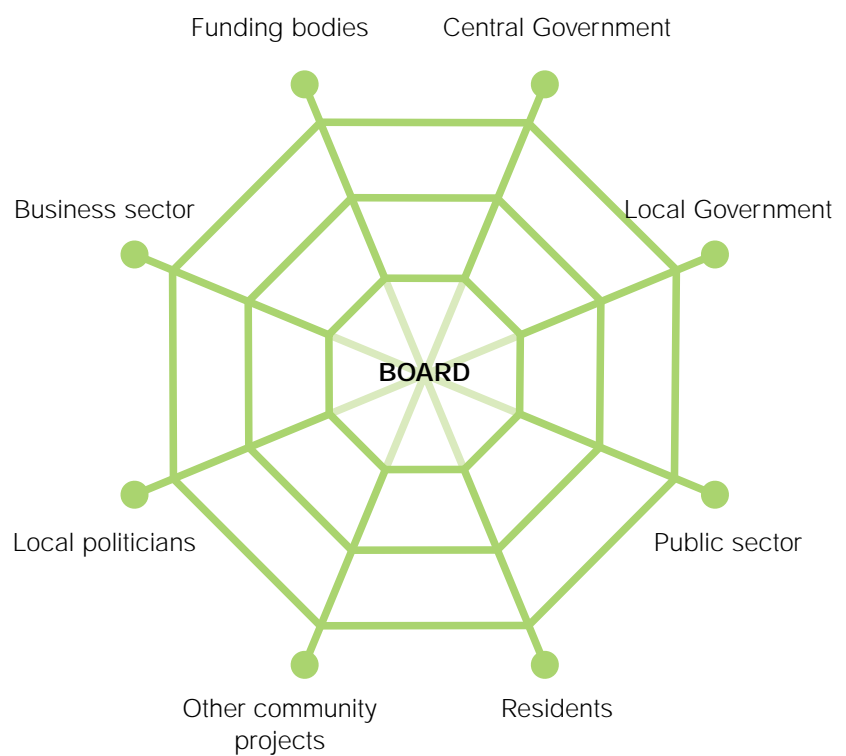
2 Community Roots

In deprived areas, such as Southmead, it's very, very difficult to access services and funding, and local people who relied in years gone past on city councils providing those services and funding have got to the stage where they've actually given up. A development trust gives them the opportunity of actually voicing their opinions and actually seeing something done tangible for their area - something they want for their area not what is dictated from above by the bureaucrats. They're grass roots - they've got a good idea what could be done, what could be used to improve their area but they haven't got a vehicle for people to listen to what they've got to say. So with the Development Trust they've got a chance to have their say - they've got a chance to change things, they've got the opportunity to actually put things in motion and to improve the area with what they know will improve the area. And to be respected.

Jack Reddall, Southmead Development Trust

Different Beginnings in the Community

Development trusts are one example of a range of community-based organisations concerned with regeneration. A number of reports have been published by the DTA which explain some of the background to such organisations, for example, Stephen Thake's (1995) *Staying the course: The role and structure of community regeneration organisations*, the report by Michael Ward and Sheila Watson (1997) *Here to stay: A public policy framework for community-based regeneration* and *Fabulous Beasts* (DTA, 2002) which tells a number of stories of community enterprise. One of the most important lessons to be taken from any study of community development trusts is that each locality and the communities living within it are different. The case studies reported here illustrate great diversity. The histories of how each trust investigated came about are different: community resistance to the threat of dispersal; created as a mechanism for managing a community asset; set up as the result of a consultant's report identifying the need to get the community talking; created to strengthen the

community's inter-organisational capacity; identified as the appropriate vehicle to provide community facilities through planning gain; emerging as the natural successor to a City Challenge board in order to increase the role of the community; and put forward as the community-led accountable body for obtaining and controlling Single Regeneration Budget funding.

The Eldonians: Community Resistance

The Eldonians, the oldest of the trusts investigated, was one of the first communities in Liverpool to resist re-housing and dispersal in the 1970s. It fought a long battle with the Labour-controlled City Council to obtain a site and take control of their own housing. The Eldonian Community-based Housing Association (formerly the Eldonian Housing Co-operative) was set up in 1983 by council tenants living in tenement blocks which were scheduled for demolition and where the residents were likely to be dispersed across the City. The Chair, Tony McGann, has been involved in housing issues since the

beginning. The Association obtained part of the Tate & Lyle site after the company closed its plant in 1985, with the help of the Merseyside Urban Development Corporation. The development of the Eldonian Village began in September 1987. The Association owns 310 homes, let on fair rented and assured rent tenancies for about £48 per month each, and manages 141 units. Although the Eldonians began as a housing co-operative, it has since grown and now includes five other companies. In 1987 the Eldonian Group Ltd was set up as a development trust with the objectives of enterprise and job creation, enhancing access to employment within community businesses, and becoming financially sustainable. The Group currently employs 160 people, directly or through its member companies. The subsidiary companies include: the village hall; the Elaine Norris Sports Centre; and the Eldonwoods day nursery. The Group also helped establish the nearby Boundary Street Enterprise Centre, which provides 55 small office units and eight workshops. In 1999, a warden scheme was established using intermediate labour market funding from the City Council. It employs 13 trainees for a year and has recently received Home Office funding of £245,000 for two and a half years. Eldonian Enterprises Ltd has been set up to provide consultancy services.

Southmead Development Trust:
Transfer Asset of
an Asset to the Community

Southmead Development Trust was initiated by Bristol City Council in 1996 when the Council decided to transfer the site of a former secondary school which had 'failed' to the local community. Following an interim steering committee in 1996, a board of trustees/company directors made up of local residents and workers was first elected in April 1996 to manage and develop the Greenway Centre and also to operate in other community activities outside of the Centre. The Trust holds a lease on the old school building, surrounding grounds and a

catering centre. Its principal objective is to develop comprehensive regeneration of the Southmead ward, an area which has a recent history of social deprivation and high unemployment, principally due to changes in industry and economic recession. Southmead Estate largely comprises housing and experiences high levels of unemployment, high rates of petty crime and vandalism and low educational achievement. There is evidence of the growing use of 'hard drugs'. Yet, Jack Reddall explained, the main problems are the Estate's lack of leisure and training facilities. The Trust is seeking to improve the quality of life of local residents by providing training opportunities, a managed works base and leisure amenities. The Trust works co-operatively and 'in partnership' with a range of existing organisations.

When a building becomes a liability rather than an asset is a moot point. There may be a variety of reasons that prompt a local authority to hand over assets from its property portfolio. For a short time after the closure of the school, the City Council certainly attempted to let the buildings through various organisations. The Old Greenway Trust was

formed, but operated for only a couple of years. Maintenance costs and under-use of the building then prompted the Council into setting up a full trust. Asset transfer to community organisations is encouraged by Government policy as a means to support sustainable renewal and reduce dependence on grant aid. Advocates argue that control of assets can lead to community empowerment and provide the means for community capacity building, decision making at the local level and a focus for community enterprise (DTA, 2001). Nevertheless, there are enormous pressures for community-based organisations to be self-financing. Providing services on a not-for-profit basis in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation, however, creates difficult tensions between competing social and economic agendas. Arguably, the City Council could have faced severe opposition from the local community if it had tried to sell the school buildings and land. Moreover, divesting itself of the land would have meant that the central government grant would have been reduced. By handing over the land to the community and entrusting the delivery of local services to the Trust, the Council was able to reduce its own expenditure, whilst the responsibility for the provision of those services shifted to the community. Notwithstanding control of a physical asset, community trusts may, nevertheless, require capital funds and a steady income stream in order to ensure the asset is viable.

Newquay Regeneration Forum:
'Get people Talking to One Another'

The economic base of Newquay and its rural hinterland relies on tourism and its associated industries. Seasonal part-time work means that around 30 percent of households have a household income of less than £10,000. The Newquay area has some of the highest unemployment levels in Cornwall with some 30 percent on income support. Younger people under 25 are more likely to be unemployed. There is a higher than average retired

population. Lack of tertiary education facilities and poor public transport provision contribute to the low proportion of residents with formal qualifications. The mortality rate is higher than for other parts of Cornwall. Gill Merrell described the strange way of life for Newquay residents:

> *Our population is only 20,000, although it swells to over 100,000 in the summer. This creates a strange way of life because in the winter months people do have some time, but in the summer months the pressure comes on and a lot of people have part-time jobs or are self-employed. In the summer a lot of people on the Regeneration Forum find it very hard to find time for voluntary community things.*

The setting up of the Newquay Regeneration Forum resulted from a recommendation in a consultants' report in 1996 to create a consultative body. John Murrin observed:

> *It was to get people talking to one another - which is a problem generally. There is quite a lack of community spirit and to get people in the same room to let each other know what is going on is one of our functions. That is a milestone in itself to actually bang heads together and get people talking.*

Originally the Forum comprised nine councillors, plus the Chamber of Commerce and the local Hotels Association. Careful attention to Government and funding bodies' priorities, as well as a commitment to being inclusive, has steered the Forum to draw in a range of sectoral interests, such as health and housing, schools and young people in order to ensure that the company arm of the Forum has the appropriate 'brownie points' and is 'in the right position' when it makes funding applications and needs to demonstrate it is consultative. Indeed, the Forum's communication network and consultation experience has been tapped into by the local authority in order to raise the profile of the Objective One funds Cornwall now receives and to inform the Integrated Area Plan.

Kings Cross:
Supporting Stable
Community Organisations

In April 1997 the King's Cross Community Development Steering Group (CDSG) was established to guide and inform the work of the King's Cross Partnership's Community Development Officer and Community Development Project.

Its membership represented the ethnic and neighbourhood communities of the area as defined in relation to the King's Cross Single Regeneration Budget Round 3 programme. The CDSG commissioned the Community Development Foundation to undertake a comprehensive audit of local community activity and needs, as part of a two year research and consultation process leading to the formulation of the King's Cross Partnership's Community Development Strategy. The area of benefit comprises Copenhagen, King's Cross/Brunswick and Somers Town wards, and Camden Village and Percy Circus/Weston Rise, surrounding King's Cross station and the brownfield railway lands. The area crosses the Camden/Islington boundary.

The King's Cross Community Development Project was established in May 1999 and it seeks to bring a strategic focus to community development in King's Cross. Its role is to support community groups and voluntary organisations in contributing to, and securing community benefit from, the economic and social regeneration of the King's Cross area of north London. The Project is currently responsible for implementing the major part of the multi-sectoral King's Cross Partnership's Community Development Strategy and is working with some 300 local groups and organisations including tenants and residents associations, community centres, playgroups, arts projects, employment and training projects and ethnic minority and refugee organisations. The Project has recently become the King's Cross Community Development Trust (KCCDT).

The Business Plan 2001-04 defines the objectives of the Trust as follows:

Community development is about building the organisational structures of the local community in order to strengthen local people's control over their own lives. KCCDT is building a more sustainable and vibrant local community sector by ensuring it is better able to:

i. *identify and address gaps in skills and knowledge;*
ii. *raise funds and tackle shortages in resources;*
iii. *monitor, evaluate and communicate the value of its work;*
iv. *address the specific needs of the various ethnic minority communities;*
v. *identify overlaps in provision and develop new projects to address gaps;*
vi *liaise with and work in partnership with other community groups and organisations, and other agencies.*

Mark McNestry describes the Trust's Board thus:

Of our management board, 50 percent are white and 50 percent black and ethnic minorities (BEM). All three large neighbourhoods and two small ones are represented. The BEM represent all the major minorities and there are 4 women, 8 men. In terms of representation, we're doing very, very well. There can be a maximum of 15. When we first set out to pull together that steering group, we aimed for representativeness in geographical and ethnic diversity. As time's gone on that's improved. We invited people and identified gaps and I went out and introduced myself and persuaded them to join. All members are representing groups and organisations and not individuals. All of our full members represent voluntary organisations or community groups bringing benefits to the area. The membership elect the board. It was our AGM very recently and we had 12 people standing for 15 places. In terms of our

memorandum and articles, the Board appoint office holders and that's where we have a contest every time. It changes over time. We go through a period of months where everyone's present and then suddenly it's really hard to get people to turn up. We've had a turn over but not one to worry about. It's also about people's reasons for being involved because they want to represent their community, and gradually they take on responsibility for the wider area. The demands of their own organisation also pull them away. The people are often over stretched.

Paddington Development Trust:
SRB Managed and Delivered by the Community

Paddington is one of 68 high priority regeneration areas identified by the Government Office for London. It scores highly in many of the indicators in the Index of Deprivation, is ethnically very diverse and has a transient population. Paddington Development Trust was formed in 1998. It was successful in winning £13.5 million of Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding and is the accountable body and leading partner in the 'New Life for Paddington' Partnership. It is the largest SRB project ever to have been designed and led by a local community. The Trust's core objective is to empower and build the capacity of the local communities in the area. It is important to note that the roots of the Trust go back much further than its formal creation in 1998. Director Neil Johnston elaborated:

The Trust was formed by a core of local residents after a period of quite intense local activity over the last 30 years. It all heated up between 1996-98 - which is when the Trust was formed. It was part of a larger initiative that looked at the degeneration of Paddington over the last 30 years, the collapse of the key services and particularly the youth service. The new development around Paddington Station, which became the focus, is a £1-3 billion project - the largest in Europe in the last 15-20 years. That was really the catalyst in many respects for forming the Trust in 1998. The Trust is community-led and community-based and takes in five of the deprived wards in North Paddington. We kicked off with about £25,000 in the bank and an aspiration to design, implement and manage a large SRB programme. We designed, wrote and presented a bid to the Government Office for London - initially for £30 million and that got negotiated down to £13.5 million for a Partnership which was showing £64 million worth of works through a process of match-funding. We operate that SRB Programme and we are the accountable body for the Urban Programme which is a Partnership in Queen's Park. The critical factor here is that we are the accountable body, which basically means that we are totally responsible for the money. Now that's not a particularly big deal - but in local communities and voluntary sector terms it is. It may be one of the only ones to have started from scratch. These things are usually dominated by local authorities and, as many of the problems in deprived areas are the result of failed local authorities' policies, it's quite an interesting experiment.

Yet the SRB money has a limited life-span and the Trust lacks an asset base. Sustaining the Trust's influence in local affairs may also depend on its ability to carve a role in the emerging Borough-wide local strategic partnership.

Nottingham Renewal Trust:
A Natural Fit to
Suceed City Challenge

The Renewal Trust works across the communities of St Ann's and Sneinton in inner city Nottingham, an area which has significant Pakistani and African Caribbean communities and which is one of the most deprived areas in the City. The objectives of the Trust and details on its commitment to community involvement appear on the Trust's website.

http://www.renewaltrust.org.uk

Ten facts you need to know:

1. The Renewal Trust is an independent not-for-profit partnership with the aim of helping to improve Sneiton and St Anns.

2. The Renewal Trust has a Board of 19 Directors which includes 6 elected community representatives

3. The Renewal Trust will help local communities to make things happen in their areas by grant aiding community based activities

4. The Renewal Trust won't have millions of pounds to spend but it will have a regular long term income to spend on local projects

5. The Renewal Trust plans to support local small business and community enterprise with loans, grants and advice from Septrember 1998.

6. The Renewal Trust's Trust Executive is Andrew Trurner.

7. The Renewal Trust's AGM will be held in September each year.

8. The Renewal Trust will work jointly with other groups in the area to help get projects running and funded.

9. The Renewal Trust is involved with the refurbishment of the Sycamore Complex in St Anns for sports facilities for local people.

10. The Renewal Trust wants you to be involved!

The Trust's main thrust is to relieve poverty. A company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, the Board has an equal split between the public and private sectors and local residents with six directors from each. The Trust emerged as the 'natural fit' when City Challenge was wound down and a wide-scale consultation initiative using fora and surveys showed that local people believed that a development trust was the appropriate vehicle to take things forward. Andy Turner explained how the City Challenge Board had been a private-public-community partnership with the decision-making control resting solely with the public element, but that the Trust shifts the balance:

> *What was attempted with the Trust was to ensure that each sector had equal representation and an equal voice in what happened. The Trust is a way of ensuring that it is an investment in the community - whether that be the local business community or the local community in all its forms.*

Caterham Barracks Community Trust:
Community Management through a S106

> *'How to get people involved?' 'How to get people engaged?' The answer is there's no simple answer. But it's a combination of the politics of an area, as well as its social structure. I think it's not possible to achieve some of these things without direct political involvement whether that's with a big 'P' or a small 'p' and what we did here was that we went out on the route of a conservation area status (Dick Moran).*

The creation of Caterham Barracks Community Trust in Surrey is due largely to the driving energy of its director, Dick Moran. When the former Guards' Depot and barracks on the outskirts of Caterham were scheduled for redevelopment, Councillors Dick Moran and Robin Clements saw an opportunity to protect some of the site's heritage and create a

mixed-use 'urban village', with many of the original buildings being re-used to provide community facilities which were lacking in the wider area. Some 10,000 residents live in Caterham valley, while some 11,000 live 'on the hill'. Many people commute into London. The Trust's principal responsibility is to develop and manage the former barracks' buildings, which require quite considerable refurbishment, to provide new community facilities for Caterham and the environs. The local authority produced an urban design and a development brief and sought comprehensive redevelopment of the old barracks. Dick explained:

> *In order to inform the development brief I suggested setting up a local group of interested people - mostly councillors for starters who wanted to have a say in the process and wanted to be a part of the conversation.*

From the start, great emphasis was placed on public consultation, using community planning techniques. A Planning Weekend, which attracted some 1000 people, presented alternative redevelopment schemes using photographs and 3-dimensional models. Commenting on the enormous enthusiasm for the Weekend, Marilyn Payne said, 'Everybody was just nosey really! The Barracks had been closed for so long. Nobody had been allowed in.'

Most of the issues likely to be raised by the community were anticipated by the organisers and 'seasoned professionals' led a number of working-groups. Following the Weekend, the community management working group formally examined different kinds of management structure and chose a community development trust. The working committee went on to become the Board of Trustees. Dick explained that what is interesting about the approach taken to the various working-groups is that it required people 'to go out and research' and 'to come back with answers'. This led to a greater understanding of the issues because people were invited to 'go and look at the viability of that'. The establishment of the Trust was incorporated into the Section 106 Agreement accompanying the planning approval.

1.1 The Caterham Barracks Community Trust shall be set up within 6 months of the date hereof with a constitution containing between 8 and 12 trustees with at least one trustee appointed by the Council and two by the Owner and other user and resident groups being represented. The two trustees appointed by the Owner shall be replaced following completion of the Development by one trustee representing the residents of the Dwellings and one trustee representing the employers on the Property.
1.2 [...]
1.3 The ... Trust shall be responsible for the management and future maintenance repair and renewal and running of the Community Trust Facilities upon the Property (S.106 Agreement, 1999).

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website *Living Places - Urban Renaissance in the South East - Case Study* 17[2] describes the trust as the 'maintenance of momentum'.

An interesting issue facing the Trust is the constitution of the Trust in a 'village' which is not yet fully built. Dick Moran explains:

The problem we had - and still have - is that the membership of that Trust is not well developed or articulated - the user groups don't exist yet - we don't have arts users, heritage users - we don't even have people living here in large numbers yet - we don't have enterprises yet - yet those will be all the representative people who will be on this body when it's in its final form - ironically when it's in its final form there'll be bugger all left to do. It will then be a decision about how do you develop it, move it, change it, shape it - to fit the current and local context - and it will change.

2 http://www.planning.dtlr.gov.uk/livingplaces/03/17.htm

Summary

Writing about community development trusts in 1995, Stephen Thake identified that community regeneration organisations often emerge as a result of the general climate of uncertainty, from chaos, stemming from poverty and the disintegration of the social fabric, and from stress, caused, for example, by the collapse of the local economy and rise in unemployment. He highlighted that regeneration organisations might form in 'response to violence', in 'response to invasion', such as the threat of dispersal posed to the Eldonians or in 'response to withdrawal' or lack of provision of services and training, as experienced in Paddington and Southmead. What this study suggests is that the track record of community development trusts to date means that trusts are increasingly recognised as an appropriate vehicle for community-led, community-based regeneration and that, rather than surfacing as a 'response', their formation and use is far more proactive. The Newquay Regeneration Forum is a positive step to 'get people talking' and, as the thirty year history preceding the setting up of the Paddington Development Trust illustrated, establishing a network of core people and establishing partnerships can prove to be an important first step. In King's Cross, the Trust's objective is to coordinate the needs of the ethnic and neighbourhood communities of the area. Paddington Development Trust has a mission to win and control significant regeneration funding in order to deliver local services for and with the local communities. Yet, trusts' sustainablility may depend on them being able to integrate themselves into the emerging local strategic partnerships and/or securing an asset base.

The stories told here show how members of the community can initiate ownership and redefine accountability for local regeneration through a variety of imaginative ways, although a secure income stream is vital in the longer term. Nottingham is using a trust to carry forward the work of City Challenge and to give the local community more influence in the decision-making process. Nottingham is thus continuing to build a history of community activity in regeneration and to develop an asset base. The Caterham Barracks Development Trust sought to use the planning system, first to conserve part of the community's local heritage and then to use planning gain as an instrument to secure a sufficient asset base and community management structure to deliver services to the wider community of Caterham. The background to these trusts illustrate very different beginnings depending on the different histories of community activity and the extent to which that activity has been collective. The local communities are deprived in different ways and the opportunities to tackle that deprivation and empower the local community also differ. Potential resources may be asset-based or grant-led. People who can prepare for and spot opportunities are key. Indeed, a common theme across the case studies in making things happen is the energy and enthusiasm of a handful of individuals with leadership qualities. The next chapter therefore turns to look at those individuals spearheading community renewal.

3 Spearheading Community Interests

Neil has so much drive and works himself so hard that we'd never have got off the ground to the extent we did - it just wouldn't have happened without someone like him - he is truly visionary. Jackie Rosenberg

In this chapter, we recount some of the views and insights of the active community members interviewed who have a 'habit of involvement', either professionally, voluntarily or politically, in order to explore what characteristics emerge in more detail and what conditions can support that energy. In contrast, the next chapter will focus on the perspectives of the 'new' trustees being recruited into positions of responsibility and leadership within the trusts. This account will include perspectives from 'paid regenerators', as well as 'voluntary' and 'political' community leaders.

'The Moving Spirits, The Leading Lights'

Talking about the power of certain individuals to strengthen the human capital of an area, Neil Johnston of the Paddington Development Trust explained the energy that can be generated within communities:

> The 'moving spirits', the 'leading lights', the community 'social entrepreneurs' are the glue that brings and sticks everything together and so what we're talking about is entrepreneurial energy - which is not directed towards classic profiteering - but is geared towards creating human and social capital.

Tony Gibson (1996) developed the 'moving spirit' idea in *The Power in Our Hands*. In that book he tries to understand what prompts people to become 'doers'. He explains:

> At street level, it's what I call the moving spirits *among us. They are not necessarily the leading lights in any community. Charismatic leaders may help to blaze the trail, but it's obscure,* unimportant *people among the rank and file who say to themselves* enough is enough, *make a move and persuade the rest of us that after all something can be done, here and now.*

They are the invaluable earthworms who move around to break up the soil. They are the yeast that makes the dough rise. They scarcely get a mention in the National Curriculum; but they are the history-makers (Gibson, 1996: 6).

All the interviewees exhibit this propensity for 'social gluing' to various degrees. Some are 'paid' to glue. Others glue voluntarily. Commenting on the importance of understanding individuals' motivations for participating in the Newquay Regeneration Forum, John Murrin said:

> I don't analyse the committee and say, 'Why are they here?' We're just bloody grateful they are.

In this chapter, the focus is on the leading lights, the 'catalysts' and 'starters'. In the next chapter the spotlight will shift to the moving spirits.

'Paid for it'

Employed as the manager of the Nottingham Renewal Trust since 1998, one year after it had been set up, Andy Turner is the link between the Trust staff and the Trust Board. A qualified town planner, Andy worked at South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council in an inner area programme team working with community projects before first working as a local planner with Nottingham City Council and then for some five years as a City Challenge project officer with Nottingham City Challenge. Andy's knowledge of the area and local residents and 'who you go to' has therefore been built up over the years through being actively engaged in various regeneration projects on the ground. Additional external professional expertise is bought in where necessary. Together with the broad membership of the Board, which includes a number of professionals, 'We've got a lot of knowledge about Nottingham and Nottingham business folk'. Clearly having a staff complement of 13 plus part-time staff, provides the Renewal Trust with the resources, knowledge and expertise to support and implement the ideas of the Board. In addition, part of Andy's role is to ensure that local people are employed to run Trust ventures, such as The Sycamore Centre, a community leisure facility. Andy had become 'fed up' working for the local authority when he applied to work for the Trust. He spoke of the rewards of working for the Trust:

The best thing about the Trust is that I can manage it - and I do manage it on a daily basis. I'm responsible - so you've got that feeling of responsibility. And the opportunities are great - because you can pitch at things. I have a very good Board who are responsive and give me a lot of feedback and we direct things. It's good because we can see things happen. In a local authority you're a million miles away from the means of production and it's nice to be at that coal face at times and actually say, 'OK I signed the cheque' and sometimes they're quite big ones. There's a lot of satisfaction that goes

with that. The reason I've stuck around is because the Trust has developed hugely from two people through to thirteen and a centre and doing other things and now we're going through this process again of saying, 'Where do we want to be in another three years time?' So it's constantly changing.

Jack Reddall has worked for Southmead Development Trust since 1996 and is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Trust. Trustees set policy and Jack feeds information back to the Trustees on what and how objectives are being met. Input from the Trustees is complemented by input from staff. Comments from the Trustees indicated a very strong working relationship with the Chief Executive. As Angela Weston, a new Trustee, confided:

I know that if I've got a problem or if I'm worried about something - I know that I can always come in to the Centre and I can speak to Jack.

As Director of the Paddington Development Trust and Secretary of the Company, Neil Johnston's main duties span everything to do with running the Trust: funding, programme management on the SRB and supporting local innovative initiatives. Prior to working for the Trust, his experiences included performing arts, teaching and managing businesses. He has also had a long career in the voluntary and community sectors. Having worked in the area for some 11 years, Neil knows the Paddington area and its people well. He was invited to apply for the post. He observed:

What's really quite interesting in terms of the voluntary sector is that my ambitions of life have largely been satisfied in respect to what I want and what I need so this work is very much about looking at areas that are in a deprived state and looking at their regeneration from a business perspective which is quite interesting because in many respects this is where a lot of this stuff's fallen apart. It's not seen as a mainstream activity.

The importance of skillful public relations and business acumen in community regeneration was also stressed by Dick Moran from Caterham Barracks Trust:

> *There is a sense in which you have to have people around with capacity to lay claim to the media and managing the messages which go out. It's about having champions who know their way through the system and are able to articulate the ways in which money can be extracted. That's quite difficult because what you're looking for is people who have some perception and understanding of the business imperative - you must make this a profitable entity or at least at a minimum viable - and yet at the same time it has to retain its community focus, its accessibility and inclusivity and all of those issues - and that's extremely difficult.*

Dick's knowledge of the area is informed by his activities as a councillor and former Labour group leader. He has also taught, worked in marketing and business and with the performing arts. As a councillor, Dick and a fellow Labour councillor, had used the redevelopment of the former barracks as a part of a 'political campaign':

> *The redevelopment of the Barracks was a good campaigning subject. It was good for us to become figureheads for this project. It became a vehicle for us to talk to our community politically and to start to be able to offer them opportunities which they would not otherwise get.*

Now paid to manage the Trust, Dick is no longer a councillor because of the potential conflict of interests. He talked about the link between politicians and community development:

> *I think it ought to be the case that politicians grow out of communities. They should continue as paid entities to develop that community and to do that job - because it is a job of work. I'd reached the stage of saying, 'Well I've done this job for ten years and not really been paid for it as a local councillor'. I earned my £2500 a year - I was the lowest paid group leader in the country. But previously I was able to commission the activity - say, 'I want that done' and now I can't do that. I have to do it myself.*

The commitment, conviction and communication skills of those interviewed is something that comes across very strongly. It has a contagious quality which enthuses and inspires others. Talking about Dick Moran, Marilyn Payne said:

> *He's got the skills to chat - he can store it all in here [taps her head] and pour it forth and make it sound interesting and exciting and fun - I couldn't do that - even if I didn't get embarrassed and seize up and lose the plot - I just couldn't do that - and he's just brilliant - he's made for it, it would seem. To be quite honest if he hadn't taken the job I don't think the Trust would get very far. There are one or two others on the Board who have put effort into it, but they haven't got the same skills, the same enthusiasm and the same charisma with people.*

In attempting to articulate what he brings to Paddington Development Trust, Neil Johnston ventured:

> *A great deal of experience, business skills, history and a degree of vision - or imagination - some of which is highly questionable when you're sat in a hall in the middle of winter talking to four people who represent the Westbourne ward.*

'On a voluntary basis'

The Newquay Regeneration Forum has no paid staff. The Forum's activities have also been limited by the lack of assets and permanent income stream. The Forum receives £2,000 annually from the Town Council to cover its administrative costs and free accommodation for its meetings, but it lacks a solid track record to convince sponsors to invest in the organisation. It administers the SRB Community Chest Fund and has achieved some modest project successes. John Murrin is a professional accountant and candid about the ambitions and obstacles facing the Forum:

> *Our problem partially is that we're all groping around in the dark really. It's the trouble with a lot of organisations. We don't have people who have the experience. We have had a few modest successes but these have been few in number due to the fact that we are all volunteers and only a few of us are actively involved. With a lot more time and some capital to play with, I know we could achieve a lot more. We are on a very steep learning curve. Although some of us have certain skills, none of us are proficient in all of those necessary to make us expert regeneration practitioners. But regeneration itself is a fairly new science. People with those qualifications aren't around yet.*

John tried to explain why he is involved:

> *It's perhaps selfish reasons - I mean I don't mind admitting it - I get a buzz out of doing it because I am originally from Newquay - I was born and brought up here and work here nine hours a day - although I don't live here now. But my grandfather was a developer in the town, my father was - my son's an architect. So there's something which is in the blood if you like. I like to get projects off the ground and see them come to fruition and the mechanisms of putting it all together - that's what I find interesting.*

In expanding upon her business and political experiences at town, local and county levels, Gill Merrell emphasised the need for an eclectic set of skills and local knowledge. She mused:

> *Going round to meetings you pick up what's happening in the wider world and how to get in to funding programmes and what you need to do. I don't think that anybody else could have done what I've done. Without the background knowledge you wouldn't know where to start. And this is where I think it's hard for community projects to get going if there isn't somebody there who knows how to find a way around some of the pitfalls - but perhaps I'm cynical.*

As Treasurer of the local soup kitchen, a guidance tutor for the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Chair of the Racial Equality Council for Cornwall, and Community Fund Manager for the Forum, Eileen Bortey identified some of her quailities as her 'ability to be pretty open with anyone' and the fact she has 'fingers in lots of pies'. John Murrin characterised her as the Forum's 'social conscience'. Eileen laughed:

> *I had lunch with the Chief Constable the Thursday before last and the following meeting I was with a group of disaffected young people and probably told the same jokes in both places. And I did a TV programme on racism in the South West and walked into a Soup Kitchen where they asked for autographs! I see my role as going around to all the organisations that I'm part of and saying, 'There's a meeting. Come to it!' That's actually been very successful. I've got fingers in lots of pies, lots of networks. Lots of people came.*

She also praised the informality of the Forum because it encourages 'meeting in the middle':

> *If it's too formal it becomes another town council - automatically people don't like what councils do - I don't know what it is. If you ask anybody about any organisational body from central government down it's always the negatives that are*

remembered - never the pluses. It's an advantage for the Forum not to be seen as too formal. I had lunch with someone from the Chamber of Commerce and we had to try to meet in the middle because we're coming from different agendas - so it is a way of laddering through the community and making the connections in an informal way.

Neil Johnston commented that local people setting up community-led organisations need professionals and well-connected people. The Chair of the Trust, Drew Stevenson, is an academic and regeneration professional with significant experience in local government. Neil said:

" *We've got one of the best people to chair the Trust and that was a very smart thing to do. Any residents' group that created something like this would be advised to do the same thing - a lot of this is networking, relationships, making contacts, who you know is the big issue - and how you know them.*

Jackie Rosenberg, a local resident and former Labour councillor, has twenty years' voluntary sector experience and a wealth of contacts in the North Paddington area. She explained:

" *I work in the voluntary sector, I sit on the voluntary sector forum and I'm a local resident (I live in Queens Park). I've been around twenty years and know a lot of history and know a lot of people. I'm quite useful to have on the Trust, because a lot of people talk to me - I hear a lot of things - I can feedback stuff. And, hopefully, I can make sure the Trust stays in the right direction.*

Jackie described how the original contact group which preceded the setting up of the Trust was 'spearheaded' by a number of influential community activists and housing associations. This group sought to include other organisations onto the emerging Board. Jackie sees the Trust as a powerful mechanism which can 'act as the champion for people' as well as a device with which to continue her own community development interests:

" *A number of organisations were around at the time. We were being asked to go on the Board and put ourselves forward. I've been a local councillor in Westminster and knew all the people that were engaged in it. I guess I must just have gone along to a meeting and landed up putting my name to it - I don't quite know why. I don't remember the process by which I got on the Board and when it set up. But what I do remember is that I knew I really wanted to be there. It was always really important to me to be involved in the Trust. I don't want to be on the council any more because I don't want to be in a minority. This way I can still be engaged and still do a lot of the stuff that you do on a council: community involvement, participation, empowerment, regeneration, but with like-minded people, rather than being in permanent opposition. That's why I got involved. In my mind I saw Paddington Development Trust as a sort of potential local council for the Paddington area and it could almost replace what the local council was meant to be doing in that the council was not seeking external funding and had closed down its regeneration unit. It didn't recognise the term 'regeneration' at that time. Because of the 'Shirley Porter years' the Council had this huge antithesis to this group of people that I was associated with because we were all - inverted commas - "Labour people" and, by definition, poison and shouldn't be talked to - and there was this ridiculous mistrust and stuff. I saw the Trust as something which, potentially, could gain real resident community support and be a real champion - a real voice for this part of Westminster.*

Zulfor Hussain is active in his community in Nottingham with youth work, form-filling, advocating on behalf of the community and victim support. He is Vice-Chair of Nottingham Citizens Advice Bureau, on the Board of Directors of Nottingham Community Housing Association (one of the country's biggest housing associations), Chair of a voluntary sector community health project and recently joined the Renewal Trust's Board of Directors as a Trustee. He has been approached to enter politics but, to date, has declined. He commented:

" I wouldn't have wanted to be on the Board if I didn't think I had the knowledge base and skills to be able to participate at that level. Throughout my working life, I've always been very passionate - particularly around issues of equal opportunities and issues like that. Through the intensity of my involvement I've been able to gain a great deal of experience and build up my own knowledge base in these areas - I don't like to use the word 'expertise'.

Zulflor also knew about the Trust's activities through his work in the community. He used that knowledge to become a beneficiary by attracting funds into his local community. He was of the opinion that the Trust was not adequately addressing the needs of Sneinton:

" This pushed me to say, 'Well there's no point sitting at home moaning about these things - you have to get out there and see whether you can participate in any change and make any change effective'. It's why I give my time to a lot of community organisations - it's all on a voluntary basis. A lot of it is something inside me. If I see an organisation, an initiative that's doing good work, or potentially could be doing good work, and could be doing it better I would like to be involved to help towards that aim - rather than sitting back and criticising.

Dick Moran reflected on the need for what he calls 'community champions' or 'social entrepreneurs' to have their own support networks. Ironically, boards can be enabling or disabling:

" I think that if I stayed for too long that the Trust and I would fall out badly because I would end up saying, 'Look you're looking at the wrong ball you're not paying attention to the things that matter. You're asking me to produce reports which detracts from my ability to go out and sell - and I'm supposed to be going out and selling. So there are very real tensions and I don't think that other development trusts necessarily face the same problem - but they're not simply one person entities -

they have a degree of support - I got lucky with Simon and I'm fortunate because people like Marilyn support me to the hilt - but without that I would be in deep trouble and Paul is a real ally - so I have got a support network. I suppose the observation that I would make is that the Trust ought to be my support network but it's my biggest critic. In a sense I have to use my support network against the Trust rather than with it and I would like it to be the other way round - maybe it's not a bad thing.

Yet the objective of the board membership is not simply a licence to act but also to represent the views of the community, private and public sectors. The Nottingham Renewal Trust elects its Trustees from 'across the area and representing all sections of the community' at its Annual General Meeting (AGM). Board members bring a mix of local knowledge and professional expertise. As mentioned above, Zuflor knew of the Trust before he showed an interest in it and was elected in order to represent the voice of the Sneinton ward which he felt was benefiting less than the St Ann's ward. Andy Turner expanded upon the Board membership:

" We have 22 trustee-directors, six from the local community, the third membership re-elected or newly elected each year at the AGM. So two members stand down or spaces are filled each year. Six members from the private sector, elected through a business forum - that happens at least annually, if not more frequently. We try and do it quarterly. Six public sector reps: three councillors, one GP, a local area police commander, one FE rep. The councillors are the ones we ask to be re-elected then, because we can't change the police and the GP is a very active member of the board and the FE is cyclical through a vote at the AGM because we've got three colleges who work locally.

'They do the politiking'

Using the Nottingham Renewal Trust as an example, one can infer that the public sector representatives invited to sit on trust boards have a professional 'habit of involvement'. Certainly, local councillors are, by their very nature, politically involved in community matters. A politician's role as trustee may lead to tensions if party politics or vested interests and the aims of the trust conflict. Commenting on the politicians' membership of the Southmead Development Trust, Jack Reddall observed:

The two councillors we've got are directors and Trust members, but they're also on the inner cabinet of the new cabinet City Council. One is Deputy Leader and his main area concerns education and lifelong learning and the other one is on social services and health. It's only last May they got voted into office. They're in an awkward position. I'm not sticking up for them, but being cabinet members, they're very aware of a vested interest, so obviously when discussions are made - or I assume when discussions are made at the Trust - they have to state their position and have to stand back. Again I'm assuming - but I would imagine that's how it is.

John Weston highlighted how politicians' good intentions can weaken:

I think deep down they are for the Trust, but they are councillors first. There are times when I think they decide - no more than I would in their position decide - to pull away at this point.

In contrast, Andy Turner noted:

The politicians we have are senior members within the Labour group. We also have one Tory aboard in Greenwood ward which skirts the outside of our area. Nottingham City's got a cabinet style and I have the Lead Member on Education, Employment and Development in one member and Chair of Housing in another member. So we have senior members who are fully signed up to the way the Trust is working and aren't averse to kicking the City when they need to. They actually behave

themselves on the board. They don't do politicking - which is great. They've been trained and they're aware of what it means to be a trustee and their responsibility's first and foremost to the Trust - so that's very good.

Gill Merrell explained how she previously had some 14 years' experience as a councillor. Serendipity and disappointment seem to have taken her into politics:

I was at a Women's Institute meeting and the Chamber of Commerce was going to take some lights down because they could not afford to run them and somebody said someone should go and speak at the meeting - which I did - and that stood out a bit. Later someone said there was a vacancy on the town council - and I couldn't believe how dreadful the district council was so I ended up standing for that and got onto that and eventually ended up on the County Council.

Gill explained how 'councils are very different to how they used to be. A lot of local responsibilities and local decision-making has gone away' with money ring-fenced and actions prescribed by central government. She described how the work of the Forum, which 'brings together local knowledge and local contacts' played an integral part of her Council-related activities (or, one could say, vice versa):

You get a phone call. 'Look we've got this opportunity to get some funding to do something about the playing-field and we've got to get permission from the County Council, but it seems to be caught in a chain somewhere so can you do something?' So often I go in and see the right people. It's things like that. The Regeneration Forum meetings are once a month - but the phone-calls, letters, meeting people, going into County Hall - means quite a few hours every week - but not just sat in a room - this is the important thing really about the community - things don't just stand alone. I was having a problem with one part of our bid and so I go to the Newquay Learning Towns Forum which was set up to get more funding for the town and the Headmaster was there and he gave me a couple of recommendations. If you're going to get a

successful community it spreads [smiles] - it's drawing people together - it's taken me a year to draw together people for what we're doing at the moment. It started just over a year ago and we're now ready to put in the bid for the feasibility study. It took time to draw people in slowly so that you can say it's really representative of the people.

Gill also made an important distinction between the role of councillors and community activists:

I think any group of councillors will meet and talk about things in a meeting or a working-party and then they'll go to another meeting and talk about something else. One or two people have to decide to drive something forward and it could very well be one or two councillors who decide to do that. Councillors should help community projects forward - go and see the officers - help push community projects along. But it's the people who live in the area, the town, the street, the estate or who have a sporting interest and who are the ones who should drive the projects.

'Some external support'

Those engaged in running trusts were clear about the tensions inherent in running business ventures in deprived communities. Jack Reddall said:

I think it's going to be very, very difficult for the Development Trust to have financial success and community success. I don't think the two can actually go hand in hand unless there is some external support. You should be looking to develop, but it's very difficult with the financial monies available to a Trust.

There was evidence, too, that local government organisational practices are being expected to be mirrored by the community. Moreover, there were also general concerns about local authority bureaucracy getting in the way and what John Murrin described as the 'cultural clash between local government procedures and those of the real world'. Gill Merrell elaborated:

I don't think it is the community who should support the Regeneration Forum - it's the Government that should. Where the community is lacking something it is quite literally lacking it so therefore you need to put resources into it. People can give their time on a voluntary basis for things such as the Forum and do what they can - but they in turn need support or they will fall by the wayside. A lot of people are lost because too much is asked of them - because they can only give so much time - only do so much. In a community the size of Newquay, there aren't very many people who, I think, would fall into that sort of social entrepreneur category - but what you do have is a lot of people giving a little of their time - and they need an umbrella underneath which they sit and which gives them support or whatever is needed. One of the supports they could give is not tying them up with loads of red tape and bureaucracy. Without the background knowledge I would have found it very difficult to do what I do because you're constantly trying to wade through cotton-wool. Often over simple things when often a simple phone call would help - instead of which you get stuck. If it's really the community and if it's really bottom-up then that's what it is it's a community which is fragmented with all sorts of lifestyles, all sorts of problems, all sorts of skills, all sorts of advantages and that is what the community is - the community isn't an entity of its own it's a whole lot of little bits - which all flow together, divide and part and come back together.

Lawrence Holden is Chair of the Eldonian Group, a leading Liverpool solicitor and Pro-Chancellor of Liverpool University. He brings a great deal of experience from these different fields and is well known in the Merseyside regeneration world:

I've just taken over as Chairman and I'm a solicitor in Liverpool. I do advise a lot of community groups and have had a long relationship with the Eldonians and other groups in the city. There have been a lot of big issues in the last 10 years and I've seen a big sea change in the last 5 years. The new administration is doing a lot of positive things, although that's not to say I wouldn't be completely uncritical in certain areas in terms of

their understanding of the need for very strong connections. It's a very arbitrary relationship. In the last few months I've been proposing that there should be a new Investors In People standard for regeneration agencies and a commitment from the top to empower communities and that monitoring and evaluation should be done by local communities. I've seen the regeneration industry grow enormously. Local people often see this as more 'men in suits' and are cynical. Some communities are not better off now, and some are worse off. They have not been empowered. Local Authorities and Housing Authorities tend to do things for their own purposes rather than to genuinely empower people. That is changing and I've had a lot of support from Housing Authorities and Local Authorities in this proposal. The aim would be to create a different working culture in the way staff relate to their communities. [...] the way they go about their grant making processes, tenancies and leases etc. Local leadership can be fragile and proper capacity building programmes are sophisticated. Some staff are doing a good job because they learnt from not empowering people in previous programmes.

Summary

There are tensions about the role of politics and ability of government institutions in providing community services, to the extent that some interviewees saw development trusts as a replacement vehicle for delivering regeneration, by-passing party politics. It is crucial that governments acknowledge that communities cannot be run like bureaucratic organisations. Listening to these people who commit so much voluntary time and energy to development trusts revealed an interesting mix of compassion and realism, conviction and vision, intuition and business acumen. There was no evidence of people having formal qualifications in regeneration. The attributes appear to be detailed local knowledge, local contacts, business proficiency and the ability to generate and articulate a common vision and persuade others of the merits of that vision.

All the interviewees acknowledged the importance of knowing how to 'work' the regeneration system and how to use contacts and networks. There is clear evidence of creating synergy by 'gluing' and channelling previously un-connected energies. Yet 'glue' is, perhaps, too permanent a metaphor. These leading lights are engaged in a form of social 'oiling' to smooth, nurture and stimulate symbiotic relationships and to release and realise the potential of individuals and communities. It is a process of development, of continuous improvement, and this requires time. The interviewees, whether paid, voluntary or commenting from a political perspective, all talked about working in and with and for local communities. There is something in these individuals which means that they 'want' to be involved. Involvement is in their 'blood', something which is inextricably tied up with their 'life's ambitions'. It is about 'doing' and 'being at the coal-face' rather than 'talking'. Words such as 'passion', 'vision', 'energy', 'enthusiasm', 'responsibility' and 'reward' peppered the conversations. There was a belief in human and social capital and the creative power of collective action with 'like-minded' people.

The interviewees in this chapter are intrinsically motivated and 'engaged' in community development, whether this is for their professional career, or political or personal reasons. The efforts of these leading lights in working for trusts' objectives can be supported through ensuring trusts have a stable financial infrastructure or help in kind, by having cooperative and active trustees, and, importantly, by minimising red tape and bureaucracy. The next chapter will explore how 'new' trustees are recruited from the community and how individuals who have a 'habit of involvement' use their zeal to recruit them.

4 Recruiting New Trustees from the Community

The reason why I got involved was because the whole road was up in arms about what was going to happen to us and I just got really interested in it. And when we had the original local group, which was councillors and just everybody else who was interested, I thought: 'I just can't be doing this' and 'It wouldn't work with him' and 'That would be awful'. And some people were really negative and Dick was just brilliant and said 'Swim on!' I just wanted to see it work and not trashed. I'd listened to Dick and I didn't think it needed to be something ordinary - I thought it could be pretty special. Marilyn Payne

'To make things happen'

The management of and appointment of trustees in the seven trusts investigated varied. The trusts comprise various levels of staffing, intensity and degree of community deprivation, and extent of commitment and approaches to community involvement. They used diverse ways to recruit trustees onto boards, as well as offering different training and support. This is, perhaps, unsurprising, given the idiosyncratic composition and histories of the local communities and the characteristics of the 'leading lights'. Indeed, the organic and informal development of trusts seems to make strong use of natural processes, turning on human relationships to grow, rather than bureaucratic or democratic processes. Community involvement in trusts may be formally set out in the constitution. Andy Turner explained:

> We wouldn't function, or we'd be outside the terms of our constitution if we didn't fill our membership so if our community reps all walked away then we couldn't deliver - we'd have to wind up or find other people very quickly. The split in terms of our membership is written in the constitution and it says you will work for the local community in delivering the programme. It's there.

Part of the strength of the trusts investigated was their ability to link into other community energies. Talking about Paddington Development Trust, Jackie Rosenberg explained how it feeds off well-connected individuals. She said:

> I think it has to and that is how it survives. By being linked to a lot of people who either have historic connections with the community or newer ones who are doing everything out there in the community. One organisation on its own can't. The Trust has benefited through the fact that I was so connected before I came here.

As the previous chapter showed, some people are intrinsically motivated to be and play an active part in their communities and participate in a wide number of community-oriented organisations and activities. In contrast, Marilyn Payne, for example, initially became involved in the Caterham Barracks Development Trust because of the threat of impending local development. The reason she stays is because she 'loves it'. Dick Moran's support was clearly important in sustaining her commitment, particularly in the early stages. Extrinsic motivation emerged as an important factor in recruiting new blood from the community and creating synergy to take the trusts forward. Although not always the case, an important consideration for having people on board is that they play an active part. Characterising the Newquay Regeneration Forum, for example, Gill Merrell said:

> The Regeneration Forum is comprised of people who are active in the town and know the town well and have got reasons for being there - it's to make things happen in the area.

Equally important is the use of personal networking to draw in the missing parts of the community

jigsaw. Southmead Development Trust, for example, is considering co-opting trustees onto the Board:

> *In order to further strengthen the Board, more use may be made of co-opted non-voting members, who can be called in ad hoc to input particular areas of expertise. These may be from local businesses, financial or legal organisations, retired people from the University of the Third Age or REACH. The Trust has benefited a great deal in the past from the help given by commercial partners, particularly SWEB (Jack Reddall).*

There is thus clear evidence of a proactive and pragmatic targeting of individuals by those already involved or leading the trust and sometimes a process of self-selection in terms of who is 'netted' into the process, rather than 'democratic' processes and clear 'representativeness'. In this chapter we therefore look at who is brought in, some of the reasons why and how the 'moving spirits' are recruited as trustees.

'It's not democratic'

Dick Moran was candid about the current nature of his organisation as 'a kind of one-man-band with a collective of people that are pretty signed up to its core objectives'. He explained the non-representativeness of the membership of the Caterham Barracks Development Trust Board:

> *The problem we have at the moment is that the 11 members of the Trust were members of the original local group who voted internally as to who would be on the Trust. They put themselves forward, wrote themselves a CV and a description and said, 'This is the interest I'm seeking to represent'. Then the local group, which numbered nearly a 100 people, voted on who would go onto the Trust. Now, without putting too fine a point on it - Robin Clements and I went and found the people we'd like to have on the Board and promoted their corner and showed them how to do it - because at that time it was about making sure the Trust*

continued to travel in what we deemed to be the right direction. Therefore the Board that we appointed is committed and is fairly representative of a fairly wide range of interests. But it is not an active board in the sense that you want it later. Marilyn is the only active Board member - she participates, runs, gets involved in what is physically happening on this site - and cares. The rest care, but they're not necessarily directly involved and they're not running the football and so on.

Membership of the Newquay Regeneration Forum is by invitation. Eileen Bortey talked about the tensions between democratic representation and encouraging involvement and open discussion about local community issues:

> *Membership is by invitation. There is no voting. It's not 'democratic'. For example, health wasn't represented. They've now been invited. It's as open as possible, but they're not advertised meetings. To tell you the truth I think there's enough people of substance on the Forum that if anything was not in the community interest it would not happen - because it would be known - it's that open. I don't think that applies to the closed doors less transparent situations. But it's not 'democratic' - I mean who voted me - a 'community person' - on? Nobody did. But how on earth could you do it? To be elected for the Town Council you have to stand for something - a political party or Bunnies for the World Unite or whatever and then ideally that's what you represent. I believe that we're quite limited in who would stand for election - because a lot of people don't like failure. But also there's this very definite view that you have to represent an ideology. I think that's the problem. The Forum's aim is to be wider than that. If you have all business people then it focuses all one way. I think that's primarily how and where it was - and I can see the validity for that. But should we focus all the time on tourism? That's where all the money is. If we focused elsewhere - would that make life better? Who'd answer that? I wouldn't like to work in tourism. But if I lived here and wanted to work, would I have choices? I think it needs to be discussed as widely as possible. I don't think town councils are open enough or big enough.*

What other organisations are there? You get people coming in demonstrating - if people feel strongly enough, for example, foot and mouth - but if you've got something amorphous like regeneration with multi-issue stuff you're never going to get a community in. I think that there's probably a fair amount of participation in the Forum by the groups represented there if they feed it back - if the 'reps' feed it back.

Yet, the importance of expanding Forum membership and bringing the interests of a group forward as opposed to individual projects was highlighted by John Murrin:

If they were an individual that just wanted to be part of it to bring forward their own particular project for profit - then we'd say no - that's not the sort of thing we're interested in. But if they came forward representing certain areas or organisations - then we would not have a reason to deny them. We have gradually invited new people on and basically Forum members have said, 'Do you think we ought to get this side involved?' Or, 'We know an organisation that would be interested. We're sure they'll send somebody.' It's been by word of mouth.

Neil Johnston justified the self-selecting nature of the Paddington Development Trust Board because of the limited democratic networks that exist due to the largely transient and ethnically diverse nature of North Paddington:

At this stage the Trustees are volunteers to a degree. They were certainly not elected. We started from scratch. We need three years to put in the local structures that have an electoral possibility - that's the problem. There is now a programme afoot to create an electoral process. We're facilitating three ward forums and this year each ward forum will elect one trustee and next year two trustees. We recognise there is a need for local residents' support which is transparent and is open to as many people who want to go for it - and also that there is a need for expertise and experts.

Yet, like Dick Moran, he was clear that a few key individuals had led the project unrepresentationally:

There's no doubt about it: we're led unrepresentationally. But we have led in what we consider to be the common good. At the end of the day - regardless of what bureaucracies or accountabilities or transparencies you have - that's got to be number 1 - so we have led.

The fact, however, that the creation of Caterham Barracks Trust precedes the development of the urban village it is intended to support, means it lacks a wide membership base and committees can prevent things being done:

One of the dangers of these things is having an entity that is small enough to be effective and large enough to be representative. We decided that 11 was the optimum number and 12 was the maximum. Any larger than that and I don't believe you have sensible decision-making - you end up with committee-driven decision-making and committees are not particularly good at making decisions - nor are they particularly good at delivering on a vision. I have the vision - share it with quite a number of people as it happens - and what I'm looking for from the Board is to endorse it and licence me to go and deliver on it.

'If I get voted in'

By contrast, Southmead Development Trust already has a system of elections, set out in its Articles of Association, which are tied in with the local council elections where part of the Board is replaced by rotation in order to retain a continuity of expertise. Prospective candidates are sought through leaflet drops, posters in libraries, a caravan at local shopping centres and 'word of mouth'. There was an implication that this last strategy was more persuasive 'arm-twisting' and confidence-boosting than neutral information provision of the opportunity to become a trustee.

Retiring after six years as a Trustee on the Board, John Weston pointed out that linking the Trust's elections with the council elections and providing two voting slips so that electors could vote simultaneously doubled the number of votes cast.

> *When I first stood I got 362 votes. My second term I got 700 - because it was alongside the City Council voting.*

Jack Reddall expanded:

> *Invariably what happens is that people come out to vote for the local council. As you've got your elections in the same points of Southmead, people who probably at other times wouldn't come out and vote will actually fill in a voting form for the Trust because they're voting for councillors. I like to think it's the other way round as well.*

Simon Glover is a docker and Health and Safety representative at the Port of Bristol. His passion is his role as Cub Scout leader and 'doing something for his community'.

> *I've seen so many bad things happen on the estate - abuse of drugs, social abuse - and we can't allow it to go on - it hurts me inside to see it. That's what makes me tick, I think.*

Simon has been a Southmead Development Trustee for six months and explained how the Trust seeks to be inclusive through the appointment of its Trustees:

> *We try to involve everybody on the estate. And that's probably why the Trust take the view that we have people like myself from the estate as trustees or directors. So we have a say. People may not like what we're doing here. They may see me as a pillar of the community, for I'm Cub Scout Leader - well-respected from a young age because I look after mainly age 8 until 11 and then I assist with 11 to 16. Then it's someone you know. And they say, 'We'll go and see Simon'. And they have a word. And then I'm able to introduce them to the Trust or the things set up by the Trust.*

Simon went on to explain the election process and why he stood:

> *It works like this. To be a trustee I have to be elected. I had the highest amount of votes. I can't remember how many it was. I don't get off on that. I was elected, so people knew me - to vote for me. And you didn't just vote for one, you voted for three or four and there were, say, eight candidates. I went round canvassing. I knocked on doors. I don't find that easy. I spoke to all my Cub pack parents. I spoke to the Scout troop. I spoke to the local school - to the parents at the local primary school because obviously that was the age group I deal with, so it was far easier for me to do that - and there isn't a secondary school in Southmead. And only people with a BS10 postal address could vote. People know me - the local builder knows me. Your photograph is up at the Library, at the local shops, the Health Centre, and the public places people use like the churches, here. And I said, 'We are standing as trustees for Southmead Development Trust to have a say in what happens for people in Southmead'. I felt that I could be a voice for the community - generally youth. I mean even the old age pensioners need a voice, but we have people on the Trust that are wardens of the old age pensioners so they've got a voice, but very few people are there for the youth.*

I'm in with the youth, you know a semi-professional (because I'm not a paid youth worker, but I've got qualifications with youth). I felt that I could bring the ideas of youth to the Trust and be a link really.

'Coming up to sixty and frightened to death of computers', Angela Weston became involved with Southmead Development Trust when she attended a basic computer course and successfully passed to receive the first certificate she had ever had in her life. She kept in contact with the Greenway Centre where her husband, John Weston, was a trustee and who spoke about Trust business at home. Now a trustee for six months herself, Angela explained:

> *I got talked into it. Maxine, who works at the Trust, said, 'Angie you can stand.' 'No Maxine I can't,' I said. And she said, 'Give it a try.' So she kept on, every time she saw me, 'Have you thought about it?' And I used to get this every time I came into the Greenway Centre. And in the end I said, 'If I get the votes. If I get voted in.' So I put the word around and said I was going to stand and I've got a feeling I got about 390 odd votes. I know it was quite a few and I was so shocked I couldn't believe it. We had all our photographs taken and we had like an open night here where everybody met everybody else. I was quite surprised because I really genuinely didn't think I'd be voted in.*

Angela plays an active part in her community. She cleans for her church and prepares meals three times a month for elderly people through the Baptist Church and a Friendship Circle. Angela uses her personal contacts, mainly the elderly, to feed ideas into and from the Trust and the community.

> *You do it by word of mouth really. You sit and you listen. I mean we might get an elderly person who's got a problem - perhaps where they live and this kind of thing. And if it's something that you feel the Trust can deal with, then you can put it to the person you think would know and you can pass the information back. I go out and I meet people. When I go down the road I talk to all people. Elderly people lots. Because some of the elderly*

people, they might not see anybody from one day to the next and they come out just to speak to somebody. And I believe I speak to everybody. They get a 'Good morning, how are you?' They want to stand and talk for ten minutes and I'm willing to stand and listen.

Becoming a trustee was very hard for Angela at first:

> *I did find it very hard to start with because it's something I've never done before. For example, what they were talking about - the language that some people use. Someone will come in, perhaps, and give us a talk from the council. I find sometimes I don't always understand the wording they use, but if they said it in basic language I would understand. But by being here and by trying to understand, I understand a lot more now than I did. I've still got an awful long way to go because it is an awful lot to take in. I mean you don't realise the responsibility you've got as a trustee, and it's a big responsibility that could be quite serious really when you think that you are responsible for the people that work here, you're responsible for what goes on here and a couple of times I've said, 'Gee what have I taken on?' It's been a challenge and it's been good for me. Because it's brought me out of myself and it's made me see that I'm a person in my own right. Because up until about ten years ago I didn't believe in myself at all, in any way, shape or form. It's only been in the last, maybe eight years that I've started coming out of myself. It's taken me a long time. But I've got more confidence now. I mean I can talk to people. I can go into a place now and talk to anybody. I don't care how high up they are. I can speak to them, but I could never do that before. So it's been a real challenge to me - and that was starting a computer course. And that's what it did. So it's been very good.*

Feeling uncomfortable may well discourage people from participating. Yet, as Angela's story shows, individuals can feel very 'empowered' if they are able to make their voice heard. Likewise, Marilyn Payne remembers:

" *At the very first meeting when the Barracks were sold, we were down at the council offices and I wanted to say something. If I could have just butted in I'd have been alright - but I had to wait until I got the nod and by the time it got to my turn my heart was beating and I started to say it and then I forgot what I was going to say. Big silence. And then, at the local group meetings to discuss the open day I wanted to say something and I just couldn't. I found that when I did someone would butt in. But they didn't to other people - although they did to me. I've got a lot better and I can actually say what I want. So it's brought me out of myself - it's given me something else to fill my time up with. It has done a lot. It's opened my eyes to loads of things and people and councillors and how the community is run and the politics.*

There was clear evidence in some trusts of a frustration with local politicians. For example, Marilyn noted what an enlightening experience, involvement with local councillors had been:

" *I sat on this local group with councillor-type people. God! I was just horrified really. Some of the things that I've listened to and that they said. I've thought, 'And you're supposedly trying to run our country'. It's all petty and pathetic some of it. You know how they do in parliament, they all mutter and 'grunt grunt'. It was like that and this chap was talking through people and I thought, 'How rude!' This is really ignorant. And it was a real eye-opener.*

'Volunteers with an idea they want to see happen'

John Murrin explained that the voluntary nature of the Newquay Regeneration Forum has meant that it has expanded largely by drawing on personal contacts and networks:

" *I think it's probably the only way you can do it. You can speak to people as a contact. If you rang them out of the blue and said, 'Do you want to get involved?' they'd say, 'No'. It's knowing who to speak to in the relevant organisation. The Forum's built on the fact that you are asking people to volunteer their time. If you've got volunteers with an idea they want to see happen and they're willing to work on it then that's more important than saying to somebody, 'I want you to sit on the committee and build up a project you know nothing about'.*

Yet, there are tensions between formality, inclusivity, talk and action. John Murrin explained:

" *We have not tried to get too big. Perhaps that's a mistake in the current climate because we need to be inclusive and get the voice of the community coming forward to support the funding applications we make, but that's only been very recent - the last six to twelve months. The trouble is that if you have a meeting with fifty or sixty people, you still end up with half a dozen people that actually do the work. But you spend most of the meeting with other people chipping in their ideas. ... The way Objective One is structured, you've so many strategic filtering committees and monitoring bodies and so on. What you don't have is actual people on the ground to do the project. The local Council can advise on how to fill in a seventy page Objective One form and do a little feasibility study - but what they won't do is do the project itself. And I see that as an area where we can actually do things. ... A lot of it's done by word of mouth. I know so-and-so and perhaps they might know a bit about this. Someone will ring me and say, 'We need an accountant to advise on a business plan or whatever. Where do you think we might get some money from? What about the VAT aspects?' But there aren't the people - certainly in an area like this - that are proactive in the local government line in getting things moving. ... Quite a few of us have joined the Forum to actually do things rather than sit on committees and talk about it.*

The degree of active involvement varies and this can cause frustration for more active board members, as one member (anonymised) ventured:

When I look at the Board of Trustees I think, 'Well you're useless', 'You do nothing', 'You just nod'. You don't see them from one month to the next and then they're there - if they turn up - and what have they done? What have they actually put into it? Except agree -or disagree - to what [name of director] comes up with - I mean I'm sounding pretty negative about some of it but I'm not - I think it's all going to work out and be brilliant but it's going to be hard work and it's going to be hard work from the few that will get the rest motivated.

The personal stories recounted here clearly show a process of osmosis between the conventional political arena and what Neil Johnston described as the 'apolitical' trust. Yet, there was also evidence that involvement in trusts leads to a wider interest in local politics and community affairs more generally and that the workings of trusts are necessarily entangled in government bureaucracy because, in many instances, trusts are community off-shoots with a legal requirement to meet local authority conditions of funding or service-delivery or asset management. As a consequence, trusts may lack the power and independence to implement their ideas. Drawing on her own experience, Gill Merrell observed:

People get involved in the Regeneration Forum and then, after a while, you are faced with all the things which impact on what you are trying to do - and it's not easy to do things which seem very simple to the 'man in the street'. But when you come down to it, you can't do it, for a whole load of reasons, well then people do what I did. Say: 'Well, if you can't beat 'em join 'em'. One member of the Forum - at least one - will be standing at the local elections.

'Prioritising and tackling what you can in manageable chunks'

There was some evidence of training and support for new trustees. Paddington Development Trust, for example, provides new trustees with a list of regeneration acronyms. Andy Turner explained:

It's a case of prioritising and tackling what you can in manageable chunks. We think of ways of getting directors out and about looking at examples of good practice elsewhere. So if we can't find any local equivalents of an issue locally we jump on the bus and use other networks. How can we learn from somewhere else? It's about broadening horizons.

New trustees can clearly find the role challenging and questions emerged about who is responsible for providing training. Dick Moran gave an example:

I've gone to war with County Council because I believe that they should have come in when we set up this entity and offered training. They should have said we will help you to induct all your staff - we will take you through the police checking regimes, we will make sure that in terms of child protection policy you've got it right before you start - and they've offered nothing.

John Weston who is stepping down after six years as a Trustee was frank about his frustration at the lack of initial training and how the City Council's attitude to Trustees' needs changed when they became responsible for large funds. He believes that 'gradual training' is necessary because people's life experiences may not prepare them for running a business:

It was hard for the Trustees when we came, because we were just ordinary people. We weren't knowledgeable about the business procedures. Most of us were unemployed. Prior to my accident, I was with machining, prior to that I was a supervisor instructor on YTS and YOP. We asked the City Council to train us within the first

eighteen months and nothing was done because they would have had to fork out the money. Now we've got some money they say we should all be trained in the structure of a company, accounts, general development, good business practices to keep the Trust going. I feel after five and half years for the Council to tell me I have to go and be trained when I know I'm standing down!.. And unfortunately it's a rushed job. My wife went to two of the sessions - she couldn't go to the others because she wasn't available. The first one she came back and showed me a 'structure of the department' and I hit the roof because it was badly made out for a structure of any organisation and wrong. But early training will help people because they come in with nothing. Little groups don't run like a business. It's all very well saying people run their own homes, but it's not the same. It's totally different. Yes, I think training is essential.

Summary

The previous chapter showed how trustees may put themselves forward or be systematically recruited by virtue of already being active in the community. Such individuals are often intrinsically motivated and the networking process is organic. In the beginning, one is drawing on one or two motivated individuals. Slowly one can draw in other useful individuals with local knowledge and their associated local networks. In this way, trusts widen their involvement and extend their influence in other networks of interests and expertise. Harder is drawing out new blood from the community where individuals do not have the habits and practices of socialised collective action. Not only is it about working the regeneration system, it is about working within and with the system.

There is evidence of considerable variety in how and why 'new' trustees are recruited from the community. A clear objective for community development trusts is to enhance possibilities for collective community

action by strengthening the knowledge base, avoiding duplication and sharing information. In the initial stages, it would appear that finding compatible individuals who demonstrate commitment to the trust's objectives and/or who wish to become actively engaged in the trust's activities is more important than establishing 'democratic' procedures for ensuring representativeness. The latter is, however, recognised as important in the longer term in order to meet participative principles of inclusiveness and transparency. Yet, one must first create a habit of democratic engagement and in deprived areas, such as North Paddington, this may not exist. The election process used at Southmead Development Trust, which links in with the local council elections, was the most innovative of the recruitment processes investigated in that it encourages a campaigning exercise which serves to raise the profile of both the Trust and the prospective Trustees. In terms of recruiting 'new blood', Angela, Simon and Marilyn are examples of how one can extrinsically motivate and 'home-grow' trustees. Here, convincing individuals of their worth and encouraging them to 'swim on' when they risk faltering is all important. Time and support are required to convert the human capital demonstrated by such dedicated individuals in their own personal community works into a form of socialised social capital which accommodates the rules and conventions, responsibilities and potential conflicts inherent in formalised collective community action. There is evidence that far more support and gradual training could be provided to sustain trustees, especially where they lack management and business experiences. This needs to be tailored to the learning needs and learning styles of individuals. Moreover, there are questions about where the responsibility for training lies, clear limitations as to how much trusts can be expected to do with minimal human and financial resources and also restrictions on the responsibilities volunteers can be expected to assume. The next chapter examines these ideas further and explore ways in which trusts use local projects to develop local human capital.

5 Supporting the Community in Local Projects

A project rises to the surface. You find people bring good ideas, but, unless one or two people pick it up and really go for it, you find it never survives. With an organisation like the Regeneration Forum it's got to come from the people themselves. I have this argument with people at the County Council and with regeneration people who want to impose 'bottom up' projects. You can't impose them on the community - either they come from the community with a groundswell of support for something or they don't survive. It'll start off, perhaps, in a blaze of interest, but then it just withers away. The Regeneration Forum did a project on the old tram tracks in the town which was a cut-through mainly used by people walking their dogs. It was really quite disgusting and a shame to see it. The idea came up to regenerate the tracks and there were probably about three people who really felt that it should happen. I mean everybody wanted to see it happen - but three or four people were determined it would happen and it took about 18 months to two years by the time it went through all the processes. It all takes time. Gill Merrell

'Help local people gain the confidence and skills to manage local businesses, co-operatives and community projects'

To 'help local people gain the confidence and skills to manage local businesses, co-operatives and community projects' is one of Southmead Development Trust's stated objectives. Through the interviews, some valuable insights and lessons emerged from the case studies around encouraging and supporting community engagement in local projects and how one can nurture and sustain local people. This chapter describes the importance of making connections in the community, working in partnership, using consultation and research to identify projects, managing power relationships, minimising the risks of negative messages emanating from involvement in projects, ensuring transparency regarding which projects trusts support, providing project leaders with infrastructural support and advice around core viabilities and competencies, offering personal development, certificating skills development and achieving a balance for the residents involved between responsibility and what can be expected from people giving of their time voluntarily.

'Find out information and get help'

The need to work 'in partnership' both to access funds and in project delivery was highlighted by several of the interviewees. The Southmead Youth Partnership Project, for example, brings together the Bristol City Council Youth Service, Working in Southmead for Health, Voice of Southmead and Southmead Project. The Project is currently seeking to set up a Youth Council. The Trust is also working with a wide group of agencies and residents to renovate two derelict shops through the Cranmore

Crescent Project. Simon Glover highlighted the Trust's magnetic force to 'pull all these agencies to pool their resources together'. Jack Reddall was clear about how consultation was used to research the need for particular projects and how the Trust acts as the information 'hub':

> *The Trust is the main catalyst organisation for Southmead. All small groups, irrespective of their size, can actually come to the Trust if they need advice, or want help with funding and so forth. We don't control them or anything like that but they can get that information. Local residents can use the resource centre, which we're developing at the moment. So if they need to know anything - how to get on the internet, or where to find this information, the Trust is actually the focal point - through The Greenway Centre, but also through the provision of having satellite sites. No matter what problem they've got, no matter what they want to find out, there is somewhere that they can actually go and find out that information and get help if they need it.*

External evaluation of Southmead's Northern Arc project by Wavehill Consulting commended the project as 'an excellent example of good practice'. In the report's section on residents' ownership of the processes, the consultancy found that 95 percent of the residents and project users had been listened to and taken into account in the way that the training is delivered and that 68 percent of residents or project users were represented on the board or groups influencing the project.

'I want to do something'

An important theme running through this study is the requirement for a 'groundswell' of support and determination of a few to do something. Paddington Development Trust has brought £13.5 million pounds through SRB into North Paddington and some 120 projects now exist, many of which would not have happened without the Trust's support, either directly or through the 'New Life for Paddington' Partnership. Neil Johnston is frank about the challenge of

'developing residents', both in the sense of 'developing relationships and projects'. He explained:

> *I think a lot of the community-led rhetoric is built on a sort of Disneyesque assumption that you put all this money into an area and all the residents are going to come out singing and helping you spend it and it's not what happens. So we work very much from the moving spirit context where we try and let as many people know as possible that we're here through cycles of residential engagement and basically wait for those residents who have the capacity to say, 'I want to do something.'*

Accessing funding is clearly a fundamental part of the support offered. There was evidence of a wide number of projects, both large and small, coming forward. Eileen Bortey is responsible for the Community Chest:

> *The Regeneration Forum has got the potential for the grand million pound projects - but it also has its £37 flag-stand in the local church for the Brownies. How delightful. The people who put that bid in and achieved it take an interest in what the Regeneration Forum does and actually came to one of the community exercises where we were trying to talk it through - so it made a connection. And now the Brownies are feeling proud and their flag is no longer kneeling against the wall but standing in a nice oak stand - meaningless to most people except the 80 year old ex-Carpenter that made it and the local Brownies - but those kids are going to know about the local Forum.*

'Perception and feedback'

Recurrent ideas running through the interviews related to the power of 'word of mouth' and the importance of relationships and networks. Neil Johnston explained:

> *This is flesh and blood stuff. One of the critical elements of community development is actually building, rebuilding, recreating networks*

of real relationships of people who know each other so that they can resolve their difficulties and conflicts with each other. A lot of what happens in deprived communities is that, for one reason or another, a series of conflictual relationships are never resolved. If they are not resolved, they can actually deepen and become endemic to the way a community is made up and that in itself actually acts as a barrier because you then create internal divisions for meagre resources and all sorts of frictions and confrontations arise around those resources.

In deprived communities where people may be 'isolated' from networks and information, opening communication channels for information, feedback and revising perceptions can give individuals the confidence to become involved and can change or confirm people's interpretations of power relationships. The messages and signals from the Trust or those 'benefiting' from the Trust need to be 'positive' if a domino-effect of project involvement is to be created and jealousies minimised.

This study has already highlighted the fact that governmental institutions seem to deter public engagement and yet Jackie Rosenberg pointed out an irony if trusts run themselves along the lines of local authorities:

> *There's the irony of saying we're like a mini council because the council is 'the big, bad council'. Are we then just a 'big, bad mini-council'?*

Neil Johnston explained Paddington Development Trust's enabling approach:

> *There's a danger within the organisation that we just keep all of this stuff to ourselves and run it all. Now that's not good PR locally because basically you're turning yourself into an authority and an institution. So we made a rule that we would only do things where there were gaps that nobody else could fill.*

Not only are there power issues regarding the trusts themselves, but there is also a learning curve for residents gaining power for the first time. One of the innovative projects being developed in North Paddington is a neighbourhood wardens scheme. A steering committee comprising local residents is being supported by the Trust and local residential social landlords. A number of tensions have arisen around the management of the project: its objectives, funding and the personnel employed. Much of this is because those involved lack the life experiences and appreciation of costs that setting up a new community enterprise and developing mechanisms to sustain the initiative require. Neil observed:

> *There's a whole bunch of issues that come up with this sort of thing - nightmarish scenarios - just around when people who have never had power get the opportunity of power. (A) They want it for themselves and their own self-interest and (B) they are often working under the assumption that someone is ripping them off. You get situations where people come to the Steering Committee ready to complain about the fact that the Neighbourhood Wardens is getting more money than their projects. People say the Neighbourhood Wardens costs around £120,000 growl, growl. And you say, 'Well what do you think it's going to cost, sixpence?' 'You want to put people on the street in uniforms with a Neighbourhood Centre and the management to go with it - what's it going to cost?'*

Yet, how residents' experiences of involvement in projects like the Neighbourhood Wardens is telegraphed along the community grape-vine is crucial in a wider sense, as Neil described:

> *Perception and feedback are very, very important in that the principal marketeers here are the Steering Committee - so all the attention that happens at the Steering Committee can get fed back to the street and that can turn the whole perception round 'like that'. I mean, if residents are unhappy at the Steering Committee they can take that out to the street.*

'A very deliberate and persistent pursuit of who's not included'

Jan is a beneficiary of the Paddington Development Trust (PDT). She is blunt about how the Trust's allocation of funding is perceived by some on the street:

> *One of the criticisms that PDT attracts on the street is that of croneyism by people who don't understand, who don't categorise it as croneyism. Some perceive it as racist because they experience a knock-back and think it must be because of that factor. There's a perception about who's got the better chance. That's true the world over. There's a deliberate attempt to crack that - to break through that. There's a pursuing of those not already in to make sure that they know how they can get in and what to get in. A very deliberate and persistent pursuit of who's not included and at least getting the message out.*

Jackie Rosenberg is also a beneficiary. She explained about the outreach work provided by Paddington Development Trust to help individuals bring new community projects forward, but she also argued that good existing community projects should continue to benefit from support:

> *I've been really transparent and honest about it [funding] and that it's not going into my back-pocket. But just because you're a good, successful, established project doesn't mean you shouldn't get funding. I mean if you're doing a good job then you should get supported for doing a good job, and you should support new, emerging projects, if they don't duplicate and repeat. I think there's a bit of mythology around the usual suspects getting all the money. If all the usual suspects are good and are delivering to the community and are respected and have the support of their community - what is inherently bad about them getting funding?*

'Infrastructure support'

Jackie Rosenberg described how umbrella organisations like trusts are able to 'demystify some of the bizarre things that people are having to battle with' in regeneration. Neil Johnston highlighted the support communities require in terms of structural aspects of projects and actively building public commitment. In relation to the Neighbourhood Wardens Project he commented:

> *The community does need assistance. Communities that don't have structures will require infrastructural support - by that I mean a legal entity and professional support and financial planning and things like that. The CDT structure is ideal for that, but you also need a route into the local community to residents so that you can reflect and inform. Then you can facilitate consultation. You can then listen and, within the host legal structure, create a power structure that favours residents who support the wardens.*

Similarly, in Bristol, whilst the Southmead Development Trust already provides a centralised physical space for leisure and training activities, in the longer term, it hopes to set up a number of satellite sites throughout Southmead, under the umbrella of the Trust, but closer to the community, with the intention of supporting local people with advice and support to access external funding.

'Core Viabilities and Competencies'

There was evidence of a commitment by some of the trusts to address the Government's agenda of encouraging opportunities for volunteering and management. The Nottingham Renewal Trust, for example, employs local people wherever it can. A new venture for the Renewal Trust is The Sycamore Centre which provides sporting and leisure activities, activity weeks for children and a volunteer programme. The complex of buildings had been closed for some 15 years and become a liability rather than an asset to the City Council. Andy Turner explained that it was rather too early to judge how successfully local people had been engaged in running projects at The Sycamore because effort has, to date, been concentrated on securing the resource and the physical work. Nevertheless, Andy observed that there was a lot of interest at the 'ideas stage', but far less in the building stage. People from the management groups had drifted away, although they are beginning to return now that there is 'more than a building shell and things are happening'. Comparing this fluctuating interest in other Trust projects, Andy noted:

Through the activity of business planning and actually focusing on core viabilities and things like that, local people have actually become appreciative of the implications of choices. They are being made aware. All too often in the past - and this happened with our ICT bid for UK online centres - people signed up to a bid because they saw a half million pound bid with a 1.4 million pound programme over three years which brings computers into our centre - great - sign on the dotted line. They didn't realise what that meant and what they'd actually signed up to. But, hang on, that means your centre's got to be open between 9am and 9pm, people have to be able to access accredited training courses, the European driving licence, all that stuff. Then, they thought, 'Oh my God what have we done?'

He emphasised how important it is to provide the support mechanisms and framework so that people can get on and deliver the projects:

We try to take a lot of the concerns out so that people can get on with thinking about their centre and how they can encourage people to access the programmes. It's all too easy for people not to be truly aware of what they're signing up to, whether that be a direct implication for them as a director or as a member of a management group or as a worker. We offer briefings and structures and we have to do the same with our own structure as well. So, for example, we have a Youth and Community Co-ordinator who's brought some very good information in about the health and safety issues within our Youth Centre, the whole thing about dealing with under-eights and police-checking. When it's new to you - when you haven't done it before - you've got to learn it and you have to learn it quickly. So what we're trying to do is to help people get through those processes and to build those core viabilities and competencies.

Andy made the point that tackling exclusion is often done through employment. Involving local people in the management of projects can support their personal development:

Inclusion is making people economically active or enabling their participation in wider structures by giving them the means to actually engage. Now what we've done with Sycamore is make the decision taking structure management group open to all - anybody who wants to come along can come in - but we try to manage that process somewhat - so we get a continuity of membership. Someone may come in with a particular agenda but we try to shape that. A lot of what we do is about personal development.

'A certificate saying they're competent'

Rob Stephens was appointed in September 2000 as the Black Youth Development Worker with the purpose of providing outreach and detached youth work for the African Caribbean people in St Ann's and Sneinton. He explained how the Sycamore Centre was working:

> *We're trying to involve the community in taking on board this organisation - what we've got here - this building - managing to better themselves through all sorts of activities, through sports or whatever. It doesn't have to be sports, it could just be a drop-in centre. It could be finding work. It could be educational. What we've done is just to start off with the basics - young people and sports because we know they're all running around and it's the holidays - so we're starting with them. Then we can dangle the carrots, like education.*

Rob is working with a number of volunteers. His aim is to provide an opportunity for these individuals to take responsibility for what they are establishing and doing and to raise the profile of 'peer education'. As volunteers, these young people are obviously unpaid. Rob has proposed a framework which would entail payment and a certificate of competency 'so that they can better themselves':

> *We're trying to give them the basic fundamentals and, maybe after a year, they'll get a certificate saying they're competent at this and this and they'll have had hands-on experience and you can't get anything better than that. I mean voluntary's good but there's a problem. You've got to realise that people do have to live and they do need paying at some point - if you want to do it off your own back because you've got a job and you come in of an evening - that's great - but people who are going to commit a lot of time to it mornings and evenings then I think we need to look at what processes we can go through so as to give them something towards what they're doing - because people have to pay bills and people have to eat.*

Dick Moran is also exploring formal recognition of activities at Caterham Barracks Development Trust where young people involved in the skate-park, Skaterham, are responsible for running the tuck-shop, mending bikes, selling stickers, cleaning up and so on:

> *One of the reasons why people don't get involved is that they don't get accredited properly and they don't get proper recognition for what they do. One of the things that I'm looking to do through the management of the CR3 youth project is, as well as thanking those involved for what they do and recognising what they do and that they're doing thing safely, is to show that they are valued - over and above that. I want them accredited, recognised in formal ways. I'm going to put in for accreditation, based on NVQs. This will allow young people to get some formal qualification. My experience is that people need validation for what they do. Doing what you do constantly day after day without some form of recognition becomes impossible. A lot of people give up very early because there isn't much recognition. We've got successful projects, like the footballers. You've got huge numbers of enthusiastic dads - most of whom smoke and cough a lot on the pitch - but they've got young children who demand that they go out there and knock a ball around. 160 signed up in the first year of the football club and there was a huge initial wave of enthusiasm from the parents but the hard core of serious people died down to 9 or 10 in about nine months. What was done which was clever was to start accrediting dads as referees. The dads became people who were quite important. You can be called up to ref a match. You're not just a dad standing on the touch-line shouting the odds sometimes abusively, you're something more than that. There's a sense in which recognition is part and parcel of the way in which you get people to do things and - from a management perspective - that requires the people who are setting things up and running things to be aware of that all the time. If they fail in that then those entities will not survive.*

Project worker Simon Bernacki at 21 was the youngest interviewee. He is working on the

Skaterham project, the skate-park element of the CR3 youth project in Caterham, during his year-out and he manages the website. He has been involved in various consultation exercises to raise the profile of the skate-park and its redevelopment. Simon also put himself forward for the management committee. No other young people came forward. Simon suggested:

> *Perhaps they didn't realise just what it entails and thought it was just community meetings and didn't realise how important it might be to have their view.*

Dick sees an important link between creating a vocational route and growing up in the community:

> *Let's create a vocational route for young people out of which they can define a future for themselves just by what they do with the present. Now not everybody will want that and not everybody wants to be employed as a result of all of this, but it ought to be the case that people who decide that they want to be leaders or they want to do something which involves working with people have the opportunity. There is a large catchment population and large numbers of young people. It ought to be the case that I can create training opportunities for a very significant number of young people in the spaces that physically exist locally - and I ought to be able to persuade all the employers to take these young people on as apprentices or as trainees. This is a means of giving them a labour source and giving young people a vocational development source. It also creates a connection between young people and their growing up where they're in charge of it.*

'I can't handle all this pressure'

Gill Merrell expressed particular concern about the increasing responsibilities and pressures being placed on voluntary activities and that too much may be expected as community projects become more sophisticated:

> *You have to have a balance. What can you expect from people giving their time voluntarily? If you ask someone to do something and they don't do it well what can you do? They're doing it voluntarily. Whatever they give, they give of their own time and you just have to be thankful that they're giving that. But someone along the line has got to take the responsibility. As community projects get more and more sophisticated, I see this as a real problem. In the old days if you gave voluntary help - then nothing very much was expected of you. If you had the time and the ability then you would probably rise to the top and become the Chairman or President. You would make changes and make things happen in your area. But now you suddenly find you have responsibilities - the School Governors is a good example. If you were interested in kids and the local school you'd be on the PTA and give a few hours of your time and go to meetings and come up with ideas of what you thought people wanted for the school. Over the years things changed and the Government started putting responsibilities on governing bodies and now it's quite frightening: health and safety issues, balancing budgets, a lot of quite heavy responsibility. That's alright if you're people with the time and ability to do that sort of thing - but if you've got a very stressful life and family commitments and you've got elderly parents and young grandchildren and families, as well as trying to hold a job down and run a business - you can give a few hours a week to help the community but can you really cope with another line of stressful responsibility? If they're not careful they will kill that goodwill part of people who want to help. People give what they can, but they can only give so much. If you expect too much from people then they'll eventually say, 'I don't want this - I can't*

handle all this pressure'. The idea of community involvement is right and proper - and it's necessary - but you've got to think about the lives of the people who are giving that - and how much they can give before it starts to affect either their personal relationships or the husbands and wives start to get fed up with it or it affects their health and they're too exhausted.

Summary

Several lessons emerged with regard to community involvement in projects. Fundamentally important is to create the culture to grow bottom-up initiatives, but so, too, is the requirement to be able to offer the expertise and guidance on how to fund, run and sustain social businesses, assisting individuals with the means to identify core viabilities and competencies. Importantly, the trusts themselves are learning organisations: developing, changing, enhancing their capacity, expanding their networks. Along with the community they are learning new competencies and strategies for action, especially as they seek to strengthen their own asset base or income stream and try to recruit new members from the community as trustees. Such learning, what some might call 'capacity building', requires time. Yet, having the capacity is more than learning a set of skills, it is also about having the time, space and freedom from commitments to expend personal energy and time on a voluntary basis. It is thus about physical and emotional capacity and recognising the potential of social involvement to contribute to a sense of personal fulfilment.

A particular challenge facing this type of social engagement is that rewarding and unpleasant experiences are equally likely to filter into the social grape-vines as people talk about 'what they have done today'. There is thus a constant pressure on trusts to create positive experiences and messages in order to sustain the trust's activities. It is important to acknowledge, however, that we often learn more from our mistakes. We thus need to manage the difficult messages, too. There is clearly a need for interpersonal and group working skills, as well as an understanding of business and management processes. Getting positive messages out about opportunities available, creating a history of project successes and making connections in the community between people and projects is vital to the wider goals of 'community development'. Devising transparent processes for explaining why some projects are supported and others not is also important. Saying, 'Thank you' and recognising the effort which is made, often voluntarily, is central if one is to maintain momentum. Indeed, validating people's learning through formal certification of skills developed through community work seems to offer a win-win situation. Finally, appreciating how precious, yet ultimately how fragile, 'goodwill' is requires us to pay careful attention to the pressures and stresses we imposed on our 'moving spirits'. This chapter has focused on the community doers and the groups and organisations working in the area. The next chapter examines how community development trusts involve the wider community.

6 Including and Involving the Wider Cmmunity

There were notices everywhere. But would people come to the Town Offices which of course we could get for free? No they wouldn't. Some do - but it's the verbal ones that come - the same people - always - not that that invalidates what they have to say but they can impinge on and make other people that are there for the first time feel very uncomfortable and not valued. So we used a hotel - and it was the bar - with the idea that people could be on the periphery and sidle in if they wished to. It didn't actually work because some of the town councillors came - so other people couldn't hear. But the premise was right and that was very definitely around an attempt to involve and ask people what they wanted and we set up groups from that. In my experience it didn't seem to be a painful process ...people came out and said things. Eileen Bortey

'What we're trying to do is to get everybody involved'

This study provided a wealth of information about how trusts go about 'including' and 'involving' the wider community, as well as some of the barriers to involvement. Marilyn Payne commented:

> *What we're trying to do is to get everybody involved with what we're doing and not just the few. But every time I speak to anyone about it they say, 'Well that always happens with volunteer projects - you get the few that do it all the time and nobody else wants to know'. I think it needs to change.*

There was a clear commitment to the principle of inclusivity of access to the opportunities offered and the dissemination of information through local community networks was identified as particularly important. As discussed in earlier chapters, inclusion may be achieved through having community representation on the boards and working in partnership with groups and agencies already working in the area, including, of course, the local authority, or through specific projects to tackle particular problems of exclusion, such as providing training or leisure facilities.

There was little evidence of high turn-outs at community meetings. Jack Reddall, for example, commented:

> *We don't get very many turn up, but, saying that you've also got to realise that on the actual Trust board are ten local residents, so obviously they get feedback from their neighbours, friends, you know, social environment type of thing, so you'll probably find a lot of local residents actually feed information through the trustees as opposed to attend the meeting, because nowadays not many people like attending evening meetings.*

Promotional activities, such as family fun days, theatrical events or arts festivals were also used, and there was some evidence of the use of the internet, particularly for the young people involved in the Skaterham project. More 'traditional' methods, such as open meetings, leaflets and posters were also used. Angela Weston felt that more could be done because often only trustees turned up to events. Yet it was not for want of information:

> *You'll find you'll see notices in a shop and a lot of people just walk past and they don't take any notice at all. But if they were prepared to stand and read what was on - they would know what*

was on and if they wanted to go - you've always got information on how you get a ticket or how you get this and they could find out. But people don't seem to do that. They seem to be in their own little world somehow.

Vital to the process is outreach work. Talking about the Nottingham Renewal Trust's Partnership Development Worker, Liz Lowe, Andy Turner said:

> *Liz and I spend a lot of our time going out to local group meetings that happen in the area, meetings that happen at community centres and various other things. When we're trying to develop specific proposals, we will set up specific events. However, over the last three years we've had a programme running with Technical Aid for Nottinghamshire Communities (TANC) and we have a joint programme called Create which is all about community capacity building and investigation of community issues and matters. So when we set out on the Sycamore project, the first thing we did was to get TANC to run a large event for us that actually engaged the local community through planning for real, surveys, questionnaires and through paying local residents to survey local residents as well.*

Yet consultation fatigue and unmet expectations are also a risk as Black Youth Development Worker Rob Stephens remarked:

> *You always get loads of surveys done in the same area and people get fed up with that and of having more surveys and more surveys and nothing ever being done.*

Simon Glover was clear about the commitment to involve the wider community yet realistic about the constraints of volunteers trying to promote the trust. He sees the setting up of physical satellite buildings in the community as vital:

> *I think there is room for improvement. I mean a caravan up at the shops for a couple of days a week when we're doing the campaigning and then nothing else afterwards... But it's all down to*

funding at the end of the day and volunteer help. Because none of the trustees are paid. Getting theses satellite buildings that's paramount. And it won't work unless people like myself explain it to the Trust because the Trust is protected by these four walls and this is the Trust. But actually the Trust has got to get out into Southmead and that's a big step and it's a difficult step. It takes money. It takes time. It takes volunteers. It takes a building. There's so many things that have got to be tied up. And there's so much red tape. And the City Council are not helping with that red tape. Sitting on the fence is the polite way of saying it. They don't help and there are good people out here and all you've got to do is tap into it and make it better for ourselves, because nobody else is going to make it better for us.

Paddington People is a quarterly magazine which provides community news and gossip and which profiles people active in the community. Neil Johnston described the communication strategy:

> *We produce these newsletters - 20,000 households a hit. We've got a web site which probably nobody looks at - but a lot of this is around forums, around meetings, around excuses for meetings. Our closest partner in many respects is the North Paddington Society which is a residentially based amenities trust which focuses on building and environmental issues. We've also got the Paddington Businesses Network which is for the businesses that want to work together, to intertrade, interact, do events together. We have established a community safety forum alliance with 50-60 people. It's a mix of the PR factors and it's getting out there on the street and inviting people into a process or into a project.*

Word of mouth, communication and feedback was identified again and again as a most powerful tool. Jack Reddall said:

> *We have open days, but mostly it's through posters, leaflets, leaflet drops and so forth. One of our main criteria is actually to bring the public in to see what we do. But with a leaflet drop - for every hundred leaflets you put through a hundred doors,*

you'll probably find about ten people actually read them and about one person might take some notice of them. Obviously another way is word of mouth. I mean the estate is no different to other housing estates in Bristol - word of mouth is your biggest vehicle. It's the biggest vehicle for complaints as well!

The King's Cross Community Development Trust put a lot of effort into the annual arts festival as a means of bringing together a very diverse set of communities. Mark McNestry explained the Trust's approach to involvement:

> *We do a lot of festivals and arts related work. It's difficult to be specific because there's a lot of it done in different ways. Festival's a good way of bringing communities together. We supported King's Cross Festival 2000. We put together a partnership of 36 community groups and organisations representing a whole range of communities. There is also a regular newsletter going to all member organisations.*

The objectives of widening involvement can be for a whole range of reasons, for example, to inform, enable, license, direct, implement or promote the trust's activities. Clearly involvement is not necessarily the same thing as active participation by the whole community all of the time. What emerged from the interviews was a very dynamic process with fluctuating involvement by different interests, with different skills and levels of commitment coming to, or being brought to, the fore at different times, and also a mix of protagonists and supporting cast, doers and on-lookers, providers and recipients. The importance of community learning, both as a means to determine which and how things get done, as well as a means to reduce social isolation emerged as a very important activity. This chapter begins by looking at why people do not become involved and placing involvement in community development trusts in the wider context of participation, before describing how conflict is a creative force, highlighting some of the insights regarding involvement strategies and then focusing on the issues of information and learning.

'Why should I participate?'

As pointed out in the opening chapter, there is currently a lot of government rhetoric about community involvement. Whilst the principle of having the option to be involved is not disputed, the difficulty of achieving involvement in reality was something that each interviewee acknowledged. When asked about why some members of the community do not get involved, Zuflor Hussain observed that community support would be more likely if people's basic needs were met. For Zulfor, the work of the trust must be looking at the longer term:

> *It would be too easy to say apathy. It's more than that. It's looking at what other priorities people have on their plate. Particularly in inner city areas where there are huge number of other priorities that people have just trying to meet their basic needs, such as safety and security. Whilst those kinds of issues are going on for people they're not going to want to get involved in organisations or committees or even want to know how you do. That's where the role of trusts come in and why I think it's more valuable for the Trust to be doing longer term work - because it's looking at ensuring that people's basic needs are met. Through that people can be more settled in themselves. Then you can make approaches and say: 'You can participate in this and this is what you'll get out of it.' Because they've seen the results for themselves. Rather than try to hypothesise for them that this is what you may get of it. People have to see something real to ensure their participation.*

In similar vein, Jackie Rosenberg said:

> *You read the Sure Start stuff and it's just great to read and when you compare it to the Thatcher days it's such a breath of fresh air. It's just when you're engaged on the ground you know how difficult those things are to deliver and how they can appear just like liberal clap trap because it's so hard if you're trying to raise a family in the inner city, and you're on low income - if any income at all - and you're trying to get through your day. The idea that*

on top of that you're going to attend six steering-group meetings a year on the future... It's really hard to engage people. And it costs a lot of money. And you need teams and teams and teams of community-based workers knocking on doors. You've got to go to where people live, you've got to sit in their living-rooms, go to where they hang out. They ain't going to come to you. They're not going to come and say, 'I read a leaflet that says that there is a Sure Start meeting.' You've got to bribe, cajole...

Jackie commented that Paddington Development Trust's next big challenge was to increase resident representation, but that the Government's focus on participation is exhausting people:

> The next big ambition is to get resident representatives included and onto the board, but that is not straightforward. It's easily said and difficult to achieve and the mechanism that's now been agreed to do that is to use the existing Westminster Federation Residents Association to help achieve that - which is not a bad idea, because how many times can you reinvent the wheel? And because the government has so much focus on resident participation, residents are 'knackered' and they don't want to.... why should they? They just want to live their lives. Why do they have to get involved? Why should they get involved in all these things? Sure Start and Children's Fund and so on. Why do I have to do this? If I lived in Surbiton or Surrey or in some posh area ... they wouldn't ask me to get involved in all these things. Why is it only inner city people who are knackered who have to do these things? There are advantages to using an existing organisation - but then I wonder how representative chairs of local residents associations are.

The issue of how representative representatives are arose again and again. Jackie explained it thus:

> Look at our membership here: a large Moroccan population - no Moroccan on the committee. Though it would be nice to find a Moroccan it's not about having a token Moroccan on the committee. If I meet in the street, or if I come across someone who is interested and engaged and passionate about something who happens to be Moroccan then it would be great to get them on the committee, but they need to be people that want to engage, otherwise it's tokenistic.

Neil Johnston argues that people only want to participate if their land, or rights or interests are under threat. People do not get involved because:

> They don't have to - they don't know about it - they don't want to - there's nothing that impinges on their self-interest in it - and a small percentage is based on, 'Oh **** it, it's got nothing to do with me'. There is a very small element of that.

He makes an important distinction between participation as a social activity and participation as community activism:

> If I am living on this estate and I am working 8 hours a day for £5.50 an hour and I get home a 6 o'clock and I know that there's a meeting at 7 and on the agenda there's going to be: piss on the stairwell, nuisance by children and a peeping tom has been seen creeping around the block, then what am I going to be feeling like? Why should I have to participate in that if I'm working an 8 hour job and doing what I can to keep the family together and I am suffering because of all this piss in the stairwell and all the rest of it. My participation basically means that I go along and complain. My participation also means that I will hear another complaint - probably from the housing association saying, 'Well, we did this last year and we cleaned it up, but you know what it's like.' The whole structural nature of participation is so geared to the personal interests within a community. I live in a village outside London - and there's a Parish Council. The Parish Council meets to discuss what it's going to do with its Millennium Grant, or whether they can reconfigure the priest's rota to be there on the third Sunday rather than the 4th, or whether we should plant walnut or oak on the way into the village. This is leisure management and people do this as an extension of their social activity. They're not going there because an 80-year old woman was raped, mugged and left dying in the gutter four nights ago and they want

action. At some point you've got to look at the relationship between participation and activism because I think depending on the context you're looking at - the one is very much about the other.

True, some people do get involved and do give freely of their time and expertise. But, as Dick Moran said:

> There are not that many people who are prepared to do that - or who can afford to do that.

'Cut them out if they don't like confrontation'

Both Dick Moran and Neil Johnston talked about using conflict creatively. Dick described how the community's active opposition to the proposed redevelopment of the Barracks provided a creative force:

> The way that social entrepreneurs - people like me - thrive is as much by opposition as by active support. If I get decent opposition then that's a good fight and it's well worth fighting for and it's an issue. Where you get half a fight everybody is apathetic and actually there's nothing there to create then it's really difficult. It comes back to the politics. I faced a lot of political opposition to what we were trying to do - and it articulated itself in the form of active opposition to some of the design framework. It wasn't terribly well articulated - it was quite poor and impoverished - but it actually made the fight worthwhile.

Neil explained how confronting aggression and antagonism can produce community activists:

> Antagonism is a very odd thing. I tend to see it as potentially creative energy. When people really are angry - partially because of what they view around them as their living environment and also because they are not being invited to engage - then the paradox is that antagonism frightens people so that decision-makers see someone coming who looks like a problem and basically tries to cut them out because they don't like confrontation. Whereas if one is prepared to go

through that confrontational element of a relationship often you will find that behind that there are people who want to do things - community leadership and community-led initiatives are all about the community. The community is not something abstract. It is flesh, blood, psychosis, psycho pathological, normal, everyday, funny people and those people who are unemployed in a particular deprived area basically want employment. Usually the people who are aggressive, who are angry, who are most difficult to work with turn out to be the people who really want to work locally.

'Residents want to be involved because of the way we're doing it - the approach'

In explaining how the Newquay Regeneration Forum went about consulting the local community about spending Objective One money, Eileen Bortey talked of the importance of providing a comfortable context for involvement away from the traditional political institutions. Politicking can clearly have a negative impact on community involvement. Eileen identifies the informality of the Forum as an important factor in providing opportunities to voice ideas and become involved:

> With luck your idea won't be something too contentious or you could feed it in via somebody and not feel too uncomfortable. I don't think that situation always applies. For example, at the town council a councillor might feed in your stuff, however, they might slant it politically and use it as a weapon. Whereas with the Forum it's an idea that is put out and opened up without being a challenge. It's there to be looked at.

Dick Moran has experience of involving people in various community activities. Talking about involvement in community arts, he explained:

> Over the seven or eight years I've been involved in it - the membership has changed fairly constantly - the personalities have changed, but the entity hasn't changed and it's always got the

same number of people there. There is this kind of enthusiasm to move it forward and do something - it doesn't matter that it's picked up and dropped what matters is that it's picked up again. Part of it is inspiring people to say, 'You've got something. Could you contribute? Could you do that, perhaps? You could help us with that'. And it requires someone physically to go and say, 'Look we've got a problem with this how could you help us?' Then, when they do that: the praise, the applause, the thanks. All of those things need to go in.

He was dismissive of the fact that people often describe him as an 'ideas man' and described himself more as a 'deliverer'. He plans the Trust's development 'like a campaign'. He is very clear that one has to have a strategy for involving people and finding collaborators:

Before we sent off the lottery bid we had a local consultation exercise for local residents. We circulated all 72 residents who existed at the time and 12 came - and we said this is what we're proposing - what are your observations? How do you feel about it? This is where you live and we're proposing an Arts and Recreation Centre which could turn this place on its head - and they were in favour. They liked it. They thought it was imaginative and would do something for the area - and for them. What we're having to do is to enlist collaborators - people who share the vision and people who wish to work with us in order to achieve those objectives.

Involving people requires a strategic approach and the targeting of issues:

Each time we're coming up with a new initiative we pick up a new batch of consultees who're interested. You can't sustain large amounts of community consultation over a period of time across a huge wide range of things - it's just silly. What you do is you pick your villains - and you focus it and attack that.

The important issue is to allow enough time, to be responsive and to keep things moving:

A succession of particular interests will emerge over time and they will develop their membership and will lay claim to resources and then will change again. I think what we'll find is a sort of snowball rolling kind of effect where different entities come to the fore with different purposes. I don't think that matters. What I think is important is that it is moving - and what matters is that different groups get a chance to articulate themselves properly and you get opportunities which are real. My job initially is to set that up and set up the financial framework to allow that happen. If I can do that I will have achieved that which I set out on ten years ago.

Dick also has a vision about how to create leadership opportunities for young people who, as yet, are not sufficiently represented or involved in the Skaterham project:

At the moment there aren't enough young people involved in the management committee but if you look at the feasibility study I anticipate that the largest group of people on that body will be young people. We will have to develop those people in that but I think that if we have a building that starts to challenge and we say to young people, 'The deal is you've got to contribute in some way' and we set up a young people's leadership programme or whatever which require of them a contribution, some of them will buy into that and some of them will then become representative - and when they do that they become spokespeople and when they do that they can move onto the board. But you have to grow them - it doesn't happen overnight.

Dick believes that, in the longer term, the Trust's activities will enable people to be more involved in their communities:

It's intended to develop the membership of this entity in such a way that those people who want to be involved are invited to be so - and, having been invited, get the recognition that is their due for having contributed. Subsequently some of those people will go on to develop that further. It comes back to that awful word capacity - I use opportunity which I like better - but it is about creating opportunities which are real - allowing people into spaces which they can then themselves articulate.

'Lattice-work Network'

Two important characteristics of North Paddington are the diversity and transience of its population. The reluctance to engage stems from a consequence of a number of dysfunctions, largely because people do not know each other. Neil Johnston explains how, in such communities, people lack the capacity to engage with each other or are inhibited from doing so, whereas in more 'successful' communities 'lattice-work networks' exist:

> *These new communities are starting from scratch so there's the fear, the reluctance to engage. You are dealing with people who are often at the lower levels of poverty, often with a whole level of dysfunctions because they are in that type of socialising in the first place - the whole drugs culture. We're talking really micro stuff here and barriers exist within blocks often defined by things like culture and language. The common interest that citizens might take in their neighbourhood doesn't exist because the needs are so extreme in a lot of places and they're personal. If you look at the networks in more successful communities they exist at a social level through pubs, through clubs, through social amenities of one kind or another. There'll be a bowling club, a network of people who play bowls together - or cricket there'll be all these facilities and amenities which exchange and create what I call lattice-work networks. So you're creating one level on top the other. The incremental growth you get out of that is doubled or tripled or quadrupled. You are overlaying. With things like community-chests, giving money to very small micro organisations doesn't really enhance the relationships between those organisations. It's a network that comes together around funding. But at the end of the day one's got to ask what is the objective of establishing networks - or discovering networks and linking them up? What's the objective? Networks carry information. They carry gossip. They carry opportunities - not necessarily major opportunities but micro opportunities. They carry neighbourliness - in terms of 'I need. I've got'. They can provoke local services in terms of baby-sitting, child-care. You can create the conditions whereby*

networks might develop but, by its very nature, a network is something which is pretty sophisticated and, as it's a dynamic structure, it depends upon a flow, a whole range of things - information, gossip, general interest, shared interests, 'save our football club', offering child care.

There was evidence that it is often small things that can make a big difference. Jan Yorston described the sorts of things residents in North Paddington were asking for at community meetings:

> *To get to know by name and address anyone who was vulnerable, say like old people, disabled people, children. To be able to help them with things like their benefit claims and to be able to put them in touch with people who could help with that. They wanted a community base and an individual that they could come to and give ideas, take ideas, store that information.*

'I didn't know or understand'

Neil Johnston doubted the validity of the question: '*Why do you think people don't get involved?*' For Neil, information is key and this section talks about some of the interesting insights around knowledge and understanding. Neil observed:

> *I don't think it's a question of 'why aren't people involved?' This whole thing about participation is a big misnomer. The critical factor is that people should be informed and, through that information, have routes to come forward and say, 'I'd like to a,b,c or d' or, 'Do you need anyone to do a,b,c or d?' It's the information that creates the condition for participation. You cannot railroad people into participating - unless there's a very good reason. For example, two little girls are killed in the same road and residents will come out - out of anger and frustration and general distrust. The development of a £3m site down the road is not going to bring them out - partly because they don't know about it - partly because, as yet, it hasn't impinged upon their lives. It's information that's the critical issue. Everyone within a local community*

should be informed of what's happening in some form or another which gives them a telephone number or a web site or whatever it is so that they can find out more. That is very important and this is part of this democratisation of isolated and excluded communities.

Inclusion thus depends upon knowing about the opportunities. The choice then exists about whether or not to become involved. An important part of trusts' activities thus seems to be about raising awareness and increasing the community's knowing about itself, as Angela Weston enthused:

> *Being part of the Trust makes you understand what Southmead is. I've lived in Southmead 25 years, I didn't know what went on in Southmead until I joined the Trust. I never realised just how many different groups - how many different things go on in this Trust until two weeks ago when Don took me all the way round the Trust and showed me. I didn't know because I don't come down here very often and I was doing community work outside.*

Angela also suggested that a lack of community involvement was due to not understanding how things work:

> *If I look back over the years I used to be like that. I didn't know or understand how half of the things ran. I mean I have a lot of dealings with the church. I didn't understand what went on in a church until I started involvement with cleaning it and finding out what has to be done and this, that and the other. You don't realise. You take things for granted because when you go in there it's clean, it's tidy but you don't think who's doing it and what's going on to get it done. And I've noticed it a lot. People do care in their own little ways, but they're not prepared to put themselves out to try and change it.*

Employee Simon Bernacki reflected that the serendipitous opportunity to work for Caterham Barracks Development Trust had opened his eyes to the local opportunities available:

> *I just happened to be in the right place at the right time. Dick needed someone to help him and the skate-park needed help. As it's gone on I've learned on the job. I wonder if I hadn't have come into this job whether I'd have thought about the community at all. It's just knowing that there's a community that you can be involved in. It's getting to people and saying, 'This is what you can do. Come and learn'.*

Summary

The case studies clearly showed a strong commitment by the trusts to inclusion and involvement of the wider community, tempered, however, with an equally strong dose of realism as to the extent of that involvement and time and effort required. There is evidence of local needs and views being researched, but a concern that some communities are over-surveyed without much being done. There was an acknowledgement that few people become actively involved, but that this requires an appreciation of the severe deprivation which some communities face and the lack of experience of collective action or opportunity to socialise, simply because leisure and training facilities do not exist. Engagement in 'successful communities' may be an extension of social activity, a form of leisure management, whereas in deprived communities where people are struggling to meet basic needs, taking the issues on becomes social activism.

Trusts use a variety of communication strategies and outreach work to engage their local communities, but there are limitations as to the effectiveness of this, given the lack of resources and limited capacity of volunteers. Word of mouth, talking with people in their sitting-rooms, persuading and cajoling, extolling the personal and social benefits may encourage involvement. Yet extrinsically motivating communities in this way requires considerable outreach work, time and human energy. There was a robust argument that maximising opportunities for information in a variety of accessible forms is more important than requiring participation. Important findings from this study relate to the powerful contribution trusts can make in connecting and re-connecting communities and public services, creating opportunities for neighbourliness, raising awareness, tempering expectations by encouraging people to check out project viability, helping communities to learn about themselves and providing opportunities for learning by doing. Through their non-partisan work trusts can create opportunities for knowing and understanding.

7 Observations and Action Agenda

First and foremost it's about having a commitment to the community one lives in - and that commitment is not to one's own needs but the needs of the community - though obviously your needs are part of that. It's being committed to the community itself and having value for the community. Now every community has its bad points, but it's not somebody who is always going to be looking at its bad points - but somebody who wants to promote the good points of the community and wanting other people in the community to see the good points and concentrate on those and get rid of the bad points. It's about who's got the energy, the time, to actually make the involvement real - have some value coming out of it and a sense of realism and awareness of issues. One's got to be coming from some knowledge base to be able to make those issues real otherwise your heart might be in the right place and you're doing it for all the right reasons but the way boards, committees, agendas are put together people can very easily become side-lined if you're not aware of how to make your involvement effective - I've seen that in a lot of organisations and I don't think that it's necessarily something that would happen in the Trust here but there could very easily be a danger of that. Zulflor Hussain

This study has sought to draw on the rich experiences of individuals directly involved in a small sample of community development trusts, drawing wherever possible on the interviewees' own words. The extent and depth of experience, insight and ideas voiced by 'professionals' and community members alike are thus celebrated in this report. This final chapter attempts to make some general observations and proposes an action agenda that the DTA and other organisations, such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and regional Centres of Excellence, may wish to take up and develop further.

Community Development Trusts: Informal, Organic, Dynamic 'Real'

The first set of observations relate to the fact that trusts play an important role in knitting together complex communities which may have a long history of disillusionment, social exclusion and raised expectations which have not been met. Most have found that people cannot be coerced into participating but must be encouraged and supported over a long period of time. Information is crucial to this process, but, ultimately, existing networks must be used and individuals need to be encouraged into roles and responsibilities which they initially feel ill-equipped to perform. Word of mouth, talking with people in their own homes, persuading and cajoling, extolling the personal and social benefits of involvement may be more effective

than more traditional methods of meetings and leaflet drops. The experience seems to be that identifying motivated individuals with their own networks of friends, relations and contacts within the locality works best, and then giving them the support to develop their confidence and capabilities in the tasks they perform. Community involvement can thus develop sustainably over time by tapping into the informal and organic processes which exist at the local level. These dynamic processes gradually expand into stronger networks which bring real benefits in the longer term.

There are clearly intrinsically motivated individuals for whom community involvement is 'in their blood'. There is a need for community champions with the charisma to provide extrinsic motivation and to create a habit of involvement for members of the wider community who lack the awareness and confidence to become actively involved. The case studies clearly show that trusts have a role in developing transparent modes of operation and disseminating information about community activities more generally so that those who lack the time to become directly engaged can, at the very least, be kept informed. Development trusts can become vital hubs in a lattice-network, bringing together leading lights and moving spirits who can support the micro initiatives of the wider community. Crucially, trusts are about doing rather than talking so that people experience real change for the good. Until people's basic needs are met, the government's exhortations for participation by people living in deprived communities are unrealistic. Regenerating communities is not a hobby and it is not a leisure activity.

New Ways of Learning

This report seeks to contribute to the Government's commitment to spreading the word and promoting the value of social enterprises (DTI, 2002). A second set of observations arising from the case studies is the importance of social and individual learning. Those employed by and managing trusts demonstrate an enormous wealth of knowledge about their areas and about how to go about the difficult task of getting complex projects off the ground. Most of those interviewed did not identify with the concept of the 'social entrepreneur', but many displayed an impressive range of skills and experience of the practicalities of community development which reflected the learning that had been acquired. Trusts are very much in the business of collective learning about their communities, their assets, avoiding duplication, telling success stories and explaining how to access the resources needed to promote and sustain long-term strategies. The tacit knowledge of what works and why in a particular context is often contextual and very specific to a time and place, but ways need to be found to access this knowledge for the benefit of those areas further behind or where no trusts exist at all. The interview questions made certain assumptions about the formality of the training and capacity building used. What became evident was that individual and personal learning was based very much on learning by doing. The implications are that a deep sensitivity to individual learning needs, learning styles and learning preferences is required by those seeking to 'build the capacity' of community members. Individuals' own sense of accomplishment is integral to the learning process. The DTI's Social Enterprise Unit must find ways to reflect the impact on individuals' patterns of learning as it seeks to mainstream social enterprise.

Making the Network Work - An Action Agenda

Given the Government's commitment to supporting social enterprise and sharing expertise more widely, there is clearly scope for the DTA to disseminate how community experiences of working for trusts contributes to strengthening social capital. Important questions are how best to measure the impact of, and how to disseminate, such learning, much of which is intuitive and based on 'gut feeling', what some call 'tacit' learning. The idea of funding 'community consultants' has already been raised by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. Consideration of how active members of trusts could be funded for part of their time to be spent advising other trusts or similar enterprises on a one-to-one basis should be given. Mentoring, whereby trusts facing similar issues are linked, or where a reciprocal bartering system is set up, could facilitate mutual learning processes. Those with experience in some areas offer this in return for expertise in other sectors which they lack. It is important to consider developing a system for 'accrediting' those who have achieved certain 'standards'. The DTA's regional co-ordinators could play an important role in developing and extending regional networks by collating and disseminating the exchange of experience and learning. The stories told here are one way towards mutual learning and celebration.

New technology has the potential to facilitate networking across the country. The emerging Centres of Excellence in the nine English regions could provide the focus for an electronic interactive bartering system whereby trusts could both offer expertise and seek contacts in other trusts where the advice they seek is available. This bartering system could be linked to training programmes whereby activists can learn to refine their skills by becoming 'reflective practitioners', articulating what might otherwise remain tacit skills. The objective would be to enable individuals to identify, 'package' and present their knowledge and skills in ways that will be most beneficial to others in the field, whilst recognising their own potential.

Learning Alliances

The potential of story-telling and sharing experiences of problem-solving is increasingly recognised as a powerful way to learn. One way to tap into community talent is through coaching and mentoring: helping others to learn, learning through teaching, learning together. The next stage of this project will be a series of regional workshops to explore what frameworks would support learning alliances and the good work already being done. The authors would welcome feedback on this report and would be interested in progressing with others any of the ideas set out above.

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