

Participatory Budget Pilot Project

Report Summary

Compiled – Neil Mushrow 9th April 2010

Participatory Budget events have been piloted all across the country, in many places this process is becoming the norm on how community projects are initialised. In November 2009 Stonydelph was chosen as the location for the first pilot to be run in Tamworth, The Community Safety Partnership had access to £20k of funding from the LSP to promote locality working initiatives. The PB events were planned to coincide with and promote the opening of the new Stonydelph community ARCH (Advice Resource Community Hub) which will open at the start of May 2010.

Participatory Budget (PB) schemes have the benefit of being a short process from application to receiving the funding, with the emphasis on the groups looking for funding working closely with the Community Development Team and engaging with the local community to promote and develop their own projects.

During the planning process I worked with North Lincolnshire County Council Neighbourhood Management Team, who had piloted a successful PB scheme in 2009. Their experience and the transfer of information between us was an invaluable part of the process.

During November through January I was tasked with finding groups that could provide community projects that would benefit the residents of Stonydelph and meet the criteria stipulated by the CSP, which requested that groups would address one or more of the safer neighbour directives which include.

- Include intergenerational Activities
- Address concerns over Anti Social Behaviour
- Provide improvements to the environment and the appearance of the neighbourhood.
- Health Issues including participation in leisure and sports activities
- Reducing criminal damage including deliberate fires
- Address alcohol related crime and disorder.

Twelve groups from across the region submitted expressions of interest, from these 10 were shortlisted to submit an application to be included in the PB process.

The 10 groups promoted their projects throughout February, culminating in 2 public voting events held in Stonydelph where groups met residents and informed them of their projects.

These events were supported by a postal ballot where all homes in Stonydelph were given the opportunity to return a postal ballot form.

There were a total 297 votes cast, (which would have made it the 3rd most popular party in Stonydelph at the last general election) at the two community events or either by postal ballot, residents were given a wad of £20,000 'Stonydelph Pounds' to place in ballot boxes for any of the 10 groups who were looking for funding.

Many of the voters said that voting with Stonydelph pounds was a fantastic and personal way of voting. There has been a tremendous response to the concept with all voters filling out an evaluation form saying they would partake in the process if it was done again.

The Stonydelph Participatory Budgeting project has proved to be a great mechanism to enable people to influence local decisions where they live. This was made possible through locality working, with Community Development Officers working closely within the community and with the residents to have a genuine impact within the community.

The four groups that were successful received over 3.8 million pounds worth of votes, and will benefit hundreds of Stonydelph residents; were

- **Pennymoor Community Centre** - A variety of specially equipped buses will come to the community centre during the summer holidays, giving residents access to services they may not have otherwise. Such as an Age Concern bus, a technology bus, a play bus, a cookery bus. Buses from the Armed Forces.
- **Staffordshire Fire and Rescue** - Working with young people to reduce anti-social behaviour, they will undertake a short sharp shock experience over a 14 day period. The students used in the program will be monitored over the next year.
- **St Martin's Church** – To replace equipment used by groups at the church to sustain current groups and attract new members.
- **Stonydelph Primary school** – Creating an outdoor arts exhibition made from recycled products and work with local.

The initial success of the Stonydelph pilot which will now see the implementation of the 4 successful community projects over the next few months, these will be carefully monitored, with figures and data being recorded and presented over the next 12 months.