



Reasons to be cheerful



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As part of the **Goodwin Development Trust**, a social enterprise focused on improving the quality of life for the people of Hull, The Octagon plays a vital role in creating investment for projects in the community.



In our very first issue of New Start in February 1999 (above), we described how a group of local residents on an estate in York got together to tackle crime and the causes of crime, improving security and setting up sporting activities for young people.

Our second issue revealed how artists were working with communities across the UK to bring neighbourhood renewal projects to life, providing opportunities for people who were previously disengaged and unaware of the possibility of change.

From our earliest days, New Start has highlighted the many reasons to be cheerful about the regeneration of the UK's communities. Last autumn, when we reached our 400th issue, we invited New Start's readers to send in their own reasons to be cheerful – the projects, stories and incidents

that have inspired and excited the people whose role is to turn regeneration into reality.

Here we've brought together 100 of your recommendations to give a flavour of the achievements that make you think it's all worthwhile. Some of them are stories of individual lives changed, of personal transformations. Others show how organisations have worked together to overcome obstacles and make things happen.

The stories we feature in this publication hit all the government's policy buttons: they're about empowerment, helping people find a future through employment, improving education and skills, entrepreneurship and place-shaping. But they haven't succeeded because someone in a Whitehall office has decreed it: they have worked because they've been rooted in the efforts and awareness of local people, be they residents or paid regenerators.

In a constantly shifting policy environment and with a battery of new challenges arising from social, demographic and economic change, I hope Reasons to be Cheerful will help us focus on what's constant: the resources, initiative and will to succeed of the people who want to make a difference at ground level.

Julian Dobson

Editorial director, New Start

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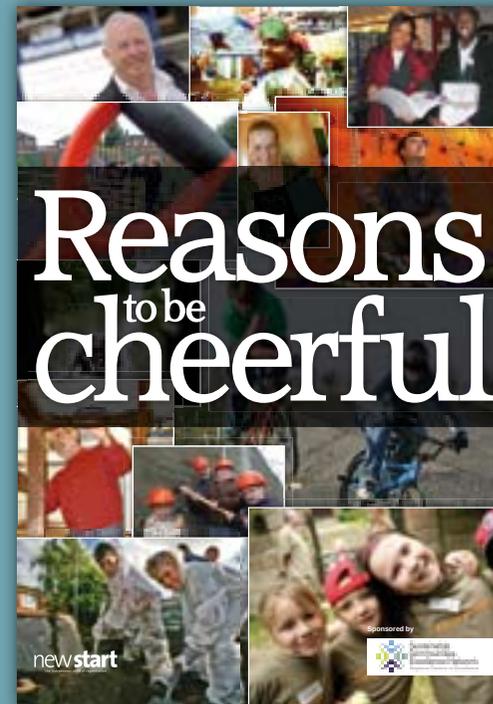
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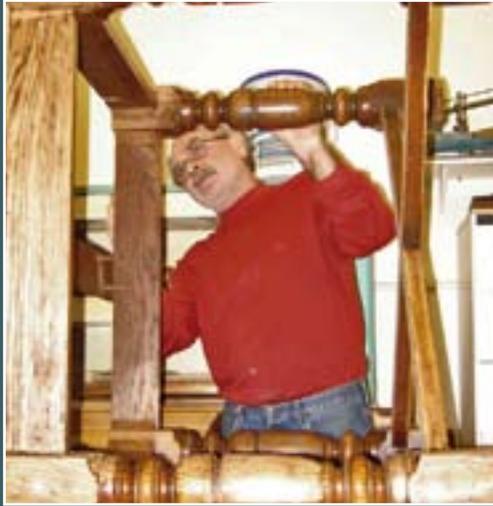
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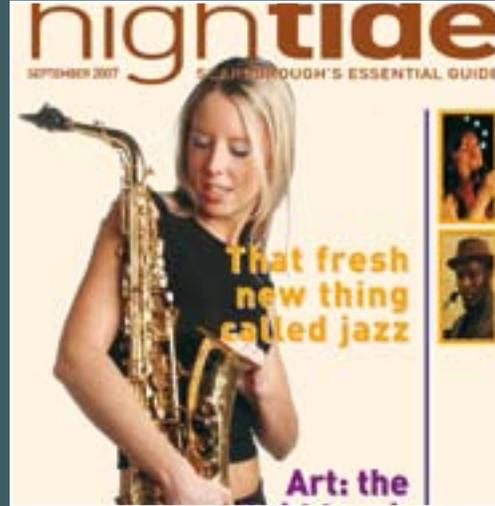
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www.newstartmag.co.uk

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Emmaus Bristol gives people who have lost everything - homes, health, self-esteem - a second chance in life. It's more than a hostel: it aims to restore residents' self-respect and hope. Two people who arrived as homeless alcoholics are now employed by the community, while many others work as volunteers. As one resident put it: 'I feel proud of Emmaus Bristol. When I came there was no workshop, it was empty, we thought how are we going to fill this up? Now we're looking for a bigger place. I was part of making that happen.'



High Tide magazine is helping to promote Scarborough's renaissance town programme, persuading punters that the resort is a place of arts and culture, not seedy hotels and fish and chip shops. The magazine was launched in 2006 and is sent electronically to more than 300 subscribers.

'We believe that in helping promote Scarborough's visual arts, music, theatre and so on, we are part of the change in the way local people see their own town,' says High Tide's editor Janis Bright.



Pictures by Grenville Charles

Suppose you let kids design their own schools? That's exactly what happened at a project in Barnsley - and it's *beam's* reason to be cheerful.

Beam, a public arts project based in Wakefield, aims to find imaginative ways of understanding and improving the public realm, and was so impressed with the work of schoolchildren in Barnsley that it staged an exhibition to showcase it last year.

Putting young people in the driving seat, the exhibition explored how involving youngsters in the consultation process about new school buildings - as designers, clients and users - can improve the quality of school design and education.

School design is going through exciting changes as the government's Building Schools for the Future programme takes effect. The programme aims to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school and half of all primary schools over the next 15 years. This investment offers an unprecedented opportunity to create school buildings that inspire learning and are a source of pride for pupils, staff and their communities.

The exhibition, *Suppose WE Designed a School*, focused on a creative consultation project organised by *beam* with students and teachers in Barnsley. Priory Sports College and Willowgarth High School, which were due to merge, took part in the project as part of their preparations for Building Schools for the Future.

With the help of an architect and an artist, *beam* asked students to consider their school from all angles - as a

functional place, an inspiring place, and a place for the community. Models, drawings and visualisations created by students illustrated their ideas for a school of the future.

'The Priory and Willowgarth pupils rose to the challenge of thinking about their school in an inspiring way,' says architect Prue Chiles. 'It is amazing how open minded they were about what a school could and indeed should be. Very concrete and important issues came out of their work, that need to be taken on by the people responsible for the new schools.'



Find out more:

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Web: www.beam.uk.net/gallery.php

Getting out of the gang 3

The **Makeda Weaver project** is a new scheme to help young men escape from involvement in gangs and crime, providing them with homes and training away from their usual haunts.

Run by Shian, a black-led housing association in north London, the scheme will initially provide accommodation for 12 young men, supported by two outreach workers. It was launched last October as a response to gun and knife crime.

Saving small firms' bacon in Fulham 4

Piglet is riding to the rescue of small businesses in North Fulham, west London. Piglet is the offspring of the PIGS - Premises Improvement Grants - scheme to give local businesses a makeover.

The latest initiative began in May 2007, with £425,220 from North Fulham New Deal for Communities, offering business support and advice in the light of competition from the nearby £1bn White City redevelopment.

All the world's a stage 5

Derwent Living in Derby has teamed up with a drama project to enable local people to attend theatre productions.

Resident involvement officer Sue Williams says some participants would never have gone to the theatre previously, and 'it has given them a new lease of life'.

New friendships have been formed and six volunteers now help to administer the project, which is expanding to include other events.

Dig, Manchester, dig! 7



Michael Farrelly writes: **'Dig Manchester** is one of Manchester City Council's flagship cultural and social regeneration projects, inspiring thousands of people to get involved with archaeology in their own neighbourhoods. Residents, schoolchildren, and community groups have worked alongside professional archaeologists from Manchester University at sites of historical interest across the city.

Northenden Mill, demolished in 1966 after half a millennium turning grain into flour, provided a great accessible venue, with adults on the main mill site up to 4m deep, and children on the shallower miller's house site. The four-week dig in the summer of 2006 involved 2,000 people in total.

We provided a wide range of ways to get involved: digging, sorting and sieving finds, recording, taking photographs, sharing memories and stories, painting, drawing, modelling clay, and writing poetry. This created the opportunity for a diverse range of people to get involved in hands-on archaeology for the first time.'

Find out more:

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The local voice 8



Peter Sutcliffe is community director of **Meden Valley Making Places**, which since 2003 has been responsible for regenerating former mining communities in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. He represents the local community forum, which covers the eight settlements covered by MVMP, to ensure local people's views are heard and acted on.

Peter, from Mansfield Woodhouse, says: *'Through the Community Forum and my role, every resident affected by the project knows they have a direct line to those making and implementing decisions on behalf of their area. The communities now taking shape truly reflect the vision of local people who have been involved at every stage.'*

All in the same boat 9



Ten years ago users of an Essex canal were in deep water when the arrival of an invasive weed threatened to block boating and fishing.

Since then, volunteers have put in hours of work to clear the **Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation** and a £9,550 grant from Essex County Council's community initiatives fund will help ensure the beauty spot remains a thriving attraction.

The money will be given to the Inland Waterways Association which administers and maintains the 14-mile waterway, which runs from Chelmsford to Heybridge Basin on the Blackwater estuary.

The council grant will be put towards a new workboat. The picture shows Essex County Council's cabinet member for localism, John Jowers, with his deputy, Colin Riley, and members of Essex Waterways in their old boat.

Find out more:

www.communityinitiativesfund.co.uk

Living in Hope (Street) 10



The **Hope Street Association** has achieved a massive change in the public realm and in perceptions of Hope Street, Liverpool, says *Hilary Burrage*.

'It's taken us 15 years from when we first started with the objective of saving Hope Street's Philharmonic Orchestra and the Everyman Theatre from oblivion. Now Hope Street Quarter is seen as a critical hub for the city-region, with its two cathedrals, two universities, several colleges, two theatres and an international concert hall, all along one kilometre of public highway. Not to mention the wonderful views down to the river, and the amazing diversity and vitality of our communities...

It has taken a huge number of hours of determined hard work by a small band of volunteers, supported by a lot of enthusiastic and committed helpers. The challenge which remains is not to achieve recognition of our locality, but to see how we can all continue to raise horizons while ensuring the community still feels due ownership of developments.'

Happy Hoppa puts Shoreditch on the move 11

*Carolyn Clark, deputy chief executive of Shoreditch Trust, writes: 'In 1999, when the Shoreditch Trust new deal for communities programme was formed in east London, the **Shoreditch Hoppa** was a high priority. Residents wanted to get to facilities such as the hospital, banks and the tube.*

Transport for London eventually agreed that our route could accept freedom passes and travelcards, and even gave us an official number: the 394. Shoreditch Trust proudly launched the Hoppa in September 2001.

After a year, there were almost 3,000 users a week. We received fantastic feedback from the start. In 2003, Transport for London agreed to take the service on as part of the main bus network. It remains hugely popular with local people and makes me smile every time I see the little red bus with 394 on the front.'

From pits to peonies in County Durham 12

Back in 2004 Kate Welch, then manager of Easington Action Team for Jobs, and her colleague Mandy Ryder were working to help unemployed people from ex-mining villages in County Durham. They both believed the environment you live in has a major effect on how you feel, and decided the environment of Horden and Easington Colliery really needed to be improved.

So they organised a two day 'ground force' spectacular. Thousands of volunteers took part in a range of activities to make the villages brighter and tidier. They distributed 5,000 hanging baskets and tubs, planted new bedding areas and trees, picked up litter and turned wasteland into community gardens. After Kate became chief executive of **Acumen Development Trust**, a local charity, she and her team continued to support Bloomin' Marvellous, which has now taken place each year since 2004.



Teenagers enjoy the mountain biking tracks at Fowlmead Country Park near Betteshanger, Kent. Local people can now make the most of the open spaces created by reclaiming previously derelict colliery land.

Fowlmead is just one of the achievements of the **National Coalfields Programme**, run by English Partnerships. Ten years on, it's still breathing new life into former coalfield communities - thanks to a five-year extension and an extra £20m of funding.

Over the last decade the programme has created 16,345 new jobs; 2,192 new homes have been built; 1,946 hectares of brownfield land has been reclaimed; and a total of £1.04bn has been invested by public and private partners.

Sarah Warren at ABCD (All Saints & Blakenhall Community Development) in Wolverhampton writes: 'Just seeing the community together at our fun day at the end of September last year having fun and laughing shows the community cohesion that exists in the ABCD area, and makes the whole programme worthwhile.'

ABCD is a new deal for communities programme. It has been awarded £53.5m to transform the areas of All Saints, Blakenhall and Parkfield, to the southeast of the city centre. Its aim is that before the programme ends in 2011, people will be proud to say they live or work in the area.

The majority of the programme's directors are elected by the local community.

Hurray for homework 15

A year ago **Melksham 1st**, a community organisation working to improve the lives of residents of Melksham, Wiltshire, set up a homework club for young people. The club has been a huge success, providing a safe and warm environment for youngsters.

'Children's homework has improved and children are not left to wander the streets,' says community trust director Carolyn Beale. *'This is a reason to be cheerful and to start another homework club, which we hope to do shortly.'*

Stars of the playground 16

The **Star Neighbourhood Centre's** children's playground in north Belfast has been created on a former 'peaceline'.

'We were told we would never get the ground and that we would never get the resources,' says Jim Deery. *'In addition we were told by so-called external experts that the park would never last - it would be burned at the first opportunity.'* The local children who use the playground have proved the experts wrong.

Bluebeard's bequest 17

New Heart for Heywood NDC and Heywood Safer Community Partnership in Lancashire are supporting local residents following Operation Bluebeard, which disrupted the local drug supply chain.

The initiative aims to prevent the drugs market from becoming re-established. According to MORI data, local residents' fear of being burgled has dropped by 24% since 2002, while the fear of being mugged or robbed has fallen from 57% to 42%.



After the awful flooding in Gloucester in summer 2007, when the city and many surrounding villages had no running water for nearly two weeks, life in the city nearly ground to a halt - and the tourist trade certainly did.

Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company was determined to demonstrate that despite worldwide reports, the city was not under water and the 'magnificent seven' sites at the forefront of the city's regeneration were never flooded. So it asked for, and received, £70,000 from South West Regional Development Agency, which was keen to boost confidence in the city.

Gloucester Heritage URC decided to use the money to put on a Tall Ships Festival, a high profile event which would boost tourism and give residents a reason to be proud of themselves and their city.

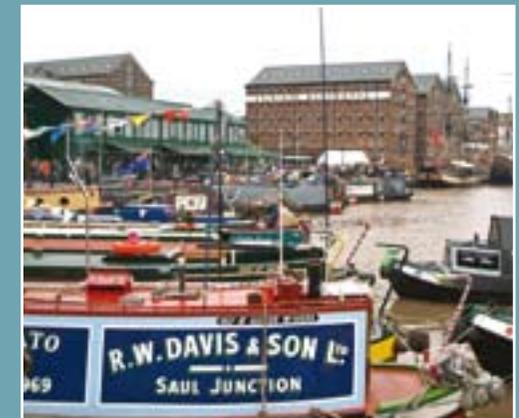
Working closely with Gloucester City Council, in just six weeks the URC put on the best party the city has seen for years, with 20,000 people turning out to see the ships. Gloucester Docks was buzzing with people and the takings of local businesses shot up over the weekend - an amazing result if you recall that just 20 years ago, the 18 tall warehouse buildings of Gloucester Docks were threatened with demolition.

Alongside the Tall Ships Festival, a range of events were held on the quayside offering a glimpse of how Gloucester might have looked and sounded 100 years ago. The festival culminated in a stunning lighting show of the

ships' sails and rigging with live music on the docks.

Gloucester Heritage URC wanted to demonstrate that regeneration is as much about people and their response to where they live as it is about new buildings. The Tall Ships Festival achieved that and it may now become an annual event.

As URC chief executive Chris Oldershaw put it: *'If Gloucester can put on an event like this in just six weeks, just think what we could do with a year to plan.'*



Find out more:
www.gloucester.gov.uk/tallships



Asian elders have been developing their creative flair at weekly art classes - and the results are now on show at Edgware Community Hospital in north London. The artworks will be exhibited for a year, and were all created by pensioners aged over 70 at the **Anand Day Centre**, run by Asra Greater London Housing Association.

'Many of the artists attended the launch and were very proud to see their hard work appreciated by so many visitors,' said Nila Patel, care co-ordinator at the centre.

Barnet deputy mayor Richard Cornelius is pictured at the opening with some of the artists.

Helen Barnes, neighbourhood regeneration manager at the Regenda housing group, writes: 'My reason to be cheerful is seeing the completion of **St Chad's Neighbourhood Centre**, a community centre on the Limehurst estate in Oldham. It was the catalyst for the complete transformation of a run down and troubled estate.'

The £2.7m centre brings together a doctor's surgery, library and pharmacy as well as the offices for Limehurst Village Trust and Sure Start. 'Its success has helped ensure the long-term sustainability of the Limehurst estate and contributed greatly to the quality of life in the community,' says Helen.



Family walks on Dunstable Downs are good for confidence and self-esteem. Picture: Tina Stallard

Just over a year ago Johnny Smithson*, a 42-year old father of one, left his job, suffering from alcohol dependency and depression.

In the past, people like Johnny could expect to spend years on incapacity benefit. Instead, he was referred immediately to **Healthy Steps to Employment**, which helps claimants back to work in Luton and Bedfordshire.

Since his referral Johnny attended more than ten sessions at his local gym, at a nominal fee, to complement his counselling and medication.

'The gym has been fantastic. I have a programme tailored specifically for me and I attend twice a week,' he says. 'I miss it when I don't go, and it helps take my mind away from alcohol. My friends and family have also been commenting on how great I look, so it's also done wonders for my confidence.'

Johnny previously rated his confidence and self-esteem at about 2 out of 5. Now he feels they are off the scale. His ability to manage his health has increased five-fold and his lung capacity, body mass index and blood pressure have all improved. His previous employer has recently invited him back to work.

'I can't wait to start work again, and am planning to go back within the next month or so. I've even been signed off my alcohol support programme early as I have been so successful,' he says.

Healthy Steps to Employment is needed: just under 15% of Luton's population say they have a limiting long-term illness,

and most incapacity benefit claimants have been claiming for more than five years. The project has been funded by the East of England Development Agency's 'investing in communities' programme, in partnership with public and voluntary organisations.

Clients have an initial hour-long consultation with a health and wellbeing advisor, who draws up an individual action plan which can include mental health support and physical activity programmes. For many it is the first time they have been offered the chance to discuss their incapacity in depth and address their difficulties.

*Johnny's name has been changed.



Smiles to Scotland 21

Liz McCoy writes: 'I am an elder in **St Paul's church, Provanmill**. I have been coordinating an adult exchange between The Gambia and Scotland for the past two years, funded through The Church of Scotland.

I have a smile on my face every day when I think of the last group of Gambians who were over here. Of the five folk who came over four had never owned a passport, never been outside Gambia and had never seen a train. These exchanges make so many people in my community and in The Gambia smile with happy memories.'

Village screens 22

Village halls in rural Derbyshire have been turned into temporary cinemas through the **Derbyshire Film** scheme, which in two years has helped 23 groups across the county to screen films in local venues.

The scheme provides portable film equipment to get groups started, but the aim is that voluntary groups should be able to buy their own equipment and screen any films they choose.

'It's been a great success and makes me cheerful!' says Ann Wright, the county council's assistant head of arts.

A friendly future 23

Normand Park, the only large green open space in North Fulham, is getting a £2.5m makeover in partnership with Hammersmith and Fulham Council and North Fulham NDC.

The new design, which involved three artistic projects, aims to reflect the diverse needs of the community, and a local 'friends' group will take over its long term upkeep when the NDC programme ends.

The new attractions include an interactive artwork which is lit up by the movement of passers-by, as well as a play area and a community garden.



Stamford in Lincolnshire is home to England's first conservation area. But its two town squares were rather the worse for wear. A local town partnership managed to hold a national design competition to improve them, raise £1.5m to implement the winning design, and worked to involve local young people. The result includes the engraved haiku, pictured - and the project has won congratulations from Cabi Space for creating quality spaces that respect and highlight Stamford's stone heritage.

Saffron Walden's state-of-the-art skate park provides a much-needed meeting place and gives youngsters their own outdoor space. The £279,000 scheme was boosted by a £15,950 grant from Essex County Council's community initiatives fund.

'The project is helping to reduce petty vandalism and antisocial behaviour which can occur when young people have nothing to do and nowhere to go,' says Jayne Clarke, secretary of the **Saffron Walden Skate Group**.

Andrea Martin, double bass player with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, writes: 'I'm one of ten musicians in the orchestra involved in **Music for Life** - a pioneering initiative, funded by Kensington Regeneration and the Foyle Foundation, which sees us working with children, teachers and families in the deprived ward of Kensington in Liverpool.

We currently operate in five local primary schools, and since we began the project in 2003, have reached more than 4,000 people through regular workshops with pupils and parents. We also encourage and equip teachers to use music to enthuse and educate children.

In an area that struggles with disaffection and social exclusion, Music for Life has certainly helped to tackle some of these problems. The positive comments we've received from participants, parents and teachers make me proud to be involved - and show just what an impact we can have.

So far Music for Life has improved levels of literacy, attainment and behaviour among pupils, boosted pupils' confidence, contributed to teacher development and created an orchestra of 60 local children. In 2007 it was selected for

Renew Northwest's exemplar learning programme, and it has also received positive comments in Ofsted inspections of local schools.

This project alone shows that music has the power to transform lives and regenerate communities.

But we're not stopping there.

In April 2007, the RLPO and seven of England's leading symphony orchestras came together to pledge an ambitious programme for the next ten years. We are working to ensure every child has the opportunity to see a live performance during their time at school. We are committed to building even stronger links with our communities, reaching out to people who haven't yet encountered our work.

We've come a long way in the last five years, but we've still got much more to do. Our aims might be ambitious, but we're confident that collectively, and with the right partners, we can make an ever-increasing difference to the lives of people in communities across the country.'

Find out more:
www.liverpoolphil.com/content/getinvolved/Musicforlife.aspx

Payback time 27

Dating for charities 28

Hanley's hall of fame 29

Inmates of **Stanford Hill Open Prison** on the Isle of Sheppey have been doing their bit to make the borough of Swale cleaner and greener, tidying up cemeteries and clearing paths.

In two weeks the prisoners removed more than 50 bags of litter from public spaces. The group is also painting over graffiti, clearing fly-tipped rubbish, and improving disabled access. The work is done by low-risk offenders under full supervision.

Voluntary organisations and charities in Leicestershire and Rutland are discovering how to build meaningful relationships with funders - thanks to a **Rural Community Council** advice project.

The matchmaking scheme has linked 283 groups with funders, bringing in £316,570. The project was funded through the national ChangeUp programme, which is designed to support voluntary organisations.

Lee Carroll is a neighbourhood worker for **Renew North Staffordshire** in Hanley, Stoke on Trent.

Lee is proud of the new centre where he works: *'Since we've had the community hall we have had somewhere to hold consultation events, afternoon teas, luncheon clubs, Christmas parties and much more. Over 150 groups have used the venue and it's turned into a real hub for the community.'*

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Wake up and smell the coffee 31

Meet the experts 32



With a wealth of experience in catering and management, Paul and Maxine Sadlier always dreamed of owning their own business - a local coffee shop providing a personal service and using only the best Fairtrade ingredients.

Thanks to financial assistance from **Black Country Reinvestment Society** (BCRS), they recently won the National Coffee Shop of the Year award from the Beverages Services Association.

Two years ago, the Sadliers approached several banks with their business plan, but couldn't get the finance they needed. Even with help from the family and re-mortgaging their house, they were still thousands of pounds short.

That's when BCRS stepped in. BCRS is a community development finance institution that helps small businesses to grow and develop by providing loans to those who can't access funds from traditional sources.

Two years on, Maxine Sadlier puts their success down to 'passion and a desire to succeed'.

'We are very proud of the personal service we provide and our customers are like a family unit. Many of them have been with us since day one,' she says. 'Customers recommend us to their friends and colleagues so we are always busy and never need to advertise.'

Find out more:

To discover more about community development finance, visit: www.cdfa.org.uk

Londoners who were once homeless or had been dependent on support services have been trained to become support workers themselves, thanks to City Lit's **Inside Knowledge** scheme. The programme, funded by the European Social Fund, helped 365 people between 2005 and 2006, providing them not only with NVQ2 qualifications but also with the chance to repay some of the help they had received as vulnerable people.

More than 29,000 people facing barriers to employment or requiring higher level vocational skills have benefited from training schemes like these in London, overseen by the Learning and Skills Council. The ESF pan-London programmes aim to provide £64.5m to more than 100 projects over three years.



Picture by Ruby Porter

Community radio used to be a niche activity for diehard enthusiasts. Stations would appear for a few weeks and then vanish.

But in 2004 the Community Radio Order made five year licences possible. About 140 groups across the UK have been given licences so far, and some 70 are on air. The pictures show **Sheffield Live!** in action.

Community radio stations are not for profit, run mostly by volunteers, giving a voice to people we don't hear on mainstream media. They enable communities to feel a sense of pride and can make a powerful contribution to local regeneration initiatives.



Young people in Redcar were happy to muck in to give overgrown shrub beds a facelift at the recent Make a Difference Day organised by social landlord **Coast & Country**. The landscaping work was requested by local residents and carried out by volunteers from Coast & Country's staff and PAYP - Positive Activities for Young People.



Wythenshawe has often been seen as the seamy side of south Manchester - a run-down, peripheral estate with not much going for it. Not any more.

The £23m redevelopment of **Wythenshawe Forum** was completed in 2004, bringing together leisure, learning, access to employment, childcare and healthcare services in one attractive and innovative public service hub.

The landmark building in the centre of Wythenshawe is a model of improved service delivery, underpinned by strong partnership working, and rooted in local needs.

The previously dilapidated complex was radically redesigned and refurbished, on time and to budget. Residents were fully involved, both through consultation and an arts programme: over 350 local people helped develop public artworks, the large ceramic floor mosaic, stunning fabric and glass panels, spinning emblems, paving mosaics and banners. The stylish artworks have transformed the look and feel of the Forum.

The Forum has created new local jobs and is stimulating investment in the nearby town centre. Four community directors ensure its work continues to meet local needs.

'The whole building lifts my spirits - I feel great when I walk through the door,' says Brenda Gixti, one of the community trustees.

The facilities at the revamped centre include:

- **Forum Leisure.** A swimming pool, sports hall, main hall and fitness suite attract an average of 8,000 users per month, and provide affordable sports development programmes for all ages.
- **Forum Library.** The Forum was the first Manchester library to pilot supported online access to council services. There are dedicated areas for children and teenagers, including a homework centre, and it's open seven days a week.
- **Forum Futures.** This flagship adult learning and employment access centre focuses on employability, lifelong learning, ICT and improving skills and training.
- **Forum Health.** A £4m primary health centre offers walk-in healthcare, GP practices, nursing, minor surgery, dentistry, speech and language therapy, and healthy living activities.
- **Forum Nursery.** With 100 places, the nursery offers childcare for Forum users, staff, local families and employees.

Find out more:

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Move over, Frank Lampard: here comes the **Chelsea New Deal FC**. North Fulham's first local football club gets young men who are passionate about the game training and competing regularly. Some 32 young men have joined the club since its launch in 2006. They're trained by Chelsea's Football in the Community coaches and compete in the Street League.

Child Dynamix is a childcare company which grew out of the Preston Road new deal for communities scheme in Hull.

Starting as an NDC-run nursery, it is now a fully fledged social enterprise running play and learning projects, employing more than 70 people and operating across the city. It has been an independent social business since 2005.

Shamwari helps people with refugee status to integrate successfully into their new community. Run by Regenda housing group, it has been operating for three years.

One volunteer, Banafsheh, was once a refugee herself and now helps others improve their language skills. You can view her story at www.regenda.org.uk/reasons/



With the help of local celebrity Bill Banister, primary school children start dismantling the wall that has divided their town since the 1950s.

The fall of the wall marked a milestone in regenerating Devonport, Plymouth. The three-metre high security wall has divided the town since 1950 and a once thriving community quickly declined.

English Partnerships has worked with Devonport Regeneration Community Partnerships and Redrow Homes, appointed as a developer partner in 2006, to rejuvenate the area.

More than 450 homes are being built, one quarter of them for affordable rent or shared ownership. There will also be a health centre, new supermarket and shops, offices and managed workspace.

Lizzie Greenaway, of Kirby Frith, Leicester, has won an award for her outstanding contribution to her community.

Lizzie, who has lived on the Kirby Frith estate for 12 years, won the Colin Smith Memorial Award from the East Midlands Tenant Participation Forum.

Lizzie chairs the estate's residents' association, and has spearheaded several community activities, including setting up a memorial garden and helping win a £20,000 grant from Leicester City Council for young people on the estate.

Lizzie's next project is to approach Leicester businesses to ask if they will provide funding for a youth club.

'I know it might take a long time, but I really think the young people on Kirby Frith need this youth club, so I want to see if any local businesses can help us,' she says. Offers of support should be made to Natalie Robertson on 0116 257 6749.



John Cummings (pictured) is one of Gateway to Gateshead's success stories.

'I was made redundant five years ago because my back wasn't up to heavy work anymore,' he says. 'Since then I've struggled to get back into factory work, so I've been trying to learn new skills.'

John now has a job in Gateshead Council's human resources department, thanks to the **Gateway to Gateshead** project. It's an innovative way of enabling unemployed people to move into jobs with the local authority.

Entry-level posts in a range of roles were advertised in local media, community venues, GP surgeries, and shops - and at a recruitment fair at Gateshead's civic centre. After a short pre-employment course applicants were guaranteed an interview.

'I saw this scheme advertised in *Council News* and went for it,' John says. 'I was really surprised that I got through. It's been great for my self-esteem to get back into work and I'm really enjoying it.'

From 183 applications, 65 people were invited to attend the pre-employment stage and were guaranteed an interview to attend the rest of the six-week course, run by Gateshead

College. Of the 20 who took part in the training course, 16 successfully gained jobs with the council.

The Gateway to Gateshead project is just one of the methods Gateshead Council's economic development service uses to ensure local people benefit from the physical regeneration of the borough.

Disadvantaged and economically inactive residents are contacted through drop-in sessions at community venues, and offered one-to-one advice and guidance, information on training courses, and support to return to work.

More than 5,000 local residents have now been helped into work, while 3,335 have been helped to gain accredited vocational qualifications.

Another of the service's successes is the Quays to Employment programme. Major employers on the regenerated Gateshead Quays, including the Baltic and Sage arts venues, have taken on a total of 343 local people, while 146 have gained vocational qualifications.

Find out more:

www.gateshead.gov.uk/Jobs%20and%20Employment/BacktoWork/Home.aspx

Kirklees in colour 41

Tenants of two high-rise blocks at Berry Brow, Huddersfield, are celebrating a makeover with a difference.

The facelift to their flats, which was commissioned by **Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing**, has been coordinated by a team of artists and designers, with colours that reflect the changing shades of the surrounding hillsides.

Customers are kings 42

Sue Williams at **Derwent Living** in Derby writes: 'Fifteen Derwent Living customers give up their time each month to read documents and attend meetings to form the Derwent Living Community Panel. The group give their time, skills and knowledge to support each other, the organisation and other customers. They do a great job and deserve recognition and thanks.'

Notts not negative 43

Areafour is a record label set up by the **Partnership Council** in Hyson Green, Nottingham, as a reaction to the waves of negative press about knife and gun crime.

The label has released Soundcheck Nottingham, which showcases 18 of the city's guitar bands. The record was recently awarded seven out of ten in *Rock Sound* magazine.



Picture by Jessica Dunleavy

Active Inclusion is a collective of support workers and teachers which offers one-to-one support and group work with young people who are at risk of dropping out of education or society.

Based in Easton, Bristol, it won Bristol East Side Traders' new business of the year award in 2004, and last year was named business of the year. Its work has now expanded into Bath, northeast Somerset and Wiltshire.

The picture shows a children's procession at last year's St Mark's Road street party, which was supported by Active Inclusion.



Over two months in 2002, **Operation Garden City** in Wythenshawe, south Manchester, reduced nuisance by young people by 40% and cut all crime by 18%.

The initiative, led by Greater Manchester Police, Wythenshawe Partnership and Manchester City Council, combined high visibility policing with an extensive programme of youth activities.

Police were able to offer young people exciting alternatives to hanging around the streets, including break dancing, radio production, DJ-ing, MC-ing, cheerleading, street dancing and drama.



My reason to be cheerful is that people in Hertfordshire are being given support to get involved in their local communities and make a real difference to their lives, *writes Natalie Webb*.

Dacorum Borough Council and Building Capacity East have just produced a community engagement guide called Engage which aims to encourage everyone in the county to engage with their communities better.

In the true spirit of engagement, the approach to developing the guide was to grow it from community grassroots. Engage draws on knowledge and experiences of local groups and organisations across the country and includes case studies from councils, community groups and other organisations.

It covers every aspect of community engagement: from why to do it, to providing practical advice on techniques available - newsletters, posters and media campaigns, questionnaires, focus groups and interviews.

It contains important information, expressed in simple, easy-to-use language, on sensitive subjects such as equality and diversity, working with faith and ethnic groups and engaging with diverse communities.

Engaging communities is not always easy so the guide gives real hands-on information presented in a friendly, approachable way. It is full of real life case studies and photographs. Where possible contacts were included so residents and community groups could contact representatives of case study projects, encouraging groups to link up and share experience and expertise throughout the county.

Engage was supported by an event (pictured) which saw over 230 people get together to find out more about community engagement and share knowledge, experience and expertise. A diverse group of people attended, from chief executives to residents, councillors to voluntary sector representatives. From feedback received at the event, 97% agreed that Engage will be useful to them. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent, people rated Engage 8 - even more reasons to be cheerful!

Find out more:

Contact: Natalie Webb, stronger communities policy officer
Dacorum Borough Council

Tel: 01442 228614

Email: Natalie.Webb@dacorum.gov.uk

Give me sunshine 47

A room in a Birmingham church hall has been given a £15,000 green makeover - with sunpipes, wind catcher, solar panels and insulation from recycled denim and sheep wool.

The room at the Christ Church Memorial Hall, Ladywood, is part of a £2.3m 'eco neighbourhood' project led by **Family Housing Association (Birmingham)** and the city council.

Local school children are now filming a documentary on the project.

A debt of gratitude 48

MoneyMAX is about maximising household income in the North Fulham NDC area of west London. Run by Fulham Citizens Advice Bureau, it offers confidential financial advice to local residents, enabling them to gain budgeting skills.

In the last year the MoneyMAX project has helped clients write off debts totalling £97,810, and reschedule payments on another £45,190 of borrowings.

Safer in Saunders Park 49

Residents of 175 homes in Brighton are reaping the rewards of the **Saunders Park Partnership**, set up two and a half years ago to improve services on the estate. The partnership has successfully tackled antisocial behaviour, rubbish dumping, and crime, as well as encouraging resident involvement.

An independent evaluation in November 2007 revealed a 24% rise in satisfaction with waste, refuse and recycling services.

The Sustainable Communities Excellence Network is an alliance of the Regional Centres of Excellence for sustainable communities (RCEs) established throughout England. We equip people, partnerships and leaders with the skills and knowledge to deliver regeneration and sustainable communities.

When *New Start* approached us with the idea of being involved in this publication, we jumped at the chance. It is great to remind ourselves of all the excellent work that is happening to improve people's lives and the places where they live. In the often challenging environment in which we all work, it is encouraging and inspiring to be reminded of successes and improvements.

Here are a few examples across some thematic areas of our work showing how we are helping to make a difference across England. More case studies and information can be found on our websites (given below) or on www.scen.org.uk.

Growing skills and sharing knowledge

Raising our Game is a professional development programme for managers and others who are responsible for creating and maintaining sustainable communities. Four RCEs – RENEW Northwest, South East Excellence, Integreat Yorkshire, and Creating Excellence in the South West – have piloted the qualifications with funding and coordination from the national Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC).

'Raising Our Game has enabled me to grow and develop a thorough understanding of how my role affects wider regeneration. It has impacted enormously on how I plan and deliver my work and how I interact with and deploy human resources within my responsibility.'

Anne Boyd, market towns project manager, Frodsham Forward

'Now I feel more empowered to question plans and contribute to external developments which could impact on our organisation. Having taken the certificate I know that my suggestions are based on a sound academic and practical footing.'

Val O'Connor, director of Coney Hill Neighbourhood Project, Gloucester

'It has engaged me in thinking, acting and reflecting on things and then adapting them to my situation. Far more effective than being talked at!'

Jane Hunter, principal landscape architect, Hampshire County Council

Ignite North East has also provided bursaries for people to undertake the certificate in regeneration at Northumbria University.

'[It] has helped me to gain a national perspective on many current issues within our market town; in particular the work-based project allowed me to conduct much deeper research and analysis into one of our key projects. The networking is also invaluable and I have met several colleagues with whom I will be keeping in touch.'

Andrea Langston

Creating Excellence has harnessed the power of networking in the South West to help strengthen community organisations. Through a development fund with the South West Foundation, grants have been made to 49 networks of over 1,000 mainly grassroots organisations. Results include 10 sub-regional networks for funding advisers – more than in any other region.

'If the intention to engage communities at neighbourhood level is to become reality, local authorities and the key strategic

partnerships ... need to have a community development strategy that maps existing resources and commits local and regional bodies to providing more intensive support as circumstances require.'

From '8 Lessons from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Neighbourhood Programme'

Regeneration East Midlands has been running a sport and regeneration programme. The skills in sport event, sponsored by Sport England and Skills Active, brought together more than 100 sports development workers for a series of afternoon training sessions.

'The leadership workshop was brilliant and I would welcome more workshops on this theme.'

Skills in Sport delegate

Growing local authority and community leadership skills

All the RCEs are working on programmes to improve skills in design in the built environment among councillors, planners and public sector and community clients, in particular by supporting the development of networks for design and heritage environment champions.

Inspire East in East England, along with the ASC and the Government Office for the East (GO-East), have prepared a guide on the key topic of low carbon in conjunction with the Building Research Establishment for planners and councillors.

'These documents provide important and helpful information to assist with the completion of the environmental performance statement.'

Greater Norwich Development Partnership



Integreat's Interlink programme enables local authority officers and members to raise design aspirations through site visits

South East Excellence has developed its Making Places programme to provide interactive workshops addressing the barriers between councillors and house builders.

'The workshops provide an opportunity for both developers and councillors to meet with other key players in the southeast region and sub-regions and to discuss how joint working could be made more effective.'

South East England Development Agency

Urban Design London (UDL) has been organising foundation courses and master classes for a wide range of built environment practitioners and councillors.

'I can't tell you the difference it makes when everyone understands the same basic urban design concepts.'

Architect, after a meeting with council officers who had attended UDL's foundation course

Integreat Yorkshire, with Leeds City Council and the City of Bradford Metropolitan Council's regeneration teams, will be developing a cross-section of skills over a four-month period while providing a space in which the two councils can develop a closer working relationship.

Spreading best practice in place-making

Several RCEs are involved in organising design review panels which are helping to improve design quality and understanding of development issues in the regions.



Urban Design London's built environment training for councillors and practitioners



The South West Design Review Panel



The popular Regeneration East Midlands Design Review publication (photo: REM)

'East Midlands Development Agency fully endorses the important contribution that the design review panel is making to the design quality of significant schemes across the region.'

Anthony Payne, director, land and development, East Midlands Development Agency

'[The South West design review panel] has helped us arrive at a scheme which is far better than the original. The panel helped me analyse what my concerns were and to suggest some practical solutions to them – not just say what I didn't like, but give a clear indication of a path that could be taken to improve it.'

Graham Townsend, North Devon District Council

Other RCEs have been running events to improve skills in design in the built environment. In the Northwest the Fusion Learning Laboratory ran a series of design and built environment workshops.

'Clear communication of ideas, pitched perfectly to the time available.'

Workshop delegate

Integreat Yorkshire has worked with its regional architecture centres to share best practice in design with local authority officers and elected members.

'An excellent opportunity to hear from key people involved in the development of the cultural quarter, join them on guided tours and enjoy plenty of time for networking with colleagues from other local authorities.'

arc regional architecture centre, Hull

Design for London has spearheaded the Green Grid Initiative to provide east London with a network of open spaces.

'The East London Green Grid is the kind of creative, coherent and large-scale urban proposal that we see precious few of in the UK ... Design for London's work is a marker for a thoughtful and ambitious contemporary urbanism.'

Kieran Long

Ignite North East has launched a competition for 11-13 year-olds to improve their understanding of the impact of climate change and resource efficiency on the place where they live.

'Our Place 2020 [is] an exciting new regional competition for schools aimed at enhancing young people's sense of place and inspiring them to want to improve the communities in which they live.'

Education Business Connections

RegenWM in the West Midlands worked together with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) to organise Building for Life training workshops.

'It is excellent to see the WMRA working with their local authority partners to raise the quality and quantity of housing in the region in response to CABE's housing audit. This is fundamental to achieving improved quality and higher standards of design of new homes in the region.'

Iain Wright, parliamentary under-secretary of state for housing

As you can see, the RCEs are busy across England. As regeneration delivery undergoes transition, RCEs continue to offer:

- Intelligence and connection
- Delivery experience
- Responses designed to respect regional differences



Northwest graduates of the Raising Our Game professional development programme

(Photo: Renew Northwest)



For more information about your region's RCE, see:

- RENEW Northwest**
www.renew.co.uk
- Ignite North East**
www.ignite-ne.com
- Integreat Yorkshire**
www.integreatyorkshire.com
- RegenWM West Midlands**
www.regenwm.org
- Regeneration East Midlands**
www.regenerationem.co.uk
- Inspire East**
www.inspire-east.org.uk
- Creating Excellence South West**
www.creatingexcellence.org.uk
- South East Excellence**
www.southeastexcellence.co.uk
- Design for London**
www.designforlondon.gov.uk
- Urban Design London**
www.urbandesignlondon.com



A £10,000 grant from **Essex County Council's** community initiatives fund has helped pay for a new climbing wall for a Rotary Club project in South Woodham Ferrers.

This increasingly popular sport provides a much-needed extra leisure facility for the town and the surrounding area. Climber Johnny Dawes is pictured at the launch event.

Philip Grigg, vocational and youth chairman for the Rotary Club in South Woodham Ferrers, says: 'This will appeal to a broader population than the many traditional sports available, including some of the disaffected young people in the area.'

Twenty residents living in the first bungalows to be built as social housing in England got a winter warmer from their landlord, **Coast & Country Housing**. With the help of local schoolchildren, Coast & Country assembled hampers to keep their occupants warm - including hot drinks, scarves, vapour rub, lip balm, menthol sweets, and tea bags. There were also energy efficient lightbulbs, energy saving tips and a thermometer. The message of the hampers was not just to stay warm during the winter, but to discover how to save energy throughout the year.

Painted out of a corner 53

Carter's cause 54

Helping hands in Hull 55

Peabody Trust's painting and decorating apprenticeship programme for unemployed people has given vulnerable residents a reason to smile - and the apprentices come away with a college qualification and work experience.

Three new trainees have just been recruited to decorate homes on Peabody estates throughout Wandsworth, south London.

'In just a few weeks they have exceeded my expectations,' says supervisor Bill Sanders.

Maggie Carter, who has suffered from multiple sclerosis since 2003, recently returned to her family roots in north Staffordshire.

'A friend took me to a community meeting and I just started getting involved,' says Maggie. *'I can't do physical things any more, but mentally I have become stronger.'*

Maggie now chairs the **Meir Community Steering Group** and her campaigning work has included lobbying former housing minister Yvette Cooper at the House of Commons.

Community wardens in Hull have been commended by prime minister Gordon Brown for their work during the devastating floods last year.

The wardens worked round the clock to help local residents and distribute cleaning materials.

John Marshall, head of community services for **Goodwin Development Trust**, which manages the service, says: *'Wardens still regularly visit those affected by the floods, many of whom have had to move to temporary accommodation.'*

Social enterprises in the east midlands won a seal of ministerial approval for their work when Phil Hope, minister for the third sector, was given a tour of two of the region's top ethical businesses.

He visited Newark-based **Unique Coffee Bar and Scrap Store**, and **Hill Holt Wood** on the Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire border, to pay tribute to the work of their staff and founders, and to encourage other entrepreneurs to follow their example.

'Unique and Hill Holt Wood are examples to anyone who says you can't combine a profit-making business with social and environmental goals. You can - and ventures like these are doing exactly that,' he commented.

Unique provides a range of services for young people, many of them disadvantaged, including a drop-in coffee bar, alternative education courses and work experience. Meanwhile the Unique Scrap Store offers safe surplus materials from local business, which are collected and sold at low cost to community organisations and the public.

Unique chief executive Matt Stevenson-Dodd said: *'With Phil's previous experience as a youth policy advisor,*

and current brief for social enterprise, we are certain he will be interested in our plans to replicate the success of Unique Coffee Bar across the region, helping other communities provide young people with something to do, somewhere to go and someone to talk to.'

Hill Holt Wood, founded in 1995 by Nigel and Karen Lowthrop, is a leading example of sustainable development. The enterprise provides countryside services for North Kesteven District Council and specialises in eco-construction such as straw bale building.

Hill Holt also provides alternative education opportunities, training and preparation for excluded schoolchildren, young offenders and unemployed or disadvantaged young people. Hill Holt Wood won an Enterprising Solutions Award in 2004.

Find out more:

The Social Enterprise Action Plan, published in November 2006, and the Third Sector Review, published in July 2007, set out the government's commitments to foster a culture of social enterprise.

Visit: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector



Jane Black's Christmas celebrations in 1999 were ruined with a redundancy notice. Now, with the help of Liverpool-based women's enterprise agency **Train 2000**, she's running Mercury ITC, a successful technology company.

As with most new businesses, funding was a key issue and Train 2000 helped Jane raise £29,000 in grants and loans.

'I can't say it was easy,' Jane says. 'At first we were living hand to mouth and I relied on friends to help me with childcare, but we have now achieved a good share of the market providing IT services and equipment for home users and large organisations across Merseyside.'

Jane is pictured (centre) with Maggie O'Carroll (left), executive director of Train 2000.

English Partnerships' millennium communities programme is creating environmentally sustainable homes with a community focus.

Allerton Bywater Millennium Community in Yorkshire recently welcomed the occupants to the 1,000th millennium community home. New community facilities in the village include a refurbished former infants' school building and Miners' Welfare Hall.

The Millennium Communities Programme has created seven sustainable communities around the country which all include green spaces and aim to provide outstanding community and recreational facilities. By engaging local people in the initial stages of the development, quality places where people want to live have been created.



My reason to be cheerful is seeing Tish Bates, a young person from one of our neighbourhoods in Fleetwood, Lancashire, totally transform from a disruptive child of twelve with an uncertain direction, into a responsible young adult of eighteen, who has become an inspirational role model and mentor for other young people in her community.

So says *Angela Mackie*, projects manager for the Regenda Group. The catalyst for the change? A project called **Dream Scheme** which is entirely run by community volunteers.

The aim of the scheme is to break down barriers between young people and residents and reduce juvenile nuisance on the streets. Tish, 12 at the time, attended the first Dream Scheme sessions at the community centre on her estate.

Young people carry out tasks to help the local community such as gardening, estate clean-ups and organising social events for older residents in exchange for points which they save and put towards trips out to theme parks, bowling and other activities.

This Dream Scheme, funded by Regenda, has now been going for six years and five similar schemes are now running

in different locations across the Wyre district.

At 14, Tish moved up into a Community Change group which is designed for young people between the ages of 14 and 18, continuing her work for her community.

Now 18, she has helped lead many community projects and has successfully lobbied local authorities for funding. Work has now started on a brand new purpose-built sports centre for young people in her community.

Tish also promotes the Dream Schemes, citing her experiences to encourage children to get involved. Last year she became the first Young Mayor of Wyre, shadowing the mayor on official duties. She was named the Regenda Group's Young Resident of the Year for the Wyre district in 2006 (see picture).

'It's wonderful to think that one of our projects has really shaped the future of a young person's life and helped to take it in such a positive direction,' says Angela.

Find out more:
Visit: www.dreamscheme.org.uk

Making a mark in the park 59

Culmère Park, a once near-derelict open space in Wythenshawe, south Manchester, is now an attractive neighbourhood park, thanks to the efforts of parents whose children used it as a route to school.

The parents galvanised a range of regeneration and voluntary agencies into action and won a £10,000 grant from Barclays Sitesavers. Four years on, there's a refurbished playground, multi-use games areas and even a woodland walk.

Laptops bridge the learning gap 60

Thousands of Birmingham youngsters are involved in the biggest scheme in the country to provide laptops for pupils.

By the end of the summer term, 8,000 will have received the computers through the £5.7m programme, led by Birmingham City Council and the **Birmingham e-Learning Foundation**. The scheme enables pupils in disadvantaged areas to have the kind of learning facilities many kids take for granted.

Calderdale's caring Christmas 61

Calderdale Cares, an employee volunteering programme managed through **Action Halifax**, successfully matched local businesses with 22 community groups through its Cares at Christmas project.

Companies collected a staggering 1,300 gifts including scarves, gloves, toys, food parcels and toiletries, which were distributed to community groups.

Cares is a national initiative promoted across the country by Business in the Community.



Keith Cowling writes: 'I recently attended the opening of a stunning new village hall in the remotest part of the Forest of Bowland in north Lancashire. The building in Slaidburn (pictured) is formed from a reconstruction of the redundant Methodist chapel in the village. It is one of ten village hubs conceived by an SRB6 programme in 2001 called **Enterprising Rural Communities**.

The Slaidburn Hall, in a small village wholly owned by a conservative estate complete with its own Dickensian "squire", marks the culmination of ten years of wet Wednesday nights by a determined working group of local people struggling against local conservatism and inertia.'

A scheme to upgrade the grounds of an Essex football and social club will be completed in memory of handyman Charlie Bowles, who dedicated his life to his local community. **Brightlingsea United Football and Social Club** has been awarded £5,000 from Essex County Council's community initiatives fund to finish a project to provide an all-weather training pitch. Club chair Jayne Chapman says: 'It was always Charlie's ambition to get our grounds tidied up and make sure the children had somewhere to play all year and we were determined to do this for him, as he devoted his life to local children and football in the community.' Brightlingsea mayor Alan Goggin is pictured kicking off the celebrations.

Raising their voice 65

'My reason to be cheerful is the feeling I get each year at our **Youth Voice annual conference**, when I see over 100 young people from socially excluded backgrounds coming together to discuss matters that really affect them and putting together plans to tackle them. Each year the conferences get better and better,' says Emily Mathias, neighbourhood regeneration manager for the Regenda Group. Last year the youth groups competed against each other in a 'Dragon's Den' style competition to win £3,000 worth of cash prizes for community projects.

Friday is for fitness 66

Lifestyle Fridays helps people living in North Fulham, west London, learn about health risks and do something about them. Developed by North Fulham new deal for communities, it offers services such as smoking cessation and food co-ops. Residents can have a range of checks including blood pressure, glucose, body mass index and cholesterol levels. Sessions have been provided in local churches and the mosque, the market and supermarkets, pubs, schools, sheltered accommodation and leisure centres.

Look and learn 67

Neighbourhood Watching is a public arts project that uses creative methods to encourage residents to get involved with changes planned in their area. Based in Bethnal Green, east London, Neighbourhood Watching has worked closely with local tenants and Tower Hamlets Council to develop outdoor film screening, drawing and animation workshops with children, and a light installation project. It was one of 29 shortlisted projects for the Academy for Sustainable Communities awards for sustainable communities in 2007.



Cultural planning techniques are creating a clutch of inspiring developments in communities across Scotland - from a festival of East Lothian's former coal ports to the creation of one of Britain's largest urban landscape installations.

Cultural planning is an approach that uses the 'culture' of a community - its history, environment, the community's cultural development and underlying strengths and resources.

Planners, regeneration professionals and community development workers learn to appreciate the depth, richness and potential of residents' cultural resources and to inspire the development of new ideas and skills. Local people and organisations discover how to make the most of their potential.

Using the creativity of local people and professionals, these skills and resources are integrated into a broader development plan. Examples of successful cultural planning in Scotland include:

- The Park Life project is regenerating Dalmeny Street Park in Edinburgh. Developed by local arts organisation Out of the Blue and social inclusion advocates Capital City Partnership, the project is engaging residents in the redesign and care of the park.

- In East Lothian, the Three Harbours Festival has grown in two years to include 500 participants at 140 venues. Linked by a range of imaginative installations, a two-mile coastal route has been lit up to draw the eye to the hidden charms of the former East Lothian coalports.
- In South Ayrshire's Creative Nurseries project, under-fives and their carers explored cultural resources on imaginary journeys, while learning how to solve problems and create new ideas.
- In Royston Road, Glasgow, local residents helped create one of the UK's largest urban landscape installations in Molendinar Park. They created a guided journey connecting their new community centre and the park. A neglected space is now being developed as the hub of the community.

Underpinning this work, the **National Cultural Planning Forum** and the University of Strathclyde have developed and delivered the first credit rated undergraduate cultural planning training programme in Europe.

Find out more:
www.ncpsg.org/index.php
www.capitalcitypartnership.org



Cultural life in the Derbyshire town of Belper stepped up a gear with the re-opening of the Ritz cinema, 15 years after the screen last fell silent.

A grant of £140,000 from the **Belper and Milford Townscape Heritage Initiative** (THI) boosted the redevelopment and the single-screen cinema now boasts an air-conditioned auditorium, luxury seating and a licensed bar. It is located in Belper's Public Hall, which has also had a facelift thanks to a further £90,000 THI grant. This has attracted more businesses to a previously dilapidated area of the historic mill town.

A partnership scheme with funding from several organisations, the THI has awarded grants to over 70 projects and generated investment of more than £2m in the regeneration of Belper and Milford.

Find out more:
www.ambervalley.gov.uk

Trainees from the Leeds reBuild project put their newly acquired joinery skills to work when they raised money for a go-karting trip by selling everything from bat boxes to desk tidies to family and friends.

The young people were part of YouthBuild, a year long programme for 16-24 year olds hoping to work in the construction industry. It is part of **Leeds reBuild**, which works flexibly to support young people unable to benefit from mainstream training opportunities. The scheme also helps small construction firms to benefit from the city's building boom.

Project worker Kate Shinnars says: *'It's amazing what a common goal can do. The commitment from friends and family placing orders for the merchandise is very supportive and encouraging.'*

The programme combines study at Leeds College of Building with work experience on a building site. The rest of the time is spent on practical projects in reBuild's workshop.

Women in Thornaby, Teesside, formed their own women's group after taking part in peer research to investigate how local people were managing to get by. They found many residents were struggling with poverty, ill health and isolation.

As one group member explains: *'Women know what needs dealing with locally and aren't scared to make their views known.'*

With support from the **Thrive Initiative**, they have now put on learning days on issues such as debt and health, and taken part in national conferences on poverty, regeneration and gender.

On the strength of the first peer research project, and the resulting report, *When Ends Don't Meet*, they have secured funding to do more activities with women and young people, and hope to help more local people make their voices heard and bring about change.

Find out more:
Contact: Michelle Green at Oxfam
Tel: 0161 860 2813
Email: mgreen@oxfam.org.uk

Angela Russell from Westoe, Tyneside, writes: 'My reason to be cheerful is having my artwork exhibited at the Tate Modern.'

I grew up in a leaky-roofed terraced house in Westoe, with no formal training in art or design. I've been fighting depression since the age of 12, and suffered a complete breakdown at 20. A year later, I was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder.

In the summer of 2007, my care coordinator suggested I submit some of my artwork for a Tate Modern exhibition organised by **Personality Plus**. This is a community interest company working to tackle stigmas surrounding personality disorders.

It wasn't until I went down to London for the show last October that I actually allowed myself to smile at what I'd achieved. Personality Plus now plans to take its exhibition on a tour of the regions. Hopefully, this will get the message across that those who suffer from personality disorder are not so different.'

The picture shows Angela's work Green Cat of the Forest, in oil on canvas.

Anyone who has felt pressured to make decisions about technology for which they are unqualified will find solace in net:gain. net:gain helps voluntary organisations develop an ICT strategy that matches their needs and activities. Both staff and volunteers get involved in the process, deciding where they want to go and learning how ICT could help or hinder them in achieving their goals.

So far, net:gain has worked with 600 organisations. One satisfied customer is Dave Radford from Chesterfield Volunteer Centre, who said: *'We ended up feeling as if our computers were our friends, rather than the enemy we perceived them to be.'*



All Saints Terrace Community Garden in Nottingham used to be a dumping ground and a haven for drug takers. Now, thanks to the efforts of 30 local residents and the **Partnership Council**, a charity based in the city's Hyson Green area, it's blooming and local people are using it again.

Matthew Danquah of the Partnership Council, who has been managing the project, comments: *'It's great that so many people have wanted to be involved and now that the garden has taken shape, we are all really inspired.'*

Sheffield's **City Stewardship** programme has helped more than 2,000 teenagers learn building and environmental skills, and is keeping the city safe and clean at the same time. The partnership between Community Training Services, Sheffield Homes and Kier Sheffield organises gardening for older people, painting and decorating empty properties, and crime-busting measures such as fitting window locks. Local councillor Mazher Iqbal is pictured visiting a recent clean-up in the Westfield area,



Penlan Environment Forum is providing training and career opportunities for local people in one of the most deprived parts of Swansea - and improving the neighbourhood at the same time.

The area was chosen by the Department of Work and Pensions as a pilot for its working neighbourhoods initiative. **Penlan Communities First Partnership** worked with BTCV Cymru to develop a project that would not only fulfil the DWP's funding criteria but also improve housing and the environment, and offer advice, training and support for economically excluded groups.

Local residents conducted a community audit of the green spaces across Penlan and pinpointed eleven sites in need of urgent attention. By visiting similar community environment projects elsewhere they were able to gain inspiration and ideas about how their projects might look.

The Environment Forum was created to help local people transform the disused sites into green community spaces. Participants had a chance to receive training and accredited qualifications while taking part in the project.

Children from local primary schools worked with a

community artist to install a new fence and garden around the Methodist church, a major local landmark. Volunteers and the Environment Forum designed and constructed walls, a soft play area and tree planting schemes. More than 100 volunteers are now involved in the programme.

A 'Pride in Penlan' week in June 2006 saw younger residents helping older neighbours to clear unwanted garden and household rubbish.

The long term goal is to set up a social enterprise to maintain the improved sites across Penlan and create enough work to sustain a team of staff.

The programme was highlighted through Swansea's Lord Mayor's Community Regeneration Awards. Since 2002 the awards have gone from strength to strength, celebrating the excellent work that takes place in Swansea's communities. Individuals and groups who have worked hard to make a difference where they live have been given the recognition they deserve.

Find out more:

www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=15176

Yasmin's an inspiration 76

A culture of regeneration 77

Resolution is the solution 78

Yasmin Riaz has been honoured as inspirational colleague of the year in the 2007 UK Housing Awards for her work at Calico Housing in Burnley. Yasmin began working for Calico as a temp in 2003.

A year later she became a neighbourhood officer and quickly demonstrated her engaging and confident style.

Yasmin now works in one of Burnley's most challenging neighbourhoods, combating neighbour nuisance and reassuring residents.

Folkestone in Kent was badly affected when ferry routes across the Channel ended. But local authorities, regeneration agencies and cultural investors including **Arts Council England** and the Heritage Lottery Fund are using culture as a catalyst for change.

The old town is being redeveloped into a £25m creative quarter, with live/work spaces for artists and up to 1,000 jobs planned by 2009. There's a new performing arts centre, and the old Glassworks will house a university campus specialising in the arts.

Resolve is a specialist division set up by **Charter Housing Association**, part of the South Wales based Seren Group, to tackle antisocial behaviour. Unlike some approaches, it tackles residents' concerns through mediation and support - but it has the power to take cases to court when necessary.

Almost two thirds of complaints are resolved following the first contact with Resolve's nuisance prevention team; the team has also achieved 100% success to date when it has decided to prosecute.



A world-class celebration took place in the Wythenshawe area of Manchester when community groups representing 12 different nationalities or ethnicities came together for a festival of music and dance.

The second **Wythenshawe One World Festival** took place on 1 March and included contributions from the Malayalee, Irish, Tamil, African, Filipino, Brazilian, English, Chinese, Polish and Arabic communities. A harpist brought a fitting Welsh note to the festivities - March 1 is when Wales remembers its patron saint, David.

Old and young alike took part in a variety of workshops, including African drumming, Brazilian dancing, sari-tying, Indian puppet making, Polish handicrafts and Chinese calligraphy.



Cut-price cycles are helping staff at **Helena Housing** in Merseyside to keep healthy and reduce carbon emissions. The Cycle2work scheme allows staff to buy a bike tax free and anyone who uses their bike for work receives the same mileage rate as they would for a car. The company has also provided showers and cycle racks.

Back in the market 82

Penclawdd local produce market in Swansea was set up to help producers, farmers and small businesses struggling in the wake of foot and mouth disease and BSE. Four years on, it continues to go from strength to strength with some of the original stallholders now running successful businesses. Profits are ploughed back into providing services for the local community, and the market even gives local musicians an opportunity to showcase their talents.

A leg-up in Liverpool 83

The **Regenda Group** has brought a smile to more than 160 first-time buyers who now have a foot on the property ladder in Liverpool. The group's Access to Home Ownership scheme started in 2003, helping people in the L1 postcode area overcome barriers to buying their own homes. The programme now covers all the regeneration areas in the city and offers help with finding solicitors, choosing properties and paying mortgage arrangement fees.

Going straight at Ashfield 84

A young offenders' institute with a reputation as one of the UK's most violent prisons has been transformed into a model of good practice thanks to its director, Vicky O'Dea. **Ashfield Young Offenders' Institute** in Pucklechurch, Gloucestershire, is the largest juvenile prison in Europe. Under Ms O'Dea's leadership a range of pioneering educational initiatives has been introduced. The prison is managed by a private company, Serco.



Refugees from Bosnia are receiving practical and psychological support through a network of communities across the UK, thanks to funding agency **Capacitybuilders**.

There are more than 10,000 Bosnian refugees in the UK, struggling daily with issues such as post-war trauma, language difficulties and racism. The Bosnia and Herzegovina UK Network aims to help them by unlocking vital services and support.

Recent ChangeUp funding of £108,900 from Capacitybuilders has enabled the network to increase its activities. It now co-ordinates 16 organisations in towns and cities throughout the UK. Some groups - such as one based in Bolton - would have been unable to get established without the network's help.

The network is working with other refugee groups, local authorities and other funders to increase knowledge of services and support available.

Thanks to the network, a range of meetings and seminars are taking place, giving people an opportunity to share their experiences and to learn how to get involved in their local communities. The network also supports supplementary schools for children with classes in the Bosnian language, art and culture and English.

In addition, the network boasts a new website that provides vital information to Bosnian communities in different areas. There is also a monthly newsletter, produced by volunteers and distributed to around 1,500 contacts.

The network recently bought a property in Birmingham - Bosnia House - to be used as a centre for the local Bosnian community, bringing together a range of local Bosnian groups, including elderly, disabled and young people.

The work has an international dimension, too, with the network linking up with organisations in 21 countries, providing refugees with a united and more powerful voice. Together, they attempt to influence policy in Bosnia itself, offering hope not only to individuals but to a whole nation.



Find out more:
www.capacitybuilders.org.uk



Picture by Nick Strugnell

Residents from more than 300 properties on a Peabody estate in Hammersmith, west London, now have a tranquil green space they can call their own, thanks to the refurbishment of a sunken garden.

The estate was built in 1926 with a central garden that was destroyed by bombs in the second world war. Although since repaired, in recent years the space had become run down. Now it is a place where children can play and residents of all ages can enjoy some peace and quiet. The transformation was brought about by the **Peabody Trust** working with residents and partner organisations Groundwork West London and Greenscene.

Actors visiting **Brentwood Theatre** in Essex will no longer have to brave the elements when they dash from the outside dressing room to the stage. A £350,000 extension will house new dressing rooms and also provide facilities for disabled people and space for education. Pictured from left: Cllr Phil Baker, actress Jane Herbert, Cllr Lionel Lee and Brentwood Theatre director Barrie Logan.

Online celebration 88

Children's champion 89

Just volunteering 90

Investment fund **Futurebuilders England** has launched an online gallery of photos, videos and audio recordings to celebrate its work with more than 250 third sector organisations. Since 2004, the loans-based fund has offered over £111m to projects that include a cultural centre for deaf people and a programme to educate schoolchildren about mental health. The gallery can be accessed at www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk/content/Gallery.aspx.

Campaigner and activist Safia Saldeeye is a prime example of how local people can bring about change in their communities.

Ms Saldeeye has drawn down almost £40,000 in external funding to set up the **Somali Children's Advocacy** project in Fulham, west London.

Based at Fulham Primary School, the children's project runs study support services and a family learning club open to all.

Two volunteers have received accolades in the national **Justice Awards**. Avril Ainsbury, from Liverpool, was named Volunteer of the Year for her many years of service, including work as a custody suite visitor, offender mentor and witness service volunteer.

The runner-up was Jackie Goulding, from Hampshire, whose work involves emotional support and practical advice to people affected by crime.



Inspired by the adult wardens they saw patrolling their areas, young people from the Chichester area asked to become **junior wardens**. Now there are three schemes which all share common goals but have been tailored to reflect the needs of individual communities.

The Tangmere scheme was established in partnership with the local school and supports national curriculum work in citizenship, PHSE and geography. Members join in patrols, community work with older people and litter picks. One initiative involves them taking responsibility for bus shelters in the village, supported by the parish council, which in turn rewards them for their efforts.

The Chichester scheme targets 'harder to reach' children, promoting personal safety and environmental issues. By taking part in the scheme, the children have learned a great deal about the impact of antisocial behaviour on their neighbourhood.

The Selsey scheme involves children and adults working together in the community. Projects include gardening for older people, conserving the local pond, and helping with Christmas lights and litter picks.

On each scheme, every member has a uniform and is encouraged to promote respect and take pride in their neighbourhood. The children work together to make a

difference in their community and act as role models for their peers. Each scheme raises the profile of the young people in the neighbourhood and helps them to be aware of the impact of their behaviour. In turn it provides them with experiences they might otherwise miss, such as going to the seaside or riding on a fire engine.

One participant said: *'Sometimes I have been bullied, insulted and chased by other children. Being a junior warden gives me the confidence to stand up for myself and others.'*

And a parent commented: *'Children get an awful lot of satisfaction from feeling they are being helpful and making a difference to the community. That's what the scheme is all about - teaching the children how they can help.'*



Find out more:

Contact: Andrew Pilley, community development manager, West Sussex Primary Care Trust.

Tel: 01243 534858

Email: andrew.pilley@wsx-pct.nhs.uk

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For more information about the range of print and design services offered by New Start, contact Jamie or Chris on 0114 281 6130

Thank goodness for Goodwin 92



From humble beginnings in a small shop on Goodwin Parade, Hull, Goodwin Development Trust has worked hard to make a difference in the local community.

The Goodwin Resource Centre opened in November 1999 after a campaign to win funding and refurbish a former retirement home. This marked the beginning of a period of enormous growth.

Goodwin Development Trust now employs over 300 staff with a turnover of £9.2m, working across 38 sites. It aims to deliver services that improve residents' lives throughout the city and is recognised as an example of best practice.

Goodwin provides contracted public services such as the Hull Community Warden Service, and has developed assets to generate income in order to become self-sustaining. These include two children's nurseries, a fitness centre, a refurbished city centre development to incubate new social enterprises and an award winning meeting and conference centre.

Find out more:
www.goodwintrust.org

Everything's coming up roses 93



Betty Rushton, chair of the Sutton Trust Community Group, writes: 'Our reason to be cheerful is our community garden in Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent. Until 2006, the garden was home to eight rundown blocks of flats. But when William Sutton Homes donated the land the Sutton Trust Community Group was able to convert what looked like a concrete jungle into a city oasis.'

Now our garden includes flower beds and vegetable patches which are used by local schoolchildren to grow fresh produce.

A new sensory garden, polytunnel and greenhouse are being built, funded with a £26,000 grant from Renew North Staffordshire.

The feedback we have had from people, particularly the schoolchildren, has been incredible. As well as promoting pride in our community it helps to make them aware of the importance of healthy eating.'

The community group was kick-started with a donation of £200,000 from Renew North Staffordshire, which funded a community building.

Broad Heath's school is back in business 94

Elaine Le Montais, head of regeneration at **Touchstone**, part of Midland Heart housing group, is 'incredibly proud' of the transformation of a once abandoned Victorian school at Broad Heath, Coventry.

The scheme took seven years to complete and cost £4.5m - but the vision of linking housing, leisure and enterprise has been realised with affordable accommodation, live/work units, a state of the art youth centre with nearly 5,000 users, and an enterprise centre which has supported nearly 30 businesses since opening in 2006.

'Throughout the process, we never lost sight of what we were all trying to achieve,' Elaine says. 'And when we see the impact of our work - the achievements of young entrepreneurs who previously struggled to afford living and office space, or young people excluded from school achieving qualifications - it makes it so worthwhile.'



Almost £1m has secured the future of east Brighton's healthy living centre.

The centre co-ordinates projects that help local people to improve their health and quality of life. Based at the Moulsecomb Sure Start Children's Centre, it was set up in 2003 using new deal for communities money.

Brighton and Hove City Teaching Primary Care Trust has now approved £960,000 over the next three years to support the centre, whose services were used by more than 6,000 local residents in the last 12 months.

The centre will run services on mental health, substance misuse, sexual health, sports, and healthy living and a project for carers. Pictured from left are staff members Sarah Withers, Helen Graham, Erika Adler and Tracy Whittle.



Dario Ferrari, of Coalville, Stoke on Trent, is pictured at the launch of the Weston Heights housing development, part of **Renew North Staffordshire's** housing market renewal programme.

He says: 'I will be able to watch my new home being built, which is very exciting. This is the chance of a lifetime for my family and for whole community. It is a lovely part of the city to live in but the estate has gone very downhill over the past 10 years and it needs to change. We need new people, new life and a new image for this area.'

Thriving on the credit crunch 97

The credit crunch may provide scare stories for the media, but for the **National Federation of Enterprise Agencies** (NFEA) it's a chance to show what they're made of.

A themed week of 'credit crunch' events at the end of April is an opportunity for owners of new and small businesses to gain independent, professional advice to see them through difficult times. Issues covered range from raising finance for a new business to managing cash problems. With a bit of realism, NFEA says, there's no reason why businesses can't handle the current situation.
Visit: www.nfea.com

A spire inspires a Glasgow revival 98

When Townhead Church in north Glasgow was demolished in 1998, local people decided they had had enough of funding cuts and the dismantling of their heritage. With bulldozers on site and the body of the church in ruins, sculptor George Wylie joined a protest to save the spire.

The result is **Royston Road Project**, controlled and managed by local people. The project is dedicated to arts-led community development and residents have united behind the improvement of Spire Park at Royston Hill and Molendinar Park at Blackhill, in collaboration with artists and architects.

Branching out in Exeter 99

Hillcrest Branch Ltd, a social firm employing people with mental health problems in Exeter on gardening contracts, is celebrating its new start as an independent company limited by guarantee.

All profits will be reinvested into the company. Hillcrest Branch was previously a project managed by Devon Partnership NHS Trust, and it has spent the last two years preparing for independence.

Sally Reynolds, chief executive of Social Firms UK, says the commitment of local health service managers and Hillcrest's staff was crucial in getting the new enterprise off the ground.



The remote town of Wooler in the north of England's northernmost county has become a hive of activity through a partnership that has spent the last 12 years working to improve the prosperity and wellbeing of local people.

Glendale Gateway Trust has brought more than £4m of investment into Wooler, which has a population of around 1,900, and the surrounding rural area of Glendale in Northumberland.

Its achievements include the renovation of a disused outdoor centre to create the Cheviot Centre, a community centre with offices, an ICT suite, meeting rooms and tourist information, which opened in 2000.

When the local youth hostel was closed by the YHA, Glendale Gateway Trust bought and refurbished it and now operates it through the Youth Hostels' Association enterprise scheme.

The former Mechanics' Institute has been turned into a youth drop-in centre, while two empty shops have been bought and renovated for local businesses, with affordable flats for young people above.

Derelict land behind the town's High Street, which had been an eyesore for 20 years, is now being used to provide 15 new affordable homes after a deal was brokered with a housing association.

Money for the projects has come from public and private sources, while the Countryside Agency's market towns initiative funded a programme manager from 2001 to 2004 to develop new ideas. By acquiring derelict and underused sites and bringing them back into use, the trust has reduced its dependence on funding - around 70% of its spending is now covered by earned income.

Recent projects include a retail distinctiveness study of Wooler, working with Northumberland Strategic Partnership and Miller Research, which has generated a clutch of projects to improve the town's shopping environment for local residents and visitors. The trust is also discussing the acquisition and development of further underused sites in the town, which it would like to develop for the benefit of local people.

The trust has 18 trustees drawn from local government, farming and tourism interests, the voluntary sector and local retailers. It also runs the Glendale Festival and supports the Glendale Oral History Society.

Find out more:

Contact: Tom Johnston

Tel: 01668 282412

Visit: www.wooler.org.uk/community_pages/glendale_trust



Sustainable Communities Excellence Network

www.scen.org.uk

For more information about your region's RCE, see:



Urban Design London

www.urbandesignlondon.com



Ignite North East

www.ignite-ne.com



RENEW Northwest

www.renew.co.uk



Integreat Yorkshire

www.integreatyorkshire.com



RegenWM West Midlands

www.regenwm.org



Design for London

www.designforlondon.gov.uk



Inspire East

www.inspire-east.org.uk



Regeneration East Midlands

www.regenerationem.co.uk



Creating Excellence South West

www.creatingexcellence.org.uk



South East Excellence

www.southeastexcellence.co.uk