

Feedback from DALC/RBWM Big Society workshops for Parishes

Background

A workshop was held on 14 November and focused on increasing local civic participation within Parishes. The feedback received from Parish Councils highlighted a number of barriers and blockages to local civic involvement including lack of awareness and understanding among young people as to what Parishes do as well as identifying a number specific actions for example greater liaison with schools and FE Colleges; links with community projects specifically focused around young peoples' priorities that if undertaken would lead to a greater local awareness of and involvement of residents with their Parish Council.

Parish Councils were made aware of the opportunities available to secure funding both through the Council grants available and external sources funding as route to developing projects that would benefit and involve the local community encouraging more local volunteering. The feedback from this workshop have been discussed with the Chairman of DALC (January 2012) with a view of producing an action to take forward the finding to be presented for discussion at the Parish Conference

A second Workshop was held on 5 December and focused specifically on devolving Services to Parishes. It provided Parish Councils with an opportunity to undertake more detailed discussions around each of services detailed within the menu of devolved services as well as an opportunity to be consulted on proposals option for devolving applications and identify additional area where service could be devolved.

Accountable Offices for each of these areas were present and the discussions with each Parish were captured and summarised on the attached sheet. The actions are now being followed up by Accountable Officers..

November 14th workshop - feedback

1. Adopt- street - What are we doing?

Horton Parish Council

- Carry out two street clean ups per year
- Plant trees
- Planting flowerbeds for the winter
- Village fete held – money given to the local church
- Just elected 21 year old onto Parish Council

Sunningdale

- Big Society Coordinator appointed (volunteer)
- Adopt-A-Street (Big Society Friends of Sunningdale)
- Volunteers' appreciation tea party
- Easy to use and informative website, lots of pictures and advertising of local events

Bisham

- Parish newsletter is incorporated into Church newsletter
- 2 local mums organised a “wedding picnic” which was attended by local residents
- Parish party held

White Waltham

- 1000 bulbs planted in borders around the Parish
- Newsletter to be produced which will go to all local residents

Blockages/barriers

Horton Parish Council

- Getting litter picking equipment for the residents who carry out the clear up
- Health and safety (particularly hanging baskets)
- Public liability

Sunningdale

- Recreation ground in Cheapside had been subject of vandalism (previous years)

Bisham

- Issues regarding signing up to Adopt-A-Street, partly geographical, problems with busy roads.
- No young people (demographics of a village, where families stay for many years)
- Residents seem to feel they don't have the time to participate
- Insurance – is the insurance available

White Waltham

- Problem with graffiti and litter in a local play area
- 3 social housing estates conflicts with other areas in White Waltham due to alleyways with over hanging vegetation and not knowing whom to approach to deal with the problem.
- How to report potholes

How to overcome

Horton Parish Council

- Streetcare to contact Dale (Parish Chairman) re: litter-picking kits
- Streetcare to enquire re: public liability insurance

Sunningdale

- Parish suggested the local children took ownership of the recreation ground and helped with the refurbishment of the equipment. This has eliminated any further vandalism.

Bisham

- Approach Bisham Primary school to see if they may be interested to sign up to Adopt-A-Street to clear the car park area (safe area)
- Suggestions to start a small Adopt-A-Street group, then publicise quickly, take photographs and then advertise to other residents/groups.

White Waltham

- Meeting to be set up with Streetcare to discuss the play area
- Streetcare Manager to contact department with RBWM to try to establish who has ownership of which alleyways/paths.
- Number given to report potholes to.

Young people:

- young people do not understand the role of Parish Councils
- need to make youngsters more aware of all the things parishes do, this could be through Parishes visiting school, FE colleges, sixth forms etc.
- need to make a connection with young people when they return from University
- should work with Duke Of Edinburgh Scheme to offer an award scheme for local community involvement
- should use the various councils services that support 13 – 19yrs olds to encourage local community involvement and volunteering
- community projects (funded by the RBWM or externally funded) could one way of getting young people involved with their local communities could engage more with local schools and youth clubs to get more young people involved with local Parishes.
- some parishes have an older population – there aren't so many young people around

Funding available for community projects:

- Parishes councils need to be more aware of grant funding opportunities available and how to apply for it- both externally and through the council at parish level
- funding may be available for local projects, however there are sometimes issues with the availability of resource i.e. finding local people to run projects or issues with CCRB checks. There is an opportunity for Parishes to work together on community projects.
- not sure what S106 funding is available to Parishes
- Working more with young people (and their parents) will help to ensure more people are aware of and engaged with the work of their Parish and may wish to seek election as Parish Councillor.

