



Agenda

Community Engagement Forum Partnership Board (Tadcaster & Villages)

Venue: The Ark, 33 Kirkgate, Tadcaster LS24 9AQ

Date: Monday 16 May 2016

Time: 7pm

To: District and County Councillors
Councillors Don Mackay (Chair), Mrs Liz Casling, Keith Ellis,
Andrew Lee, Chris Metcalfe, Richard Musgrave and Richard
Sweeting

Co-opted members
Steve Cobb, Amanda Crossley, Bea Rowntree, Trevor Phillips
and Avis Thomas.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

A copy of the Register of Interest for each Selby District Councillor is available for inspection at www.selby.gov.uk.

Board members should declare to the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest in any item of business on this agenda which is not (in the case of Selby District Councillors) already entered in their Register of Interests.

Board members should leave the meeting and take no part in the consideration, discussion or vote on any matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Board members should also declare any other interests. Having made the declaration, provided the other interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest, the member may stay in the meeting, speak and vote on that item of business.

If in doubt, Board members are advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer.

3. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Tadcaster & Villages Partnership Board held on 21 March 2016 (pages 1 to 6 attached).

4. UPDATE ON TADCASTER BRIDGE

To receive a verbal update from David Bowe, Corporate Director (NYCC) on the work to restore the bridge over the River Wharfe in Tadcaster.

5. UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS / DECISIONS

To consider any updates from actions and/or decisions made at the previous meeting that will not be covered by subsequent agenda items.

6. BUDGET UPDATE

To note the current CEF budget and spending to date (page 7 to 8 attached).

7. 'PROJECT TADCASTER' UPDATE

To receive a verbal update on developments from Councillor Metcalfe.

8. EVENTS ARCHIVE PROJECT

To consider any progress with the Events Archive project.

9. UPDATE FROM THIRD SECTOR PARTNER

To receive a verbal update from the Tadcaster & Rural Community Interest Company on its work to date in relation to its contract with Selby District Council, including the Community Development Plan and any marketing/publicity matters.

10. SELBY DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

To consider the development of a Community Engagement Strategy by Selby District Council (pages 9 to 17 attached).

11. FUNDING APPLICATIONS MADE TO MULTIPLE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORUMS

To consider if the resolution made at the meeting on 11 November 2016 under minute number 8.1 should be revoked, specifically:

“To reject future funding applications that are made to multiple Community Engagement Forums, without requiring these to be considered by the Partnership Board”

12. NEXT PUBLIC FORUM

To confirm arrangements for the next Tadcaster & Villages Forum on Monday 13 June at Rosemary House Community Centre.

Dates of next meeting
Forum – Monday 13 June 2016 at 7pm. Rosemary House Community Centre, Rosemary Court, Tadcaster. <i>Market place of local service providers from 6.30pm.</i>
Partnership Board – Monday 11 July 2016 at 7pm The Ark, 33 Kirkgate, Tadcaster. LS24 9AQ. <i>Deadline for funding applications and agenda items Wednesday 29 June at 12noon</i>

Gillian Marshall
Solicitor to the Council

For enquires relating to this agenda, please contact Daniel Maguire, Democratic Services on 01757 292247 or email dmaguire@selby.gov.uk.



Minutes

Tadcaster & Villages Community Engagement Forum - Partnership Board

Venue:	The Ark, 33 Kirkgate, Tadcaster, LS24 9AQ.
Date:	Monday 21 March 2016
Time:	7pm
Present:	<u>District and County Councillors</u> Councillors Don Mackay (Chair), Chris Metcalfe and Richard Sweeting. <u>Co-opted members</u> Steve Cobb and Avis Thomas.
Apologies:	Amanda Crossley, Councillor Keith Ellis, Trevor Phillips and Bea Rowntree.
Officers present:	David Gluck (Tadcaster & Rural Community Interest Company), and Daniel Maguire (Democratic Services Officer, Selby District Council).
Others present:	Tom Jenkinson (Stronger Communities, NYCC) and Heidi Green (Business Support, York and North Yorkshire).
Public:	0

22. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Avis Thomas declared an interest in minute numbers 34.2 and 34.3, as a director of the Tadcaster and Rural Community Interest Company. She remained in the meeting during consideration of the items but did not participate in the debate or vote.

23. MINUTES

The Partnership Board considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 15 February 2016.

RESOLVED:

To confirm the minutes as a correct record of the Partnership Board held on 15 February 2016.

24. UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS / DECISIONS

Minute 13 (4ii) – it was confirmed that David Gluck had invited a representative from the Church Fenton airfield to the next Forum, and was awaiting a reply.

Minute 13 (5) – it was confirmed that David Gluck had met with Tadcaster Town Council and would prepare a proposal relating to the Christmas lights 2016.

Minute 19.1 – the Partnership Board requested that David Gluck reports back on the Tadcaster Triathlon funding application.

Minute 20.1 – the Partnership Board asked that the Events Archive Project be a standing item on future meeting agendas.

25. UPDATE ON FLOOD RESPONSE

It was reported that a Flood Emergency Action Group had been established in Tadcaster, and that the lead would be the Tadcaster Town Council.

It was further noted that a number of villages within the CEF area had also established, or were in the process of establishing, Flood Action Groups.

26. UPGRADE OF ROAD SIGNS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Councillor Metcalfe reported on work that was being progressed to upgrade road signs and street furniture within the Tadcaster Conservation Area. It was reported that Councillor Metcalfe had used his NYCC Community Fund to part-fund the work, and he requested that the Partnership Board contributes £650 to cover the cost of repainting two CCTV columns in Tadcaster.

RESOLVED:

To contribute £650 to cover the cost of repainting two CCTV columns in Tadcaster.

27. BRANDING AND PUBLICITY

The Partnership Board agreed that no further changes were required to the CEF branding. It was noted that the 'Your Community' web address would be redirected to the CEF pages on the Selby District Council website.

RESOLVED:

To not make any further changes to the CEF branding.

28. 'PROJECT TADCASTER' UPDATE

The 'Project Tadcaster' Board had not met since the previous CEF Partnership Board.

29. PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEMBERSHIP

It was noted that there were three vacancies for co-opted members to the Partnership Board. The Board agreed that the vacancies should be filled, but that it would be appropriate to wait until the start of the new municipal year in May.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To ask David Gluck to contact Church Fenton Parish Council after the start of the new municipal year in May, with a view to co-opting a member from the Church Fenton area;**
- (ii) To ask David Gluck to include an editorial piece in the next edition of 'Tadcaster Today' to encourage volunteers.**

30. BUDGET UPDATE

The budget report was noted. It was confirmed that there were outstanding payments of £360 for the 'Visit Tadcaster' website and circa £3,000 to North Yorkshire County Council for the purchase of traffic light equipment.

RESOLVED:

To note the budget report.

31. UPDATE FROM THIRD SECTOR PARTNER

David Gluck presented the update and noted specifically that the video production project was progressing, with the second film package being recorded after the Tadcaster Triathlon. It was also noted that a condition survey had been undertaken at Manor Farm.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

Tom Jenkinson (Stronger Communities, NYCC) was introduced to the Board and explained that he would be able to work with the CEF to promote the Stronger Communities team and that he can help local organisations by adding value to funding applications and projects. The Board welcomed Tom and thanked him for his support.

32. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016/19

David Gluck reported that he had received some feedback from Board members regarding the new Community Development Plan and that these suggestions would be included in the revised CDP. It was agreed that the new CDP would include a review section to provide detail of completed projects.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

33. NEXT PUBLIC FORUM

The Board requested that the next Forum be held at the Rosemary House Community Centre, so that residents living in the east of Tadcaster would not have to cross the River Wharfe. The Board also expressed its wish for the 'Market Place' sessions to be reinvigorated, and asked that relevant local service providers be invited.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To hold the next Forum at Rosemary House Community Centre; and**
- (ii) To invite local service providers to attend the 'market place' before the Forum.**

34. FUNDING APPLICATIONS

34.1 First Tadcaster Girl Guides

The Partnership Board considered the application which was for £700 towards the cost of sending a group of twelve girls and four adult leaders on an adventure trip to Switzerland. The Board was supportive of the application, but requested that the group be invited to attend a future Partnership Board meeting to feedback on the success of the trip.

RESOLVED:

To approve a grant of £700 to First Tadcaster Girl Guides, subject to the group attending a future Partnership Board meeting to provide feedback about the trip.

34.2 Tadcaster and Rural Community Interest Company

David Gluck (Tadcaster and Rural CIC) presented the application to the Board. The application was for £4,270 to cover the costs associated with establishing a Tadcaster Business Forum.

Heidi Green (Business Support York and North Yorkshire) also addressed the Board in support of the application, and explained that the initiative would be based on the successful 'Enterprise Café' operating in Selby.

It was confirmed that the Business Forum would seek to engage businesses in a two-way dialogue with the Tadcaster Town Council and the CEF.

The Board confirmed that it was supportive of the project, but that it wanted the project to be promoted as a CEF initiative with regular updates provided to the Board.

RESOLVED:

To approve a grant of £4,270 to the Tadcaster and Rural Community Interest Company to cover the costs of establishing a Business Forum as outlined in the application, subject to the project being adequately promoted as a CEF initiative and that regular updates are provided to the Board.

34.3 Tadcaster and Rural Community Interest Company

David Gluck (Tadcaster and Rural CIC) presented the application to the Board. The application was for £4,260 to cover the costs associated with updating and maintaining the 'Visit Tadcaster' website for 2016/17.

It was noted that the website had had a limited impact and that additional support was required to update the current content and then to maintain the content. It was confirmed that this would be a one-off cost and that the website would become self-sufficient.

The Board was supportive of the project but was concerned that there was insufficient detail regarding the breakdown of costs (specifically the justification of two days' work per month) and the ability to measure the impact of the updated website. It was confirmed that David Gluck would bring further details to the Board at a subsequent meeting.

RESOLVED:

To approve a grant of £4,260 to the Tadcaster and Rural Community Interest Company to cover the costs of additional support to update and maintain the 'Visit Tadcaster' website subject to the project being promoted as a CEF initiative and subject to further details being provided regarding measuring impact and workload.

34.4 Tadcaster Carnival 2016

The Board considered the application which was for £1,000 towards the costs associated with running the Tadcaster Carnival 2016. The Board was supportive of the application, and asked that the organisers be invited to attend a CEF meeting after the Carnival to report back on the event.

RESOLVED:

To approve a grant of £1,000 to the Tadcaster Carnival to cover the costs of running the 2016 Carnival as outlined in

the application, subject to the organisers providing feedback to a future meeting of the CEF.

35. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

36. NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meetings would be:

- Monday 16 May 2016, 7pm – Partnership Board
- Monday 13 June, 6.30pm – Forum.

Meeting closed: 8.45pm

Grants:

Income:

Date:	Details:	£
01/04/2015	Balance B/F from previous years	£ 52,838.91
01/11/2015	Annual Grant from SDC	£ 10,000.00
		£ 62,838.91

Expenditure:

Paid:	Ref Number:	Awarded to:	Details:	Paid	Commitment	Total	Date Agreed:
29/07/2015	N/A	Tadcaster Social Club	Tadcaster Acoustic Festival	£ 500.00		£ 500.00	22/06/2015
29/07/2015	N/A	Ulleskelf Parish Council	Ulleskelf Defibrillator Project	£ 500.00		£ 500.00	22/06/2015
29/07/2015	N/A	Tadcaster & Rural CIC	Tadcaster Today Issue 6	£ 1,435.00		£ 1,435.00	
13/11/2015	N/A	7Video	Tadcaster Video	£ 2,883.60		£ 2,883.60	12/09/2015
	N/A	Tadcaster & Rural CIC	Visit Tadcaster - Year 2	£	£ 360.00	£ 360.00	
	N/A	Tadcaster Historical Society	Archaeological Dig	£ 500.00		£ 500.00	26/03/2015
19/04/2016	T1502	Tadcaster & Rural CIC	Tadcaster Today 2016	£ 3,632.00		£ 3,632.00	16/11/2015
22/04/2016	T1504	Tadcaster Triathlon Team	Race Arch	£ 1,000.00		£ 1,000.00	15/02/2016
	T1506	Tadcaster & Rural CIC	Core Costs 2015/16	£ 4,929.00		£ 4,929.00	15/02/2016
	None	Tadcaster Town Council	Gateways project	£	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,000.00	15/02/2016
	T1511	North Yorkshire CC	Traffic Lights	£ 3,000.00		£ 3,000.00	
22/04/2016	T1505	First Tadcaster Girl Guides	Austria Trip	£ 700.00		£ 700.00	21/03/2016
	T1506	Tadcaster & Rural CIC		£	£ 4,270.00	£ 4,270.00	21/03/2016
	T1507	Tadcaster & Rural CIC		£	£ 4,260.00	£ 4,260.00	21/03/2016
	T1508	Tadcaster Carnival	Carnival 2016	£	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00	21/03/2016
22/04/2016	T1512	BK Parnaby	Painting CCTV posts	£ 650.00		£ 650.00	21/03/2016
28/04/2016		Kuhnel Graphics	Banners for Tour de Yorkshire	£ 780.00		£ 780.00	26/04/2016
				£ 20,509.60	£ 11,890.00	£ 32,399.60	
				£ 30,439.31			Grant Available

Project Running Costs:

Income:

Date:	Details:	£
01/04/2015	Balance B/F from previous years	-
01/11/2015	Annual Grant from SDC	£ 10,000.00
		£ 10,000.00

Expenditure:

Date:	Ref Number:	Paid to:	Details:	Paid	Commitment	Total
24/11/2014		Distinctive Catering	Refreshments - Forum	£ 60.00		£ 60.00
01/06/2015		Distinctive Catering	Refreshments - Forum	£ 60.00		£ 60.00
01/06/2015		Riley Smith Hall	Hall Hire - Forum	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
19/10/2015		Distinctive Catering	Refreshments - Forum	£ 60.00		£ 60.00
19/10/2015		Riley Smith Hall	Hall Hire - Forum	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
14/01/2016		Riley Smith Hall	Hall Hire - Floods	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
14/01/2016		Distinctive Catering	Refreshments - Floods	£ 60.00		£ 60.00
15/02/2016		Distinctive Catering	Refreshments - Forum	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
01/01/2016		David Gluck - Ruralis	Support to CEF	£ 655.00		£ 655.00
15/02/2016		Riley Smith Hall	Hall Hire - Forum	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
		Stephen Mellen	Sound System for Forum	£ 80.00		£ 80.00
		Just Travel	Bus Hire for Forum	£ 120.00		£ 120.00
28/04/2016		Tadcaster & Rural CIC	Car Park Management	£ 1,084.55		£ 1,084.55
				£ 2,679.55	£ -	£ 2,679.55

£ 7,320.45 **Budget Available**

£ 37,759.76

Total Fund Available:

Community



What is Community Engagement?

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

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What is community engagement?

Community engagement means different things to different people and many people use the phrase to describe very different approaches. The term is used, often interchangeably, with others such as 'involvement' and 'participation', and to describe a range of activities.

For the purposes of this toolkit, community engagement is simply defined as involving the people that live in your area with local redevelopment. This is simple to say but difficult to do: success will be achieved through a range of approaches and activities, and on a sliding scale of involvement that ranges from giving people information and asking them for their views, to giving communities a direct say in decisions and in some cases control over future development.

Understanding community engagement theory

There is a wide ranging body of work exploring the theory of good community engagement, which draws on research and practical experience from around the world. Here we introduce some of the best known and most useful concepts for planning community engagement.

There are two factors which you will need to consider when developing your approach to community engagement: how deep and how broad an approach you intend to pursue.

The choices you make in relation to these two factors will be determined by what it is you are trying to do and will help you to determine the approach and activities that you use. Understanding the range of possible perspectives will be crucial as this will help you shape what can be achieved and how you communicate with local people.

The International Association for Public Participation's 5 step framework for participation is a useful framework for thinking about different objectives and approaches for community engagement. Another approach, which does not put the different options in as hierarchy is the 'wheel of participation'.

Other useful links for information about the theory of community engagement include:

[CAG Consultants' work on communities and participation](#)

[JRF: Community participation and empowerment: putting theory into practice](#)

[Partnerships online: from theory to practice](#)

[International Association for Public Participation's](#) 5 step framework for participation

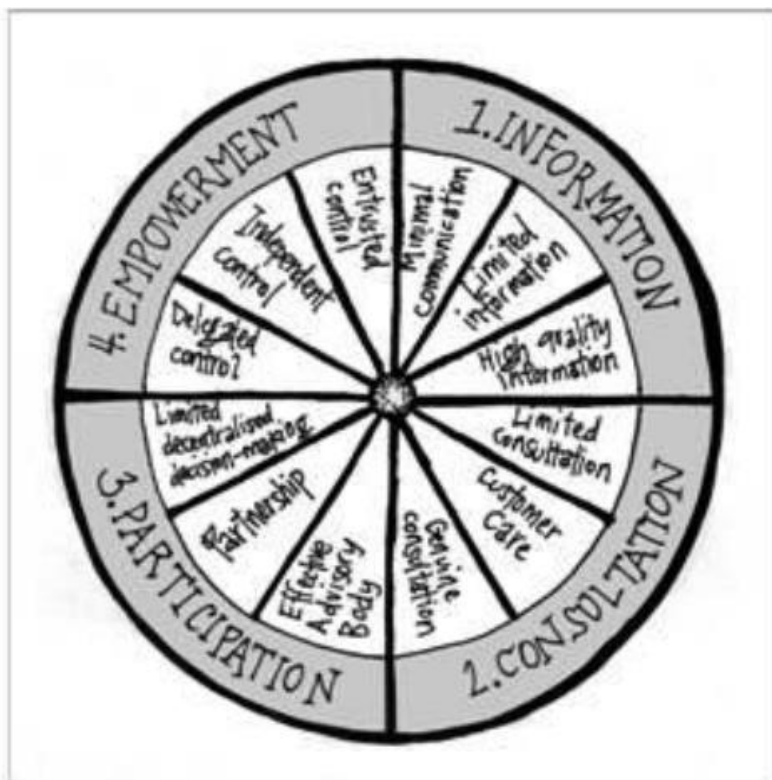
The International Association for Public Participation has developed a framework for looking at the depth and scope of engagement. This is based on five levels of engagement, each one increasing levels of participation and involvement. At one end of the spectrum engagement is simply an information sharing exercise, for example through the provision of websites or newsletters. At the other end, engagement can lead to genuine community empowerment and local control through mechanisms such as Community Development Trusts.

Goal	Techniques		
Inform	Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the opportunities, problems, alternatives and/or solutions	Keeping the public informed through information dissemination. One –way process that is starting point of dialogue.	Effective information dissemination is vital, with honesty about non-negotiable areas of influence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletters • Websites • exhibitions
Consult	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	Consultation is a term recognised in law: must invite responses and consider them before making decision, although under no obligation to make changes.	It is a structured episode, not a process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings
Involve	Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	Joint consideration of public responses with the community before decisions are taken, with feedback on how community has influenced decisions	Fluid, ongoing process and face to face dialogue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberative Polling
Collaborate	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	Look to the community for help in formulating solutions, incorporating recommendations into the decisions as far as is possible	Face to face dialogue with community representatives and those effected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory decision-making
Empower	Place final decision-making in the hands of the public	Requires investment in time and resources and community capacity building	Supporting community control through the existence of highly developed local structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Development Trusts

The 'wheel of participation'

This framework has been used by different agencies wishing to present options for involvement and participation. The original thinking outlining this approach was published in 1998.

Here is one illustration of a wheel.



Why do people participate?

Understanding Participation, a literature review by the participation organisation Involve, demonstrates that people's reasons for being 'active' citizens will vary greatly depending on their social, environmental and personal circumstances. The main reasons outlined for people getting involved are:

- "A personal interest" or common interests
- An aspiration to change things
- Faith
- Exposure and access to community and voluntary sectors
- An opportunity to voice opinions

Recent literature suggests that having a voice in the community and feeling a sense of empowerment gives citizens a stronger commitment to their local area. As a consequence they will be more likely to be a part of local activities. In addition, according to Understanding Participation, "when an active interest is shown in their opinion...and feel their engagement was influential and acted upon" a citizen will be more motivated to be involved and stay involved politically.

Social networks are also an important factor in triggering the involvement of citizens. Some triggers include 'being asked', 'word of mouth' and the influence of community 'motivators'.

What does good engagement look like?

Find out about what good engagement looks like by:

Joining Local Government Improvement and Development's [Community of Practice](#) on community engagement

Reading lessons from CLG's [Guide Neighbourhoods](#) programme about working with and empowering neighbourhoods and [Local Government Improvement and Development's](#) advice about community engagement

Reading [Planning Aid's guide to good public engagement in development](#)

Reading about [Camp Hill](#), Nuneaton, Warwickshire - a holistic approach to community engagement

Each community is unique and each challenge you face will be different; 'one size fits all' does not apply when it comes to community engagement.

When done well community engagement can bring a wide range of benefits to those involved in a particular project or plan, including to local people. It can increase trust in and improve the reputation of councils, and deliver improvements to services.

While it is wise to follow best practice methods and draw upon the best possible experience, it is also important to be flexible and adopt an approach which takes into account local difference. In some cases using tried and tested methods that have worked in one area may not fit your local circumstances. So, there is no set template for community engagement projects. Rather there is a menu of options from which you can choose throughout, always referring back to what it is you are trying to achieve and adapting to local circumstances as things change on the ground.

Good planning is critical to successful community engagement

The participation organisation, Involve recommends a formula for public participation. Below is a summary of the key factors it believes should be considered when planning activity:

- **purpose** - be clear about what the engagement activity seeks to achieve;
- **context** - pay attention to the needs and character of the local community;
- **people** - consider who should be involved, what their needs are, and what support or incentives may help them take part;
- **method** - design the process and choose a method that is appropriate to the purpose, context and people; and
- **outcome** – set the goals and overall objectives.

Good engagement will reach all sections of the community, not just the people who are already involved in local organisations or decision-making. Research has shown that typical participants in local decisions vary according to the activity and the issue, but some groups can be harder to engage than others – often because they do not want (or do not have the time) to attend community meetings.

Research shows:

- there is often a perceived 'usual suspect' group that dominates local participation;
- the typical participant is older (24 per cent of 50-74 year olds compared to 12 per cent of 16-24 year olds have participated in consultation exercises);
- black and minority ethnic groups tend to be under-represented;
- those living in rural areas were identified as more likely to engage, with 27 per cent taking part compared to 19 per cent living in urban areas.

Use creative approaches to community engagement

There are many creative approaches to community engagement that have been developed in response to the challenge of involving young people, families and minority groups in local decision-making.

Read about Participatory Appraisal approaches, the Community Game project developed by Living Streets and work by the Chartered Institute of Housing about engaging Muslim communities.

You will need to balance the experience and knowledge of people in your team, with tried and tested practice and the need to take a variety of approaches to engage different groups of people. Make sure you know about previous attempts to engage local people by making use of existing information, and use the best and most appropriate tools available for the task in hand, for example:

- traditional approaches to community engagement can be combined with using new technology. This may include geographical information systems (GIS) based software for mailing lists, texting and computer simulations and models
- internet-based approaches such as blogs and twitter can provide ways in which people with ICT access and skills to engage and interact with each other
- keep an eye on changes as they develop as new tools that can be useful when developing groups on-line – like Facebook, [tumblr](#) or [ning](#)
- technology can also serve to exclude, putting up new barriers to some people getting involved.

The combination of tools you use will need to be determined by who it is you need to engage and what you know about them.

Top tip: Community leadership in engagement activity

In some situations where residents and community groups are very active or supportive of local development and regeneration, it might be appropriate to let them take the lead on engagement activities.

There are many good examples of situations where residents and community groups have been trained to carry out local research or participatory planning exercises.

Participatory Appraisal is one approach that allows residents to define their own priorities for action. It is a technique that is widely used around the world and has been successfully adopted by some local authorities in the UK.

Find out about [Participatory Appraisal](#) as an approach and click here to find out how [South Tyneside Council](#) used this approach for neighbourhood planning.

Engaging communities on difficult issues

Community engagement can be productive and fulfilling work but it can also be complex, difficult, challenging and frustrating for everyone involved. It is an ongoing process of dialogue and influence in response to local priorities.

The process of community engagement inevitably unearths different and often opposing views, some of which cannot be reconciled. This is especially so when projects are controversial or raise strong objections from local communities, for example, when a hostel for people coming out of prison is proposed as part of a new community, or where the proportion of social housing in a development is felt by existing residents to be too great, or when transport infrastructure is seen to threaten the local environment.

If previous attempts at regeneration have failed or stalled, or if communities feel they have been over-consulted and their views not heard, there are likely to be high levels of mistrust towards the local authority and developers. This will create extra challenges for community engagement and in particular, for the frontline staff who are leading on engagement and consultation with local stakeholders.

Community responses to these issues can range from grumbling to passionate opposition. Staff who are leading on community engagement should be briefed, trained and supported to work in these difficult situations.

Good communication, honesty, acknowledging the mistakes of the past, and providing real opportunities for influence can help to rebuild local relationships, and in some cases, turn opposition into support as in the case of the [Quaggy River Action Group in South London](#) a resident led group that positively influenced plans in Lewisham that affected the River Quaggy. However, this takes time, skill and commitment.

Useful links:

[Welsh Assembly's guide to consulting homeless people](#)

[CLG's range of publications and advice on promoting community cohesion](#)

[CLG Guidance on Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#)

Why does bad engagement matter?

When done badly and without a clear purpose, community engagement can be a waste of time for all the stakeholders involved – residents, communities and the organisations leading the engagement process.

This can have a negative effect on local people's appetite for participation and the reputation of the organisations that are involved. Activities carried out without a commitment to respond to the findings or those designed to support a preordained result are meaningless, and can have an equally negative outcome.

Sometimes this stems from the reality of community engagement being at odds with high-level strategy. This reflects the competing demands and resource pressures on local stakeholders. As well as poor quality engagement, without effective coordination and a shared commitment, there is a risk that different council departments and partners in one area will duplicate engagement activity.

There is such a thing as too much engagement activity. This can lead to 'consultation fatigue', with local people being asked to take part in a plethora of forums, meetings, and activities. Engagement can cease to be meaningful if it is undertaken purely for the sake of having to be seen to engage.

One way of avoiding this is for those involved to develop a shared understanding of community engagement and to take a consistent approach, sharing what is happening on the ground. Where there is already a comprehensive community engagement strategy in place, planned engagement may well fit in within existing structures and processes.

In practice, community engagement can highlight the tensions at a local level between participative and representative democracy; between those elected as politicians who might feel that they are the representatives of the local community, and members of the local community seeking opportunities to exercise more influence and power over their own affairs. Local politicians can be very influential in determining the success or failure of support for community engagement activities. You will need to be careful that engagement activity and its objectives does not become politicised, or used for party political purposes.