

Asset Based Community Development - uniquely linked with Area Forums?

What makes Area Forums meetings different from local PACT groups or Neighbourhood Watch gatherings?

Being involved in all three of these community organisations I have often found it hard to distinguish between them - and other public assemblies of a similar nature. However my eyes were opened at our January 2015 Gateway Area Forum when the invited guest from the Council's Public Health department (Liz Petch) demonstrated the undeniable link between good mental and physical wellbeing and community engagement of a sort offered by our Forums.

People whether unemployed retired or even homeless **reference the Bridge project* can help themselves and their community to become a better place. People are this town's greatest asset – being able to offer cash to groups and organisations like those highlighted below empower people to change both their own lives and the people they encourage and support. I know that the Council through no fault of its own has been put in an almost impossible position, having to rob Peter to pay Paul. –but I urge you as the Executive to consider retaining a very limited amount of cash so that the Forums can continue to maintain their unique link with Asset Based Community Development and help to * **Reduced need and demand for public services** thus making a cost saving by spending just a little to support our Forums.

Asset Based Community Development

The overall aim of building a common understanding and the increased use of community asset approaches is to enable local people and communities to enjoy the best possible life chances. Evidence suggests that by embedding community assets approaches into public services in Blackpool, communities will be enabled to use their skills, knowledge, experience, strengths and capacity to build stronger, confident and more resilient neighbourhoods.

It is anticipated that assets-based approaches will lead to the following improvements:

- Increased social connectedness
- Increased participation in community life
- Increased perceptions that people can call on friends and neighbours to help out in a crisis
- Increased satisfaction with the local environment
- More people feel they are able to make decisions about their lives

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- Increased mental wellbeing
- Improved physical health
- Increased self-reliance
- **Reduced need and demand for public services***

Below is a list of the recipients of Gateway Area Forum funding since April 2014:

April 2014

£1,000 - Claremont Heritage Group

***£1,000 - Bridge Project**

£1,979 - Blackpool Boys and Girls Club

October 2014

£500 - Lancashire Women's Centre

£588 - Caterpillar Parent and Toddler Club

£1,500 - UR Potential

£3,040 - Claremont First Step Community Centre

January 2015

£5,000 - Blackpool Kicks Project

£750 - Blackpool in Bloom

£2,818 - Aunty Social

£2,000 - Talbot and Brunswick Parents Forum

£930.84 - Blackpool Carers Centre

£1,704.42 - New Methodist Church

£1,374.54 - Club2Go

£4,948.33 - Claremont Park Community Centre

£1,979.33 - Community Printing

£274.90 - Forest Gate Baptist Church

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£2,199.26 - Christ Church with All Saints

£2,749.07 – St John's School (Talbot and Brunswick Residents Association)

£274.91 - North Shore Methodist Church

£1,374.54 - Sacred Heart Catholic Church

£357.38 - Robin Ross - The Old Rock Factory

Dave Blacker MBE

Chairman

Gateway Area Forum