

take part

South Normanton and Pinxton Development Project (SNAP DP)

Review (26th Oct 2010)

This review was provided as part of the East Midlands Take Part dissemination process.
The review was provided by the East Midlands Take Part Champions, the Workers' Educational Association East Midlands and the University of Lincoln.





South Normanton and Pinxton Development Project (SNAP DP) - Review (26th October 2010)

Introduction

South Normanton and Pinxton Development Project (SNAP DP) is based in South Normanton in Derbyshire and is in the area covered by the Bolsover District Council Local Authority. They were set up in 2003 and funded to run until 2013, with three key aims: to aid community development; to set up and run a number of youth projects, and; to improve the environment. The group is now turning its attention to the need for longer term funding and sustainability.

South Normanton and Pinxton Development Project (SNAP DP) - Review (26th October 2010)

A. Review and Evaluation

The purpose of the Take Part review and evaluation was to enable the participating groups to review and evaluate their progress over the last year and to generate a report reflecting this. The report can be used by the group to contribute to its external evaluation for the year. Take Part in the East Midlands was also using the review to generate information about the skills and attributes of community organisers/active citizens.

Successes and Sustainability

Since Take Part project interviewed SNAP in March 2010, the group has undertaken a number of further projects and achieved new successes. In terms of the organisation as a whole, SNAP had been formed as a strategic group until March 2010, but has needed to change its direction since, which has meant focussing on delivering projects and finding ways to become more sustainable, particularly as once the current funding is due to finish in 2013, some services will no longer be able to be provided for free.

Ways in which SNAP has become more sustainable include charging the 'bigger companies' for adverts in their community newsletter. For example, the Parish Council aims to publish a quarterly newsletter but due to other commitments has recently been finding this difficult; SNAP offered them the use of a full page in the newsletter instead. In addition, the local PCT funds a page in the newsletter, as do a number of local businesses. Adverts and rents from businesses using the business centre are also features of future sustainability.

Some of the successes that SNAP members are particularly proud of include Janice Cooper (SNAP Project Manager) acting as vice-chair of the Health and Wellbeing group of the Local Strategic Partnership and her colleague Mandy Mangold (Strategic Youth Development Manager) sitting on the Children's and Young People's Services, both of which helps to bring both projects and knowledge into South Normanton and Pinxton and also enable the communities' voices to be heard at the strategic level. Another success SNAP has achieved since March is funding to provide a more permanent member of staff to run the Community Garden. The staff member is now employed to work 16 hours per week, and the local PCT further funded a project for her to provide a Fruit & Veg Bag scheme. Amazingly, over 100 orders were placed in the first week alone! On average, between 90-100 orders are completed every week and a number of volunteers have been recruited to help manage this. One sign of the success is that the group has been able to turn around some sceptical comments from the project's neighbours who are now avid users of the scheme.

They have also had further success with their Charity Shop. Money was raised to provide a £7k refurbishment and re-open the Charity Shop. This was initially through local residents calling in the office and asking SNAP to try and re-open the shop. SNAP took the proposal to their Board and the project was approved. It now has over 20 volunteers working there and is managed and run entirely by volunteers. One young woman who was unemployed started working there and developed the skills that helped her find employment.



Strengths and Limitations: what could have gone better?

Youth Service

SNAP continue to improve their Youth Service, particularly centred around their MUGA. Initially they employed 3 male workers but quickly found this was isolating the young female members of the area. In their favour they recognised this and addressed it, raising the money to employ 2 further female workers. Since their recruitment, they have worked with over 50 girls who now regularly attend twice a week. One negative has been the floodlights for the MUGA. They have now been installed but are still not operational. They were also vandalised when they were first fitted. With hindsight, SNAP realise that this work could have been managed better to ensure both adequate building and fitting and improved security and usage.

Cyber Cafe

The Community Church initially set this up but had opposition from local businesses who believed it wasn't run properly and caused gangs of youths to congregate outside adjacent shops. SNAP have obtained funding from both Toyota and Rolls Royce to open this 2 days per week and have liaised with local businesses. These businesses recognise the importance of the Café but wanted a say and/or reassurance on what goes on and who works there. SNAP have addressed this issue by stipulating that employees must wear a recognisable uniform, and have invited local businesses and local people to 'make their mark' on the Café by helping set it up. Instead of finding the money to refurbish it, they now recognise that it would be better practice to ask local businesses to provide materials and to allow local people with the necessary skills to help decorate the premises and achieve a sense of local ownership and engagement.

RAISE Project

For 6 years SNAP has run a 'Mums & Bumps' group to help provide support for young mothers. Initially, a number of 'soft' outcomes were expected but these quickly became 'hard' outcomes and led to progressive elements for the group. Recently, SNAP has also worked alongside the Bolsover Local Authority to help improve education surrounding teen pregnancy. They quickly found that although there was Sex Education and Parenting Advice, there was no direct education centred around relationships. SNAP developed a 14 week project and ran it in 2 local schools with one school being a mixed group, and the other being exclusively girls. The project used a 'River of Life' diagram, where students placed photographs of events in life to particular stages in life (between ages 5-70) and questioned the students as to where having a baby fitted in. The Deputy Head from one of the schools said that some of the girls who usually didn't come to school had attended exclusively for the project.

South Normanton and Pinxton Development Project (SNAP DP) - Review (26th October 2010)

B. Active Citizenship

Active Citizenship

'Local people able to give their opinion, get involved and make a difference'

Janice Cooper, SNAP DP

Example: in their Youth Service they allowed young people to have a say at all levels. They evaluate the project, come up with the activities and construct a monthly plan from the information they receive. From that information they have recently found that the local young people wanted to develop the skate park – they got a bmx expert in to advise and put their own funding bids in. SNAP comment that through the Youth Service *'Consultation has gone and engagement is in'*
Mandy Mangold, SNAP DP.

Big Society

Not a lot at present. It's a new phrase and SNAP are still unsure what it means and what will be involved. They are cautious that the government feels volunteers will do the work for free, without 'paid support'. It should definitely involve more 'partnership working'.



C. Reflection

Case Study: the Community Garden

What got you started: a local parent dropping his child off at school was fed up with an adjacent piece of waste land not being used. His daughter, who lived in Scotland, discussed this with him and told him how in her local community a similar piece of land had been developed into a Community Garden. He thought this was a good idea and together they drafted a letter to SNAP's Community Newsletter.

Key individuals / groups involved

Pinxton Development Group held monthly meetings and the parent went along to one of these and aired his thoughts. PDG really liked the idea and organised a consultation day to get the thoughts of local people. From this, a number of local people, organisations and schools got involved.

What did they do

They asked SNAP to manage the idea and turn it into a project, as they had the relevant experience of managing big projects like this. SNAP held further public consultations and workshops. At this point, the original 'instigator' no longer felt he needed to be involved – was this because he felt he had achieved what he set out to do?

How did they go about it

SNAP set up an 18-24 month project and held a number of fundraising events, consultations, planning meetings, open events and workshops – they felt it crucial to have a series of 'smaller' projects within the longer large one. This way local people would see smaller targets and goals reached and continue to believe in and support the project.

The Community Garden is now open to the public and at the stage whereby it is open daily and is managed by a permanent member of staff after 2 years.

Making things happen

Key to the success of the group and its projects has been the building of relationships between the organisation and its local authorities and councillors. For example, through the strategic work the project staff carry out they have gained a good understanding of new developments and opportunities which the group can use. Furthermore, the group knows its local parish, district and county councillors and has been able to build on these relationships to good effect. The benefit goes both ways as the councillors have been able to get a much clearer picture of the genuine needs of communities in their areas and have been able to support the projects in response to these needs. An example of this was being able to link the timing of the development of a car park near the school to support the development of the community garden.

*Review meeting took place at SNAP on 26 October 2010, present were:
Janice Cooper and Mandy Mangold of SNAP
Matt Beresford and Jane Watts of Take Part.*