

END OF FIRST YEAR REPORT
August 2006 to August 2007
By Richard Lancaster
Priority Neighbourhood Development Worker (PNDW)

Introduction

The post of Priority Neighbourhood Worker was established at the end of August 2006, working for the Council's Area Management team. *The project is managed by South Leeds Health for All on behalf of Leeds City Council's Inner South Area Committee which both funded and commissioned this post.*

The key function of the post is to support successful community engagement as part of the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan (NIP) process. This would include supporting community groups and individuals, building capacity in groups and delivering on projects in the NIPs.

NIP's have been completed around the Central Middleton Estate and Cottingley, with the PNDW continuing to support some activity in these areas. *NIP's on the Manor Farms and Recreations have begun, with the PNDW supporting and developing community engagement in these areas. The NIP for the Arthingtons is in the process of development. The PNDW is also supporting the Area Management Team and Area Committee in Belle Isle developing various forums to engage with local councillors.*

Summary of Achievements

Over the last 12 months the PNDW has enabled groups to engage more effectively with the Area Committee, empowering the groups to affect the decision making processes and having effective mechanisms to do this. *Additionally, the PNDW has supported groups in developing and running projects such as Middleton in Bloom and Cottingley in Bloom Garden Competitions.*

Middleton

The development work with Middleton Community Group (MCG) has seen an increase in people attending meetings and a more structured group organisation. This has allowed MCG to be more effective and assisted in developing a closer working relationship with local councillors and agencies, allowing them access to a consensus of local opinion to deal with NIP issues including ASB, housing issues especially around neglected void properties and street cleansing. *Additionally, the group is now able to look at positive actions that they can take in the area such as looking at road calming measures, with the potential for a 20mph zone in the Sissons; beginning to support the development of Middleton in Bloom with a garden competition; developing a calendar with support from I Love South Leeds; and establishing links with other community groups.*

Cottingley

Here the worker has again been able to develop a stronger Cottingley in Bloom group, not just in terms of increasing people attending meetings and events, but also looking at new actions to lift the estate such as new flower beds, baskets around the flats, *completing the Welcome Boards and running a garden competition. Working with Tenants and Residents Association Cottingley (TRAC) has seen newsletters delivered to all homes and help supporting TRAC to produce the newsletter themselves. Other activities have included supporting various grant applications to redevelop the Community Centre Garden;* developing intergenerational work between the school and Dulverton Court. This work has further helped local people and groups to have confidence to once again undertake special events such as organising and running a summer fayre.

Manor Farms

While this has been slow to get off the ground regular meetings of a new group are taking place and a small committee is developing. This provided a wide range of issues that could be included in the NIP including CCTV, tackling antisocial behaviour, environmental issues such as street cleansing and untidy gardens, void properties and a focus on engaging young people. *Presently, funding from Aire Valley Homes Leeds is now available for CCTV cameras on the estate.*

Recreations

Meetings have begun to develop a new community group, with mailings in the area being undertaken by some local residents. A newsletter has been produced and delivered.

ACTIVITY IN MORE DETAIL

Middleton

Growth of the Sissons Tenants and Residents Association (now Middleton Community Group) – this group began in September 2005. It is understood that meetings were attended by a small number of people around 6 or so, no minutes were taken, no agreed or written constitution, mailings were undertaken randomly, difficulties with treasurer role in the group and much of the load was on the chair person. With the arrival of the PDNW in September 2006 the group has been able to develop proper procedures and processes; widened its audience through more mailings; encouraged and supported action by local people such as gaining consensus on proposals for the Sissons Crescent/Road play area and delivery of flyers for meetings.

The group now has

- A new name – Middleton Community Group
- a constitution,
- new treasurer,
- properly minuted meetings

- developed a core committee known as the 'Small Group' allowed group to action specific objectives such as litter bins and traffic calming measures
- new residents are attending each meeting, which now average 20 residents
- enhanced designed flyers and posters
- increased mailings from 300 to 750 flyers around the estate
- engaged several members in delivering flyers
- encouraged members to attend Area Committee meetings
- allowed development of neighbourhood watch in part of the area.
- *A 'small group' that meets with agencies to discuss particular issues such as traffic calming.*
- *Undertaken a photographic and local story project with I Love South Leeds to develop a calendar.*
- *Undertaken the organisation of a Middleton in Bloom Garden Competition*
- *Group has it's own website www.middletoncommunitygroup.co.uk*

Future developments to include

- Encourage more residents to attend group through events and publicity.
- *Involve group in Middleton Community Network (MCN)*
- *Establish group newsletter and/or link with MCN newsletter*
- *Develop further group website.*
- *Produce a calendar for 2008 from the workshops with I Love South Leeds*
- *Ensure traffic calming on Sissons Road progresses*
- *Group to organise 3 clean ups and/or other events including a summer fayre*
- *Develop further the Middleton in Bloom and establish a group of people to run this and extend the garden competition. Have flower tubs around shops.*
- Further small group meetings with specific agencies.

Cottingley

The PNDW arrived on Cottingley towards the end of the NIP process, but has been able to support and develop a range of projects with groups on the estate. The two main groups that have been supported are Cottingley in Bloom and Tenants and Residents Association Cottingley Hall (TRAC).

Cottingley in Bloom has seen an increase in residents taking an active role as compared to when the PNDW arrived

- 6 new residents attend meetings and actively take part
- *Attracted 18 volunteers from ASDA to help the group*
- New treasurer and signatories to the groups bank account
- Small projects such as putting up hanging baskets on the flats has led to a promise of £100 from LSH for 5 more baskets and TRAC also providing £100 for baskets. Total of 18 baskets around the Heights and Towers.

- Developed a wide range of ideas for future projects such as further flower beds, seating and tree planting.
- *Welcome boards agreed design and costings and produced – awaiting planning permission.*
- *Run garden competition*
- *Entered Cottingley Towers and Heights into the Neighbourhood Awards element of Leeds in Bloom – awaiting result.*

The increase in interest with Cottingley in Bloom has helped to encourage some residents to attend TRAC meetings. The PNDW has provided TRAC with a worker to continue actions in the NIP, now that the official period for the NIP has finished. Through TRAC the PNDW has been able to support

- Newsletter – supported 2nd and produced 3rd delivered to all homes. *The group now being supported to undertake the production and delivery of the newsletter.*
- Leafleted flats twice with TRAC and Neighbourhood Watch regarding throwing rubbish out of windows
- *Supported applications to several grant providers for work to Community Centre Garden.*
- Developed intergenerational work between Dulverton Court and Cottingley Primary School.
- *Cottingley Summer Fayre – approx 200 or so people attending. Initial discussions suggest that the fayre should be run again. There also seemed interest from young people in developing a football team.*

Future Actions to include

- Encouraging further resident involvement in TRAC and Cottingley in Bloom through publicity, developing projects and events.
- Develop further Cottingley in Bloom Garden Competition.
- Encourage TRAC to take even greater control of the Cottingley Newsletter. One newsletter produced and do 3 more over next 12 months.
- Have at least one 'community fayre' over the next year.

Manor Farms

The PNDW role has allowed a focal point for developing a new community/residents group and has been able to support the Tenant Participation Officer for Aire Valley Homes Leeds in the area. Initial complications existed around the old residents group, but this has been resolved and the group officially disbanded in the early part of this year. Regular meetings now take place and a small committee is developing.

Future Actions to include

- *Develop a committee and constitution*
- Encourage more resident involvement through events and publicity
- *See the CCTV cameras up and running*

- Produce a newsletter for the Manor Farms
- Have 2 community/social events to 'celebrate' Manor Farms over the next 12 months.

Recreations

Again the role of the PNDW has been to begin to develop a new group for the area covered by the NIP. Only two meetings have taken place so far with local people, but meetings are to be monthly and a name for the group has been decided - 'Old Holbeck Residents Association'. A newsletter has been produced for the NIP area.

Future Actions to Include

- *Encourage further resident involvement through events and publicity*
- *Develop a committee and constitution*
- *Produce 3 more newsletters over the next 12 months*
- *Have 2 community/social events in the NIP area over the next 12 months*

Arthingtons

The NIP is presently under development.

Future Actions to Include

- *Undertake community consultation on main issues*
- *Develop community group and committee for the area*
- *Have at least 1 community/social event in the NIP area in the next 12 months.*
- *Have a newsletter for the area produced.*

Other Activities

The PNDW role has allowed support in other small ways outside of current NIPs such as

- Supporting the voluntary manager at Manor Field Hall
- *Supporting the Area Management Team in developing 'forums' in Belle Isle to encourage better engagement between local councillors and local people and groups. A meeting between youth agencies in the area and councillors is due to be held on 6th September.*
- Providing initial advice to the establishment of a community group in the Leasowes area.
- *Attending local summer galas*
- *Attended Operation Champion events*

Future Actions to Include

- *Further support for voluntary manager at Manor Field Hall*
- *Arrange 2 other 'forum' meetings in Belle Isle for Older People and Tenants and Residents.*
- *Attend summer galas/festivals*

- *Attend appropriate Operation Champions*

Conclusion

The Area Committees development of the PNDW role has, through the NIP programme, provided the direct support required by groups and individuals to sustain their positive involvement in the NIP process and beyond. *The post has been extended for a further year up until end of August 2008.*

The PNDW has undertaken intensive work over the last 12 months in Middleton and Cottingley. Additionally work has commenced on the Manor Farms and Recreations. The NIP for the Arthingtons is under development along with the development of 'forums' in Belle Isle.

There have been some set backs over year such as

- *Middleton – the difficulty of getting some one to help with the secretarial role, which may be due to people feeling that this is a daunting role with minutes and distribution of information?*
- *Cottingley – the disbanding of Neighbourhood Watch group in one area, due to difficulties between the members of the group and police. Also delays in getting the Welcome Boards erected, mainly due to contradictory information about relevant permissions needed from council departments.*
- *Manor Farms – difficulties in developing a committee, although there have been only 5 meetings so far.*

It should be acknowledged that the development of groups into strong, sustainable entities is long term and takes time to establish, especially in areas with a mixed history in terms of agency involvement and where people have become sceptical about changes. Over the last 12 months the main thrust of the PNDW activity has been to concentrate on developing strong groups, which can look forward to sustainability and are ready, with assistance, to organise and run their own celebration events and practical activities such as clean-ups. *It is envisaged that some of the role the PNDW has undertaken with groups in Middleton and Cottingley will be reduced to allow for development work in new NIP areas.*