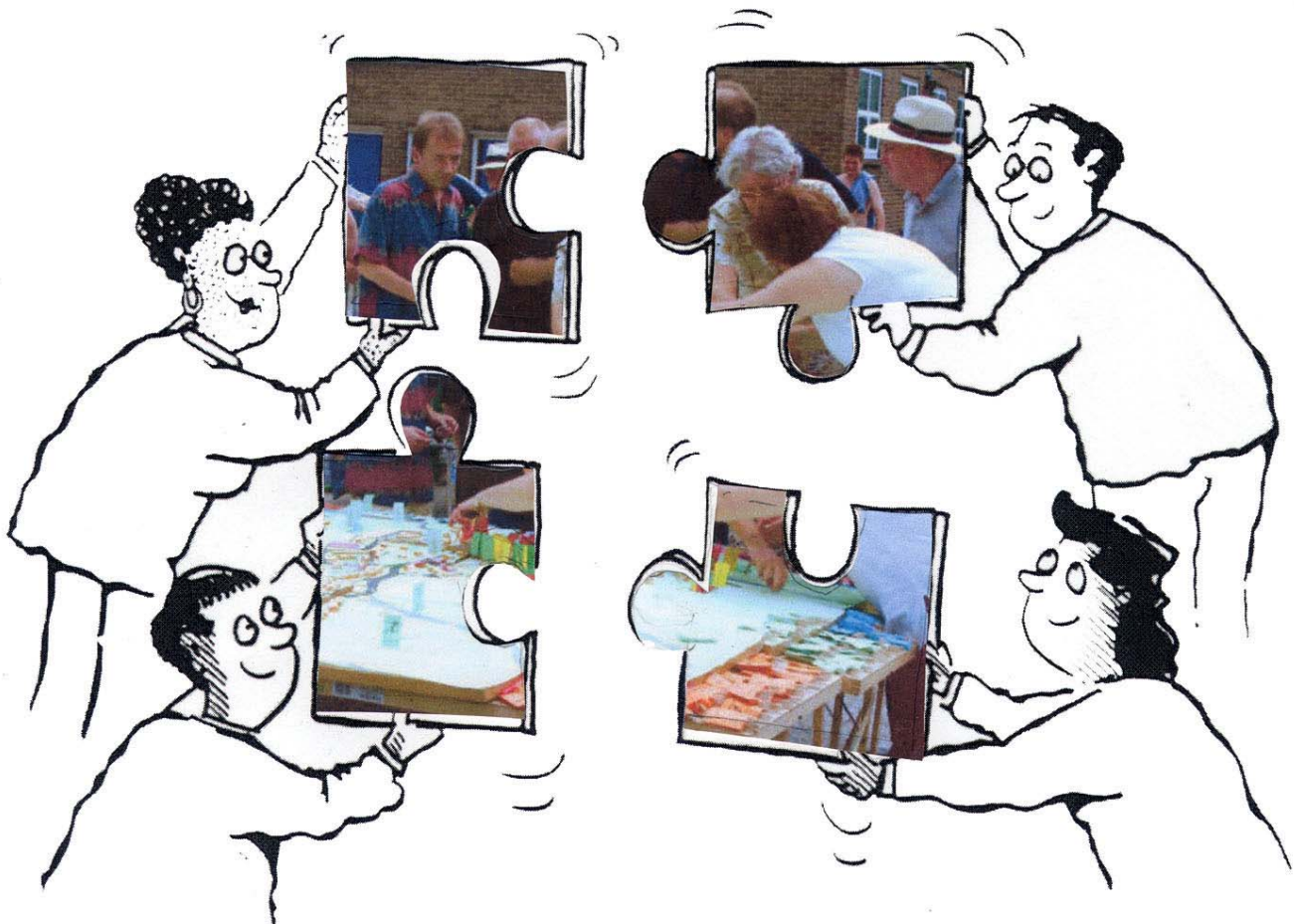




# *Jigsaw*

Autumn 2007

*The* newsletter of Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation



**\*NIF News\***

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As we approach 20 years of NIF, we have been reflecting on our progress, developments and achievements over the last 2 decades. To help us do this and to ensure the organisation continues to deliver against its core purpose we have recruited the services of Steve Evison (from Resources for Change) to act as a Transition Chief Executive. Steve has been working with us to review our core purpose, our product and our direction. From this work we are currently looking at some exciting new partnership opportunities as well as how to promote the huge range of services we provide, many of which people are unaware of. After all, in the last 20 years we have gained a huge experience, and, have worked all over the UK from Aberdeenshire to Cornwall and from Northern Ireland to Suffolk. Throughout our journey we have never lost sight of our vision *to deliver excellence in community development*, through working at grassroots level, giving local people a voice." To hear more about what's being going on, please read on. If you are interested to use our services, or partnership up with us in the future, then give us a call....

Whilst "Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>" is our highly successful community consultation tool, over the past 20 years we have also engaged in visioning, facilitated participatory workshops, evaluations using visual tools, building design and conversion, delivery of bespoke training courses (from Residents to Councillors), and so much more, all of which has taken us far **beyond** "Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>".

The future will see us retaining this ethos as we continue to diversify and progress our ongoing development to meet the ever changing needs of communities, ranging from grassroots to government initiatives.

**Beyond "Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>"** some of our most recent projects covered such areas as:

**Statement of Community Involvement** - *A pre-planning application for the redevelopment of the Buckland Mill site in Dover* .....[read more](#)

**A re-modelling exercise** – *to identify properties for demolition within a housing estate in Hull to create a more sustainable environment*.....[read more](#)

**New community facility** - *an opportunity for local people to put forward ideas and suggestions for use of a new Big Lottery funded community facility*.....[read more](#)

## ***Other areas of work***

Youth Development <http://www.nif.co.uk/youthdevelopment>

Asylum seekers/refugees <http://www.nif.co.uk/asylumseekers&refugees>

Councillor training <http://www.nif.co.uk/training/councillortraining>

Facilitated workshops <http://www.nif.co.uk/facilitatedworkshops>

Bespoke training <http://www.nif.co.uk/training/inhousetraining>

Projects revisited <http://www.nif.co.uk/projectsrevisited>

**If we worked with you in the past, we would love to hear from you about the impact that we had on you <mailto:admin@nif.co.uk>**

**NIF is all about finding simple, effective ways to involve un-empowered people in decisions affecting their own neighbourhood.**

We are about strengthening their links with other neighbourhoods, opening opportunities to improve and enrich their lives. We provide an external, independent approach, working with and through local groups, voluntary bodies and public bodies to effect lasting change. We believe in a holistic neighbourhood approach led through participation. Grassroots facilitation for Grassroots change. Using visual approaches we help provide the catalyst for local players to take forward change.

**Beyond Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> .....**

**Developing and supporting tools for local Grassroots action**



## ***NIF at Regeneration & Renewal***

NIF had a display at one of the largest annual regeneration conferences in London in May. The event was organised by Regeneration and Renewal . The Foundation disseminated some of its recent work around its Youth Engagement Programme funded through Department for Communities and local Government (DCLG).

The event also provided NIF with the opportunity to showcase some of its recent project work whilst providing clients and delegates with an opportunity to talk directly to NIF's projects staff and to gather information about the services that we offer.

***“Planning for real<sup>®</sup>” .....30 years on !***



Is it really 30 years since ‘Planning for real<sup>®</sup>’ was first used as a consultation tool in Dalmarnock, Scotland?.....**yes** it is and it is still the most popular and visual consultation tool available.

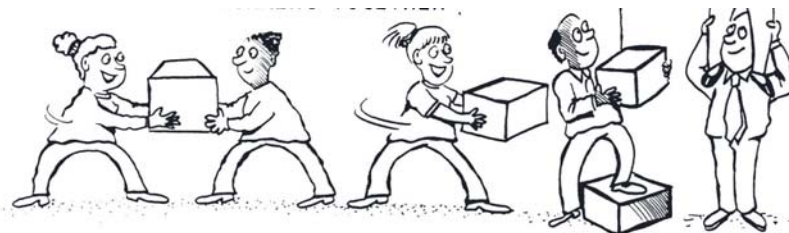
### ***What is ‘Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>?’***

So you've heard of "Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>" - it's a model, right? Well, not quite. "Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>" is a whole process of community consultation. It begins with contacting the local community networks and reaches a conclusion with the formation of an Action Plan for taking forward the decisions made during the process.

“Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>” is a flexible tool and has been effectively employed in heavily urban areas such as inner city London, in very rural areas in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, in very diverse communities, for example those found in Birmingham and in very divided communities such as Newtownhamilton in South Armagh.

***And here is how it all began.....***The idea behind “Planning for Real®” took shape when, in the 70s, I embarked on a four-year trial, in 200 Junior and Secondary classrooms, in eight different Authorities, of a ***hands-on*** neighbourhood decision pack called ***Living Space***. Teachers reported with enthusiasm and sometimes incredulity that youngsters regarded as “passengers” were suddenly pegging level with the academically bright, and everyone generating commitment that continued for weeks, months, in some cases over a year. The Department of the Environment took note and backed a sequel aimed at adult communities in a series of “deprived neighbourhoods”. The adult version concentrated on one 3D model of an imaginary neighbourhood, with a realistic selection of option cut-outs to pick from, arrange, and re-arrange, individually and collectively on it. The new pack got people off their seats clustering round, sorting and sifting, talking nineteen to the dozen, making up their minds without the need for formal talk. Then, one day thirty years back, it was the turn of residents in Dalmarnock, Glasgow, to try their hands. But they said to me, “*Very interesting, but where’s the place it shows?*” I said it could be anywhere. “*Not good enough at all, at all. We want it **for real**, for Dalmarnock.*” Not just a training exercise, but a tool to work out what needs doing and how to get it done. So over the weekend we transformed the 3D model to represent Dalmarnock, streets, houses, derelict areas – the lot. It went the rounds on display, wherever it might catch the casual eye, attracting enthusiastic turnout for the Big Day when everyone (including fifteen Council professionals invited to join in “on tap not on top”) could get to grips with the possibilities. A BBC team had been covering other public meetings in Glasgow (where Us, the residents, had come into contact with Them, the Council people and sometimes given them a bloody nose). This time everyone was on the same footing, lots of chatter, everyone experimenting and beginning to pick up each other’s ideas. The BBC Tonight programme covered the event and called it “*A scheme which at a stroke of childlike brilliance put reality into the lazy jargon of community participation*”. After that we were on a roll. (Dr Tony Gibson 2007)

**For more information about ‘planning for real®’ please visit the NIF website [www.nif.co.uk](http://www.nif.co.uk)**



## ***Up date on the Youth Development Programme (DCLG)***

Paul Higgitt explains what has been happening just lately on the 5<sup>th</sup> and final year of the programme.....

### **Humberside Improvement Partnership Elected Member Development**

In response to a workshop on effective community engagement as part of the IDEA's *Walking the Talk: local vision for local members*, held in Birmingham in Sept 2006, we were invited to be part of the Humber Improvement Partnership's Elected Member Development event in September 2007. This event brought together Elected Members and Officers from East Riding, Hull, North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and the Fire Service

This event gave us the opportunity to put forward practical and effective ways to consult with communities as part of a more active approach to community engagement . This included focusing on the importance of involving young people as active citizens in their neighbourhoods. Discussion also focused on the importance of involving young people in neighbourhood governance and looked at effective ways to encourage wider participation of young people in neighbourhood change. The presentation touched on elements of the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper, including:

- Democratic Renewal (in which young people should play an integral role).
- How Elected Members are involved in informing, consulting, involving and devolving with communities and young people.
- NIF also had the opportunity to promote it's school involvement work and the development of practical ways to promote the national curriculum school citizenship agenda.

Key to community involvement in neighbourhood based decision making is effective community engagement and consultation. The event gave NIF the opportunity to share best practice approaches in community governance.

Elected Members also participated in trying a number of practical and participative tools and techniques for active community engagement including model based approaches, problem solving and looking at causes and effects of neighbourhood issues.

Participants also considered their own responses to 'community governance' in the practical sessions, and related these to key messages in the White Paper, including the roles of communities, Councillors and Officers.

## ***Safer routes to schools***

Haringey Schools use “Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>” to consult as part of the School Travel Plan!

Nisha Parmer from Haringey says.....

The London Borough of Haringey School Travel Team use “Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>” as a tool for consulting the whole school community. Pupils are encouraged to make a 3D model of the area around the school. Haringey has a diverse community with other languages spoken, often English as a second language. Pictorial representation various issues on cards encourage participation from pupils of different ages and ability.

We aim to identify any barriers pupils, parents and staff face on their journey to and from school. These issues can be addressed through the School Travel Plan (STP) process to make the journey safer for everyone.

Using this tool, pupils do not only identify issues relating to transport but also other key areas such as parking, graffiti, abandoned rubbish, environment and crime & safety.

Pupils at St Francis de Sales Junior School in London, N17 used this model as part of the consultation process for their STP. When making the models, large maps are placed on a backing of polystyrene and cardboard. The maps are painted with public open spaces and gardens in green, roads and pavements in shades of grey, house floor sites painted in pale terracotta, shops and community buildings painted pale pink.

When constructing the models the children use paints to colour the mounted paper maps; colouring the grass, the building footprints and the roads, trees and bushes are constructed from cocktail sticks, card and tissue paper. The houses and local buildings are made by identifying the house type of a certain street or location and placing it onto the model which gives a 3D effect. Landmark buildings are constructed using digital images from the internet or a camera. The pupils were encouraged to place cards on the area relating to the issues they face on their journey to school and the results were analysed and become an integral part of the School Travel Plan.

This activity is linked to cross curricular subjects such as art, maths, social development and geography. This can also be linked to a transport theme relating to the immediate school environment.

The whole of the school was involved in the consultation and the model is also used as part of an exercise at the Councils Green Fair where members of the public were able to view the model and express views and concerns.

The exercise is a fun way of getting the vital messages across to the whole school community and important for the Local Authorities to use as part of the borough's overall STP Strategy. There are also links to other departments within the Council such transportation, highways, planning, housing and other outside agencies such as the emergency services, local businesses and interested community groups.

### **Quotes from Year 5 pupils at St Francis de Sales Junior School.**

- I liked making the models and cutting the houses out. The thing I enjoyed was partnership working with others. We were taking our time chunking the houses together on the map. I have to say I enjoyed it very much.
- I enjoyed painting the blocks and attempting to make the Tottenham Hotspur stadium. I learnt the skill of painting neatly. This activity was fun because I get to know more about Haringey and the area my school is in. I liked making houses and gluing on to their places, because I normally like the arts and crafts and other things related to drawing.
- I really enjoyed the designing and painting the model. It taught me some places around the school. I especially enjoyed making the trees.
- When I was designing the model I really enjoyed it because you can share your knowledge with other people and you can learn something as well.



**Pupils who made the model**

For further information please contact Nisha Parmar – Senior School Travel Advisor, 020 8489 1091 or email [nisha.parmar@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:nisha.parmar@haringey.gov.uk)

# ***\*Competition\****

Now the consultation period on the Planning White Paper is over, the real enquiry can begin. Below is picture of a little girl clearly involved in a 'Planning for Real<sup>®</sup>' exercise. - Who can identify the place? A clue is on the model which mentions Mallory House. A bottle of champagne to the first reader who gets the correct answer to the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation on [info@nif.co.uk](mailto:info@nif.co.uk)



For an extra bonus point does anybody recognise the girl? Or if it is you we would love to hear from you.

## Just for fun !!!

G	R	A	S	S	R	O	O	T	S	H	B	Y	O	M	S
W	U	G	C	G	S	S	B	R	K	L	W	E	E	R	A
E	R	H	H	N	O	I	T	A	T	I	L	I	C	A	F
B	A	A	O	Q	S	S	T	I	E	O	V	Y	Y	L	K
T	L	M	O	C	W	F	D	N	U	S	O	D	E	N	J
A	P	L	L	A	E	M	X	I	R	U	U	L	K	A	A
G	R	E	S	D	B	F	U	N	N	O	H	B	S	T	M
E	N	G	R	M	S	H	I	G	O	I	L	M	S	I	W
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I	J	U	M	R	E	X	G	J	R	W	S	L	K	A	L
P	L	A	N	N	I	N	G	F	O	R	R	E	A	L	P
M	S	E	E	Y	R	P	I	L	Q	B	V	F	E	S	O
P	W	I	N	N	O	V	A	T	I	V	E	I	N	N	E
C	O	N	S	U	L	T	A	T	I	O	N	S	E	T	P

All of the words below are hidden in the grid above except one, which one is it?

**Innovative  
Consultation  
Rural  
Tools**

**Planning for Real  
Jigsaw  
Techniques  
Charity**

**Grassroots  
Young  
Website  
Schools**

**Facilitation  
People  
National  
Training**

## Number Cruncher

1		2	*	3	*	4		5
	*	6			*		*	
7			*		*	8	9	
*	*	*	10		11	*		*
12	13			*	14			
*		*	15	16		*	*	*
17		18	*		*	19		20
	*		*	21			*	
22			*		*	23		

**Across**

- 1 8 across doubled
- 4 months in 9 years
- 6 seconds in three minutes
- 7 12 across divided by six
- 8 17 across plus ten
- 9 7 across plus 2
- 12 minutes in three days
- 13 22 across doubled
- 17 6 across minus eighteen
- 18 months in eleven years
- 21 six times 4 down
- 22 19 down five times
- 23 Months in ten years

**Down**

- 1 18 down plus fifty-two
- 2 1 down plus sixty-three
- 3 1 across times 3
- 4 4 across minus seven
- 5 9 down plus 161
- 9 21 across plus 115
- 10 5 down minus 180
- 11 15 across minus forty
- 12 2 down minus twenty-four
- 16 five times 3 down
- 17 19 across plus six
- 18 11 down plus eighty-three
- 19 23 across plus forty-four



### ***Freelance Consultants***

The Foundation is looking for skilled and experienced freelance Community Development Consultants to expand its existing network of consultants nationwide. We are looking for consultants who are able to work with communities at grass roots level and their partners in a participatory way using a range of tools and processes and are committed to the ethos of empowering communities.

If you are interested please send your CV for the attention of Margaret Wilkinson, Head of Projects & Developments, to The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, The Poplars, Lightmoor, Telford TF4 3QN or email [diane\\_rixom@nif.co.uk](mailto:diane_rixom@nif.co.uk)

### ***Board Members***

The Foundation is also looking for anybody who would be interested in becoming a board member at NIF. For further information (i.e job description, specification etc) please contact Diane on 01952 590777 or email [diane\\_rixom@nif.co.uk](mailto:diane_rixom@nif.co.uk)



# And Finally.....

## *NIF's response to the Gov't Planning White Paper*

### **`Planning for a Sustainable Future'**

Neighbourhood Initiatives is a Charitable Foundation which aims to help communities, and particularly their less articulate members, to investigate their structural problems and evolve measures to tackle them. Our principal technique in this is 'Planning for Real®' developed by Dr Tony Gibson, though we also have other generally related techniques and services to offer.

"Our aim is to improve actual community engagement in planning rather than create more process." Para 1.43.

1 The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this important and timely White Paper. In relation to Chapter 1, NIF recognises only too well from its work the comment that 'planning systems are confusing and unclear' to many around the country. Our experience is that it is particularly true of those who are least able to articulate their views either because of disadvantage, age or ethnicity. The problem manifests itself most strongly when those who do understand the system and who have most to gain, manipulate the process to narrow advantage. This exacerbates social and community disunity and creates short term winners and losers. In the long term, everyone suffers.

2 NIF is pleased to see that the White Paper recommends increased 'funding for bodies such as Planning Aid to ensure members of the public get the advice and support they need to get involved in site specific proposals'. NIF has seen substantial grants awarded to Planning Aid in recent years to support its work in assisting individuals in their planning battles.

3 NIF has a thirty year record of assisting communities to envisage their futures through 'Planning for Real®' and other capacity building activities. The aim has been to beef up the capability of communities to better help themselves, not just in the short term but in a sustained and enduring fashion. NIF would like to hope that it will be financially enabled to assist Government to deliver the outcomes of the White Paper, bringing all its experience and networks to bear.

4 It is interesting that the picture on the front cover of the White Paper is of a child next to a model involved in a 'Planning for Real®' exercise. Ever since Tony Gibson pioneered the activity in Glasgow in 1977, a model has been central to achieving better understanding of a proposal. Through such means, NIF has worked extensively and successfully on planning and regeneration matters with children, asylum seekers, older people and hard to reach groups. It is with these general comments that NIF then addresses specific questions in Section 1 of the Consultation.

- Q.1-10 We agree there is a strong case for dealing with national infrastructure and major projects in a different way, in particular bringing them forward in a coherent, comprehensive and timely fashion that is better understood by the public. National Policy Statements are essential in the absence of a national spatial strategy of the sort that now exists in Scotland and Wales. It is crucial that these are 'joined up', and their long time horizon coupled with

five year reviews also seems so sensible that one wonders why it has not been done before. NIF believes Ministers should take decisions (see response to Q 29 below).

- Q.12 Yes. We consider that promoters should be responsible for proper consultation through participatory processes. We would recommend the frontloading approach and community engagement steps outlined in the national Planning Forum Good Practice Note on this topic.
- Q. 27 We agree that an inquisitorial rather than adversarial approach is most suited to the examination of the major projects. However, we would recommend a form such as Parliamentary Select Committee rather than a Public Examination for the 'open floor' stage. This will allow for closer examination and cross- examination of the evidence rather than the less formal round table approach. Our experience is that if the public is to be satisfied that they have had their 'day in court', it is important that they are convinced the testing is thorough.
- Q.28 NIF has particular experience over many years and around the country of working with hard to reach groups. The first place 'Planning for Real®' was tested was in a 'no-go' area of east Glasgow that officials rarely even visited. We would be pleased to develop bespoke packages for DCLG based on our long hands-on experience. Any engagement process needs to be well co-ordinated and programmed as part of a transparent project plan. Communities dislike nothing more than being ignored for years and then bombarded with a succession of agencies asking for their views on the same or similar proposals, often which are quickly ignored again. NIF's expertise is in building capability within communities, particularly those least able to help themselves, so they may continue to play an active part in delivery. Local authorities, developers and other agencies find that it is most useful to have independent third parties such as NIF becoming involved in such participatory activity. NIF also trains officers and others to act as mediators and facilitators the better to assist service delivery.
- Q.29 No. We consider that the decision regarding major projects should rest with the Minister. It is proper that the decision should rest with a democratically elected politician. The public should at least be able to feel they can register their discontent through the ballot box if they disagree with a decision rather than see decisions taken by a quango. This raises the question whether the Planning Inspectorate could perform the role (or much of it) of the proposed Planning Commission, at least in providing the Chairman for the inquisitorial panel.
- Q.32 If the IPC route is taken, we agree that Commissioners should be drawn from these fields. We are particularly pleased to see community engagement specifically mentioned and we would be pleased to offer expertise in this area. Clearly, specialists would be needed to inform the process-for example aviation on airports, marine for ports and harbours.

**Graeme Bell**

***Chair of Trustees***