



What have we learned about empowerment practice and how it could be improved?

February 2008

A short study carried out by Laying the Foundations Ltd

“You can’t retire from community work; it gets in your blood!”

“I didn’t really understand what was happening”

“No one would do it if I didn’t volunteer”

“It’s a high motivator for a resident to be sitting next to officers and having an influence”

“Loads of training, sometimes too much”

“Kendray’s gone from zero to hero!”

“I just felt like ‘why do I bother’ ”

“I got an Oscar for most outstanding female volunteer”

“We weren’t interested at first; we’d heard it all before”

“They encouraged me to speak at Ardsley House once. I’ve Chaired meetings since then; I would never have done that in a million years”

“I feel proud of myself for helping improve Kendray”

**“Negativity from some residents sometimes makes me wonder
why I do it”**

Introduction

Kendray is a large housing estate, with just over 5000 residents, situated 1 mile to the south of Barnsley town centre. Like many other areas, the community of Kendray experienced much decline following the pit closures in the 1980's. Kendray deteriorated from an area of having a 3 year waiting list for housing in the 1970's to being nick-named the 'Bronx' in the late 1990's with 250 empty properties.

In 1999, a small group of residents decided enough was enough, and became determined to put Kendray back on its feet. With the support of Council Officers, the group became 'Laying the Foundations'; their aim was to make Kendray a better place to live and work. Laying the Foundations managed to secure funding to open up 'Community House'; a pair of semi detached houses knocked together and a place where local residents could go to get help with enquiries and problems.

A similar group was also set up around this time, known as the Kendray Initiative. A small group of residents met and asked the Council for help in tackling the problems Kendray was facing.

In 2002, the Kendray Initiative secured funding to carry out a new approach to redevelopment known as Neighbourhood Management. Kendray was chosen to receive Pathfinder status due to the strength of resident involvement in the already existing community groups.

Since the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder began, Kendray has undergone major redevelopment with over £3 million worth of investment over a 7 year period. The Pathfinder is due to end in Kendray on 31st March 2009.

The MORI Household Surveys of 2003 and 2006 indicate the improvement in Kendray within the short timescale of just 3 years. For example, in 2003, 70% of respondents identified litter and rubbish in the streets as being a problem, with a decrease of 9% in 2006.

Another example is in 2003 where only 61% of respondents were satisfied with the quality of their parks and open spaces, with an increase to 80% in 2006. Both these examples are indications that the Pathfinder was already making a difference to people's quality of life.

This study set out to investigate the quality of resident engagement in Kendray's Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder by addressing the question of 'What have we learned about empowerment practice and how it could be improved?'

Key residents, staff and Partners were interviewed (see The Research Process), all of whom Laying the Foundations would like to thank for taking part in this study.

The Research Process

In order to research 'What have we learned about empowerment practice and how it could be improved?', Laying the Foundations decided to interview key residents and Partners who have been involved at some point over the last 6 years with the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder.

Laying the Foundations staff, together with Trustees, discussed which residents would be most appropriate to interview. A list of around 25 key people was compiled and letters sent out to each person explaining why they had been approached and the reason behind the research. A phone call was made to residents a few weeks later asking if they had received the letter and if they were willing to take part, mentioning that the interviews would be completely confidential.

We interviewed 14 residents, 1 Councillor, 1 Partner and 1 LTF staff member who no longer worked in Kendray but who was greatly involved in the Pathfinder up until August 2007. Although 25 key residents were initially approached to be interviewed, it was clear that some people were not interested or not relevant to be interviewed.

The interviews themselves were carried out either at Community House or in the person's home or place of work; the decision was theirs. Each interview took anything from half an hour to 2 hours, depending on the person and the discussion. I found a few people to be slightly cautious when reading the questions; they were clearly nervous about who might be reading their comments and if their names would be mentioned. However, I found most people to be very honest which made for an interesting discussion.

The analysis of comments has been kept confidential and the commentary is my own thoughts and views.

The requirement of the National Empowerment Partnership programme is that we use the six box model outlined on the next page, as a tool for reporting. There is a reference next to each question in the interview analysis section, referring to a particular box within the six box model. Some of the boxes within the six box model have not been referred to in this report; this information has already been covered in the Feedback pro-forma supplied by and returned to the National Empowerment Partnership.

The six-box model for evaluation of community empowerment

The requirement of the national programme is that we use the six box model outlined below as a tool for reporting.

	Inputs / context/ baselines	Processes	Outcomes
Verifiable facts	e.g. Catchment population targeted; pre-existing community groups enlisted; provision of x amount of community development worker time; provision of x amount of grant; commitment of officer cooperation from x agencies Box 1	Empowerment methods used; activities carried out; cooperation received Box 2	Outcomes related to local government performance indicators; outcomes assessed by additional voluntary indicators; community group objectives achieved; number of residents testifying to impact; testimony of local agencies as to impact. Box 3
Practitioners' and Participants' judgements	Objectives of the initiative as seen by community group/s; ...as seen by CD workers; as seen by local agencies Box 4	Quality of engagement process as judged by, eg, National Engagement Standards (from Scotland) Box 5	Participants' and workers' group judgement on quality of outcomes Box 6

Interview Questions, Feedback, Comments and Action Plan

Question 1: How did you first get involved in the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder?

[Link to Box 2 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

81% Positive

e.g. "I was one of the original members of LTF; I got involved in Kendray before it (Neighbourhood Management) even started; I got on the Kendray Initiative Board through being an LTF representative".

"I came into Community House to report a repair and started attending the LTF meetings".

19% Negative

e.g. "I got involved through the proposed housing demolition; they wanted to bring down my house; Kendray was called the Bronx and things were really bad".

Commentary:

Most people involved themselves in Neighbourhood Management through Laying the Foundations or due to their role as a worker which automatically allocated them a place on the Kendray Initiative Board. Most residents visited Community House to report a problem or to seek help and went on to attend LTF meetings which eventually lead to joining a group and a place on the Kendray Initiative Board.

A small amount of residents (19%) attended LTF meetings due to housing demolition proposals which included demolishing their own homes. Although a positive action was taken by the resident, it was due to a negative situation, hence why I have categorised this as being negative.

Action Plan:

- Workers to provide ample support to residents who are new to Neighbourhood Management.
- Provide thorough induction packs.

Question 2: Did you understand what Neighbourhood Management was? Has this (your perception of it) changed?

[Link to Box 2 & 4 of 6 Box Model](#)

37½% Positive

e.g. “Yes because we’ve been involved since the beginning”.

“Yes I knew it was about regeneration”.

62½% Negative

e.g. “Neighbourhood Management seemed to be pushed into Kendray but no one seemed to know what it was”.

“Not really; not many people did; it has been called so many different things”.

“I didn’t really understand what was happening and then I dropped out to concentrate on family life”.

Commentary:

Many residents commented that they didn’t initially understand what Neighbourhood Management was but this is understandable because at that time it was a new approach to regeneration and Kendray was in the first round of Pathfinder areas. However, most people went on to say that it was explained to them very well by Neighbourhood Management and LTF workers and they are now comfortable with their conception.

In my opinion it is vital for people to have an understanding of what is happening in their community and why they are being asked to contribute. The resident in the comment above, is a prime example of someone who has dropped out because they didn’t understand what it was; there wasn’t enough incentive to maintain their interest.

Action Plan:

- Residents to receive information on what Neighbourhood Management is all about and why it is in their area.
- Thorough induction packs for new and possible new Board members.

Question 3: How were you encouraged to get involved? By whom and how?

[Link to Box 2 of 6 Box Model](#)

87% Positive

e.g. I was encouraged by workers from LTF and the Neighbourhood Management team; I was just about to retire and looking to volunteer; I was impressed by the information I got to help me improve the community”.

“We are both encouraged at a summer BBQ” (at Community House).

13% Negative

e.g. “I just wanted to (get involved); the newsletter told me what meetings there were; they are a good way to get to know people and what is happening in your area”.

Commentary:

Most people were encouraged by specifically named members of Laying the Foundations and Neighbourhood Management teams via other groups they were members of. It seems that members of staff visited various groups in the community to explain what was happening and to encourage people to get involved.

In my opinion it is complimentary to Laying the Foundations and Neighbourhood Management teams that so many residents named specific people; testament to those people who have made a difference to the community and to individuals.

It is important to mention that the small amount of people who gave a negative response was only because they felt they didn't need any encouragement; they voluntarily got involved.

Action Plan:

- Provide continual encouragement to potential and existing members.
- Communicate using all types of inclusive and accessible methods.

Question 4: Have you been offered training? What's your experience of this?

[Link to Boxes 2, 5 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

81% Positive

e.g. "The quality of training was always excellent as were the venues; it was always relevant and the quality of delivery was high".

"Training provided confidence to speak to the right people appropriately instead of shouting your voice off".

19% Negative

e.g. "A company called Liggins carried out the training in the early days but it was too much and they always wanted you to be working towards a certificate; we just wanted to learn at our own pace, we didn't need certificates in everything".

Commentary:

The comments received about the training provided to residents were very complimentary. It seems that there was almost too much on offer at one point. Training was presented in various packages including workshops, residential weekends, action learning days and specific training sessions.

One of the negative comments does emphasise the importance of providing training at a pace and level to suit the resident; not all residents want to receive accreditation, they are just happy to learn. The evidence in the interviews shows that the push for accreditation from the training providers could have discouraged residents from the taking part in the training and possibly even the Pathfinder.

Results also indicate that residents prefer training to be provided within their own community. This might be where they feel most comfortable or due to the added burden of making travel arrangements.

In my opinion, the training provided to residents has been undeniably the most effective tool of empowerment and community development. Many of the interviews clearly show that without training, many residents wouldn't have the skills or knowledge to contribute the way they do now.

It is important to mention that the majority of negative feedback was from Partners for whom the training wasn't necessary, making their comment a negative one in the analysis.

Action Plan:

- To provide training in different formats and at appropriate levels in venues within the community (if possible).
- Listen to residents and ask for feedback; change training providers if necessary.

Question 5: Where has the guidance and support come from?

[Link to Box 2 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

100% Positive

e.g. “They were always a good team; no one felt intimidated; they were always friendly and didn’t use jargon, or when they did they explained it”.

“Excellent induction packs from both parties”.

0% Negative

Commentary:

Every comment made about guidance and support was a favourable one. Most people specifically named members of staff either in the Neighbourhood Management team or in Laying the Foundations. It is also interesting that some residents named the Partners as being very supportive which indicates the good working relationships within the Pathfinder.

Words and phrases which were brought to my attention were “I couldn’t have done it without them”; “She was there for emotional and strategic support, a good mentor”; “Always good support”.

In my opinion, a pattern of names and organisations have emerged from the interviews, indicating that personalities play a vital role in community empowerment due to the basic matter of who residents feel they can go to for support and guidance.

The only negative comment related to a particular worker who a resident felt was ‘too high up’ to speak to. The overall comment however was a positive one.

Action Plan:

- To ensure the right people are in place to encourage, offer guidance and support to residents. This is a vital part of maintaining people’s interest and involvement.

Question 6: Were the workers helpful? If yes, in what way; if not, why not?

[Link to Box 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

100% Positive

e.g. No problems at all; very approachable; made me feel at home from day one; you immediately felt you'd be a valued member of that organisation".

"Yes, very salt of the earth".

"They went out of their way to make sure things were ok for you".

0% Negative

Commentary:

Every comment made in the interviews was a complimentary one with regards to workers being helpful, in my opinion once again indicating the good working relationship between Partners, residents and staff in both the Neighbourhood Management and Laying the Foundation teams.

Some members of staff were specifically pinpointed as the ones who residents felt were particularly helpful. In my opinion this is linked to the comments in the previous question of which workers residents felt they could approach and felt comfortable enough to work with and go to for support.

Action Plan:

- To ensure the right people are in place to encourage, offer guidance and support to residents. This is a vital part of maintaining people's interest and involvement.

Question 7: Have you found the Partners helpful? If yes, how? If not, why not?

[Link to Box 3 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

79% Positive

e.g. "Partners have always been very good; that's one of the strengths of Neighbourhood Management".

"Berneslai Homes have always been very good; the council is now because they have learned to compromise with residents".

21% Negative

e.g. "I've not had much to do with any of the Partners, staff always did the liaising; they were good at that".

Commentary:

It is interesting to note that a comment made by a resident was that Partners had to be involved, there was no other option. In my opinion this shows what poor state Kendray was in before the Pathfinder was put in place. This resident in particular clearly felt there was only one way forward as situations couldn't get any worse.

It is important to mention that the 21% negativity was not purely negative comments, but more 'don't know' answers, or 'I've not had any involvement with Partners'. The comments were also made by some residents who do not have a strong involvement in the Pathfinder. I've classed this as a negative comment though because in my opinion those residents who are involved should have at least some basic knowledge of which Partners are involved and their relationship with the Pathfinder.

Action Plan:

- To include in the induction packs, a clear summary of which Partners are involved, their reason for being involved and the service residents can expect to receive from the Partners.

Question 8: How does it feel working with the other partners?

[Link to Box 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

66% Positive

e.g. “No problems; good relationships and personalities; very knowledgeable”.

“It’s always a high motivator for a resident to be sitting next to officers and having an influence; we wouldn’t have the commitment if this wasn’t true”.

34% Negative

e.g. “Generally very good; depends on personalities”.

Commentary:

It is interesting to note that the only negative comment was primarily a positive one. Most comments making up the 34% were not negative but more ‘not applicable’ comments. This has been categorised as a negative comment though as I feel residents who are involved in the Pathfinder should have some knowledge relating to the Partners involved.

Action Plan:

- To include in the induction packs, a clear summary of which Partners are involved, their reason for being involved and the service residents can expect to receive from the Partners.
- An opportunity for all residents at some point to be invited to Kendray Initiative Board meetings to see who literally sits around the table and what matters are discussed.

Question 9: Have you felt valued and appreciated? If so, how is that recognised?

[Link to Box 2 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

94% Positive

e.g. “Yes by the groups we belong to and by the wider community; we had our visit to Buckingham Palace which was great recognition”.

“Yes, even at meetings I get thanked; I got an Oscar for most outstanding female volunteer and was invited to the Queen’s garden party for my work with the credit union”.

6% Negative

e.g. “It would be nice for other people to be recognised other than the usual people”.

“I’ve never received anything; I felt I deserved an Oscar when they were giving them out, for the work I’ve done”.

Commentary:

In my opinion token gifts or an event in honour of resident contribution, have proved very popular for making residents feel valued. 31% of residents however commented that a simple ‘thank you’ makes them feel appreciated.

It is interesting to note that one of the of the negative comments was from a worker who said she hasn’t received an actual thank you, but didn’t feel un-appreciated either and felt it was because she doesn’t have a ‘hands on’ role.

Action Plan:

- Hold events to thank residents and Partners for being involved.
- Use token gifts or an Oscar ceremony to use as a tool for appreciating contributions made and to maintain interest.
- Do not just thank the ‘usual suspects’.

Question 10: What activities have you been involved with?

[Link to Box 2 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

97% Positive

e.g. "I've done every activity going; whatever has been going off I've done".

3% Negative

e.g. "There wasn't enough reason for doing some events".

Commentary:

Almost every interviewee had an endless amount of activities they had been involved with.

It is interesting to note that the negative comment came from a staff member who felt events and activities were sometimes arranged without a justified reason and not carried out to meet any specific outcomes.

It was clear from the interviews that there was some confusion as to whether activities were arranged through Neighbourhood Management or through Laying the Foundations which, in my opinion, indicates the successful joint working between the two organisations.

Action Plan:

- To publicise activities and opportunities for engagement as widely as possible to allow new residents to join in and feel part of the community.
- To support residents in the activities they feel comfortable with.
- Address the reasons why an activity might not be running successfully.

Question 11a: Why specifically these activities?

[Link to Box 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

100% Positive

e.g. "I've always been interested in doing things for the community and I've got the time now to do it".

"Getting involved benefits me due to living near the park; I like doing it, you meet some nice people".

"This is the best volunteering job".

0% Negative

Commentary:

It is important to mention that Question 11 was a 2 part question with 11a and 11b joined together. However, the findings should be analysed separately and with hindsight I should have asked the questions separately.

In my opinion the findings to this question show that people get involved for one of two reasons; either because they specifically enjoy walking for example, or because they have a general approach to helping the community and so join in any activity or community engagement opportunity no matter what it is.

Action Plan:

- Publicise activities where possible so new residents have the opportunity to engage.
- Support ongoing activities to maintain interest and support current volunteers.

Question 11b: How do you think you have influenced what happens in Kendray?

[Link to Box 3, 4 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

80% Positive

e.g. “Originally it was only tokenistic ways in which we made a difference; it was me who started the Young at Heart Club, it started as a tea dance with 18 people and now we have over 80 members on a waiting list and we are completely self sufficient”.

“I hope so! I also often write to the Chronicle to try and influence things”.

“Resident’s voices are listened to and can influence things; don’t think I’ve influenced any more as a Councillor than a resident”.

20% Negative

e.g. “Not personally, but possibly as a group; I don’t stand out from the crowd”.

“I don’t feel I’ve influenced what happens at all; it’s the powers that be who do that”.

Commentary:

It is interesting to note that the negative comments were only negative about themselves, but collectively as a group of volunteers, they definitely felt they had an influence. The negativity from one of the individuals, I feel, is definitely down to their own confidence levels due to expressing that they ‘don’t stand out from the crowd’.

One of the residents initially felt that it was the ‘powers that be’ who make the decisions and influence what is happening but then soon after added that actually it is the Kendray Initiate Board who make the decisions and she is part of that Board so she must have some influence.

In my opinion, some residents don’t realise the importance of their contribution and the value of their input.

Action Plan:

- Hold events to thank participants and to update them on how their contribution is making a difference.

Question 12: Have you felt listened to?

[Link to Box 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

100% Positive

e.g. “Yes by everybody; you always get the opportunity to put your point of view across”.

“Yes because we used to have meetings to design the park and we could have workshops on what we wanted”.

“Yes they always listened; they didn’t always act on it though”.

0% Negative**Commentary:**

The comments received about being listened to, were very complimentary. In my opinion, a key tool therefore to encourage people to join in and maintain interest is to simply listen to ideas and opinion which evidently makes people feel valued and part of the process.

The comment made regarding “they didn’t always act on it” is interesting as the resident evidently understood that being listened to doesn’t always mean it is acted upon; just taken into consideration. I feel this is an important notion which people must be informed of.

Action Plan:

- Provide ample opportunity for residents to have their say and be consulted with.
- Provide evidence of people’s opinions being taken on board and considered.

Question 13: Are there any examples you can give of your contribution making a difference?

[Link to Box 4 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

86% Positive

e.g. "I practically did the gala myself so it wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for me".

"My input into the allotments and community garden; I live on the spot so they couldn't pull the wool over my eyes".

"There are many examples; you only have to look around the estate".

14% Negative

e.g. "A little but not a lot".

"If we all give support as a team then we contribute".

Commentary:

It is important to mention that the negative comments were again, only negative about themselves, not as a group; they couldn't give an example of their own contribution but as a group definitely felt like they contributed. In my opinion, once again this is due to personalities and individual confidence levels. This is a negative comment though due to the resident feeling on an individual level that they haven't contributed or, at least, not enough to provide an example.

It is interesting to note that some residents felt almost embarrassed or big headed when they commented on their contribution.

Action Plan:

- Have an event or ceremony in order to thank people for their contribution as a group

and on an individual level. This will maintain interest and raise confidence levels.

- Demonstrate more openly where residents have made a difference by providing evidence.

Question 14: Has getting involved made you feel empowered? How?

[Link to Box 2 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

86% Positive

e.g. "I've got more confidence and knowledge; people in Kendray think that nothing's happening; I can tell them now".

"It's given me a lot more knowledge on how communities work; taught me how to chair meetings and speak in front of community people".

"They made me speak at Ardsley House once; I've chaired meetings since then; I never would have done that in a million years".

14% Negative

e.g. "I've always felt empowered; I've always had enough confidence".

"No, I was going to give my place up on the Board because I just felt like why do I bother".

Commentary:

It is interesting to note that one of the negative comments wasn't actually negative; the resident was already full of confidence whether she volunteered with the Pathfinder or not. I categorised this as a negative comment though as she didn't specifically feel empowered from being involved in the Pathfinder.

It has proven difficult to judge whether a person's confidence or empowerment has grown due to being involved in volunteering in the community or whether it is already within them. It might be that other factors in a person's life could have contributed during their time as a volunteer so it is difficult to measure whether it is down to volunteering.

It is important to note that the resident who remarked that they were about to give up their

place on the Kendray Initiative Board, actually returned to the next meeting and withdrew their resignation. The resident said “but then I really thought about it and decided to go back and try and do something about it”.

Action Plan:

- Speak to people on an **individual** level about how they are feeling and what support they might need.
- Offer an informal skills analysis to residents so that training packages could be set up to meet individual need.
- Develop a ‘mentor’ or ‘buddying’ system where existing volunteers can receive training and go onto mentor and support new volunteers; thus empowering the mentor and the new volunteer.

Question 15: Have you been involved in other things as a result?

[Link to Box 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

64% Positive

e.g. “Yes it made me take Maths and English up again; it gave me the confidence to go and do it”.

“I decided to get involved in Local Government as a result; it gave me the confidence to stand”.

“I got my job at Community House”.

“I got a full time job at the Credit Union”

36% Negative

e.g. “No I do enough; I don’t want to be forever at meetings”.

“Not as a result but I volunteered before I got involved with Kendray”.

Commentary:

In my opinion, the positive comments are invaluable. The positive actions which have happened as a result of volunteering have been priceless. Many residents remarked that their increase in confidence has led to so many other activities and opportunities for empowerment.

It is interesting to note that no residents commented that they had been put off from getting involved in other activities; just that they felt they did enough already. Once you work with a resident you get to know how far they want to get involved; if they are pushed too much, it might deter them from joining in.

Action Plan:

- Offer courses and training to support their contribution and to suit the individual. For example, offer informal IT training, with the incentive of a computer at the end of the course, to encourage e-mailing and communicating easier with staff.
- Inform residents of a variety of activities and engagement or employment opportunities to provide the opportunity to participate.
- Develop a 'mentor' or 'buddying' system where existing volunteers can receive training and go onto mentor and support new volunteers.

Question 16: What more could have been done to support your involvement?

[Link to Box 2, 4 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

62½% Positive

e.g. "Nothing more with the amount of resources we had".

"There's always been more than enough support".

37½% Negative

e.g. "Yes, have a joint diary to synchronise meetings so we don't double up".

"Send the minutes out earlier to remind people".

"Relax the boundaries; I'm reluctant to get involved now because I'm not a Kendray resident".

Commentary:

In my opinion, it is pleasing to learn that nothing more could have been done for 62½% of people; they evidently feel comfortable enough with the support mechanisms already in place. However, it is also pleasing to hear constructive criticism from residents themselves about what extra support could be put in place.

Some of the suggestions are very simple inexpensive methods of support and would clearly make involvement easier, e.g. sending minutes out earlier.

One resident's comments however were more serious and included "all of a sudden it just ended, they (the youth workers) stopped coming; they never told us; something should have been put in place after they left". This is evidently a case which should have been dealt with

as it could easily have deterred people from being involved. Luckily this particular person is still a current volunteer.

It is important to note that Kendray has had problems with a lack of youth workers; a problem which is currently being dealt with.

Action Plan:

- Put support mechanisms in place to suit individual need.
- Frequently ask residents and Partners what, if any, support mechanisms would be helpful.

Question 17: Was there anything that put you off getting more involved?

[Link to Box 2 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

43% Positive

e.g. “No, we were very supported; it’s unbelievable how close we all were”.

“Nothing has put me off; I just feel I don’t need to do anything else”.

57% Negative

e.g. “Negativity from some residents make me wonder why I do it”

“Yes, relaxing the boundaries”.

“Just time; I’ve got my own life and my own family”.

Commentary:

It is interesting to note that only one of the interviewees suggested that the reason for their lack of further involvement was because they didn’t agree with something in relation to the Pathfinder. All other interviewees commented that it was because of time needed with their own families and in their own lives. In my opinion, it is understandable that people do not want volunteering to take over their lives and so do as much or as little as they are comfortable with.

I feel it is important to constantly support current volunteers whilst seeking new ones. People might eventually feel fatigued of being one of ‘usual suspects’ and it is vital to maintain interest and ensure people feel appreciated.

Action Plan:

- Speak to people individually about their needs. There might be an underlying reason as to why they don't want to be more involved.
- Put support mechanisms in place to suit individual need.
- Where possible, make meeting times and venues inclusive and accessible.
- Encourage existing volunteers to bring a friend or neighbour to an event or activity; this may release the 'usual suspects' of feeling fatigued.

Question 18: If your involvement has lessened, why is this?

[Link to Box 2 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

50% Positive

e.g. "I'm doing more now than ever; a lot of it is easier because I work up at Community House".

"About the same, I don't go to the TARA meetings anymore but I'm on the Good Neighbours Group and on the Kendray Initiative Board".

50% Negative

e.g. "Lack of time due to being a Councillor".

"I was a single parent with 4 kids so couldn't get to meetings".

"I couldn't get involved anymore with Neighbourhood Management because of the boundary".

"We are both less involved now; we both decided to have more 'me' time".

Commentary:

For some residents the change of being less involved has been a positive one as they are now in full time employment or taken up a different role e.g. Councillor. It also seems that some people felt that certain activities don't need the same attention like they did when the Pathfinder programme first started which in my opinion is a great compliment to the Pathfinder and to the community of Kendray.

Action Plan:

- Speak to residents individually and informally about why their involvement has lessened. There may be an underlying problem which needs addressing, or extra support mechanisms putting in place.

Question 19: What do you think of the idea of having a young person on the Kendray Initiative Board?

[Link to Box 4 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

100% Positive

e.g. "Good idea; they can tell us what they need".

"It's us who live here; just ask us" (from a young person).

"Good idea; how effective it will be though will depend on the person; it's good that we're recognising young people's voices".

0% Negative**Commentary:**

It is interesting to note that most residents instantly responded positively and felt it would be a good move to invite a young person onto the Board. Some Partners however, looked further into the question, considering the changes which might be needed and the benefits for the young person.

In my opinion, most people definitely felt it would be a positive action to include a young person but as one Partner said, "It has to be meaningful for the young people and existing members". The young person's comments in the interview, "Just ask us!" should ideally be taken on board.

Action Plan:

- Ask young people whether they would like to join the Board; explaining what it would entail and the reason behind it.
- Look into changing meetings if a young person does join the Board in order to maintain interest and make the discussions understandable for that person.
- Look at the possibility of working with youth groups or School Councils where young people are already elected for different roles.

Question 20: Have you thought about how you can continue to contribute once the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder finishes? Where can you see yourself in 2 years time?

[Link to Box 4 & 6 of 6 Box Model](#)

87% Positive

e.g. "There will still be a role to play for residents being influential; through Local Area Agreements".

"I will still be volunteering but it depends on Kendray residents as to whether I'm volunteering in Kendray or not".

"I'll hopefully still be working at Community House and on the Kendray Initiative Board after the Pathfinder leaves".

"I wouldn't know what to do if I didn't have all these meetings to go to".

"You can't retire from community work; it gets in your blood; once you start, you find your community conscience and you can't stop".

13% Negative

e.g. "Not thought about it".

Commentary:

This question created some considerable thought from residents. Some instantly responded

Gemma Stothard
LTF Support Officer
February 2008

with "I'll still be volunteering" but a surprising amount are realising that some teams and organisations will cease to exist after March 2009 which poses some difficult questions for resident involvement.

Some Partners and residents understandably have worries about the future. For example, "don't think it will carry on like it is now", "who will pay for things", "residents are clinging to the past". In my opinion, these issues need addressing with resident involvement so they have a clear understanding of the exit strategy and what will put in place after the Pathfinder leaves.

It is my opinion that the negative comments e.g. "not thought about it" are because these people are so dedicated to their job as a volunteer that they feel there is no other option but for organisations and community work to carry on.

It is important to note that I found this question difficult to categorise into positive and negative comments. Is a negative comment one which includes the person not having thought about what will happen? Or is it that they have thought about it and not given a positive response? I decided to place any comments which included "haven't yet thought about it" as the negative ones because although a response might be negative, the person is being pro-active in thinking about the future and the possibilities of what might happen.

Question 20 continued....

Action Plan:

- Include volunteers in the Pathfinder exit strategy to ensure they understand what is happening.
- Explain to residents what opportunities for engagement and volunteering will still exist after the Pathfinder finishes.
- Explain to residents who they can go to for support and guidance after the Pathfinder finishes.

Glossary of Terms

LTF	Laying the Foundations Ltd; a resident led organisation set up in 1999 in order to tackle the problems Kendray was facing.
The Kendray Initiative	A resident led organisation, working in partnership with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, set up in 1999 in order to tackle the problems Kendray was facing.
Community House	A place where residents can go to for help and advice; funded and managed by Laying the Foundations Ltd.
'Liggins'	Training provider contracted to provide training to residents.
Young at Heart Club	Social club lead by residents, initially set up as a tea dance and now a successful self sustainable club with over 80 members.
The Chronicle	Barnsley's weekly newspaper
TARA	Tenants and Residents Association.
Good Neighbours Group	A new Tenants and Residents Association
The Board	Kendray Initiative Board.
Six Box Model	A tool, recommended by the National Empowerment Partnership, for evaluating community empowerment.