



Grey2Green



Phase 2 Community Planning

Report produced and presented by



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**Phase 2
Community Planning**

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1. Introduction

This report sets out the second phase of the Grey2Green (G2G) Project; 'Community Planning', leading on from the initial report "Some Blooming Good Ideas"¹. The G2G team will re visit the areas where residents were consulted in the first phase. Again, residents will given the opportunity to be involved, this time planning the developments that they would like to see in their areas. This is with the aim of empowering the residents through involvement at every stage of the project so they take responsibility of their area and the developments made.

The report includes residents' feedback on developments from phase 1 and will discuss the methods used and the views of development gathered through community consultation methods, including stakeholder planning meetings and community planning meetings. Individuals who have been professionally involved with the project have been interviewed to find out their roles and responsibilities within the project.

This phase of the project will set out the method and results for each of the Grey Spaces that were visited independently: Foxes Passage, Swirles' Place and Peggotty Road.

Aim

Individuals professionally involved in the G2G project were interviewed and were asked their opinions on various aspects of the project. When asked what the aim of the project is, the following responses were given:

"Delivering a desired environment to the people who matter on time"

¹ Grey2Green: Some Blooming Good Ideas, Priory Research Services (2007).

“To ensure that the community are involved in every step for example, the planning and design, alteration and end product and all ideas are led and supported by the community”.

It was suggested that the Local Authority have not had a great deal of guidance regarding key targets such as: Align capital spend with government spend LPSA 8 – 2 targets Green Flag award and to increase public satisfaction. It was hoped that “these schemes press a number of buttons” (meeting targets of both ComeUnity Neighbourhood Management programme and Great Yarmouth Borough Council).

Each of the individuals interviewed were asked their opinion of their roles and responsibilities in this stage of the project: The responses are listed below:

Grey2Green Co-ordinator:

The role of the G2G Co-ordinator was reported to be:

“To experience and reflect and to develop the processes of the programmes, managing the information and how to move forward with this”.

(For example the difference and direct conflict needs of different demographics in the community).

The co-ordinator has a background in architecture so also has a role in environmental design, giving practical options to the community when faced with issues. The co-ordinator is also seen as a ground team member

Community Development Worker:

The role of the Community Development Worker in G2G phase 2 was to keep in touch with the residents. This was done through regular communication using methods such as leaflets, newsletters, update slips, telephone calls and text messages.

“This became especially important when there was no visual/physical movements, so that they remained engaged with the project. I also made sure the residents knew about meetings that were coming up and ensured they were supported through this process.”

Environmental Service Manager (Regeneration and Environmental Department):

The role of the Environmental Service Manager is to:

“Ensure the provision of the council’s environmental services (including street scene) through partnership working and service development”.

Landscape Architect

The landscape architect has been involved with the design process of the G2G project, attending meetings with the community, taking their ideas and putting them into a plan to present to the Cleaner greener board on behalf of the residents.

From the delivery plans of the ComeUnity Programme, it can be seen that this project links to the Local Area Agreements (LAA) Targets relating to the ‘Cleaner and Greener’ and ‘Community Engagement’.

2. Methods

The second phase report of the G2G process researches the views of local residents' on local issues and how best to address them. The G2G Co-ordinator listed the stages of the process as follows:

- Initial engagement
- Sifting issues
- Community re-engagement
- Planning for real
- Design stage
- Stakeholder Event
- Bid presentation

Interviews were carried out with both the professionals and residents involved in the project to find out about each of the stages listed above.

3. Results

The following information shows how each element of the second phase has been implemented along with the results and outcomes from each of the schemes (i.e. Foxes Passage and Swirles' Place).

Foxes Passage / St James' Walk

Resident Involvement

The G2G team enabled residents to be actively involved in every step of the project through giving constant updates and contacts were maintained, ensuring 'genuine consultation'² and resident involvement at each stage of the process. This included the reporting of information collected through letters and leaflets.

² Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Participation" JAIP, Vol 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224

During the 'Blooming Good Ideas' consultations, community views and ideas about issues that needed to be addressed were collected (see previous report). To maintain residents' level of engagement with the G2G project, a letter was sent to those living in the area as a means to thank them for their involvement and to distribute the findings. A second letter was then sent explaining the immediate actions that had been completed with contact details of the G2G team (see appendices for these letters).

Following this second letter, residents phoned the Neighbourhood Centre and voicemail messages were left from the residents to the G2G team referring to the completed actions. For example:

"We have been trying to sort that out for ages, we have phoned the council"

"Thank you, this has made such a difference".

Another outcome relating to resident involvement of the G2G project is the increased level of resident activity in the community. Through involvement with the G2G project, 9 residents from St James' Walk have since attended the South Yarmouth Community Partnership (April 2007). At this meeting the focus was on setting priorities in the South Yarmouth, St James' Walk (near Foxes' Passage) has become a priority policing area.

Top 5 Ideas

On the week commencing 11th June, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who are a part of the Safer Neighbourhoods Team, visited the residential addresses in the area surrounding St James' Walk/ Foxes Passage. This gave the residents in this area a chance to complete a form by suggesting their 5 most important issues with their area. This was to include other environmental and policing issues that are present. These visits were also a means to promote the next phase of the G2G project that took place on 20th June.

Flag It Up

Prior to 20th June, the G2G team collated the main issues and constructed their means for community planning, 'Planning For Real'. This consisted of a polystyrene board with an enlarged map of the local area (taken from Ordnance Survey mapping) pinned to it. The main issues that were raised the week prior were drawn and were attached to cocktail sticks. This allowed the residents to push the issues through the relevant place on the map, and into the polystyrene board that kept them in place.

'Flag it up' was a great opportunity for the researcher from PRS who had worked on the previous stage of the project to attend and find out residents' views of the G2G project.

Since the first stage actions had been completed in the area by the Great Yarmouth Borough Services (GYBS) who. Residents reported the following developments:

"Came around to remove the weeds, which was brilliant, but they didn't put any weed killer down so they're back with vengeance"

"Cleared the square"

Another resident expanded further to say:

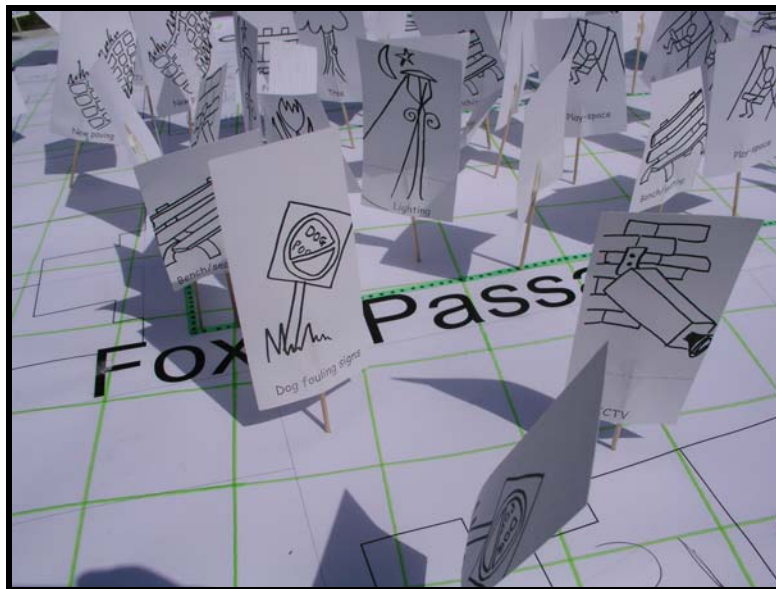
"The men came round and knocked on everyone's door, asking for all bulk rubbish that anyone had"

The residents spoke about actions that had happened since the first phase very positively. However, in terms of the above bulk collections, it was suggested that next time they could inform the residents, as:

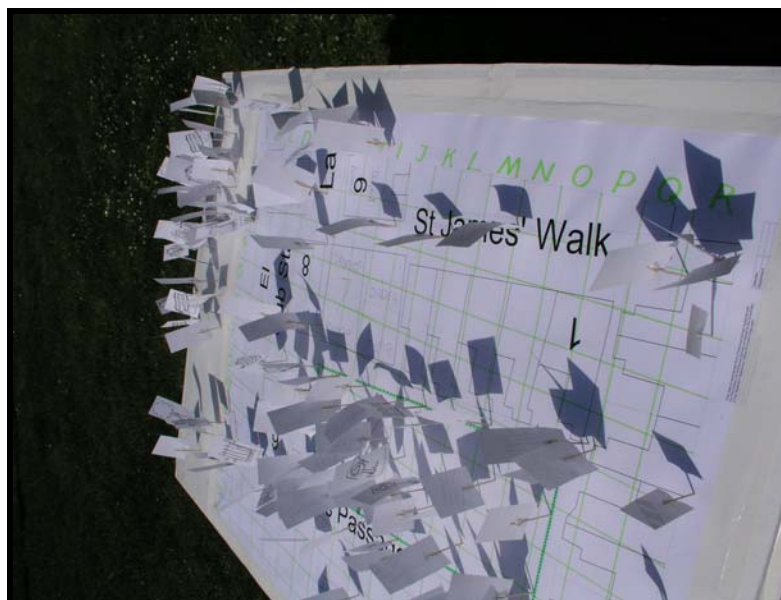
"They didn't tell us before hand, giving us a pre warning so we could have got this stuff together for them to take."

When the G2G team arrived at the site for the flag it up event, there was a fridge that had been dumped in the area. The team reported this to the Dynamic Environmental Response Team (DERT) who:

“... collected it within 10 minutes” (Grey2Green Team Leader)



Photograph 1: Shows issues that had been drawn and stuck onto the cocktail sticks



Photograph 2: Shows the completed map with the residents' planning ideas

Stakeholder Event

At the 'Flag it Up' event, flyers were given out to explain the next step of the process, the stakeholder event. Experts in related specialised fields of planning were invited to attend, for example the Police, GYBS, Great Yarmouth Borough Councillors, Environmental Health, Norfolk County Council along with the residents and members of the G2G team to give advice and suggestions on how to progress. Unfortunately, this event was not attended as well as hoped, but useful information from those that did attend. However, it was suggested that as the G2G process is entirely new, the attendance from the stakeholders has been excellent overall.

You Decide

On the 27th June, residents attended a meeting at the ComeUnity Neighbourhood Centre to discuss with the Community Development Worker Street Scene Co-ordinator involved in the project, the designs and condensing all previous information to a consensus through informal votes (see photographs 3 – 6)



Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6

Photograph 3-6 shows this meeting where the group decided to create their own identity, coming up with the name 'Green Piece Community Group'.

On 12th July, 3 community members were supported by the Street Scene Co-ordinator and the ComeUnity programme to complete a funding proposal for the Cleaner Safer Greener fund. A week later, 5 members of the Green Piece Community Group attended a meeting in the Town Hall to present their proposal to the Cleaner Safer Greener Board (made up of Borough Councillors, Local Councillors, head of Environmental Health, Tourist Authority, Regeneration and the Police). The Board members asked practical questions around the costings and layout of the plan. It was suggested that some of these issues could have been resolved in the stakeholder event if more stakeholders had been able to attend. A point was raised around the time of the event in terms of the stakeholders' ability to be present. This meant that some issues were carried forward into the next stage, which may affect the cost effectiveness and flow of the process. An example of this was a discrepancy of whether a walkway is termed as a highway or right of way.

Swirle's Place

Following Blooming Good Ideas, the first phase of G2G project, letters were sent to the residents by the G2G team with all of the ideas gathered in the original consultation as a way to keep them fully informed and involved at every stage of the G2G Process. In the area there is a community group that some of the residents attend called Market Rows Community Group. The residents involved in the G2G project use this group as a way to update other residents in the area. During one meeting, the group looked through all of the ideas, discussing which ones they believed to be more important and which ones were feasible. This exercise produced 8 prioritised:

- Plants
- Tree
- Seating

- Slow zone
- Fencing
- Lighting
- Landscaped garden
- Dustbin

Picture This

Following this, the Market Rows Community Group designed and displayed posters in the area using a local pub, a café and in residents' homes windows. The poster contained information about the next event 'Picture This', a planning event using the 8 priority ideas (shown above). Photograph frames were bought from a charity shop, each with a different priority idea attached onto it and one frame that was kept blank, this gave the opportunity for individuals who had not been involved in the previous stages to give their ideas. The residents used the frames and labels and took a photograph of the site where the ideas could be implemented (see photograph 7 and 8).



Photograph 7



Photograph 8

At 'Picture This', leaflets were given out to the residents promoting the next event: 'Putting the Plan Together'.

Putting the Plan Together

'Putting the Plan Together' was organised to be on the agenda of the next Market Rows Community Group meeting. The group designed posters advertising the event including information on 'Putting the Plan Together'. The meeting covered typical issues that the group cover with the extra agenda item. Along with the residents, a Landscape Architect, an architectural expert (G2G Co-ordinator), the Community Development Worker involved in the G2G project and PCSOs attended the meeting.

All of the photographs taken by the residents in 'Picture This' were developed and placed on an A0 sized map of the area. The aim was for the residents to achieve a consensus of the ideas from previous stages in the project, placing their plans in the areas where they wanted them. This allowed the Landscape Architect to draw the position of developments on the map for planning purposes, which raised cost implications and other issues that may occur if the plan would go ahead. At the end of the meeting those involved came up with a viable cost effective plan (see photographs 9 and 10).



Photograph 9



Photograph 10

Stakeholder Event

After Putting the Plan Together, committee members of the Market Rows Community Group attended the stakeholder event that was also attended by the Green Piece Community Group. The two groups were brought together for this event, making the most of the expert's time, increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness of the project (See Stakeholder event in Foxes Passage / St James' Walk section for more information on this). Following this, the Landscape Architect drew this plan up in a formal manner. To allow it to be used in the future stages of the project.

The G2G team achieved greater resident consultation by attending a fete that the MRCG had organised with a separate source of funding. Approximately 60 people attended the fete where fun activities were organised. These included karaoke, costume making and face painting. This was also an ideal chance for agencies and organisations such as the Health Trainers, Credit Union and the Safer Neighbourhoods Team to promote their services to the residents in this area. Prior to the event, GYB services cleaned up the area prior to the fete. 'A Brasileira' Grocery store and 'Sainsburys' supported the community by donating food.

At this event the G2G consultation process was completed on a flip chart with 3 columns with the headings: 'What I like', 'What I don't like' and 'Any suggestions'. To add views, residents were asked to write on sticky labels and place them in the appropriate column.

Prior to the fete, the Sunshine Crew, a youth group that were developed after accessing Community Development support in the previous stage of the G2G project, were aware of the environmental issues of the area and decided to make the first step of improving the physical environment. Funding accessed previously was used to provide the youth group with flowers and hanging baskets, which they hung in the area, adding value to the project.



Photograph 11: shows young people getting involved in planting

Bid Completion and Presentation

The next step was to complete a funding bid for the residents' ideas, similar to the Green Piece Community Group support in completing the bid was provided by the Street Scene Assessment Co-ordinator and the ComeUnity Programme. The Committee Members of the Market Rows Community Group (MRCG) attended the same meeting as the Green Piece Community Group to present their bid (see description of St James' Walk bid presentation for more information on this). Leading on from the presentation and the acceptance of their bid, the MRCG committee fed back to the rest of the Group, updating them with the information gained at the presentation meeting.

Once the bid was completed, it could be presented to Cleaner Safer Greener Board. Similar to the Green Piece Community Group, support was given to the Market Rows Community Group in completing the funding bid by the Street Scene Assessment Co-ordinator and the ComeUnity Programme. The Committee Members of the Market Rows Community Group attended the same meeting as the Green Piece Community Group to present their bid (see description of St James' Walk bid presentation for more information on this). Leading on from the presentation and the acceptance of their bid, the MRCG

committee fed back to the rest of the Group, updating them with the information gained at the presentation meeting.

Following the presentations, the residents of Swirles' place and the residents of Foxes Passage attended a meeting where groups were presenting ideas for developments. For example, the Rotary Club presenting a bid for a bandstand. As a result of the presentation, it was decided that GYBC would take lead on the 'Implementation' stage of the G2G project

Peggotty Road

On 9th August, the Sure Start fun day/ barbeque was accessed at Peggotty Road Childrens' Centre by the Community Development Worker to engage with community members to receive ideas for a community garden with support from a community volunteer the G2G Co-ordinator.

The idea of a community garden was taken from the Peggotty Road Community Centre Committee's previous plans to turn the area into a memorial garden.

Attendees were able to give their ideas through a method similar to 'Planning for Real' (see St James' Walk method). They were able to pin into the map of the Peggotty Road centre and 'grassy area' where items such as flowers, benches, fences, bird table, pathways and trees should be.

The Community Development Worker plans to take these ideas and work with the Peggotty Road Community Centre Committee to apply for funding to be able to develop the community garden, which will be implemented by the community. The previous work completed in this area in the first phase highlighted issues around young people and antisocial behaviour. As a way to target this, young people will be involved to gain initial contact and to involve them in the empowerment of the community.

In the previous phase, the idea was suggested to involve young people in making a mural on the wall. This has been investigated but issues have been raised around the ownership of the wall.

Strengths

During this phase of the project over 20 individuals have been consulted. Strengths of the project included the involvement and responsibility taken by:

“The existing group that took the lead and went further than our planned consultation methods by continuing to involve and encourage the local community in inputting to the plans”
(Community Development Worker)

“People get fired-up about the realisation that they can make a difference which is infectious... Motivation and raised expectations that members expressed after the bid was accepted was real... The experience that the community had of being listened to and having a practical effect” (i.e. the funding proposal agreed)

“...residents are aware that they have ownership and that the local government need to communicate with them in terms of national policies”.
(G2G Co-ordinator)

“The greatest strong point is that it is community led; unlike anything that I have ever done. Never been involved in something as community led. I feel that I answer to them and I am trying to achieve what they would like.”
(Landscape Architect)

The Environmental Service Manager said that strong points of the G2G project include that it is being managed by the ComeUnity Programme, it is community led and it gets the community involved with the environment around them. It was also suggested that residents have been understanding with the logistics of such a project.

Challenges

One of the challenges experienced during the project was reaching a consensus, as a variety of views and opinions were raised. So the majority decision is taken. I.e. coming to a consensus on ideas. E.g. benches

There was disparity between local government timescales and the local residents expectations, for example during the time-consuming Accounting and Revenue Implication Evaluation system that has to be completed before the implementation stage can be completed.

The management of increasing frustrations from the community due to the time it has taken to reach the implementation stage has been seen as a challenge. The community has made contact with the Great Yarmouth Borough Council expressing this concern through a letter. The G2G Co-ordinator sees this as a positive action. It was suggested that the lack of communication also fuelled the concern of residents.

Challenges faced by the Landscape Architect included never being sure of “what kind of reaction you will get to what you produce or what you attend. You have to be alive to all sorts of reactions and be able to react positively, confidently and comfortably to them”.

The Environmental service manager suggested a challenge that arises with community based initiatives is “the sustainability of them”, this was in terms of the council “picking up the bill” for projects when the community drop the responsibility due to issues such as transient communities.” It was suggested that quite often when working in partnership with the community, the council usually end up as the main drivers. This raises issues around the sustainability of the project. It was also suggested by the Environmental Service Manager that: *“Empowerment is difficult logistically”*.

Improvements

This phase could have been improved by having more support and commitment from the stakeholders at the stakeholder event. Stakeholders were invited to this event to solve issues may arise with the planned developments such as height of litterbins, issues with lights and highways. The Cleaner Greener Board raised such issues at the funding bid presentation. If more of the stakeholders had attended the event it is possible these issues would have been solved there, thus creating a more efficient and seamless process.

It has been suggested that more education and awareness is needed on both sides. The community need to be educated and made aware of the realistic constraints that the Local Authority have as the implementation agency. This includes researching the cost and repair costs of items such as benches. This lack of community knowledge was shown when a resident said:

“I never realised what they had to cover”

(Resident)

An example of what the Local Authority needs to learn was to allow the community to set agendas.

In summary:

“Community need to learn to be more effective and the Local Authority need to learn to be more affective”

(G2G Co-ordinator)

It was suggested that the Local Authority would learn this as the project progresses and they come into contact with more empowered communities. To help the residents learn, residents who have lived in an individual scheme (an individual grey space) that has gone through the process could feedback

information about time scales of processes and attend meetings of new individual schemes.

The Level of involvement

The level of resident involvement was very high as the residents responded in almost every case. It was reported that there had only been one case where the residents did not attend at a high level. This was seen to be due to the timing and the weather conditions and also that the physical structure of the space has no focus.

The Environmental Service Manager reported that to date there has been:

“Better involvement and engagement through Neighbourhood Management than what we could.”

It was suggested that the community were:

“... initially surprised and pleased that they were encouraged to make decisions that directly affect them. Also, I think they felt comfortable as the process has been at their pace.”

Conclusion

It was suggested that:

“G2G is an innovative and exciting approach to community led planning solutions. It is the process that is important. This G2G model can be transferred to a range of projects, not just environment. It goes beyond tokenistic community involvement and is genuine empowerment.”

(Community Development Worker)

“I think its brilliant; there is a real sense of satisfaction and achievement that you get as a professional when members of the community with legitimate needs start to have an effect on their own environments.” (G2G Co-ordinator)

It has been very important to have the Community Development Worker and a CLIP worker present, to provide information and advertising the Community Partnerships and other ways for residents to get involved in decision-making processes.

A number of agencies have worked in partnership to deliver the second phase of the G2G project. Including ComeUnity, Community Connections, GYBC, GYBS, C.J. Yardley, Landscape Survey, Design and Management and the Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

It was suggested that GYBC would be interested in being involved in these sorts of projects in the future. However, it was suggested that this would be dependant on the practicalities such as sustainability and maintenance of the projects and it was suggested that:

“Community groups would have to show sustainability after the implementation stages.” (Environmental Service Manager)

It was also suggested that if any cutbacks were needed, it would be front line projects such as G2G that would be cut due to there being no legal demand to implement these.

The G2G project has also help to work towards targets and objectives of the ComeUnity programme's delivery plan and also towards the wider LAA targets. For example, the G2G project has worked towards objectives of the 'Community Engagement, Development and Cohesion' and the 'Raising Aspirations' sections of the delivery plan. The following are examples of LAA targets that have been worked towards:

- 1.4 Making a positive contribution**
- 3.5 Build respect in communities and reduce antisocial behaviour**
- 3.6 Empower local people to have a greater voice**
- 3.7 Cleaner, safer, greener public spaces**
- 4.4 Reduce deprivation and social exclusion**

Outcomes	Outputs
Increased resident involvement in the neighbourhood, including involvement of young people	Issues dealt with and environments enhanced
9 people signposted to and accessed Community Partnership	Policing priorities decided for the neighbourhood
Residents expectations raised	2x £20,000 bids accepted for implementing community led environmental enhancements.
Increased knowledge and understanding of similarities and differences in local communities	Young peoples actual involvement in enhancing environments including planting flowers and hanging pot plants
Contacts made and increased knowledge of service providers that will increase cost effectiveness of the project (e.g. the unpaid work team)	New methods of consultation developed and used
Learned how to communicate to the council when the community are presenting bids	
Learnt new less time consuming processes to go through e.g. the time consuming Revenue Implementation Evaluation	
Hazel Blears named Great Yarmouth Borough Council as an Empowerment Champion with the G2G project as a case study.	

7. Recommendations

Challenges/ What did not work so well/ Possible improvements	Further comments	Recommendations
Disparity between the Government timescales and time consuming procedures and local residents raised expectations	The local authority suggested that it has been 2/3 months since any correspondence between them and the residents. This was suggested to be because they were researching prices and waiting for the delivery of materials: "although things are not happening on the ground, there are things happening behind the scenes". Our deadline is March 2008	Increased communication between the Local Authority and residents. For example, LA to update the residents more regularly about "behind the scenes" activity through fortnightly newsletters and meetings.
Managing increasing frustrations of the local residents due to the time consuming implementation stage (letters have been sent to the Local Authority from the local residents)		
Low attendance by professionals at the stakeholder event carries forward issues into next stage		Increase attendance stakeholder event to create a more seamless process