

Increasing Community Involvement Within Our Parks

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Community Involvement - Partnership



Community Involvement





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Aberdeen

- Population 225,000.
- Land area 186 Sq Km.
- Oil Capital of Europe.
- Aberdeen is the second most competitive location to do business in the UK.
- Aberdeen has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the UK.
- Home to Aberdeen Football Club.



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Parks and Greenspace

- Parks, gardens and green space.
- Countryside.
- Amenity land including arboriculture and woodland.
- Countryside services.
- Play areas.
- Allotments.
- Beach.
- Service employs 225 staff.
- Current budget of £7.5million.





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Challenges We Faced

- Significant budget cuts.
- Recruitment freeze.
- Aging fleet, plant and equipment but no spend permitted.
- Service 'perceived' as expensive.
- Market tested - threat of services being outsourced.
- Close internal and external scrutiny of service.
- Low staff moral.
- High levels of staff sickness absence.
- Increase in complaints.
- Public / Council expectation.
- Service reputation.
- Negative press.

How We Overcame the Challenges

- Started from scratch - Reviewed services top to bottom.
- Reduced operational costs but maintained quality.
- Proved service was competitive and 'best value'.
- Linked service to Administration's vision, priorities and objectives.
- Priority Based Budgeting (PBB).
- Promoted and marketed service.
- Grew number of successful partnerships significantly.
- Increased community involvement / engagement.
- Everyone working together.

Building Stronger Partnerships

- Friends Groups
- In Bloom Groups
- Its Your Neighbourhood
- Schools / Nurseries
- Community Councils
- Social Enterprise
- BID
- Business Partners
- Volunteers





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Building Stronger Partnerships

We know we are not alone –

- **APSE State of the Market Survey 2015, Local Authority Parks and Green Spaces Service**
- 95.2% of respondents had friends groups operating in their localities.
- 60.3% of respondents thought that the community sector involvement in parks is increasing.
- 70.5% of respondents predict growth in community involvement / engagement in the next 12 months.

Positive Impacts on Our Parks – The People

Over 1000 active groups in the UK.

- Creates Parks / Green Spaces Champions.
- Stronger bonds between neighbourhoods / communities.
- Increased Civic Pride.
- Community Identity – Brings people together in a positive experience.
- Sense of belonging and ownership for park / green space.
- Builds and inspires community leaders.
- Health benefits - Sense of wellbeing and belonging.
- It's challenging but fun!

Positive Impacts on Our Parks - What We Have Achieved

- Significant increase in the number of successful partnerships.
- Improved performance and quality of services.
- Positive team culture.
- Secured external funding and additional council funding.
- Increased income through private work and sponsorship.
- Full support of the Council.
- Positive press and media stories.
- Award winning services.

Positive Impacts on Our Parks - Success Stories

- Substantial funding secured - £3M +
- Increased sponsorship.
- 25,000 + volunteer hours spent in our parks / green spaces.
- New play areas funded by communities.
- Community led campaigns – Clean Up Aberdeen, In Bloom, Its Your Neighbourhood.
- Green Flags.
- Gold Medal, Britain In Bloom.



Inspiring Other Groups to Get Involved

- See partnership opportunity in everything we do!
- Celebrate what we do well.
- Get together and share success.
- Identify further partnership working opportunities with community groups, third sector organisations and businesses.
- Support new groups as much as you can.
- Promote the good working.
- Elected Member support.
- Senior Management Support.
- Staff buy in.

Inspiring Other Groups to Get Involved



Inspiring Other Groups to Get Involved



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Thank You – Any Questions?

