

Billingshurst West Sussex



Lead Organisation: Billingshurst Parish Council

Aim of Project

To manage projected growth of some 30% in a sustained and co-ordinated way in order to keep the benefits of a 'village profile' whilst accepting the need to provide the services required by a small town and service centre for the surrounding hinterland.

Objectives

- To develop a partnership which will provide a **platform for a co-ordinated approach** to change and raise awareness within the community in order to engage existing residents and newcomers
- To **develop a series of Farmers' Markets** in order to promote the town and maintain links with surrounding farming community
- To **organise a Christmas event** in conjunction with community organisations
- To develop **information and materials to promote Billingshurst to visitors and residents** including:
 - A parish Guide with map and info about clubs and societies
 - A newsletter for on going use
 - Two web sites including general information and council business

Achievements

- **Farmers' Markets** – Despite a number of very successful farmers' markets interest from vendors and customers has dwindled. However the market continues, although smaller in size, and is rated by those vendors that attend as profitable to them.
- **Festival Event** – This two day event was a great success according to the participating organisations. A number of activities and entertainments were provided and those selling products had soon sold out.
- **Development of publicity material** – A village guide has been produced whilst the web sites are established as
<http://www.billingshurst.org.uk>
<http://www.billingshurst.gov.uk>

Community involvement

By working together on the above events and by the creation of an overarching steering group the community has evolved a partnership that can be used to develop future projects e.g. the **Health Check** and **action plan**

Funding

The main source of funding was SRB money but this was matched by grants from Horsham District Council, Billingshurst Parish Council, donations from businesses and individuals, income from stalls and volunteer time

Innovation

By bringing together a range of organisations (22 at one stage) to organise events and activities this has led to a more robust and sustainable community partnership. One of the next outputs is the start up of the **health check** and a project to provide **enhanced sports facilities**.

Billingshurst *continued*

Lessons Learned

- Effort to achieve the outcome is underestimated
- Volunteer time is to be valued but can be difficult to obtain
- Specialist volunteers need to be identified and targeted
- Group meetings to explain the need and direction of the project are essential; the project will not happen in a vacuum
- Finding grant finance is difficult as there are many bidders applying to the same source
- Overall project time tends to be under estimated e.g. the village guide took longer than first thought
- Detractors (both political and negative) need to be identified and objective arguments formulated to address their objections e.g. Established traders raised objections to the farmers' markets

Main Contact

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