

WHAT YOU SAID - COUNTS

Event Feedback



Dedicated to our late Chairman, **Paul Lowen**,
who passed away on 25th March 2006

Participation, Inclusion & Exclusion in the 21st Century
Is Inclusion an Urban Myth?

Democratic Dictatorship
Is it too late to stop the rot?

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Website: www.actionforinvolvement.org.uk

Email: info@actionforinvolvement.org.uk

Phone: 07946 453 258

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Analysis

Response levels and feedback quality was far superior to the responses for our Event in November 2006; we think this was due to our emphasis on the need for feedback for funding purposes throughout the Event.

People heard about our Event by email from Event Speakers, colleagues, friends and family and attended for personal or professional interests. They had backgrounds as diverse as the University of Sheffield, OFFER, London School of Economics, Notre Dame School, South Yorkshire Police and WEA.

Everyone enjoyed our Event; wanted us to hold more events and suggested topics for future events. We received 4 membership applications and informally interviewed two applicants for the Treasurer's vacancy; we expect to make an appointment after we submit the Big Lottery Awards for All's End of Award Report in December 2007.

Key Benefits

We were delighted to learn that all respondents consider that we delivered a highly stimulating and well organised event.

Crucially, we re-energised interest in active citizenship and enlightened people to secure possible improvements and problems which need to be tackled in government. Significantly a participant says they intend to use the information acquired in their work to develop Neighbourhood Policy, experience a learning network, networking and expanding on existing knowledge.

As critically, we were seen to provide a useful forum to open eyes on issues usually held to be inaccessible by providing access to knowledge and understanding of local politics in the context of perceived changes in our political landscape.

Other vital benefits included learning about the system from people like Nick Clegg who form part of the system, those who apply it and how to get involved, whether formally or informal democracy and involvement exercises in all its guises.

Knowledgeable, articulate and well-chosen speakers raised awareness via ideas and possibilities without relying on newspaper bias led to what was described as varied perspectives, challenging topics and thought-provoking discussion. Many people commented that our Event created a far better understanding of local politics and change for them. This plus a relaxed atmosphere, space to ask questions on national and contemporary political debate at such a local level were all greatly appreciated.

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What we could do differently

Although delighted with such excellent feedback, as we also believe there is always scope for improvement we asked what we could do differently. Although one person considered we did not need to make any changes our feedback on publicity and event structure clearly indicates scope for improvement.

A significant concern was the 20 minute break after Nick Clegg's presentation with several people thinking that truncating discussions inhibited our need to get things flowing. We agree with these comments.

Our priority was to ensure Nick contributed effectively in the limited time and people stayed to hear our other speakers. Such issues had knock-on effects for other event management issues such as flow, technical discussions, time available for speakers and audience contributions.

Future Topics

You suggested 11 topics for future Events some of which overlapped and where this happened, we merged them in to one topic and have italicised them

- Community participation: Theory, Practice & *Practical Empowerment*
- Urban development* - Why is Sheffield Council determined to "regenerate" (destroy?) the city centre against considerable criticism?
- How does the council work* - do we need a mayor in Sheffield?
- Voting Systems
- Globalisation & democratisation
- Governmental Public policy
- Europe - Yes, No, Why, How!

As much as we really want to hold events on all of these topics, our resources are such that we can only deliver 2 events annually. Moreover, our constitution requires us to promote community participation and we are very keen to inspire the practical empowerment of people to go out there and get involved.

We are considering an event around community participation with small groups to explore how we can help people set up their own groups to explore the many other issues to consider within our multi-cultural society.

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Event Feedback Raw Data - 2nd October 2007			
Response	Responses	Total	%age
Gender	Male	9	47
	Female	5	26
Disadvantaged	Low income	1	5
	Unemployed	5	26
	Rural	0	0
	Urban	2	11
Equality	Disabled	1	5
	BME	1	5
	Other	0	0
Age Groups	14 and under	0	0
	15-25	4	21
	26-34	2	11
	35-44	0	0
	45-59	4	21
	60+	3	16
Communications needs	Sign Language	0	0
	Text-phone	0	0
	Other Language	0	0
	Other	1	5
Representative body	School	0	0
	Society	0	0
	Health Body	0	0
	Parish Town Council	0	0
	Registered Charity	0	0
	Community Group	3	16
	Other	4	21
Event outcomes	Benefited	19	100
	More Events	17	89

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Event Information

Our free events are a great opportunity to meet and hear influential people speak on latest thinking, chat with them and network during the break with free refreshments.

Accessibility

For everyone's comfort we use fully accessible venues. Should you have other special needs, please let us know in good time, 7 days should suffice, to make arrangements with our venue. We have a small fund to help disabled people with transport costs.

Free Creche

Our fully equipped creche includes 3 CRB registered, qualified and insured crèche workers. Please provide your child with some food to eat and a drink together with everything else they may need for their comfort. Although we hope there will be no need, our crèche workers *must* have 2 contact numbers to call you if necessary.

Publication

We record our Events to write our reports. Although we try to obtain confirmed approval of contributions, we have an opt-out box on our Event Registration Form. We allow at least 8 weeks for an approved report. We will email everyone to advise that our report is uploaded on to our website www.actionforinvolvement.org.uk.

About Us

In the spirit of the Power Inquiry, we aim to consider the potentially permanent disaffection and disconnection between governors and governed as a key threat to the vitality and legitimacy of Sheffield's Democracy.

In September 2005 we organised an Event at Sheffield Hallam University for The POWER Inquiry representing the diversity of the political arena to identify how to increase and deepen political participation in Britain.

We are fortunate to have a dynamic, enthused and strong team who relate to, and understand the issues of disaffection affecting our local community comprising a wide range of expertise including youth culture, invisible disabilities.



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Acknowledgements

We are grateful to everyone who helped make this Event possible, particularly our speakers:

- Nick Clegg, Liberal Democrat MP and Shadow Home Secretary
- Rose Ardron, former Chair of Burngreave New Deal for Communities Board
- Lisa Watchorn, South Yorkshire Regional Director, Dimensions UK Ltd supporting clients with learning difficulties and special needs
- Perry Walker, Head of Democracy & Participation of nef (the leading new economics foundation think tank)

And, of course, everyone who helped us find speakers including Ashley Sweetland, Magda Read, Bernadette Grocock and Peter Armstrong.

That so many people willingly gave of their time to help has been a humbling experience and we would be most remiss in overlooking the invaluable support of:

- Awards for All for granting us a generous award to support our activities;
- Rebecca Addy of BitC Sheffield for introducing us to
 - Darryl Dawson's award-winning Connexions PR Consultancy who has been invaluable in his advice and support
 - Capita for producing Event Packs to high standards for the second consecutive year.
- University of Sheffield for allowing us to use their Special List for publicising our event.
- Keith Levy of Voluntary Action Sheffield, Bernadette Grocock of Sheffield Chamber of Commerce
- Colin Thorpe, our Sound Engineer for technical advise on a PA System, potential suppliers, sound production, recording to ensure the smooth running of this and future events
- Prency Jose Porathapoor and Y Shastri for stewarding our Event to ensure it ran smoothly.
- Joe Pritchard and Wendy Stern for managing the transition of organisational restructure and undertaking all the background work to bring this event to fruition.

Hopefully we've included everyone and apologies for any oversights which is unintentional.

Joe Pritchard & Wendy Stern
Acting Treasurer & Secretary



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Invest In US

What do you get for your money?

- Join our rapidly expanding network of 700+ key decision makers in Sheffield's major institutions including:
 - Business in the Community
 - Award-winning Connexions PR
 - Voluntary Action Sheffield

- Community recognition of your investment through our free
 - mailings and reports
 - events and creche
 - publicity

Action for Involvement specialises in organising and delivering low cost, free events to high standards to help educate people in our communities on how to get involved in community decisions to improve their lives.

Our track record attracts high level speakers to lead stimulating debates at well-attended events and have fun while challenging our communities' misperceptions.

Free events *plus* refreshments, creche **and** travel for disabled people

Please call us on 07946 453 258 or email us for an information pack at info@actionforinvolvement.org.uk.

