

The voice of communities
in regeneration

The first national conference

Over 100 people from communities across Scotland gathered in Glasgow for the Community Voices Network's first annual conference on the 4th and 5th of March. The theme for the conference was 'Making a difference in communities'

Johann Lamont, The Deputy Minister for Communities opened the conference by highlighting the key role of communities in regeneration and reinforcing the Scottish Executive's commitment to listening to communities.

Workshops on issues such as creating employment, improving health, engaging young people, and neighbourhood regeneration gave participants the opportunity to find out about different approaches to community regeneration, and to share their own views about 'what needs to be done to make a difference to our communities?'

The highlight of the event on Sunday was a lively debate chaired by the straight talking Lesley Riddoch. Lesley interviewed a panel of guests about their experience in 'making a difference in communities' and then gave the audience a chance to 'get their voice heard.' The message from the audience was clear – Communities across Scotland are dissatisfied with level of community involvement in decision making structures and the attitudes of agencies toward greater involvement of communities.

Participants had a great time meeting new people but also got lots of ideas to take back to their own community.



This is what some of the participants had to say about the conference

"The atmosphere at the event was great – it's great to meet so many people doing similar things to us"

"This is a great way to find out lots of new things about community regeneration in a short space of time."

"I enjoyed myself immensely, meeting so many people dedicated not only to their own community project or community but also to making Scotland a better place."

"We came away rejuvenated and ready to inject our group with a whole pile of new ideas."

For a copy of the full conference report, call Lucy at the network.

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Community Exchange – Dundee reps visit Aberdeen

Community representatives from Dundee visited Aberdeen to find out about community regeneration in the Woodside area of the city and to share their experience of community involvement in community regeneration.

The group from Dundee got the chance to see regeneration in practice in Woodside when they visited a food co-op, an after-school club and a media project which are all owned and controlled by the local community.

The community representatives from both cities found out about the different structures for involving communities in regeneration in Dundee and Aberdeen and had the chance to learn from each other about how community involvement works in practise.

"The exchange was fun, a great way to find out how another area deals with similar problems. It gave me another way of looking at community regeneration"

Want to find out more community regeneration? - Interested in visiting another area to learn more about what's happening in other communities?

A community exchange is a great way to meet other communities involved in regeneration and to learn from each other.

If you are interested in a community exchange, get in touch with Lucy at the Community Voices Network

Stirling work

10 members of the Community Voices Network visited Stirling to see for themselves how the plans for the regeneration of the Raploch area are being implemented and to find out about how the community has been involved in the regeneration process.

The Raploch Regeneration Project is an Urban Regeneration Company, one of the 3 'pathfinders' in Scotland. The masterplan for the area shows how a £120 million investment will transform Raploch - but local activist John Matheson who is the chair of the Raploch Regeneration Group explained that the regeneration wasn't just about the physical improvement of the area but about creating opportunities for local people. The Raploch Regeneration Project has been successful in creating jobs and training for local people in construction work and is involved in a major community involvement exercise to ensure that community is fully involved in the development of the plans for the area.

Visit the Scottish Parliament

5 members of the Community Voices Network went on a fact finding mission to find out what happens at the Scottish Parliament.

The Community Voices Network members sat in on the Communities Committee as it took evidence which will inform the development of new legislation on 'The Modernisation of the Planning System'

"It really helped me to understand how legislation gets made - It was easy to follow the debate and both the staff and elected members at the Parliament were very friendly"

Anyone can visit the Parliament. It's free and easy. The visitor services team are happy to help to organise a trip.

Call them on 0131 348 5200 or check out the website www.scottish.parliament.uk.

Another community voices event!

Thursday 28th September
Aberdeen

Community led approaches to regeneration

While policies and funding change all around us, some of the most dynamic and sustainable approaches to improving communities are those which are developed and led by communities themselves.

This event will give you the opportunity to find out more about community led approaches to regeneration. You will have the chance to attend a number of workshops where community led organisations from across Scotland will provide practical examples of projects which are creating jobs, delivering services and improving opportunities for people in disadvantaged communities.

All places for members are free! Please remember it is important to book a place so we know you are coming, can provide refreshments, and know of any special needs you may have.

To book a place contact Lucy on 0141 564 7600 or e-mail info@community-voices.org

Participation fund

We know that lots of people are interested in going to events to find out what's going on in other communities, but that the cost of travel and accommodation can be a barrier.

Don't worry – the Community Voices Network has a participation fund which can reimburse the cost of your travel or overnight accommodation to any Network events and meetings. It can also cover any additional costs you might have – for example, if you need a carer or additional childcare to allow you to attend the event.

You need to be a member of the Network to claim from the participation fund. It's easy to join the network – just get in contact by phone or e-mail.

Opportunities

Judge for yourself – Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum

The Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF) is an organisation which seeks to promote good practice in Urban Regeneration. Each year SURF makes awards to projects and organisations which highlight 'Best Practice' in Urban Regeneration.

Decisions on the awards are made by a panel of judges. To ensure that the panel of judges also represents the communities' perspectives on 'good practice' SURF would like to recruit someone who has who has grassroots experience of regeneration in Scotland (someone involved in a voluntary capacity) to join this year's panel of 6 judges.

SURF has asked the Community Voices Network to help find a community activist who has the time and expertise to join the panel. The community judge will be busy between September and early December shortlisting applications, visiting projects and meeting with other judges in Glasgow to make decisions. SURF will provide out of pocket expenses and support. To find out more about the role, time commitment and selection process ask Lucy at the Community Voices Network for an information pack before 7th August.

Perfecting partnerships

The Network has five free places at a conference which will look at how partnerships, such as community planning partnerships, can better engage with communities. If you are interested in knowing more, able to get to Glasgow on 30th August, then contact Lucy at the Network to put your name down for a free place.

Faith and Regeneration

Are you interested in the link between faith and regeneration? The conference "What has faith got to do with it? The contribution of faith communities to regeneration" will look at ways of working better together for regeneration. It's on 5 September at the Royal Scottish Academy for Music and Drama (RSAMD), Glasgow. To book contact Louise Teyhan at Communities Scotland on 0131 479 5270.

Regeneration Outcome Agreements – Will they help to regenerate communities?

Over the next six months, The Community Voices Network will be running a series of events aimed at helping members to find out more about how Community Planning Partnerships are working together to regenerate the most disadvantaged communities.

Taking part in this series of events will give members an opportunity to find out more about the different approaches to community regeneration across Scotland, and the chance to feedback your views to Communities Scotland on how effective Regeneration Outcome Agreements (ROAs) have been in your area.

Thomas Glen, head of the Community Regeneration Unit in Communities Scotland said, "It is important we understand the views of volunteers and community representatives as we shape our thinking on the future of ROAs."

Details of the series of events will be published in the next newsletter.