



URBAN II

URBACT Young Citizens Project

Connecting the Coalfield Partnership

www.urban-2.org.uk

issue five

Lithuania here we come....

URBACT Young Citizen's Project is a cross European partnership of local authorities set up to encourage young people to play a more active role in the local politics and civic life of their respective communities.

A group from Sunderland and Easington recently made a return visit to Mazeikiai, Lithuania, accompanied by workers from Easington Youth Forum and Sunderland Youth Development Group. The young ambassadors are involved in exchanging political ideas and experiences and whilst in Lithuania visited "Venta" Secondary School, attended a meeting in the City Hall as well as visits to the towns of Klaipeda and Palanga at the seaside.

The group were also invited to and attended a concert dedicated to March 11, the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990. Everyone made good friends and established close links and remain in regular contact.

Councillor Joan Freak, Executive Member for Social Inclusion, District of Easington said "It is clear from their enthusiasm and involvement that young people in the area are keen to be involved in influencing what goes on in their communities. Learning from young people in other areas and countries will help to broaden their experiences and give them new ideas to consider.

Councillor Paul Watson, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Regeneration and Social Inclusion Sunderland City Council said "it's heartening to see our young people getting involved like this, in representing not only the interests of their own communities, but those of the larger European Community through this project. I am sure they will learn a lot from their visit, and will be a credit to Sunderland and the region".



12 young people from Easington and Sunderland with their hosts whilst in Lithuania

Moving on

Many of you will know that Simon Nott the URBAN II Programme Co-ordinator has moved on to pastures new. From October last year Simon took up post with North Yorkshire Police as Income Generation Manager. We all would like to wish him good luck for the future.

Alison Clark was appointed as the new URBAN II Programme Co-ordinator in October 2005, and Marc Dobson joined the team as Assistant Programme Co-ordinator in January 2006

Advice & Support

Contact Details

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2006 is the final year for allocation of funds. If you have an idea for a project, please contact the Development Team for advice.



FREE OF CHARGE

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Assistance from the European Regional Development Fund will provide over £8 million of grant towards a programme of projects with a total value of over £17 million.

The shape of things to come

On 6th March 2006, 60 members of the URBAN II Partnership came together to review the achievements of the Initiative to date and to consider the way forward to maximise the impact and success of the initiative before its end in December 2008.

In his opening speech, John Rundle, Director Europe, Government Office for the North East talked about the importance of celebrating the achievements of the programme, in addition to making reference to the future opportunities to be had from European funding.

The event, facilitated by external consultant Ernest Dobson, allowed delegates to highlight both achievements to be celebrated and any areas for improvement. A number of workshops were held throughout the day where delegates were asked to identify partnership priorities for 2006 (the final year to allocate funds to projects), along with considering the role of the partnership after 2006 and the impact and legacy the Partnership would like to see be achieved by the Initiative.

During lunch, delegates were also given the opportunity to find out more about the range of projects that have been supported by the Initiative. A number of projects set up stalls with information, pictures and staff available to talk about their projects.

A report highlighting the findings from the consultation event is available on the website. The Co-ordination Group has already met to consider how these findings can be taken forward, resulting in the formation of an action plan for implementation over the coming months and years before the Initiative ends.

The URBAN II Development Team would like to thank everyone who participated in this successful event, which consolidates the important role the partnership plays in the delivery of the Initiative. In a national evaluation of English URBAN II programmes undertaken last year, the Hetton & Murton Initiative was highlighted as an example of best practice for cross border and partnership working. The Update of URBAN II Mid-term Evaluation is also available on the website.



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Project News

The Lone Rangers URBAN II Coastal & Cycle Rangers Project



Rangers Duncan Gomes
and Rebecca Stanley

Two Coast and Countryside Rangers have been recruited to promote East Durham's seaside and cycle-ways. Their role will involve improving and maintaining the natural beauty of the area as well as creating a welcoming environment for

residents and visitors. The duo will carry out countryside management and patrol along the coastline. Fly tipping, vandalism, litter and dog mess will be targeted by the pair who are also hoping to crack down on rogue motor-bikers.

The Rangers have been increasing community involvement with 53 people now signed up as part of the volunteer group. Clean ups are held with

volunteers on the beach and cycleways, where training has covered geology, plant identification, marine life, map reading, water vole surveying, wildlife photography as well as gaining skills in using different tools for habitat management and green woodworking.

The Rangers are leading a fortnightly programme of guided walks and developing maintenance and improvement plans, tackling littering and anti-social behaviour as well as restoring habitats and improving areas for wildlife. There has been a great deal of awareness raising on connecting people back to healthier living, taking exercise and using the coast and footpaths to enjoy the dramatic views and nature.

This is an URBAN II sponsored project working in partnership with District of Easington, Durham County Council, Heritage Coast, Sustrans, National Trust and the Great North Forest.

For further information on the project contact Fiona Scully (Heritage Coast Project Officer tel—01901 3833741)



Volunteers at work

Reasons to celebrate



Elizabeth Farrelly OBE, and founder of the Byron Ada Society, celebrated her 80th birthday in March this year. In addition to this, Elizabeth also celebrates over 65 years of volunteering, which includes active involvement with the URBAN II Partnership and with both Sunderland and Easington Councils for Voluntary Service.

Elizabeth, who lives in Murton, is member of all 3 Priority Working Groups as well as being a Community Representative on the Programme Monitoring Committee. Her interest and enthusiasm to support the regeneration of the former coalfields area is second to none. The Development Team would like to express their thanks.

Could you help to improve your community through volunteering? There are a number of URBAN II funded projects that are looking for local people to volunteer their time. If you are interested, a good starting point would be to contact your local community centre.

Partnership Information

Priority 1

Edith Longstaff



Chair of the URBAN II Priority 1 Working Group 2006.

Born in Murton, Edith is married with two sons. After working 18 years with Unigate Foods selling dairy products to wholesale catering outlets throughout the North East and Yorkshire, Edith became involved with the regeneration of Murton. In 2004 she was elected as Chair of Murton Community Partnership.

Priority 2

Nicol McConnell



Chair of the URBAN II Priority 2 Working Group 2006.

As the newly appointed Training Development Worker at Houghton Racecourse Community Access Point (HRCAP), Nicol implements the Let's Go Business Plan in partnership with members from Easington Lane Community Access Point. In a previous role Nicol was involved with the Coalfield Forum as the Development Co-ordinator.

Priority 3

Bill Robinson



Chair of the URBAN II Priority 3 Working Group 2006.

Currently employed by Social Enterprise Sunderland as an Enterprise Development Adviser, Bill has been providing business start-up support to individuals, co-operatives and non-profit making organisations in the coalfields area of Sunderland city since 2002. A former bank manager with HSBC for 30 years, he has been involved in community enterprise development since 2000 on a City-wide basis.

Programme Information

2006 is the final year of allocation for the URBAN II Programme. All projects must be approved and all resources allocated to projects by 31st December 2006.

Applications are actively encouraged for projects under Priority 1 - Engaging Young People. Proposals are particularly welcome for activities which will provide wage subsidy places, support health education schemes and involve young people in community service projects for periods of over 1-2 years. There is currently around £700,000 of resource remaining to commit under this priority.

A limited amount of resource is available in Priority 3 (Building and Sustaining Economic Activity) although applications are still encouraged. Although Priority 2 (Empowering the Coalfield Community) is nearly fully committed, project proposals for potential reserve projects are still welcome. Such projects, which if endorsed by the Partnership, could be approved subject to funding becoming available.

If you have an idea for a project and are considering an application, please contact the URBAN II Development Team on 0191 517 3208. Applications submitted by 31 July 2006 will be considered in the September round of working group meetings.

What Projects?

The URBAN II Programme to date has approved a wide range of projects including Training Initiatives, Youth projects, Community Development Workers, Delegated Small Grants scheme, Financial and Legal Training for Community Groups, and Business Start-up support. For further information on these projects and more contact the Development Team (contact details on page 4) or visit www.urban-2.org.uk.