



# Participative Planning – The Planning for Real Method



Margaret Wilkinson  
Planning for Real® Unit



# Participatory Planning

## **Communities and Neighbourhoods:**

- Emphasis on engaging communities to give them a voice and influence
- Working at different levels: regional, district, parish, neighbourhood
- Working at a neighbourhood level easier than at a regional level.
- Takes more effort to involve people in issues more removed from their everyday lives.
- Starting the engagement process early enough



# Effective Community Engagement

## What do Communities want ...

- Openness and honesty
- Early involvement
- Clear understandable information (jargon free) to aid informed choices / decisions
- Accessible ways of participating
- To be listened to and their views to be respected
- See something happen as a result.





# METHOD - Planning for Real®

- First used in 1977
- Public meetings then traditional form of consulting
- Reaching out beyond usual suspects
- Tapping into local knowledge, skills, experience, resources
- Showing / doing not just talking
- Developing a Plan of Action – making things happen



# “Planning for Real”<sup>®</sup> - The Process

Getting ready – 3D model



Identifying Priorities



Consulting Residents



Action Planning





**Finding the “leading lights” - the “gang”  
from Leamington Spa**



**walkabout with “outside” expert  
(professional)**



Reaching out - Chatting on the  
doorstep or where residents  
naturally meet – finding hidden  
skills





A “bird’s eye” view – creating the 3D model



Eyes down, hands on - showing not talking



Never too old or too young to get involved

# “Inside” and “outside” experts working together



## Sorting priorities and solving problems



The “Plan of Action” – making things happen to bring about change



## Additional Tools

- Concentric circle – concensus building
- Ideas wall – around themes or issues
- Glad, Mad, Sad – photography
- “Pin Boards” – visual questionnaire
- Design Workshops – open space
- Building Design





## Why these methods work?

- It's not a public meeting!
- Engages all ages – young and old
- Models and visuals more easily understood than a plan
- Using pre written and blank “flags” means everyone gets a “say”
- Mobile – can be taken to where local people are – indoors and outdoors
- Opportunity to test different options
- Informal conversations



## Why these methods work

- Jargon free
- Flexible / adaptable
- Models can be updated as plans develop
- Able to mix and match a variety of methods
- Identifies priorities and where there is consensus easily
- Non confrontational
- Positive experience leads to people staying involved.







# Participatory Planning

## **Some of the potential benefits ...**

- Increased confidence and commitment amongst residents
- Overcomes negativity
- Bridges the “Us” and “Them” divide
- Nurtures a more active community
- Solutions match need more closely
- Improved quality of life