

ISSUE NO:75 – JAN/FEB 2007

**Parkside Community Centre
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Easington Colliery

Library Bookworm Club

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EDITOR'S COLUMN:

Well I just want to wish everyone a happy new year, hope everyone had a lovely one. I would also like to apologise for this issue being extremely late. I will not blame anyone as its no ones fault, I should have been more "harsh" but I guess that's not in my nature. He he!!

Well hmmm.... I have got to think of some topics to write about for this issue, and what do you know one has just popped into my head....

The weather, wow!!!

It's amazing its like summer is here, well obviously not but I guess we are skipping the winter and jumping straight into spring, but I'm not happy because I wanted it to snow and it didn't, but I am not going to complain because I'm simply loving this weather too.

The following morning..... I woke up this morning and to my surprise it's snowing!!!!
Its snowing everyone yey!!!!
Now I can get out the sledges and go sleighing!!!! Its about time we had the snow its fun and well fun!!!!

One last thing there will be a big surprise for the next edition I will not let you in on it just yet but it will be a surprise.

I apologise for my column being a short one this edition but I wanted to keep it short and sweet so that you can all enjoy the articles that are inside.

Again my apologies for this edition being late and I hope that you all enjoy reading this issue.

Charlotte

Access to Services

Who we are?

We are a group of young people whom are trying to find out the restrictions in leisure centres and how young people are treated without adult supervision.

Jack Mather, Daley Mathinson, Kristian Leybourne, Scott Thompson, Elliott Dixon, David Collins, Chris Grey, Sarah Dolphin, Lisa Rutherford, Hayley and Samantha Bennett all went to Abbey Leisure Centre Durham, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee and Spennymoor Leisure Centres.

Why we got involved?

We were asked to come along to a meeting at Investing in Children in Durham to meet with Glenys. We discussed which leisure centres we should visit. We tried to visit leisure centres in different boroughs within County Durham.

These included Sedgefield Borough, Easington and Durham City. We were also paid £5 an hour for our time and work.

What we found out?

- Abbey Leisure Centre Durham 19.5.06

We found this service to be very polite. We went in groups, the girls first and then the boys. We went to the desk while some others sat down, we asked about a five aside football court and children's parties. The woman behind the desk was very polite and helpful although one was on the telephone and didn't bother to hang up and speak to us. Overall we were happy with that leisure centre and got the information that we wanted.

- Newton Aycliffe 23.6.06

Newton Aycliffe is a very good leisure centre and very polite and they let us walk about and be spectators and use the vender machines even though they weren't in the main entrance.

- Peterlee 4.8.06

We weren't very happy with the way we were treated in this leisure centre. The woman wasn't very polite and would not let us in to spectate. She didn't help and just wanted us to go.

- Spennymoor 1.9.06

At Spennymoor the staff were very helpful and also some of us went swimming. We thought that Spennymoor leisure centre as a whole is very good. The others went to have a look around the centre and found the staff very friendly.

What we thought the problems were?

The only problems were in Peterlee. We felt that this could happen to other young people. In Peterlee you now need an orange card to get access into the leisure centre and through the turn styles, and some young people won't know where to get the orange cards from.

What we think will help?

We think that problems could arise when Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe convert to the card system because sooner or later these leisure centres will have a turn style and you won't be able to access the leisure centre unless you have a card. We can see why the leisure centres want to use them for example this will stop people going in that aren't supposed to be in there or that are going to cause trouble or disturb others. In Sedgefield Borough once you have a card you can access all leisure centres whenever you like. You can also download a copy from

<http://www.sedgefield.gov.uk/dms/resources/includes/file.php?id=839> and hand it into your nearest Sedgefield Borough leisure centre then you will be issued with a b active card. If you don't live in Sedgefield area check out with your local leisure centre how to get similar cards.

The full report will be available soon watch this space for an announcement or visit

www.iic-uk.org/reports.htm

Sarah Dolphin 2007



investing in children

Membership News

The good work of Investing in Children continues in the following projects that have been re- evaluated:

In Durham :

- Chester –le- Street Youth Centre
- Clayport Library
- Treetops Children’s Ward
- Aycliffe Village Primary
- Annfield Plain Library
- Tanfield School
- Shildon Library

Welcome to our newest addition in Durham –
Moorside Community Assciation

In Newcastle:

- Sacred Heart Primary
- NCH- Family Mediation & Support Services
- Atkinson Road Nursery

The Development Agency: The Mulberry Centre

Once again Well DONE to all involved, we look forward to seeing you next year!!

If you would like to know more about any of our membership work then just ask (".)

Please note: Apologies : there was an error in the last Newsletter:

Stockton Children’s Fund new member is:

Young Carer’s - Eastern Ravens Trust

Parkside Community Centre – Youth Group

My name is Diane; I am 12 years old and attend Parkside Community Centre at Seaham in County Durham. I am part of the youth group. We meet three times a week. I am a representative for the youth group along with Christopher who is 14 years old. We were chosen to represent the youth group at the monthly meeting held by the management committee of the centre; we are the only two young people there. We were voted into the committee by all the members of the youth group, the vote is done just like an election each year. If you are a member of the youth group and want to represent the voice of the group you can stand for election by making a poster. This is hung on the wall for two weeks letting the group read all about you. Then we make a speech in front of the group and then it is the turn of the young people to vote who they want to represent them.

In the meetings we listen to all the news of the centre and have our turn to let them know what is happening in the group, and also what the group would like to do. We can also comment on other centre issues, if we feel something is not right we could have a say. While in the group we are also allowed to vote if needed on centre issues.

Diane Cameron



Easington Colliery Library Bookworm Club Update

The bookworm club got Investing in Children Membership re-awarded in October 2006. Here are some of the things they have got up to in the last year.

Our Trip to Beamish - By Natasha Scott age 13

On Thursday 20th April 2006, we were granted permission to go on a trip to Beamish Open Air Museum. We raised the money for this visit by one of our seasonal bring and buy sales (there is an item on the page about this). We had a great time. The best part of the day was the murder mystery. This was the activity we chose to do when it was announced that we were to go on a visit to Beamish. In the murder mystery, we were split into two groups (we chose girls verses boys, naturally). We had to hunt around the whole museum for clues to find the answer of the question we were presented with at the beginning "Who done it?" It was a race against time and the girls were the winners, with the boys ten minutes behind us (girl power). The murderer was the man who we thought it was in the beginning. In my opinion, the activity would have been much better if the murderer was the person we least expected it to be. Although there was this one thing we thought could have been changed; we still had a great day with lots of laughs and lots of fun.

Buying Books - By Hannah Cook Age 11

Near to the beginning of the year we went to Durham to buy some books for our library. We spent £500 and we got a really expensive book on Egyptians but we are keeping it inside the library for reference so that it will not get ruined. We had a really good time because we found out how the library receives the books, and we had a look at how many books they had. It took us a while to get through a quarter of them. We made sure that we got some adult books, children, babies, teens, and loads more. This would be great if we could do it again loads went out in about just a week. After we chose the books we had to calculate it all it was pretty hard and we all kind of had a struggle with it because we had to keep looking for the price then moving it out of the way. But it was really good and we had a good time we would all love to do it again.



The Bring & Buy Sale

Bring and Buy Sale - By Jordan Scott age 11

We recently had a “bring and buy sale”. We sold many things such as videos, books, bath essences, toys, annuals and sweets such as maom stripes, lollies and fizz pops. We had a great time and my favourite stall was Andrews and Daniels nick-knacks. Altogether we made £46. We are not sure what we are going to spend it on but we are hoping to go on another “book buy” and a visit to Clayport library.

Masks - Andrew Brown Age 11

We made masks over 4 weeks with a lady called Rebecca. Firstly we drew the mask. Then Rebecca brought in some clay and we made our masks. We then let it dry. The next meeting we were allowed to paint it. Once it was painted it was put on a display. Later at a next session we were allowed to take it home.



- The Easington Colliery Library Bookwork Club February 2007

Participation with Purpose – The Right to be Heard.

At the heart of Investing in Children is a principle that all children and young people have a **right** to be heard, and to contribute to the debate about issues that affect them. This principle is now widely accepted, and runs through central and local government policy about services for children and young people.

As a consequence, it is becoming more common for steps to be taken to include children and young people in discussions when new services are being planned. It doesn't happen all the time, and sometimes it's a bit tokenistic, but there's no doubt that there is an increased emphasis on seeing children and young people as **participants** in the debate. Progress!

However, there still remains confusion about **which** children and young people to include, and **how** to include them. From an organisational point of view, the argument often goes that it is enough that **some** children and young people are invited to contribute to discussions. It would be unreasonable to be expected to include **all** of them.

Often this approach is justified by the use of mechanisms designed to portray a small group of children and young people as representative of the larger population. The term 'representative' can have two meanings here. It can mean that the members of the group have gone through a process whereby they are elected or appointed to speak on behalf of other children and young people. Or it can mean that the makeup of the small group reflects the makeup of the population from which it is drawn – it is a representative sample.

Both of these positions are perfectly reasonable responses by organisations, as long as they avoid claiming that they address the individual right to be heard of children and young people who are not involved

Democratic representation depends for its legitimacy on the consent and inclusion of those who are deemed to be represented. In most cases (school councils, youth councils, and youth parliament) the resources aren't available to provide this. Only a small minority of young people, for example, are **aware** that their views are being represented by the UK Youth Parliament, let alone knowing how they can influence the process. For the vast majority, democratic representation neither requires their consent nor includes their involvement.

A further associated problem with mechanism based upon adult representative democratic models is that they appear to be accessible to only a small group of children and young people. This seems to be a common problem across Europe. The youth parliament "scoops up all the good children" in Sloveniaⁱ "only the resourceful ones get involved" in youth councils in Norway.ⁱⁱ The process can also end up being controlled by the adults. Again in Norwegian youth councils "children and young people are praised when they behave like small adults, and put in their place when they don'tⁱⁱⁱ".

From a rights perspective there are also difficulties with the 'representative sample' approach. It is a reasonable method of judging whether an opinion poll result, based

upon the canvassed view a small sample, is more or less likely to reflect views held within the general population. However it does nothing at all to promote the right to be heard of individuals not included in the poll.

My argument is not that the activities of youth councils and parliaments are illegitimate, nor that there is anything wrong with attempting to design balanced opinion polling mechanisms. From an organisational point of view, it is clearly better that a school council, or a carefully chosen representative group of young people are included in debates about service developments than no young people at all are involved. However, we must be careful to avoid confusing this with steps to promote the rights of individual children and young people, and we need to be vigilant to ensure that these mechanisms aren't used cynically, to deny the opportunity for more challenging voices to be heard.

The Investing in Children approach attempts to blend a commitment to the individual rights of all children with an honest evaluation of what has and has not been achieved. We have tried hard to make sure that our working practices are genuinely accessible to all children and young people. At the same time, we are careful to state clearly that the children and young people who attend this agenda day, or are part of that research team, are exercising their individual right to participate, but are not representing the views of other children or young people.

In his evaluation of Investing in Children for Durham University in 2003^{iv}, Bill Williamson noted that we didn't collect sufficient data about the young people with whom we worked to know **how** inclusive our approach is. We have since introduced a data collection system, and in a recent analysis John Davis from Edinburgh University suggests that the IiC model **is** inclusive of many of the children and young people who do not engage with mainstream approaches.

Bill Williamson pointed out one other characteristic of the IiC approach, which is relevant here. Some see this as the inherent strength of IiC, whilst others have taken the opposite view.

“A consultative, representative model of how to involve young people in decision-making does not lead to situations where mainstream institutions or their managers feel challenged to change what they do or how they work. Investing in Children almost inevitably will challenge them for it brings into the open perspectives that might otherwise remain in the shadows, expressed as grumbling or dissatisfaction rather than as something to be openly debated or changed^v.”

Liam Cairns Jan 07

ⁱ Dekleva, Bojan and Zorga, Sonja. Children's parliaments in Slovenia. In Crimmens and West (eds) (2005) *Having their say. Young people and participation: European experiences*. RHP

ⁱⁱ Berg, Ingvild, Participation rights in Norway. In Crimmens and West, Above.

ⁱⁱⁱ Berg, above

^{iv} Williamson, Bill (2003) *The Grit in the Oyster: Evaluation of Investing in Children*. Durham University

^v Williamson, above.

An earlier, longer version of this article was published in Tisdall, Davis, Hill and Prout (eds) (2006) *Children, young people and social inclusion. Participation for What?* Bristol. Policy Press

Update from Ashleigh.....

OK so Charlotte has been on my back 3 times in the past week to write an article for this edition of the Newsletter and every time I'm like: "yeah, OK, whatever" but I suppose now's the time when I'm actually going to have to do it else I'll have people in higher places (Liam) on my case.... Problem is, I don't know what to write about!!

(40 minutes later) I've come up with 2 things now lol!!

Decisions Update

Some of you might have attended an agenda day at Abbey Sports Centre at the beginning of 2006 around the re-designing of the liC leaflet. Just to give you an update, the Newcastle and Durham Decisions groups came together and wrote up everything you said. As a result, it has now been given to the designer (Paul the graffiti artist) to come up with a new design.

The idea is, when it is finished, members of the decisions group will be contacting as many liC groups as possible to find out what you think of the new design – so watch this space!! All I know is it involves clouds and lots of bright colours.....

DnA

The Newcastle DnA (Drug and Alcohol group) has been really busy over the past few months.

The group was brought together after an agenda day which highlighted the most important issues that children and young people who attended had said. The DnA group have since been looking at effective ways of highlighting what was said and looking at ways of getting more children and young people involved within the services.

At the beginning of the year, the group put in a bid for funding and received a sum of money to create a DVD around drug and alcohol issues for young people, by young people.

The DnA group are working with talentSTAR* and the Newcastle Drug and Alcohol service to create the DVD and we are hoping to have it finished by March. It's looking like it is going to involve people that have used the service as well as other young people from Investing in Children within the film.

Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the DVD should contact Ashleigh on 0191 3867485.

* talentSTAR Community Interest Company empowers people through high quality cultural, media and art experiences where they have a platform to gain a voice, and to express their feelings; to start to tackle their own problems and challenge issues that affect their lives.

www.talentstar.net

Bye for now ☺

**Ashleigh Greathead
Assistant Project Worker**



**Do you live in Tow Law,
Bishop Auckland, Stanley
Crook, St Helens,
Wolshingham, Frosterley,
Staindrop or anywhere else
in the Durham Dales?**

**We are doing a piece of work
around **road safety** in your
area! If you are interested in
either facilitating or attending
an agenda day please contact
Ashleigh on 0191 3867485 or
[ashleigh.greathead@durham.
gov.uk](mailto:ashleigh.greathead@durham.gov.uk)**

Deputy Editors Babble

Hello, hope you all had a good new year!

The article on participation with purpose I feel is a good article to read. I agree that Investing In Children fully supports children and young people to have a right to be heard and rightly so contribute to the debate about issues that affect them, but only if adults would empower children and young people.

Easington Library's Bookworm Club actively involves children and young people in activities and visits to museums such as Beamish. I'm not saying just inviting children and young people to museums is participation, but if children and young people want these changes, then let young people go on activities.

Having a steering group model with a reference group works well and has done in the Listening to Children Strategy Reference Group. For those who aren't familiar with this model, it is a group of young people (reference group) which works alongside a service or services to make changes for young people.

It's good to hear that the IiC leaflet will be shorter for more young people to enjoy and hopefully encourage them to become involved in making changes.

I am guessing you have noticed in my Babble that my theme is making changes. It is important that changes are made for children and young people but this can only be done by children and young people having input into development.

Brian Davies
Deputy Editor

FULL TIME!

If you think you have something that everyone needs to hear, or have suggestions about what should be in the next month's newsletter, please write to our editor:

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**COPY DATE FOR
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23RD MARCH 2007!**

Or e-mail her at iic@durham.gov.uk

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Cantonese, Bengali & Punjabi

The Investing in Children information booklet is now available in Chinese, Bengali & Punjabi. If you require a copy in any of these languages, please contact the above address or telephone the above no.