

PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

What are the OPPORTUNITIES for partnership working between schools and community groups?

Education - children are the future

Skills development – knowledge transfer between individuals/groups within the community and schools

Shared use of **physical resources** at schools e.g. property. Using facilities for whole community events

Power of the pester – knowledge transfer to parents and wider community

Improved access to **funding** e.g. business sponsorship, prizes for raffles, income generation streams e.g. Feed-in-Tariffs, Renewable Heat Incentive

Links to **awards** helps raise profile of good work e.g. eco schools, local/national sustainability awards

Community cohesion

EXAMPLES

Start at Children Centre's so that it's ongoing – work through educational life, alongside capturing parents

Take advantage of roof space to install solar panels, utilising FiT to fund further work in the community

Dorchester Zero Waste project worked with businesses and the local school on waste issues – holistic approach to educating

What are the BARRIERS to partnership working in this context?

The right people

Knowing who the best person is to contact within the school/community group

Often driven by one individual – who may leave the school/community group and you have to restart developing relationships

Schools are good at getting big groups in e.g. RSPB etc. but struggle to get local groups in (initiative, contact details)

How do you engage the **hard to reach**?

Health and Safety precautions, CRB checks etc. can limit or completely prevent community groups from holding/initiating events

Access to certain facilities can be denied due to school policies

Finance/funding may be difficult to secure

RSBP etc. have paid role to provide support to schools, community groups may not have capacity to engage schools

Conflicting messages from funders – conditions attached

Reliant on **knowledge and capacity** of schools

Teachers only have so much **time**

'Non-believers' and prevent you from making the step

What are the SOLUTIONS to partnership working in this context?

Contacts

Work of mouth

Write to eco-team

Be clear as to who you are

Making the pitch - be clear on the message you're selling

Shape your offer according to the level of interest, use appropriate language to engage – not everyone is a climate change believer, nor do they have to be

Start on the easy actions to establish links
Look at possibly becoming a Governor to help shape schools objectives
Need to be clear on when schools plan e.g. 1 year in advance, so appreciate that your offer may need to flex with their existing class plans

Health & Safety

Identify risk sharing solutions
Safe guarding quality services

Provide a forum to **share information**

Opportunity to network, partners come together each year to meet, share ideas, successes lessons
Build partners list for programme held by LA made available on line (INSERT LINK Newcastle environmental services)
Generational sharing of expertise
Hold events that great the vision of a sustainable future (draw, write, etc)

Move the concept of **pester power** forward – teach people to learn for the future

Knowledge and capacity

Don't impose action, work and agree on joint objectives – find common ground
Offer support with as few strings attached as possible
Quick easy wins to engage
Support schools to get involved in the democratic process
'A common cause' WWF report
Positive message of going forward for a better life

Remember: One size doesn't fit all!

USEFUL LINKS

Low Carbon West Oxford 'Low Carbon Living' guide:

www.lowcarbonwestoxford.org.uk [Low Carbon Living](#)

Community Action Group [CAG Toolkit](#) details how to set up a community action group and in particular how to work with schools

Climate Xchange [Oxfordshire Climate Change Community Group handbook](#)

WWF report [A Common Cause](#) (Sept 2010) The case for working with our cultural values

PRINCIPLES FOR PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Low Carbon West Oxford think partnerships work best when underpinned by the following principles:

- **Complementarity and added value** – partnership working is most useful when different partners bring distinct and complementary contributions;
- **Clarity and respect for the different roles and contributions of government, council, private sector and communities** – both monetary and non-monetary;
- **Upstream joint decision making** – early discussions to develop co-ownership and consensus are better than belated consultation;
- **Mutual understanding and respect** – about different roles and responsibilities;
- **Transparency and accountability** – openness and honesty in working relationships and accountability to people and organisations not at the table;
- **Competence** – including reliability and delivering on commitments;
- **Clarity about exit strategies** – clarity about the length of involvement in the partnership, and plans for eventual withdrawal;
- **Early wins** – help keep partnership members motivated.