Community Matters

The National Federation of Community Organisations

Working with communities, neighbourhoods and localities

David Tyler, CEO Community Matters

Working with communities…

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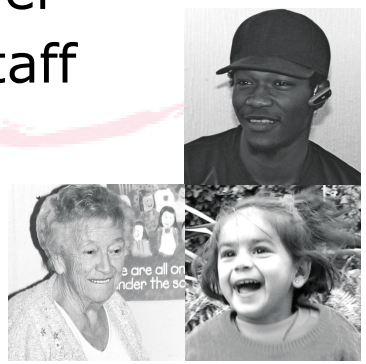
Community Matters members

- 950 member community organisations
- Reach 3,700+ community organisations
- 96% manage a community building
- 56% of buildings owned by LA
- 25% under £10K turnover
- Average of £80K turnover
- Just over half employ staff



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Community Matters members

- Association and independence
- Participation and collective action
- Mutuality and self help
- Sense of belonging
- Democracy in action

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Local Democracy Bill

- Duty to promote democracy
  - Councils to raise awareness of their functions
  - Councils to inform how to influence
  - Councils to promote civic roles
- Duty to respond to petitions
- Extended duty to involve

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Community voices

- Reactive or Pro-active
- Specific or Strategic
- Exclusive and extreme agendas

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Democratic renewal

- The Power Enquiry
  - 37% of non voters involved in community group
  - Vibrant culture of community activity
  - Unattractivness of voting
- Empowering communities to influence local decision making
  - Embedding community empowerment
  - 106 LAs adopted NI4
- Promoting participatory democracy and civil engagement

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Civil society landscape

- Community groups and associations
- Societies and clubs
- Campaigns and pressure groups
- Community enterprises
- Individual activists and entrepreneurs
- Larger community organisations
- Volunteers – vertical and horizontal

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Community anchors

- A building which is community controlled
- A focus for services and activities meeting local need
- A vehicle for local voices to be heard
- A platform for community development
- A home for the community sector
- A means of promoting community led enterprise
- A forum for dialogue within communities
- A bridge between communities and the state

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Democracy and influence role of anchors

- Championing its community
- Representing their interests on relevant committees
- Empowering people to speak for themselves
- Being a source of intelligence for local people
- Democratically managed and operated
- Hosting a local 'representative' forum
- Leading on local Community Led Planning
- Coordinating public meetings and consultations
- Coordinating petitions
- Hosting 'Planning For Real' exercises
- Hosting Councillor and MP surgeries

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Civil empowerment role of anchors

- Providing opportunities to associate and participate
- Identifying gaps in local services and filling them
- Incubating, growing and sheltering community groups
- Providing opportunities to volunteer and make a contribution
- Community Development – stimulating local action
- Earning (some of) their own income - enterprise

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Community Matters services

- Management of community buildings
- Legal and technical support
- Telephone helpline & advice service
- consultancy service for members
- Major consultancy service for LAs
- Training programmes
- Publications
- VISIBLE standards

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