

## YOU Decide Participatory Budgeting evaluation

As part of the Home Office “Engaged Communities” pilot, £20,000 worth of funds were ring fenced to be distributed through a Participatory Budgeting Process.

Two areas of Gosport were identified, with £10,000 allocated to each area.

### Bridge area

#### Stage One – Application process

##### *Promotion:*

Letters promoting the fund were sent to all households within the four wards (Bridgemary North, Bridgemary South, Peel Common, Rowner & Holbrook) - 8237 households 12<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

Posters and leaflets were distributed by the Safer Neighbourhood Team officers to local shops, schools, community groups and promoted through street meets.

Flyers and application forms were distributed electronically through the Community Safety Partnership distribution list.

The fund was promoted on the following websites: Hampshire constabulary, Gosport Borough Council, Safer Gosport.

The fund was also promoted by members of the Bridgemary Neighbourhood Forum which includes key community representatives.

##### *Applications and interest:*

Four project suggestions were received. Two of these were written suggestions and two were telephone calls. The suggestions were referred to the appropriate departments to see if they were feasible. The details are found below:

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Result</b>
Lack of dropped kerbs in Laphorn Close. CCTV camera in Laphorn Close No Cycling sign 'Slow Down' Signs near Asda	Referred to Highways and not able to proceed, fed back to applicant
Drop-in Centre at Nobes Avenue shops	Referred back to applicant for more information to turn into full application
CCTV camera at junction of 'The Drive' and 'Rowner Road'	Site visit by CCTV unit, cost prohibitive and issue already raised with local councillor
Recreational and training opportunity provision for young people	Play Leaders information given to applicant

*Application forms:*

Fourteen application forms were sent out as a response to requests, five of these were returned. Sixteen application forms were received in total. Upon receipt, application forms were checked for legal, planning and highways implications and referred to the appropriate department prior to the siefert meeting:

<b>Improve Dated Security Equipment</b>	Purchase of updated security system	£2653.15
<b>Rowner Community Youth Football Programme</b>	Purchase of equipment and facility hire costs	£2000
<b>Transformers Youth Project Rowner</b>	Purchase of sports and leisure equipment	£2000
<b>Transformers Youth Project Rowner</b>	Purchase of camping equipment	£2300
<b>16<sup>th</sup> Gosport Scout Group</b>	Renovation to Scout Hut	£9800
<b>Playsafe (Steady Steps)</b>	Play provision for 2-6 year olds	£5750
<b>Holbrook Twirlers</b>	More equipment to expand group	£2100
<b>SHELL (Safe, Fun &amp; Employable)</b>	Youth provision – purchase equipment and training	£1770.65
<b>Kickz</b>	Youth football diversionary scheme	£9940
<b>Holbrook Judo Club Youth Inclusion project</b>	Youth provision 14-21 years	£2636
<b>CCTV &amp; Outside lighting upgrade</b>	Upgrade CCTV & improve outside lighting to a Church	£6153
<b>Gosport Borough Youth Football Club</b>	Tournament Day	£5000
<b>Pelican Crossing in front of Wych Way Inn</b>	Installation of traffic crossing	£10,000
<b>The Devils Hole</b>	Provide youth facilities to the four wards – not specific	Not specified
<b>Get outside and garden</b>	Purchase of planters to distribute to community	£10,000
<b>Drop in Centre for Bridgemary Community</b>	Rent of unit for providing drop in services	£6500

These totalled to over £65,000, far outweighing the £10,000 available.

*Application siefert:*

A small group comprising of police, community safety representatives, elected member and a local residents checked all application forms for feasibility. The last four projects were not put forward to the Decision Day due to issues of deliverability.

Three of the applications were completed by individual residents, the remainder by groups.

## **Stage two – Decision Day Event**

### *Pre-event:*

Personally addressed invitations were sent to all households within the four wards w/c 1<sup>st</sup> March. Childcare and transport options were available and made clear in the invitation and booking places was also an option.

Bidders were invited to attend and could also invite a maximum of two 'supporters', though it was made clear that they could only vote if they were eligible residents.

### *Event:*

Held at the most central location to all four wards – Bridgemary Community College on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March, 12.30-3pm.

Eight children participated in the activities provided by Gosport Youth Leaders and two residents took up the transport provision

Of the attendees, forty were residents, twenty one were bidders and their supporters & three were councillors. There were ten staff from community safety, police and fire service.

Ten projects presented (the first ten in the table above) worth £46,222.33. Each representative had three minutes to tell the audience why they deserved the funding and some included young people in their presentations. The event was compered by the Hampshire Fire & Rescue area manager and the audience used a paper ballot box system to award each project a score between 1-10, once they had heard all of the presentations. Whilst they audience enjoyed refreshments, the staff counted the voting slips and the elected members oversaw the count.

The results were announced at the end of the event and only one project was fully funded with another part funded. Full details are in the table in appendix A.

Audience members were asked to complete evaluation forms, of which the results are shown below:

### **Summary of Bridgemary Decision Day evaluations**

*Of the 49 eligible voters, 59% completed the evaluation. Of the 29 respondents...*

<b>PROMOTION:</b>	<b>86%</b> attended/ found out about YOUdecide via direct mailshot
<b>VENUE:</b>	<b>86%</b> thought the venue was easy to find
<b>CONCEPT:</b>	<b>83%</b> thought it was a good way of getting people involved <b>67%</b> thought the bids put forward were well presented <b>35%</b> felt inspired by what they had seen and heard

**VOTING:** 3% found the voting procedure confusing (1 person)  
72% were happy to vote on each bid  
77% felt the voting procedure was simple  
58% felt that the voting procedure was fair

**FORMAT:** 100% felt the event was well organised  
72% agreed that the event lasted the right amount of time

**OVERALL:** 93% found the event very worthwhile  
62% enjoyed the event  
70% felt like they had a real say in what will take place in their local area

86% rated the voting process as easy, awarding it 5 on a scale of 1-5 (5 being easy):

“Well explained and easy due to colour coded boxes”  
“The coloured boxes and tickets made voting very easy”  
“Simple and low tech”  
“Colour coding made it easy and the 1-10 rating was simple”  
“With the various sheets of details made available and the short talk by the presenters it just fell naturally into place”

41% thought £10,000 was sufficient amount of funds  
51% thought £10,000 wasn't sufficient

66% thought £20,000 would be a more appropriate amount to distribute

**Suggested improvements:**

- Bidders sat at tables prior to presentations to take questions from the audience
- 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> place system with staggered monetary value £5000/£2500/£2500
- Voting for top 3 projects in order of preference
- Information pack to be sent/made available prior to the event

86% of respondents would take part in similar events in the future.

**Town Area**  
**Stage One – Application process**

*Promotion:*

Letters promoting the fund were sent to all households within the four wards (Town, Anglesey, Christchurch) - 4141 households 12<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

Posters and leaflets were distributed by the Safer Neighbourhood Team officers to local shops, schools, community groups and promoted through street meets.

Flyers and application forms were distributed electronically through the Community Safety Partnership distribution list.

The fund was promoted on the following websites: Hampshire constabulary, Gosport Borough Council, Safer Gosport.

The fund was also promoted by members of the Town Neighbourhood Action Group which includes key community representatives including Shopwatch, Neighbourhood Watch, local residents, elected members and the police.

*Applications and interest:*

Twelve project suggestions were received. Two of these were written suggestions and the remainder were telephone calls. The suggestions were referred to the appropriate departments to see if they were feasible. The details are found below:

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Result</b>
Additional lighting to Moreland Close car park and alleyway	Referred to highways
Traffic crossing island on Anglesey Road	Referred to highways and this has already been referred to the HAT
CCTV camera in Foster Gardens	Site visit by CCTV
One-way system on Fort Road	Referred to highways and they contacted resident directly
Traffic calming measures in Clarence Road	Referred to highways and cost prohibitive
CCTV camera in Seahorse Walk (1, 6 and 10)	Referred to CCTV and proximity of buildings deemed too close
20mph speed limit along road next to creek	Referred to highways
Locks, bike racks, road safety	Sent application form
Shrub clearance	Referred to Community Payback
Implement railings	Sent application form
Litterbin provision	Referred to applicant for more information
Lighting along cycle track	Referred to highways

*Application forms:*

Seven application forms were sent out as a response to requests, one of these were returned. Nineteen application forms were received in total. Upon receipt, application forms were checked for legal, planning and highways implications and referred to the appropriate department prior to the sief meeting:

<b>Gosport Youth Leaders</b>	Provision of training for 14-24 year olds	£2200
<b>Gosport Street Pastors</b>	Train additional volunteers	£1000
<b>Domestic Abuse Reduction Programme</b>	Venue hire to deliver programme	£2217
<b>Transformer Group</b>	Promote support group for those with issues of substance misuse	£500
<b>Take Off</b>	CBT based course for those at risk of offending	£6532
<b>Muddy Boots Club</b>	Secure storage for equipment	£800
<b>Newtown School volunteer</b>	Safety themed books	£300
<b>Newtown School Volunteers</b>	Cycle path signs	£1800
<b>Newtown School pupils</b>	Cycle locks	£560
Linden Grove Smartwater Street Signs	Purchase signs advertising 'Smartwater in this area'	£127.49
Anglesey Gardens Recreational Ground Litter Bins	Purchase of two litter bins	£920
<b>Alverbridge Nursery</b>	Bike rack & locks	£500
<b>Alverbridge Nursery</b>	Road Safety Equipment	£295
<b>Alverbridge Nursery</b>	High Viz Jackets	£150
<b>Lighten Up</b>	Lighting for car park next to Rugby club	£1200
<b>Coastal Clinic</b>	Lighting & security for car park & Wii fit and screen	£18600
<b>Screen Car Parking areas</b>	Alterations to car ports beneath Harbour & Seaward Towers	£Not declared

These totalled to over £37,000, far outweighing the £10,000 available.

*Application siefert:*

A small group comprising of police, community safety representatives, elected members, Chair of CSP, Neighbourhood watch and a local resident checked all application forms for feasibility. The last two projects were not put forward to the Decision Day due to issues of deliverability issues.

Four of the applications were completed by individual residents, the remainder by groups.

Alverbridge Nursery & Lighten up withdrew their bids as they could not provide a representative to attend the event. The Linden Grove and Anglesey

Garden bids were also withdrawn as the applicants felt other projects were more worthwhile.

## **Stage two – Decision Day Event**

### *Pre-event:*

Personally addressed invitations were sent to all households within the three wards w/c 1<sup>st</sup> March. Childcare and transport options were available and made clear in the invitation and booking places was also an option. Ideally, a minimum of two weeks notice would have been given but this was not possible due to the project time constraints.

Bidders were invited to attend and could also invite a maximum of two 'supporters', though it was made clear that they could only vote if they were eligible residents.

### *Event:*

This was held at Fort Brockhurst on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 6.30-9pm. The NAG originally agreed on the Discovery Centre as the event venue but felt the capacity of seventy was insufficient. Due to proximity of the change in decision to the event, the only available venue with a larger capacity was the Fort which unfortunately was not in one of the three wards. However, the venue had adequate parking facilities, was on a good transport route and the offer of transport was also provided to ensure accessibility.

There were no requests for childcare provision and two residents took up the transport provision. Additional support was provided to a resident with visual impairment.

Of the attendees, thirty were residents eighteen were bidders and their supporters & four were councillors/agency representatives. There were seven staff from community safety and the police. The event was filmed for evaluation and promotional purposes, and also provided the compere for the event and technical staff for the electronic voting.

Nine projects presented (the first nine in the table above) worth £15,909. Each representative had three minutes to tell the audience why they deserved the funding. The event was compered by LUXFactor and the audience used an Electronic Voting system to award each project a score between 1-10, via a handset, after hearing a summary at the end of the presentations. The results were immediately displayed on a large screen following each cast of votes. However, due to technical problems, the final results could not be displayed and the audience had to recast their votes using the recording card in their information packs.

Unfortunately, the audience had to leave the event without knowing the results. The following day, the data was recovered from the electronic voting system and bidders were informed by telephone. The results were also uploaded to the Safer Gosport website, whilst a letter was sent to all attendees the following week with full details of the voting results.

Full details are in the table in appendix B.

Audience members were asked to complete evaluation forms, of which the results are shown below:

### **Summary of Town Decision Day evaluations**

*Of the 38 eligible voters, 59% completed the evaluation. Of the 23 respondents...*

<b>VENUE:</b>	<b>100%</b> thought the venue was easy to find
<b>CONCEPT:</b>	<b>78%</b> thought it was a good way of getting people involved <b>100%</b> thought the bids put forward were well presented <b>39%</b> felt inspired by what they had seen and heard
<b>VOTING:</b>	<b>8%</b> found the voting procedure confusing (1 person) <b>91%</b> were happy to vote on each bid <b>74%</b> felt the voting procedure was simple <b>65%</b> felt that the voting procedure was fair
<b>FORMAT:</b>	<b>87%</b> felt the event was well organised <b>82%</b> agreed that the event lasted the right amount of time
<b>OVERALL:</b>	<b>91%</b> found the event very worthwhile <b>61%</b> enjoyed the event <b>56%</b> felt like they had a real say in what will take place in their local area

### **Feedback and suggested improvements:**

- Need chance to chat question or chat with bidders
- Distinct signage for parking, directions etc particularly for disabled people
- Address invitations to household not individuals
- Ushers/staff outside of the venue to assist/direct
- More comfortable seating
- Individual voters to rank projects e.g. 5-best, 1-worst
- Not have the lead in period over Christmas
- Too many bids from one organisation/representative
- Technical hitches marred the evening
- Compere relaxed audience and coped well with technical glitches
- Screen was not high enough for everyone in the audience to see

**100%** of respondents would take part in similar events in the future.

Agency staff and elected members involved in the process were invited to attend an evaluation workshop, to share the learning from both of the events and the proceeding process.

### **Feedback from agencies, councillors and CST**

#### **Promotion:**

- Invitations to individual households was good

- Colourful branding and advertising
- A longer lead in and more extensive
- Change in branding created difficulties for community to identify with the fund initially
- Issues with GBC website
- SNT promoting the fund, encouraging people to make applications and providing support
- Suggestion scheme was not widely taken up, though this may be due to the limited time frames. It was also onerous and time consuming referring these and encouraging applicants to turn these into applications

### **Venues:**

#### *Fort Brockhurst*

- Fort Brockhurst provided a sense of occasion
- Good facility
- Central location (to Gosport) and on good transport links
- Sufficient parking
- Registration seemed a bit chaotic
- History and local interest
- Access to the Fort was an issue
- Issues with accessibility for disabled people
- Good size though layout for food a bit awkward
- Refreshments not provided during the break created issues – this was rectified for Bridgemaary Decision Day!

#### *Bridgemaary*

- Signage was good
- Childcare provision was good
- Excellent registration process
- More signage near to entrance and directing people to LRC
- Preferred atmosphere created by Bridgemaary than Fort Brockhurst
- Balloons created a good visual attraction and tied in with the promotional graphics
- Good size

### **Electronic Voting:**

- Handset was an issue for some people – mumbblings that it wasn't registering were frequent
- Instant results on screen
- Calculated results at end (if it wasn't for computer glitch!)
- Costly and required an expert

### **Paper Voting:**

- Was very good
- Bidders bringing ineligible people along to sway the vote!
- Provided positive involvement of elected members and also a belief from members of the public (perception electronic voting can be 'fixed')

- Reinforces and promotes voting/democracy
- Created atmosphere during the count
- Preferred the voting system
- Simple and cheap!
- Colour coded and numbered ballot boxes to correspond to relevant project

#### **Bidders:**

- Some at both events did not turn up
- Raised the profile of groups and activities that people were previously unaware of
- Bringing supporters that were not eligible and not informing the team prior to the event

#### **Compere:**

- Explained things clearly and problems (such as the voting glitch) were well managed

#### **General:**

- Great events overall
- Would love this to happen again, go from strength to strength
- Councillor was surprised at the amount of bids after initial reservations
- Scoring system worked well and summary sheet with scoring box aided voters and also acted as a back up voting system!
- Both events ran to time
- Involvement of Neighbourhood Action Groups in both areas was important and worthwhile. They made decisions around criteria (eligibility, amounts, restrictions), they helped to promote the fund, put in bids and also made decisions around the events (venues, dates/times, style of voting etc)
- Mixed impact on size of bids on the voting of the audience

#### **Improvements:**

- Media profile and wider promotion
- Location could be more central to area being targeted
- Longer application times
- Venue within PB area preferable
- Use winners as examples to demonstrate application criteria
- Make it clear that young people are eligible to vote
- Invitations to be addressed to households
- Register the bidders in a completely different room to the audience – this will require staff identifying this at the entrance
- Number and place project name on ballot boxes
- Earlier identification of project supporters (who may or may not be eligible to vote)
- Make it clear on the invite that anyone from the household is eligible to attend
- Larger amount of fund to be available
- More widely available forms electronically and ensure on both partnership and GBC website

- Focus on PR particularly with Evening News
- Consider a maximum bid limit
- Capitalise on future events as opportunities to promote what's going on
- Use winners and finalists as advocates to promote future events

The learning from this pilot will be used to plan and improve future PB events in Gosport.