

Hermes RPI Awards



MEPC: Birchwood Park Community Support and Engagement

Best Practice Community Support and Engagement Initiative Submissions

March 2009



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Summary

The Birchwood Partnership is a highly successful networking organisation that brings together all sectors within the community, as well as individual residents. The aim of the Partnership is to jointly reflect the cares and concerns of residents, community and voluntary organisations, businesses, and public service providers in the area.

In 2008, the tangible benefits of The Birchwood Partnership have been especially evident. The Partnership has:

- Helped to create a stronger community, and a sense of real involvement in area development, service provision and facilities
- Co-ordinated opposition to developments that would be to the detriment of the community (i.e. Risley Landfill extension & Primary Care Trust changes)
- Hosted public meetings and consultations, which have also enabled positive changes to the benefit of the whole of Birchwood, Warrington East, and the Borough



“Without MEPC’s support in leadership, communications, accommodation and finances, the community networking simply wouldn’t happen. Community spirit takes time to develop and in relatively young areas such as Birchwood it takes positive action from visionary leaders to create that community cooperation.”

**Alistair Smith – Chairman,
The Birchwood Partnership**

Key Initiatives for 2007 – 2008

- Creating community; developing the social infrastructure across all sectors – business, public sector, residents, community and voluntary groups
- Community Safety and Security; remaining an active partner within the Neighbourhood Action Team
- Transport; enhance Birchwood Station as part of the proposed Transport Improvement Fund for Greater Manchester
- Lifelong Learning, equal opportunities and employment
- Health and Wellbeing; the Birchwood Wellbeing Project and the Oackwood Local Park Project promotes health and wellbeing in the area
- Pleasant Environment; involvement in projects to improve the local environment for all users
- Young People; full participation in the Birchwood Youth Partnership and other groups geared to informing young people
- Opportunities for All; ensuring facilities and services are available to all



Benefits

Benefits for Birchwood Park

- Direct community engagement and inclusion
- Promotion of the Park as an exemplary leader in CSR commitment and understanding of local issues
- Community promotion of Park development and amenities through www.birchwood.org.uk
- Company support, services and volunteering information for site occupiers
- The opportunity to work with our occupiers in the implementation of their present & future CSR policies, with direct community contact/relevance
- Generation of goodwill, and esteem for all Park employees and occupiers

Benefits for the local and wider community

- Immeasurable success in resources sharing and area involvement
- Business awareness and inclusion for and within the communal/voluntary sector
- Online access and easy contact to a substantial community network through both the website and Partnership Co-ordinator
- Online relevance and press releases for real people, via area stories and details
- Direct influence and support re: area-wide decision and procedure in Warrington Borough Council
- Bridge for financial and advisory support from local businesses to local people

Quantifiable Benefits

For an annual contribution of just £7,500 per annum, the work of The Birchwood Partnership has generated a high level of esteem among the key 'movers and shakers' within the Warrington area and has ensured the issues and needs of Birchwood and Birchwood Park are heard. This could not be achieved at this cost, by any other means.

Results:

- www.birchwood.org.uk – 2,182 visitors and 7,780 page views have been logged in the last 7 months (since the official launch)
- Partnership membership of 411 members – both individual and collective, ensuring communications are extended across the entirety of Warrington
- Influence is impossible to quantify, but the Partnership's regular involvement in consultations area and Borough-wide within statutory agencies is rare and well regarded
- Consistent levels of turnout at meetings – the last community meeting was hosted for 35 community residents/representative, while the Birchwood Youth Partnership's meetings are often oversubscribed

Contact

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