



The official newsletter of the PEER Group
People Encouraging Enterprise in Rossendale

Issue Two

2nd year anniversary celebrations

Facilitators Report



Andy MacNae, Enterprise Facilitator, outside one of PEER's clients, Rossendale Leisure Trust, the largest social enterprise in Rossendale

The last two years have passed quickly and over that time PEER has grown and matured into something more than perhaps we originally anticipated.

PEER has supported over 110 Rossendale businesses helping at least 38 start up or expand. These have created jobs and opportunities for the people of the valley and we tell a few of those stories in this newsletter. Working closely with all those businesses has been a great experience. We have been able to support some fantastic local people as they work to bring their business dreams to life. But I always say that PEER is about more than that. Over the past two years many disparate parts of the Rossendale community have come together, through

PEER, in support of Rossendale enterprise. In doing so an understanding of the needs of Rossendale businesses and the power of working together has developed. This has invigorated other community groups and activities, with the most obvious area being the Local Strategic Partnership.

I'd also argue that it has led to greater ambition. Look around Rossendale now and think about how many really big, bold projects there are around. Many driven by community bodies or social enterprises. All supported by a spirit of partnership working. PEER is not responsible for the inception or success of these projects but it is part of the conditions for success. To use an old metaphor - it has been part of making the ground

ready for planting.

PEER has also gained a wider attention. Seen as one of the most innovative projects around we have and visits from enterprise and regeneration people from Scotland and Liverpool. Within Lancashire many now look toward Rossendale as an example of how to do some things right. An example of an incredibly strong community with many individuals prepared to give up their time and expertise to help others and a few prepared to work very hard to make it all fit together. It is something of a tribute to Rossendale and all those that have supported PEER that somehow we've made our ideal work better than any of us expected.

Inside this issue:

Facilitators Report	1
PEER and the Community	1
Case Studies	2
Who Dares Pins	2
Fitzpatricks	2
Pennine Forge	3
Bombox	3
Creative Industries UK/ Simply Gifted UK	3
Gavin Mitchell	4
Snakes and Adders	4
2nd Anniversary	4
REAL—Social Enterprise Works CD-Rom	4

PEER and the Community

Established in September 2003 PEER is the UK's first Enterprise Facilitation project based on the Sirolli™ approach to local regeneration that is now widely used in North America.

PEER's approach to enterprise support is to understand the needs of the clients and then mobilise the community resources to meet those needs. It's a completely confidential, common sense approach, that empowers the

entrepreneur to understand their options, make decisions and take action because nothing is done without them accepting ownership. Sounds simple but one of the big differences with PEER is the sheer amount of specialist resources that can efficiently be brought to bear on a problem.

At the heart of the project is a fifty plus strong community Board made up of local people, some from business, some community

leaders and others just interested in making Rossendale a better place to live and work. The Board share their knowledge, experience and contacts to help others succeed.

Only by mobilising a community's social capital can such a high level of enterprise support be put in place (without spending silly money!).

The Facilitator meets people in the pub, over coffee or in their home.

Some recent comments:

“The most innovative project in the county”

“PEER is a massively cost-effective way of mobilising the community to enable local regeneration”

“You’ve made a real difference”



Sheila Sivieri outside Who Dares Pins, Bacup

“This is a good time for Bacup, I am excited about the future and happy to be involved in the areas regeneration”

Sheila Sivieri, Who Dares Pins

PEER and the Community continued

This casual approach recognises that many people are very wary of anything that looks like a public sector support agency. Often this is due to lack of confidence or trust or simply because they believe their business is too small to be of interest. PEER therefore goes out of its way to develop a network of direct contacts throughout the community and via hundreds of one to one conversations aims to get close to would be entrepreneurs and be trusted by them.

How does PEER achieve this?

By bringing together the business and community leaders within the borough, encouraging them to work together enthusiastically with mutual understanding and a shared goal. This in itself is something that many communities strive for.

In this alone the PEER approach brings real change to an area. Many of the PEER Board members have gained skills and

confidence to become more active in their communities and there has been massive steps forward and a real sense of pulling together to bring steady improvement.

If you would like to be involved in supporting Rossendale enterprises why not join us, or for past members, re-join the PEER Board. We are now doing more than ever before and are always looking out for new members, ring Andy on 07971 190827

Case Study — Who Dares Pins

Sheila Sivieri, who has operated her knitting and crafts business successfully in Bacup Market for the past six years decided earlier this year that the time was right for growth. She said “We had out grown the space we had at the market and with Bacup on the up the time was right for expansion. We were lucky to find the perfect property, it’s only a couple of minutes from the market and we’re looking for-

ward to welcoming customers old and new”, Sheila was helped to develop her idea by PEER. “I was able to talk through my idea confidentially with Andy. At the time I was excited by the opportunity of opening a shop but wasn’t sure how to go about it. He helped me to work out what needed to be done, estimate the costs and figure out a plan for the business.”

Who Dares Pins is in an exciting

part of Bacup, with Waterbridge Gallery and the new Equestrian shop in the same row. Sheila, who is now a PEER Board member and also Vice Chair of the Bacup Consortium Trust, is very positive about the future of Bacup and its businesses. Sheila’s business has gained a reputation for supplying top quality knitting yarns, needle-crafts, craft supplies and backing this up with advice and expertise.

Case Study — Fitzpatricks

Fitzpatricks herbal health, known to all as Britain’s last temperance bar, has for the past eighteen months been working with PEER to develop its unique bottled drinks range.

Chris Law, Fitzpatricks owner, is well aware of the great potential of their brand and products but he knows he needs more. “We needed to understand things from a much wider perspective. We had a gut feeling about the right way to go but needed some

help in working that through.” Realising that this was a big piece of work PEER was able to use its relationship with Lancaster University to nominate Fitzpatricks as a project for the Business School. Two master’s students were selected to work up a marketing and production plan with Chris. They carried out research and developed a report and marketing plan. Chris was very pleased with the results, “Talking through their findings

with the Business students really helped clarify things for us.

“We now know what we need to do and why. There’s a lot we need to sort out and we know its not going to be easy but now at least we have a road map to navigate by and with PEER we know we have support if we get stuck”.

PEER Board members supported Chris at a recent customer feedback event.



Chris Law showing his famous sarsaparilla drink

Case Study — Pennine Forge

Richard and Steve originally started their business with just one order for a set of railings. Now Pennine Forge is a team of ten highly skilled iron-workers and fitters catering for customers looking for the best in hand forged iron. Last winter Pennine moved to new bigger premises and Rossendale MP Janet Anderson conducted the official opening. Looking forward the firm has big plans but Richard

and Steve realise that to achieve what they want they have to keep getting the basics right.

It was a PEER Board member who first met the owners when she bought a gate. She introduced them to PEER a year ago and Richard and Steve have found that having someone to talk over their business issues with has been a great help. "Andy has been a sounding board for us as we've tried to develop the

business toward where we want to be. He has helped us make informed decisions, like moving premises, changing our production methods and sorting out our marketing. We've still got a long way to go. There's always something that can be done better and new problems to face but its good to know that PEER is about to give us support when we need it"



Case Study — Bombox

The Bombox is the brainchild of Moyra Franklin, who was practice manager of a law firm in Manchester at the peak of the IRA mainland bombing campaign. Moyra had two close calls with bombings. A prototype of her Bombox was then put to the test with the massive 1996 Manchester bomb. Nearly 500 businesses did not survive, but Moyra's firm was up and running again within hours. In essence

the Bombox is a common sense package of everything that a business needs to get back on its feet after a natural or man-made disaster. Plus, lots of practical advice from someone who's been there and done it.

It was last summer that Moyra first approached PEER for support as she worked her idea up into a business plan. Bombox has been on the market since January and awareness of this unique product is building.

Now Moyra needs to find partners to take her take her product further. In particular she wants to get into the US. She has re-contacted PEER and asked for some help in finding the right partner. She said "It's good to be able to talk to someone who already knows me and the business. Andy gave guidance as I worked through the original concept and so I'm now hoping that PEER can help me take Bombox to the next stage"



Moyra Franklin with Bombox
"The Key to your business survival"

Case Study — Creative Industries UK/ Simply Gifted UK

An incredibly innovative project, which you'd expect given the name, is the brainchild of local music impresario Sonia Ramsey. Sonia believes passionately in the giving people a chance and for 5 years has funded Creative Industries to offer free and subsidised taster sessions for local children in performing arts and dance through the medium of music. She also pro-

vides services in multimedia, photography and website design. Sonia's vision is to offer creative industry sessions to people of all ages to give them the opportunity to develop their talents. Using her experience and contacts in the music industry Sonia has developed a unique approach to bringing the best out of people.

With the support of PEER, Sonia is now building Creative Industries UK

into a commercial business capable of raising income that can be used to fund Simply Gifted UK which she is hoping to register as a charity.



Simply Gifted UK dancers at the Rossendale Community Network Conference 2nd July 2005

If you have an idea you would like to discuss with Andy ring him for a confidential chat anytime.

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Snakes and Adders children's adventure play frame

Case Study — Snakes and Adders

When Peter and Lindsay Foster saw a kid's play frame advertised on ebay they didn't hesitate in putting in a bid. This was something they had wanted to do for years and this was too good an opportunity to miss. A nail biting couple of hours later they had their prize at a knock down price. Now it was a question of turning it into a business. Lindsay is a highly experience child minder but needed support in putting a plan together. Would it all add up? Could they make a living out of it? How much could the business afford

in rent and wages? How to promote it? All key questions that PEER was able to help answer. Peter said "I'm OK with numbers so I didn't want someone to just tell us what we could or couldn't do, we want to work it out for ourselves. Andy took us through the process but it's our business plan and it's made us feel really confident that if we get the costs right we will have a successful business"

The big problem has been finding a suitable property.

That's where PEER's network and Board members have been useful. They have been looking for the right property. Over the past couple of months Peter and Lindsay saw plenty that were almost but not quite right. They've kept at it and finally with the help of one of PEER's board members may now finally have found the right place. We won't tempt fate but with luck we will see Snakes and Adders opening near the centre of Bacup before the end of the year.

Case Study — Gavin Mitchell

Gavin Mitchell has a simple plan – to sell the best iron beds on the market. To turn this dream into reality he had to find someone to make the beds to the high standard he required. PEER using its network approach was in a great position to help out and soon put Gavin in touch with Pennine Forge. Of course all the rest of the ele-

ments of a successful business plan had to be worked through too and PEER was able to help out here as well. Gavin said "Andy helped me to work though all the costs as well as forecasting sales. We also looked at the marketing side and in particular at the sort of customers that might buy what we had to offer. This

was really important as it helped me clarify what I wanted to do and I realised some of my initial assumptions didn't add up. Starting a business is always a risk but it's a much smaller one if you plan well."

Gavin now has his first three designs made up and members of the Board have volunteered to provide feedback to assist with his market research.

He's also working on getting his branding right and hopes to have the whole package ready to launch within the next few months.

PEER 2nd Anniversary Celebrations

To celebrate and recognise achievement and more importantly to look forward to the future PEER is marking its 2nd anniversary by holding a celebration event on 25 September 2005 at Bacup Leisure Hall, Bacup, Rossendale.

There is a gala raffle draw for a Kawasaki ZX6R donated by our guest speaker Ernesto Sirolli, the internationally recognised social champion who has set up his Enterprise Facilitation model in communities throughout the world. He will be attending from the United States to celebrate with PEER, the first Sirolli inspired project in the UK.

A luxury buffet will be followed by entertainment from the live Irish band, "Across the Water", a dance presentation from Simply Gifted UK and comedy and dancing.

Everyone is invited to make this a memorable night. Gala tickets are £15.

Raffle tickets are available at the Rossendale Motorbike Show on the 25th September from the PEER stand on Bank Street, Rawtenstall or by ringing Dorothy Mitchell on 01706 229854. Dorothy is also taking bookings for the gala dinner.

dorothy.mitchell@airtime.co.uk

REAL - Social Enterprise Works

PEER currently works with over 10 community groups and social enterprises and is a member of Social Enterprise Lancashire Network (SELNET)

Learning from the past and by knowing that for every project somebody has to set up the organisation, the structure, the rules, the systems, the policies and the procedures, a "How To" set up and run a sustainable social enterprise CD Rom was developed - REAL Social Enterprise Works.

It contains over 250 pages of information and templates to set up all the policies, procedures, and forms to set up your community organisation or small business. £10 for Rossendale enterprises, £20 for those outside Rossendale.

Details on our website <http://www.realtd.co.uk>