



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

Issue Three

Communities empowering Communities

Facilitators Report



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

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

Facilitators Report	1
Empowering your Community	1
Case Studies	
New cinema in Rossendale	2
£50million on its way to Rossendale?	2
Gourmet delight for Novaks	3
£125,000 win for Weir dream	3
Why I support PEER - Member's stories	4

In Issue 2 we talked about the achievements of PEER over the past two years. I keep coming back to this but the thing that really makes PEER stand out is the strength, commitment and variety of its board. Over eighty people have now participated in it and this represents a growing network of community champions. In an age where community involvement is so crucial to any 'social' project we have created the foundations for such projects to develop, grow and succeed.

The Adrenaline Gateway and Rossendale Enterprise Anchor Ltd (REAL) are examples of this. The community strength created over the past two years by PEER board members is a crucial foundation on which the project and funding

applications are based. A chicken and egg situation!

In recent months we have seen an increasing recognition of this with people looking at Rossendale and realising 'there's a lot happening there' and wondering how we've done it. In November I spoke at a Business Link University session on Enterprise Facilitation. Ernesto Sirolli was the keynote speaker and he got everyone discussing his ideas. He got folk from across the country thinking 'maybe it could be right for us'. But once this interest was sparked they also wanted to know how things worked in the UK in practice. After my slot I got lots of questions. My message was "Yes it most certainly works, but like most things that are worth doing it needs hard work, time and

commitment from a lot of people. It's a challenge, it takes time to get right and things can go wrong. But when you do make it work you have something very powerful and very effective, not just in terms of enterprise support but also a motivated and empowered community with the desire and capacity to do much more..." As a result we've kept up contact with several other boroughs and have already had a visit from East Manchester Regeneration.

PEER is very keen to share knowledge and experience with other communities and it is hoped that in the very near future we will start to work closely with other Lancashire communities in laying the groundwork for new Enterprise Facilitation projects.

PEER creates an active Community

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. In Rossendale it has been a catalyst to bring about a sea change in the local community. In two years PEER has successfully brought together interested members of the community to support their Facilitator to help local businesses, social enterprises and would be entrepreneurs.

We believe this to be a massively

cost effective way of mobilising the community to enable local regeneration.

We have found that many of those who have been involved with PEER have gone on to become more involved in their community. Locally this has meant being involved with local strategy and some offer their skills and experience where it can make a difference, in the Local Strategic Partnership. This community 'voice' ensures strategy gets driven from the bottom up and is

generated directly from an appreciation of the needs of local people and local business.

PEER's approach to enterprise support is to only go when invited and this is mostly by word of mouth. The service is free, completely confidential, a common sense approach that empowers the entrepreneur to understand their options, make decisions and take action because nothing is done without them accepting ownership. This is where it differs from consultancy support. To quote, 'the

PEER creates an active Community continued

With PEER Support Rossendale has become a community that can:

- Connect and collaborate
- Understand and be enthusiastic
- Lead and participate
- Build knowledge and capability
- Create, own and enact
- Encouraging enterprise
- Add flexibility and value
- Has confidence and self-reliance

brain with the problem is the brain with the solution'.

Another big difference with PEER is the amount of specialist resources that can efficiently be brought to bear on a problem.

At the heart of the project is a forty strong community board, 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 wherever they feel comfortable, over coffee, in their home or in the pub. This casual approach

recognises that many people are wary of anything that looks like a public sector support agency. Maybe due to lack of confidence or trust or simply because they believe their business is too small to be of interest. In just over two years PEER has been invited to assist over 120 businesses, this has led to 38 new business start-ups and business expansions and 50 new jobs have been created.

Case Study — The Alchemy Club at Alder Grange

We're often asked if we work with young people. The answer is of course 'yes' – it's never too early to start thinking about your own business. In recent months PEER has been working with Business Link's Alchemy project and has supported the establishment of a 'real' business club at Alder Grange.

The Alder Grange Alchemy Club is a real business based around the new Community Cinema initiative at the school. It involves a motivated group of

year 10 students who have invested their own money in the enterprise. They sell the tickets for the show and refreshments on the night.

There's nothing better than learning by doing and in the run up to the first show one of the big lessons learnt is that things don't always go to plan as tickets proved hard to sell over Christmas. A big effort in the last week, with everyone pulling together, sorted things out and the opening night played Wallace

and Gromit to a full house. The refreshments side of the business managed to pay off its investment on the first night and from now on will be building profits and reinvesting in new stock. From market research on the first night different products will be offered on the second. The team are now also selling their wares at other school events. PEER will continue working with the club as the business grows.

For details of next event contact Clare Foster 01706 223171



The Alchemy Club team at Alder Grange

Case Study — The Adrenaline Gateway

This big project took a step forward over Christmas with a submission of a £50million bid to the Big Lottery's People's Millions Fund.

This is a very competitive award and only one project in the country will be supported. If 'long listed' we will be visited in April and so there is a lot of work to be done between now and then to make the bid as strong as possible. Fortunately Lancashire County Developments Ltd, North West Regional Development Agency,

Bacup and Stacksteads Partnership and Lancashire Rural Futures are supporting the feasibility work that will be carried out between now and May.

This will help identify the best site and how we can address our very real concerns about transport and the environment. PEER is working closely with the project and played a big part in pulling the bid together. PEER Board members have 'spread the word' and built crucial community support for the initiative.

David Ingham, Chair of

Rossendale Local Strategic Partnership said "This is a great opportunity for East Lancashire and particularly for our children. We want more leisure facilities and more things for young people to do. Now's our chance.

"The Adrenaline Village will give us an internationally renowned facility and will bring jobs and income. It will put East Lancashire on the map and let investors know that we are open for business. Only one project in the country will win this money and we all need to get behind this bid"



Lee Mill Quarry, Bacup one of the sites being considered

Case Study — Food Hall at Novaks, Rawtenstall

Rossendale and its surrounding countryside is home to some fantastic food and drink producers.

Eager to celebrate this, and satisfy their own love of food, the Novak's team led by Alastair Mitchell, MD of Musbury Fabrics in Helmshore, have decided to develop a Food Hall in buildings alongside the existing Novaks shop. "We want to celebrate local produce and bring in the

best of food and drink worldwide.

"We want to give local firms an outlet and local people a great place to shop"

Alastair and Finance Director Darren Norman are now working closely with PEER to develop the business plan. Soon they plan to appoint architects and designers to develop the unused building and start to bring the concept to life.

It was Musbury Fabrics who developed the hugely successful

Farmers Market in Helmshore held on the first Sunday of every month. This has brought locally produced and specialist food suppliers to the area.

Proposed site at Novaks



"Right at this moment, in our poorest communities, there are people dreaming about doing something to improve their lot.

They never think that running a business is for people like them. But when we help them turn their dreams into reality, they not only help themselves, but also change the economic fortunes of their entire communities."

Ernesto Sirolli

Case Study — Doals Community Centre

Weir Community Partnership (WCP), a group of Weir residents have been working towards their vision of building a community centre in the village, the Doals Centre.

This growing village is sadly lacking in the basic amenities and the centre would offer a venue for community meetings, training, youth club and children's facilities, church meetings and a place to hold your party!

The Weir Baptist Church has freely donated the land that housed the former church to the project.

The group entered their project into the WRG Village Hall & Community Centre Challenge 2005, run by Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd, owners of the Deerplay Quarry.

Just before Christmas they heard they were in the final five out of 90 UK projects. As a finalist they are guaranteed an award of at least £125,000. The Doals bid was the only one from the whole of

Lancashire.

Three of the 5 winners will go on to receive a grant of £250,000. To secure the £250,000 each group must make a presentation to a judging panel on 14th March this year at the House of Commons. The five prizes will be presented at the House of Commons in May. The Weir Community Partnership is working with PEER to build their Business Plan and supporting information ready for the presentation.



Peter hard at work getting Kids@Play ready

Hot off the press - Bulletins

Kids@Play

Peter and Lindsay Foster are now much closer to realising their dream of a Kids Play centre in Bacup. They have just taken on the lease of a sizable unit in Bacup, just off Burnley Road and started work on fitting out. In the past couple of months they have got planning permission for their business and been buying the equipment they will need to operate it. With a second play frame, soft play kit and catering facilities they will be able to accommodate up to sixty kids and

parents at any one session. If all goes according to plan Kids@Play will be opening by early April.

Pennine Forge

Pennine Forge have launched their new website. It shows their beautiful range of hand forged iron-work, including railings and automated gates. Check it out on www.pennineforge.co.uk.

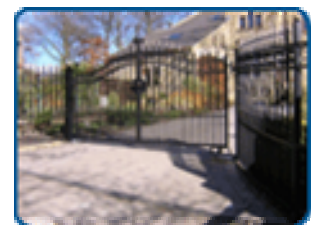
Bankside Independent

Bankside Independent will also be launching their new site soon. It will include a service giving online

mortgage and insurance quotes. www.banksideindependant.co.uk

Fitzpatricks

Fitzpatricks will soon be re-presenting their soft drinks bottles with new labels and bar coding. In response to significant interest from retailers and supermarkets Chris Law, Fitzpatrick's owner, is planning a big expansion in production with a new bottling facility and office. PEER is helping him put together the necessary business plan and funding applications.



Pennine Forge Gates



REAL

Social Enterprise Works

“How To” set up and run a sustainable social enterprise CD Rom - **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. Details on our website:

<http://www.realtd.co.uk>



Case Study — Rossendale Enterprise Anchor Ltd (REAL)

REAL has been set up as a company limited by guarantee and is applying for charity status. It is a Social Enterprise Hub for Rossendale. Working in partnership, REAL focuses on local community support for:

- Social Enterprise
- Community, voluntary, faith & youth groups
- Rossendale Community Network (RCN)

What REAL does is an excellent example of how a project directly contributes to the objectives of a number of groups. It is a free

community resource offering ‘hands on’ support to these groups. In Rossendale there are over 500 community groups.

REAL also works with the RCN, the arm of the Local Strategic Partnership. This is a communication system to ensure the voice of the community is heard and that they have the chance to influence prior to actions taking place.

The core of REAL will still be the people we call ‘ProPs’

(Professional Pensioners). These are volunteers with a wide variety of skills who no longer have a ‘day job’ and are willing to give back to the community in the form of mentorship and skilled input.

REAL will encourage the business community and external funders that Rossendale is worthy of support by building quality into everything they do; developing partnerships and building capacity in the community. REAL supports PEER clients by offering the same services for growth.

Bulletins cont.....

Who Dares Pins, Bacup

Sheila Sivieri’s knitting and crafts shop, had a good strong Christmas. Shelia reports an increasing interest in knitting “One of my biggest problems now is getting the stock in. The more popular wools have been flying off the shelves..”. Just a few doors away on Burnley

Road, Caroline Reed is due to open her new Dress Agency shop selling quality clothing. Watch out for this new business.

Cybergames, Rawtenstall

Cybergames has just opened their new interactive gaming centre – **Gateway 2**. Cyber-games is a social Enterprise linking play with learning.

Gateway 2 is on Bury Rd (on the Rawtenstall roundabout) and offers Gaming, Internet Access, Gaming Events and Courses.

For more details check out www.cybergames.org.uk.

Berrisford Advertising

Pete Berrisford of Berrisford Advertising has come up with a

great way of promoting Bacup businesses whilst letting people know about his new DISPLAY ART print and design business. He has organised a promotional board to go outside the royal court theatre with spaces available at just £15 per month.

The board will be updated on a monthly basis.

Board member’s stories 'Why I got involved.....

The PEER Board meets one evening a month and in between time can be called upon by the Facilitator for their knowledge on particular issues that arise from his meetings with businesses and entrepreneurs.

So why do they volunteer their time?

Well, one of the newer members who joined last summer is **David McMullan**, Business Development Manager, East Lancashire Finance in Haslingden. David says ‘I’m fairly new to PEER and it therefore feels quite fresh and clear to me why I attend. In brief, it’s a mix of several reasons.

Firstly, ‘Andy has an easy going, relaxed presentation style that makes the report he gives not seem as long as it really is.

‘Secondly, the content of the report: real people striving with business or proposed

businesses that vary from the modest to the amazing.

‘Thirdly, the ‘serialisation’ of the story as these people break through one barrier after another.....it humanises their efforts.

‘Fourthly, it still astounds me the wealth of experience that members of PEER have and the willingness they have to go out of their way to add momentum to Andy’s good work.

‘Fifthly, the organic humour that makes a PEER gathering more than just another meeting and helps the time fly by in no time.

‘Lastly, Dorothy Mitchell suggested it and I reckon that what Dorothy wants, Dorothy gets.....’

Sheila Siviera is both a board member and a beneficiary of PEER Support. She says ‘I was invited to an early meeting to hear about the Sirolli system before PEER was formed.

‘I was excited and wanted to be part of it, unfortunately a family crisis occurred and I lost touch with what was happening. When I became a member of Bacup Consortium Trust I began to hear about some of the ventures PEER was involved with. I was considering moving to a shop to further my business after 6 years on Bacup market and my friend June suggested I speak to Andy. His advice and input helped me make decisions and I asked about becoming a member and here I am.

‘I still call him when I am unsure and value his point of view and now know the fantastic board which backs him.

‘I believe in Rossendale and Bacup and feel that with all the positive people who live here and are prepared to give up their spare time we can really make a difference’.