

June 2008



The Official Newsletter of People Encouraging Enterprise in Rossendale

## Communities Empowering Communities

### Facilitator's Report

In the past six months PEER has passed some significant milestones and continues to build on the Enterprising Britain success of 2007. We have now helped over 250 businesses and social enterprises, from the large to the small, and word of mouth brings new clients every month.

In many ways the 'big one' remains the Adrenaline Gateway (of which more elsewhere in this newsletter) but what's great is the variety that we see – from Childcare to Joinery, from Farm Foods to Garages. And of course this reflects on the versatility of an Enterprise Facilitation program, where the skills, experience, connections and knowledge of the board means PEER can react to pretty well any need in any sector.

Over 90 volunteers have now been PEER board members and this in itself creates a powerful and vibrant network throughout the Valley. PEER is continuing to recruit and the board has welcomed quite a few new members in the last few months. These new members have decided to 'put something back' and support enterprise in Rossendale. Anyone who shares this approach is welcome, and if that's you, then please get in touch.

PEER board members continue to work to react to the needs of Valley businesses, with the latest initiative being the Valley at Work business network. This free network now has close to 130 members and celebrated its first six months with an excellent evening at the Holden Vale with entrepreneur and author Iain Scott doing the guest speaker duties. Membership is open to anyone involved in business or social enterprise in the valley and more details can be found on [www.valleyatwork.co.uk](http://www.valleyatwork.co.uk).



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

Contact Andy on:  
**07971190 827**



The Farmers & Produce Market



### The best Farmers Market in the NW?

by Peter Sweetmore PEER Co. Secretary

Around November 2003 I was working for Musbury Fabrics when M.D. Alistair Mitchell asked the question: "Why does Rossendale not have a Farmers Market?" at which point I was requested to look into this, and after around 12 months research and work Rossendale Farmers Market was launched on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2004.

This wasn't without some 'hitches'... The original research led to the recommendation that the Market should be held on a 'Brown-Sign-Site' of which Helmshore Mills Textile Museum is one, so we approached the Museum Managers and arranged for the market to go ahead. One week before the first market was due to be held – a disaster!! - the bridge over the river into the car park collapsed. All the publicity had been done, stallholders arranged and no venue... then Airtours came as a 'Guardian Angel' and let us use their car park across the road from the museum.

The rest, as they say, is history. We set up a Company limited by guarantee and held our first market (with just 18 stalls) and at the same time 'teamed up with what was then 'Passion at Work in Rossendale' (now PEER) who helped us through the early days and remain VERY supportive of the market.

The market has continued to grow from strength to strength, held on the first Sunday each month, 9.30am – 2pm with an average of around 5,000 customers enjoying a regular attendance of around 30 stalls. In 2006 we changed the name from Rossendale Farmers Market Ltd to Rossendale Farmers & Produce Market Ltd. which allows us to sell a more diverse range of foods, including 'foreign' foods such as Olives.

Quite a number of our stall holders have award winning foods and I am delighted that we have been nominated as one of the best Farmers Markets in the North West (2008) in the UKTVFOOD local food heroes competition. Anyone wishing to vote can go to [www.uktvfood](http://www.uktvfood) and also follow the links to vote for our market (please.) If you cannot vote, we look forward to seeing you at our successful market on the first Sunday of each month.

Peter Sweetmore

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Newsletter by



## Letter from Australia by Ronnie Barker PEER Chair

### Reflections from the Chair, Ronnie Barker

In recent years I have been asked about our experiences from the length and breadth of Britain but I never expected to be questioned from Australia, which according to Ernesto Sirolli's book 'Ripples on the Zambezi' is where Enterprise Facilitation was born. The questions come from someone thinking of starting a facilitation project and I thought the discussion might be worth sharing with you all.

#### 'All the way from Australia'

Q. Why did you choose to become involved with the Sirolli institute?

A. Its simplicity. The Ethos was built around helping your neighbours in the community at grassroots level in a way that traditional support could not reach.

Q. What level of support was there in the early stages?

A. From hearing Ernesto speak in September 02 I, along with a few other members of the Community, lobbied others and then invited Ernesto back to speak in Rossendale when over 100 people attended. By August 03 our members totalled 45.

Q. What level of community support is there now?

A. From day one the traditional business support agencies along with the Economic Development Unit of the Local Council gave full support recognising that this was an area that they couldn't cover and in time they would also benefit. That support remains solid to date with over 90 people having joined the board over the last 4 years, as members come and go, with 7 being inducted in June 2007.

Q. What set up costs were incurred?

A. The set up costs consisted of the Sirolli Institute's 30-month contract, the Facilitator's annual salary package and 'running costs' of which are minimal due to being mobile - no office overheads etc.

Q. What ongoing costs have been incurred?

A. The Current Annual Costs are in the region of £55,000.

Q. How have these costs been funded?

A. The first 3 years were funded by Phoenix Funding through Business Link which paid the Institute's costs matched with Local Single Regeneration Funding, Rossendale Borough Council and our own fund-raising efforts.

Q. What benefits has Enterprise Facilitation brought to your community?

A. Apart from the obvious, helping clients to start or expand their businesses, PEER Support has become deeply involved in many areas that have been recognized by Rossendale Borough Council who have continued to give ongoing financial support because of the high value they place on the work being done.

The greatest 'Unexpected Benefit' is the way the Board Members have become 'embedded' in the Local Strategic

Partnership over the last 4 years to ensure that 'more doors can be opened and ever-increasing barriers can be knocked down'.

Q. What support has been given by the Sirolli Institute?

A. Two of the Sirolli Institute staff supported us throughout all the information meetings, Board induction days, recruitment and selection days, the 5 day Boot Camp, early meetings and throughout the next 18 Months. Also on our first year and second year celebration events. We had access to a designated Master Facilitator at any time by phone or email.

Q. In what ways do you feel that your community has received value for money?

A. The fact that over 90 people have given time voluntarily at board level throughout the last 4 years speaks for itself. The financial support from Rossendale Borough Council shows they believe Rossendale is getting value for money. The fact that we won the NW Regional Finals of Enterprising Britain NW 2007 and were awarded the first prize of £75,000 to continue our work shows that the North West Development Agency believes we were worthy to represent them in the national finals.

Q. Given the benefit of hindsight, what would you have done differently?

A. With the benefit of hindsight I would have encouraged the more introductions throughout the whole of the last 4 years to continually spread the word and add to our growing network of board members.

Q. Did you have a problem finding a Facilitator?

A. We were lucky to find the right Facilitator at the first attempt. As the Enterprising Britain panel said in the NW Final with respect to our Facilitator he could leave tomorrow and the project wouldn't die because the 'Backbone of the Project' is the volunteer board without which the project couldn't continue.

Q. Do you think it will be difficult to sell the idea to a community that is currently booming?

A. As a retired MD I know that information on training and development doesn't always reach those people in most need deep in our communities. We don't advise, we don't judge, we don't lead, we do listen, we do guide and we do help them to make their own decisions whether or not to start or expand as an Entrepreneur.

So to answer your question I dare bet there are a lot of people in need of help which could be even more neglected and forgotten in a community that believes it is booming thereby attracting established support and further clouding those issues deep in the community.

Finally....

Those people that know me well also know that I will never sell what we do but I am always happy to share what I consider to be a opportunity and privilege to help people in our Community to help themselves.

## REAL—Rossendale Enterprise Anchor Ltd



Earlier this year REAL was awarded a Big Lottery grant to provide a community accountancy service for Rossendale.

REAL was set up in 2006 to provide practical support services to Rossendale's voluntary, community and faith sectors. It continued the community work of the Bacup & Stacksteads Single Regeneration Budget and made them available Rossendale wide.

During the start up period REAL was supported by PEER and has continued to work in partnership with Rossendale Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, East Lancashire PCT

offering additional in-depth business support to social enterprise and community groups. Janet Fraser, one of REAL's professional associates who wrote the successful bid said, "Local authorities, Social Services, NHS and other public bodies are being urged by Government to offer contracts to social enterprises and community groups to deliver much needed local services. However, many of these are not ready and don't have the systems, skills and financial knowledge to apply for this work."

Heather Massie, REAL's Chair commented "This is a very exciting time and gives us the chance to fulfil our ambition to make Rossendale a force to be exciting time and gives us the chance to fulfil our ambition to make Rossendale a force to be reckoned

with. We will use our grant to recruit an accounting technician who will develop resources that will aid smaller organisations bid for grants and tenders, understand full cost recovery and put in the systems needed to monitor and measure what they do."

The new accountancy services are being developed with the support of PEER's Facilitator Andy MacNae, who is using his knowledge of what local businesses / organisations are looking for and they will be available shortly.

For more details contact REAL on 01706 871730 or email [info@realtd.co.uk](mailto:info@realtd.co.uk)

## PEER welcomes new Board members

PEER has had the pleasure of welcoming many voluntary members over the years who have become part of our active Community Board. These people have come from every walk of life, every creed, of all ages, man, woman and child. Our youngest is 15 and our oldest (well we'd better not say!)

Their passion for where they live or work is obvious and they strive to make things better.

We recognise that family and business commitments can make it difficult to stay involved and active. We have members who have had to move on but are still in touch and supportive. Over the years we have probably had over 100 people active in our Board.

**A Community Enterprise Board delivers confidential, high quality, open-ended, free of charge help for anyone in Rossendale that has an idea for a business or a project. They support their Enterprise Facilitator by introducing them to family and friends and promoting the service.**

In the past few weeks we have been pleased to welcome four new members, they are:

**Paul Henson** - Paul has used his wide IT expertise to found and manage HIT Computing Services Ltd, an IT Services and Consultancy company working across East Lancashire.

**Wendy Pilling** - Wendy is the mother of one of our youngest members and works at Alder Grange High School as a Student Services Officer. She helps the year 10 Business Studies group with their Community Cinema which they run as a small business. She has also been a volunteer youth worker.

**John Ferguson** - John is Head of Whitworth Community School. As a former footballer and qualified coach he worked for 12 years as an Academy Coach for Manchester City Football Club.

**Lynda Hannam** Lynda set up a combustion engineering company after a career in education and skills training. She and her husband have also set up and run a guest house in Whitewell Bottom.

PEER welcomes applications from anyone who lives or works in Rossendale.

## Adrenaline Gateway

If you've never heard of the Adrenaline Gateway check out [www.adrenaline-gateway.co.uk](http://www.adrenaline-gateway.co.uk) This initiative, led by the Rossendale Leisure Trust with strong support from Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council, has been one of PEER's longest standing clients. We've worked with the project for over three years now and it is great to see that it has taken some significant steps forward in recent months.

Mountain Bike trails in Lee Quarry, Bacup are nearing completion and should attract new visitors to the valley as well as inspiring participation locally. Work continues on detailed planning for future work and further submissions are due to be made to funders later in the year. Meanwhile plans are well advance for a 'test event' that will be held 12/13<sup>th</sup> July. This event will test the Lee Quarry facility and the idea of having multiple events making up a 'celebration of adrenaline sport.' It includes live music and other 'cultural' activities.

Events will take place at Ski Rossendale, Lee Quarry and Whitworth Waterski. A full line up appears below:

### Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July - Ski Rossendale from 5pm

Invitational Skiing and Boarding Event – some of the country's top talent showing off their skills  
Equipment demos – with Head, Salomon, Smiths, and West Beach showing off next season's kit  
Live music from Chantel McGregor and the Oli Brown Band (ends 8.30 pm)

### Saturday – Whitworth All Day

The British Disabled Water Ski Championship – Whitworth

Water Ski Centre

Cowm Quarry – the UK's Leading Off Road Motor Sports Park Open for Business

### Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> - Lee Quarry All Day

Mountain Bike Cross Country Races on the challenging new Lee Quarry Loop

Round 3 of the British Mountain Bike Trials Championship.

Skills Workshops

Equipment Demos with Giant, Commencal, Yeti & Tarty bikes – some of the best bikes on the market.

Windwave launching the new Corsair Frames.



Construction work in the quarries putting the trails and paths in place.

## Spreading Enterprise Facilitation in Pennine Lancashire



### Welcome Two New Community Enterprise Boards!

For nearly 5 years now PEER Support has been the only Community Enterprise Board in Pennine Lancashire. Now, thanks to the support of the No Limits programme and a lot of hard work by local people in Burnley and Hyndburn, we are joined by two more. It's early days for both, neither are ready to help local people reach towards their dreams just yet. They are both getting themselves organised to recruit their enterprise facilitators over the summer.

The **Burnley Opportunities Board (BOB)** was formed at the end of March. Over 40 volunteers have come from all corners of Burnley, bringing their connections, local knowledge, experience, skills and creativity together. They have come together from all walks of life to encourage and support enterprise in the borough. Gordon Howley, the newly elected chair, is a PROP, or professional pensioner, who retired from Blackburn with Darwen Council in March. He is now engaged in many community projects, including his beloved Lowerhouse Cricket Club.

Gordon has been joined by vice chair Brian Hobbs, treasurer Andrew Waite and membership lead John Stott, all of whom are local entrepreneurs. Hugh Simpson, currently working in economic development for Burnley Borough Council heads up

the sustainability team and Judy Yacoub of the Community Alliance is secretary. They are currently seeking a Burnley person with a passion for marketing to head their communications activities.

Over in Hyndburn, **Business Opportunities Skills Support (BOSS)** was formed on June 11<sup>th</sup>. They have recruited around 40 volunteers and are working hard to bring their new organisation to life. Their new chair, Mike Booth, is a teacher trainer and coach for the University of Cumbria. His vice chair is independent councillor for Clayton le Moors Nick Collingridge, who is now a PROP with a private sector background. Treasurer Claire Regan is a newly qualified accountant with local firm Haworths and secretary Val Carder does all the hard work in EDIdeas. Linda Kirkman is heading up the membership team. Linda has worked in the public, private and community sectors. Local businessman David Hardman is heading up the communications team. David is general manager of Lantex in Accrington. Jabien Kauser, of the Lancashire BME Pact, will lead the sustainability team.

Both Boards will be trained and coached over the next two years by people from PEER Support. We have also now started creating awareness of the Community Enterprise Board project in Pendle.



## Communications Group

Keeping in touch with members and prospective members, spreading our successes and helping businesses PEER has supported blow their own trumpet are some of the activities PEERs Communication Group undertake.

The current Chair Janet Fraser is looking for any member who has a little time to spare and would like to join the group. Contact her on M: 07787 502 770 E: [janet.frasersupport@googlegmail.com](mailto:janet.frasersupport@googlegmail.com)

## Valley at Work - Rossendale Business Working

Valley at Work is a free and informal business network which was set up by PEER board members in September last year.

This was in response to repeated appeals from PEER clients for opportunities to meet other local businesses, to do business with them and to share business experience. Nine months on Valley at Work has over 120 members all of whom receive a monthly newsletter.

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 6.30, usually at Bacup Cricket Club but occasionally at members venues (for instance the July meeting is at the Horse and Bamboo theatre). The meetings are pretty informal and focused around a short talk given by one of our members and a session sharing business experience.

In recent months talks have ranged from recruitment of staff to tax planning, from marketing to relaxation techniques. In April the network celebrated its first six months with a special event at Holden Vale Hotel. Entrepreneur and author Iain Scott was the

guest speaker and over seventy members and guests enjoyed his unique insights into the challenges of running a business.

Valley at Work is free. It is for anyone with a business in the valley or who may just be starting up. To join just contact enquiries@valleyatwork.co.uk.



An appropriately dressed Iain Scott speaking to Valley at Work members.