

C

3. Doorstep Greens Monitor - *Pete Johnstone DG Programme Manager.*

Community spirit is more than just a large slice of custard pie

The creation of a Doorstep Green is only one step in the life of that green. Ongoing work ensures its survival and enhancement. One green I visited recently, Fairstead in Kings Lynn, Norfolk was going from strength to strength. The green, one year old in July was in near perfect condition. FANG (Fairstead Neighbourhood Action Group) had in the meantime commissioned a sculpture from a local artist to create a focal point for the green. With increased confidence from their DG's creation, the group were planning to take on an additional environmental project in a woodland nature reserve adjacent to the estate. The wood is heavily fly-tipped and in need of some care and attention. The announcement that FANG had just won a £5000 award from Dow Chemicals to help improve the wood will no doubt be of considerable help. FANG are also waiting to hear whether their Green Pennant Award will be successful for the Fairstead Green.

What makes one green flourish and another one struggle is not easy to explain. It may well come down to personalities, a sense of commitment and a belief in what you want to achieve. But on a more practical level I also think it is about effective partnerships. Developing a Doorstep Green is not achievable

by one person alone - they need the support and encouragement of other local stakeholders (be they local authorities, trusts of one sort or another) and of course local people. This is where a 'community of spirit' can be formed. A recent visit to Tame Valley Doorstep Green in Sandwell showed that this community spirit was not evident in the DG and the project was struggling. The green was seemingly lacking that community activist and maintenance was below standard. We are working with the council and British Waterways to improve the situation and hope that in time the fate of the green will change for the better.

A visit to Skiningrove near Stiburn, in Redcar and Cleveland showed that the community spirit was alive and well - the large slice of custard pie offered and eaten in the nearby community cafe helped me to conclude this - but it was more than that. In spite of a number of difficulties in getting the creation of the green underway the group has shown that it has the spirit to deliver a really exciting project. The DG will eventually open up a former derelict gas works site for outdoor recreational use. Again, it comes down to personalities. All the partners on this project all seemed to be working to the same ends and I have no doubt that the green - the last one in the country to start work - will be up and running in the not too distant future.

4. Photo of the month

High Scores

Another first for a Doorstep Green (we think!) - High Grance Doorstep Green in County Durham have had their own tune written. The piece was put together and performed by the local brass band for the Green's recent opening

View more photos of Doorstep Greens on the 'Resources' page website

5. Further information:

Dave Haygarth
Communications Adviser,
Doorstep Greens national project team,
The Countryside Agency,
Tel: 0161 234 0215
dave.haygarth@countryside.gov.uk

6. Networking

Communicate online and get all the latest news - not just for Doorstep Greens but almost 1,000 members across the whole parks and green spaces scene.

www.greenspace.net.countryside.gov.uk