

Shape Your City

Welcome to the March 2011 edition of
the London Empowerment Partnership e-bulletin



News & Updates

New Beginnings

Welcome to a special edition of the London Empowerment Partnership E-bulletin. The London Empowerment Partnership, funded as a four year programme from 2007-2011 has come to an end. London Civic Forum this month says a fond farewell to LEP staff members Zoe Sykiotis, Claire Harding and Catherine McLoughlin, we thank them for all their hard work and wish them every success in the future.

London Civic Forum's Policy Voice programme will continue to champion the work of the LEP and community empowerment, providing bi-monthly updates on empowerment activities and events occurring across London.

Funding for the Take Part programme has now come to an end. London Civic Forum is seeking new funding to extend the work of Take Part and Kate Burls, Co-ordinator of the Take Part Champion Programme London will be with us till the end of April.

Please [click here](#) to view our **Take Part Champion Offer**, which offers a wide range of tailored support to London organisations across sectors.

London Civic Forum celebrates Active Citizenship for All Londoners

Active Citizenship for All Londoners brought together people from across the capital to celebrate the achievements and future aspirations of the Take Part programme in London. Take Part is about people shaping their own learning, tackling real issues in their own communities and reflecting on what they have achieved together.

At London Civic Forum we feel passionately that it has never been more important to support all Londoners to take up all the new rights and opportunities opening up under localism and the Big Society. Take Part has taken real strides towards this and it is vital that learning from the programme is sustained.

To read the full event report [click here...](#)

You can find a wealth of resources at www.takepart.org.uk and on www.londoncivicforum.org.uk For photos from the event please see our Your Voice, Your City page on facebook.

OBV rally-Who Runs London?

As part of The "[Who Runs My City](#)" project Operation Black Vote is holding a special event to engage members of the public in influencing and shaping their communities.

Speakers and the Q+A panel at the events conclusion will include leaders from across the political spectrum, as well as high profile civic leaders from national charities, the BME third sector and the media.

The event takes places in Central London on Thursday March 31st doors open at 6.30pm.

The London 'Who Runs' rally is a culmination of a London-wide project which included talks, events and workshops in the London boroughs Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Tower Hamlets, Croydon, Kensington and Chelsea, and Redbridge. The days were attended by MPs, councillors, mayoral candidates, governors and magistrates who engaged in a positive dialogue with members of the public about how they could influence and shape their communities for the better.

The project has distributed over 10,000 information booklets about local power and democracy to local Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

The (BAME) Lone Mother Equation - LCF paper launched

In October 2010, the Limehouse Project (LHP) was commissioned by the London Civic Forum to conduct an Action Research study into the barriers and enablers faced by BAME

lone mothers when seeking to engage in mainstream empowerment mechanisms. The report provides key insights into the BAME lone mothers' perspective of engagement and makes recommendations to local and national governing bodies.

To read the report in full [click here...](#)



LCF/MGA Event: Community Organisers - New models for London

On the 9th March 2011 London Civic Forum and Micah Gold Associates hosted a spirited event focusing on Community Organisers. Participants heard from Lord Maurice Glasman (London Citizens), Jess Steele (Locality) & debated the opportunities & risks of new community organisers models for London.

To access the full event report, including Jess Steele (Locality) presentation [click here...](#)

Photos from the event are up on our facebook page: [Your Voice, Your City](#)



SPEAKER'S CORNER

Where to from here for community empowerment?

The London Empowerment Partnership was established in 2007 as a four year programme to improve the quality, coordination and evidence of community empowerment across London. Whilst empowerment itself remains a contested term, broadly-speaking the LEP's work has involved supporting citizens and communities in increasing their ability to influence decisions that affect their lives.

Through action research we have provided a voice to marginalised groups including the Roma community and BAME lone mothers, documenting the barriers and enablers to their engagement with mainstream empowerment mechanisms. This work has been key in providing recommendations for the future co-ordination of empowerment activities.

In supporting councillors as community leaders we have brought together officers from across the capital to identify and develop the materials they need to support them in their roles.

We have held events that bring together a cross-sector of participants from the public, private and voluntary and community sector on topical issues such as asset transfer, parish councils and community organisers; generating learning opportunities and encouraging sustainable partnership workings.

What have we learned?

Empowerment is different for different people and remains highly dependent on agency and opportunity. Our work has demonstrated some of the key outcomes of empowerment including enhanced community cohesion, increased confidence and ability to engage with local communities opportunities.

At a time when the Coalition government continues to unfurl plans for the development of a Big Society the role of empowerment is perhaps as tentative as ever. There are more questions than answers as to whether empowerment is competing with the new paradigm being developed between state and citizens, or whether it is a crucial part of how a society in which citizens feel '[supported and enabled; having real and regular influence](#)' could be achieved.

What we do know, from four years of work, is that empowerment is part of a much bigger agenda, one rooted in equality and justice, pursued by and for *all* the people; and it is to this end that we will remain in pursuit of it.

London Civic Forum will continue to champion community empowerment-if you have been receiving this e-bulletin your details will automatically be transferred to London Civic Forum's e-bulletin contact list. If you wish to be removed from this please contact chloe@londoncivicforum.org.uk

Upcoming Events

***Please see below for a selection of upcoming events and training opportunities.
London Civic Forum events are listed in blue.***

Lewisham Big Lunch Information Evening

Tuesday 5 April 2011, 5-8pm
Civic Suite, Catford SE6 4RU

On Sunday 5th June 2011 communities around the country will be getting together for The Big Lunch. This initiative, set up by the Eden Project, encourages people in their local areas to sit down and eat with their neighbours. It aims to generate community spirit, encourage people to discover common ground with each other and demonstrate how local people can change their communities for the better.

In the run-up to the day, Lewisham are holding an information evening to encourage local residents to learn more about organising a Big Lunch in their local area, including how to close your road for the day. To find out more [click here...](#)

Creating Changes

Wednesday 11 May 2011, 9:30am-4pm
London Vountary Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, N7 6PA

This one day course offers free community development training to a range of local support and development organisations in order to help them improve their practice in supporting small groups and networks. Hosted by Community Matters, the course will enable participants to share examples of their work practice with others and understand how to use inclusive methods to support community groups and networks to engage with public policies affecting their communities.

To find out more [click here...](#)

Have Your Say

Your Voice, Your City

London Civic Forum's [Your Voice Your City](#) programme helps voluntary and community organisations develop their skills and understanding of policy and decision-making structures and processes in London in order to help people in each community become actively involved in engaging with and influencing their local councils and other statutory bodies.

We also support the development of opportunities for voluntary and community sector organisations to influence and shape the

work of London's agencies and funding bodies, particularly through involvement in the debate and shaping of policy.

At London Civic Forum we are conducting our own consultation on the government's Localism Bill, in particular plans for a [Community Right to Buy](#) and [Community Right to Challenge](#). Please follow the links to have your say on the support and guidance **you think** is needed for organisations to be able to take advantage of the proposed provisions.

In Your Area

Southwark Consultation on School Transport

Closes Friday 8th April 2011

Southwark Council are asking for local residents' views on a proposed school travel assistance policy, which aims to reduce the need for vehicles by offering families alternative travel assistance.

Southwark currently provides transport for almost 400 pupils per year at a cost of approximately £4 million-proposed changes to this are part of significant budget reductions being made across Southwark council.

To find out more about the proposed plans and to give your views on the consultation please [click here](#)

Merton Foundation Trust Consultation

Closes 27 May 2011

South West London and St Georges Mental Health NHS Trust are seeking local residents' opinions on a proposal to become a Foundation Trust. The Trust feel that this status would enable local people to have a say in the development of services and plans for the future and are also seeking views on its future clinical services strategy.

To find out more about the consultation and to have your say [click here...](#)

Did You Know?

Voluntary Sector Cuts website launched

A new website has been launched that is mapping intelligence about funding cuts to voluntary and community sector organisations.

If you are part of an organisation that has had its statutory funding reduced, you can

contribute to this work by adding your information [here](#).

We Need You!

The London Empowerment Partnership is keen to ensure that information about community empowerment and engagement is shared and discussed as widely as possible. If you would like to publicise the work of your organisation or advertise an event or training opportunity through the London Civic Forum bulletin, please email Deirdre at deirdre@londoncivicforum.org.uk

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