

# NewmanFrancis

## Building Strong Communities – Case Studies

### Introduction

NewmanFrancis genuinely believe in the power of effective and collaborative partnerships and working with a wide variety of communities to transform neighbourhoods and improve quality of life. We bring an experienced team with a wide range of skills and talents. Our Enterprise Promise is that “We are the partners of choice for creating resilient and empowered communities”.

Our belief is that communities can be supported into a position where they can take full advantage of future opportunities and improve their quality of life and that of their community.

### Our aim:

When working with the Board and residents from Brunswick Close Estate we will aim to:

- Help create greater awareness and understanding of the TMO
- Help the Board gain an understanding of the needs of the community – the community engagement initiatives and interventions that residents need
- Encourage residents to get involved in their TMO and create new pathways for involvement harnessing and building the skills of the community
- Identify a range of community engagement activities that meet the needs of a diverse community, helping provide the support and services residents need
- Help create a new vision and new aspirations for the TMO which can be fed into the Business Plan

### About the NewmanFrancis Team:

NewmanFrancis is a community development organisation that is strongly committed to working with residents and communities so they have more power over their own lives and where they live.

As an organisation our staff do a range of pro-bono or voluntary roles in their own communities. For example,

- Alicia Francis has been instrumental in setting up a community market, (Woodgrange Market Place), in Forest Gate E7 which has helped incubate small enterprise start ups and has proved a catalyst for a whole range of community initiatives, including a community coffee shop as well as a shop for local artists and craftspeople to display and sell their wares.
- Lily Glasser is a volunteer walk-leader
- Anita Blow helped set up and then ran a disability arts group and managed a charity and community centre in her spare time
- Howard Mendick is involved in making accessible local arts and music in communities projects where he lives and volunteers for Oxfam
- Vivien Palmer has been involved in re-establishing the TRA on her local housing estate, developing subcommittees and marketing strategies for attracting more of the community to become more engaged in their community
- Mekor Newman is the Chair of Corbett Residents Association, covers over 3000 households, provides a network for neighbours to meet and get to know each other. In addition to this,

he organises community events and street parties and has recently taken over the management of two community assets, the local library and local playing fields and linked Healthy Lifestyle Centre building

## Case Studies

### West Ham and Plaistow New Deal for Communities (NDC)



NewmanFrancis staff were involved in this project from its inception. Mekor was the Assistant Director of NDC. The team put forward a report to Newham Council and then to government, which set out the issues that needed to be addressed in a form of an outline 10-year delivery plan and the request for £54 million.

#### Achievements:

- We devised the community engagement strategy that ensured that residents' views underpinned the delivery of health, community safety, education, housing and social economic improvements to the area as part of a £54million programme.
- A predominately community led Partnership Board was set up and supported
- We recruited and managed the NDC's community involvement workers and helped develop and evaluate a small grants programme (the Community Initiatives Fund)
- We delivered training to residents and provided strategic advice on community engagement to the project team so that they could collaboratively co-design regeneration solutions
- We carried out research into the needs of the local BAME community and how the regeneration partnership could engage with these communities and ensure that the programme met their needs

#### Team impact:

- Howard Mendick and Anita Blow were part of the NDCs Community Involvement Team and helped manage and run two community resource centres
- NewmanFrancis staff set up the employment and community safety initiatives for the project and the residents' led local youth projects
- Anita Blow set up and oversaw the Community Initiatives Fund which funded, trained and supported 90 community projects in 5 years
- Howard Mendick developed and co-ordinated a series of arts and performance initiatives including "The Final Frontier Festival" with over 30 events taking place across different venues in Canning Town E16 and, (for the successor body, Newham New Deal Partnership), created the "Good Neighbours" befriending programme

## Carpenters Estate Community Development



The Carpenters estate in the 1990's was considered to be the worst estate in Newham, in terms of crime statistics, racial harassment and anti-social behaviour.

### Achievements:

The Council decided to set up a housing surgery on the estate and Meko was given the task of running the surgery. In less than 5 years he, with the help of Alicia Francis successfully developed this service in the following ways:

- Establishing a fully-fledged housing management office by successfully acquiring funding to create a new housing office with a conference room and rooms for community initiatives
- Successfully negotiated with the Police to set up a community team to be based on the estate – in the old housing surgery office
- Successfully got the health service to provide a Mother's and Babies Health service which was delivered from one of the rooms in the housing office
- Successfully developed an Ofsted standard Nursery (which included a toy library)
- Won funding to create an IT resource centre in the new housing office and partnered with Newham College to deliver accredited training from the IT resource centre. This was recognised by the government and seen as using best practice getting people engaged in the resource
- Engaged residents and trained them in the management of the estate - they took over the estate and managed it as a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)

## Corbett Estate – Lewisham



Meko since 2010 has been a Community Champion for this estate and has brought the community together to support the needs of the area. This has involved:

- Setting up the largest Community Group in the Borough – responsible for over 3000 properties, with responsibilities for dealing with community issues and concerns, creating annual events which brings the community together (the largest event as a annual

attendance of over 2000 people); and mobilising volunteers to support the causes in the community

- Set up a charity to take over the local library and developed it in a community hub delivering services that the community require. We have over 70 volunteers, deliver a full range of community services covering all the key communities needs from teaching young people coding, to dementia events for our older residents. The initiative has received £250,000 grant funding from the lottery to continue its progress around setting up a performing arts centre and deliver employability training to the area
- The company that was managing the Health Lifestyle Centre became insolvent therefore the community, with support from the Council the Corbett Resident Association led by Mekor, set up a community Board to take over and run the centre. A good asset of the centre is its large open space for sports

## Bishop Stortford Community Development



NewmanFrancis have been commissioned to support 3 developers that are working together to build a new Town in Bishop Stortford.

### Our role

- Engagement of the surrounding community in the process and identify the gaps around services that people require in the area
- Identify how these services could be delivered
- Identify what community facilities are required – who by and how much?
- Develop a community management body/model for the new town, which involves the developers transferring community assets to that body (e.g. Community Trust, Community Interest Company)
- Develop the community management body to include different parts of the community (specifically residents on the body)
- Develop a business plan around the neighbourhood management of services, community buildings and the community development aspects of the new town

### Progress

Currently, we have agreement for 2 community buildings, and we are looking at developing an outline for a new park, open spaces and allotments, and identifying future grants and funding streams to help generate funding for some of the aspirations that came out of our initial engagement.

### “The Whaler” – a play and performance space for young people in N16



During 2016 NewmanFrancis worked in partnership with HTA architects pro-bono on a project to engage 8 – 19 year old young people in their community and create a play and performance space, (called “The Whaler”), in the Somerford Grove Community Project & Adventure Playground, Northumberland Park N16. <http://www.haringey.gov.uk/business/business-rates-and-planning/haringey-design-awards/design-awards-2016/best-community-building>

#### Achievements:

- With our partners we developed a social mobility initiative, (Beyond Boundaries), to oversee and manage the project. This raised £24K in grants and sponsorship to create and develop the scheme
- ‘The Whaler’ was created using recycled materials over 12 workshops.
- The young people were supported during Volunteer Days with staff from HTA and NewmanFrancis
- The process helped develop valuable life skills for the young people in team working, independence skills and understanding construction techniques. The workshops also helped the young people think about what their community meant to them and how they viewed their community
- The practical skills learned helped broaden the young people’s aspirations and ideas of what is possible for them in the future – especially a future career in construction or regeneration

### Wornington Green Regeneration



Wornington Green is an award-winning regeneration project managed by Catalyst Housing. This is a long-term community engagement project that NewmanFrancis started working on in 2013 as the Independent Resident Advisor and will continue to support the project until at least 2020. The team is employed by Catalyst to work with the local community to ensure that residents are involved in shaping and influencing the major regeneration proposals for their neighbourhood. As well as facilitating residents’ involvement in redeveloping their housing estate we also support the

community to develop wider benefits such as employment and training so they can benefit directly from the opportunities the regeneration will provide.

#### Progress:

- In the first three months of the project we focused on outreach and relationship building
- We carried out extensive outreach to publicise our service and our role within the project This involved face to face community surveys with residents and stakeholders, (councillors, faith groups, schools, youth clubs, and local businesses), as well as the housing staff (including caretakers) working on the estate
- We ensured that the local community's issues, concerns and aspirations were fed back to influence the master plan for the new development
- We have held road shows and events to test, challenge and refine the community's evolving ideas

#### Team impact:

- Our work has enabled more people to get involved, especially traditionally under-represented groups who may not otherwise have become engaged in the process. This has led to increased engagement from the Moroccan community who are now actively involved in helping influence the regeneration
- High visibility and presence on the estate has ensured we have developed a good relationship with the local community as well as a sense of trust as independent advisors
- We have increased participation at public meetings and events and developed an effective approach at engaging with local people and encouraging residents to get involved

### Parsons North and Hall End Estate



Parsons House is a 20-storey tower block on the Edgware Road. The surrounding area is currently undergoing extensive regeneration and NewmanFrancis delivers the Resident Liaison Service.

#### Our role

- We work with the local community to limit any disruption caused by the development and also developing a series of initiatives to make sure there is a range of social and economic benefits for local residents

- We have proposed training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities, including a training event with young people from the Westminster Youth Services, situated near the site
- We are also developing an activity programme to help lessen the impact of the surrounding construction programme and provide residents with new opportunities and experiences which they might not otherwise be able to afford or get involved in