

# **Communities Working in Partnership to Improve our Green Spaces**

**Birmingham Open Spaces Forum  
&**

**National Federation of Parks and Green  
Spaces**



# BOSF Background

- Birmingham 591 parks & open spaces
- BOSF was formed in 2005
- Bring together a Community Voice
- Not just parks
- Charity Status
- Currently 150 groups
- Funded Esmee Fairbairn
- Many partners and a good network
- [www.bosf.org.uk](http://www.bosf.org.uk)



# What BOSF Offers to Groups

- We offer advice & help to our member groups:
  - Starting a new group
  - Helping groups with funding bids
  - Answering enquiries & Signpost
  - Sites under threat advice
  - Events, Shows & Conferences
  - Networking & Communication
  - Monthly Information Sheet
  - Shrub Bed Project
  - Be Active
  - Coffee Mornings
  - Workshops & Training
  - Nature Improvement Area



# How BOSF Works with BCC

- Built a good relationship with Birmingham City Council
- Get BCC to understand the worth of the community
- We have the community voice they need
- Get the community to see that the council are there to help – not the enemy
- We are now asked for our advice & input:
  - Regular meetings with Head of Parks
  - Scrutiny Committee
  - Grounds Maintenance Tender
  - Park Keepers Forum
  - Restructure Process
- GreenPlaces Fund Partnership
- Birmingham in Bloom
- Green Infrastructure Adaption & Delivery Group



# The Importance of Community

- Gets people involved
- Changes it in to a vibrant community space
- Reduces crime
- Brings in more money
- Brings in more manpower through volunteering
- Puts the open space on the map
- “The Squeaky Wheel gets the Oil!”



# Importance of a Community Forum

- “Together we stand divided we fall”
- Networks to other like-minded groups
- Advertises their open space & group work
- Gives them their voice to make a difference
- Gives them ownership of their open space
- Helps them to bring in extra funding
- Improves skills & understanding
- Starting Your Community Forum:
  - Start small and build up
  - Vote in committee from lots of groups
  - Start by networking groups & sharing skills
- Community Voice & Network is Very Powerful!



# National Federation of Parks & Green Spaces

- The Need to Network Community Forums
- Contacted GreenSpace 2007
- Constituted with a committee
- To protect UK's green spaces
- Encourage new area wide forums
- Share best practise
- Campaigning for Adequate Resources
- Publicity
  - Networking
  - Leaflets
  - Visits/Presentations
- Discuss Current Issues
- Conferences for Community Groups
- Building up a partnership network



# What Next?

- Are you inspired with all the possibilities?
- Look at start up your own Open Spaces Forum!
- Get your Friends Groups together
- Offer networking and support
- Share your experiences
- Look at possible funding sources
- It is not as difficult as you think!
- There is help with websites and organisations
- Come and join us at NFPGS!

