

Community finds a voice

Residents learn how to set up and publish a community newspaper

A GROUP of residents on a Manchester estate which was at the beginning of a major transformation project lobbied the local regeneration organisation to help them set up a community newspaper.

The Hattersley Development Trust, the regeneration organisation which was managing the estate's renewal, commissioned cp media services to advise on setting up the newspaper.

The Trust recognised that a community newspaper would provide the agencies involved in the estate's regeneration with an effective way of providing information to residents about their work. It was also used as part of the consultation process and gave residents a voice. In addition, the employment agency based on the estate at the time recognised that working on the community newspaper could give residents the chance to learn new skills, as well as opening up a range of training and employment opportunities. It, therefore, supported the venture by providing funding and an office base for the residents' news team.

What we did

cp media services delivered several introductory sessions to familiarise the residents' group with the editorial processes, the planning required to set up a new publication and the types of skills that would be required by the various individuals working on the newspaper.

Further editorial training sessions were held with the residents so that they became comfortable gathering news, writing stories, briefing photographers, taking pictures and editing contributed copy. The training also covered the basic legal aspects associated with publishing a newspaper.

For the first 12 months, the residents' news team supplied stories and pictures for the publication which was edited and designed by cp media services. The residents then gained further funding which enabled them to buy the desktop publishing packages they needed so that they could edit and design the newspaper and prepare it for print.

cp media services delivered desktop publishing and design training to members of the news team and then continued to mentor the newspaper's new Editor – a resident – and the reporting team for a further six months.

What's happening now?

The Hattersley & Mottram Community News has been published continuously since it began in 2001 and is now part of a community enterprise established by the residents' group – Hattersley & Mottram Community Media – which has helped a number of other communities publish their own newspapers, as well as now producing the Hattersley & Mottram Community News every month.

"Hattersley & Mottram Community News is grass roots citizen journalism at its best. The Community News gives local people the opportunity to decide on the news they want to read by being the people that produce it."

cp media services can provide similar support and guidance for you. Talk to us to find out what we can do for you.