



“Turbo-Charging PB & Localism”

A workshop at
The UK Participatory Budgeting Conference
26th October, 2015



Trying to turbo-charge Localism

- From 2009, I have been trying to turbo-charge communities via 2 major initiatives:
- The Big Lunch
- Your Square Mile
- I also helped to set up “Your Local Budget” when running the Big Society Network.
- I am a huge PB enthusiast and hope to stimulate ideas to help it flourish.
- Representative democracy is not enough. We need participative democracy.



Over Centralised UK

The Square Miles of the UK

- There are 93,000 square miles in the UK. 64.6 million people live in 7,500 to 8,000 of those square miles.
- Power is concentrated in only two of them: the square miles of The City and Westminster.
- Your Square Mile was set up in 2011 to enable citizens to make changes in the other 7,998 square miles.



Levels of Community Engagement

People say they are involved in local community

Community Involvement	TOTAL 2012
I actively lead community activities	8%
I participate in community activities	22%
I help people in my community but don't take part in any activities	34%
I am not involved in my community	36%

Source: Future Foundation

Actual levels of engagement

	Disengaged	Interested	Active	Highly- motivated
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May or may not be aware of community issues Does not want to participate Has few relationships in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passively seeks opportunities to participate May demonstrate interest by donating to charity May participate ad hoc and infrequently May be part of a local group Interested in participating more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly takes part in interest groups Participates regularly Involved in multiple activities Actively recruits others to take part 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved with leadership May start and run a new group or organisation Gets others active and motivated Teaches others how to initiate and lead activities
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolated elderly NEETs Deprived & transient individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspired but inactive youths who want to do more Charitable donors Infrequent, ad hoc volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular volunteers Online civic participants Multi-group participants Team leaders Social enthusiasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scout leaders Community organisers Social entrepreneurs Experienced social entrepreneurs Regional community organisers
Current estimated size*, millions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10-15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.5-1

Feelings of disempowerment

- In 2013-14 only 41% of people took part in any civic participation in the least year, a statistically significant decrease compared to 2012-13.
- Only 34% of people felt that they could influence decisions affecting their local area, a statistically significant decrease compared to 2012-13 (38%) and all other years since 2001.



Source: Cabinet Office's Community Life survey

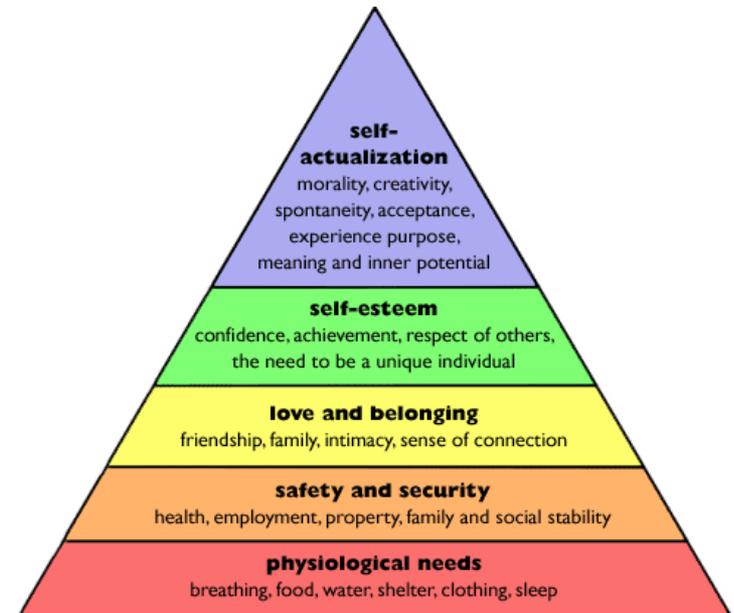
The Basis for Optimism

- Anger, frustration and a sharper interest in real democracy can be channelled into positive, creative energy and action.
- 44% of people want to be involved in decisions made by the council and 74% say it is important to be able to influence local decision-making. *Source: YSM Omnibus Survey of 2000 adults, 2012*
- So there is a widespread thirst for participation in democracy but one that isn't being quenched.



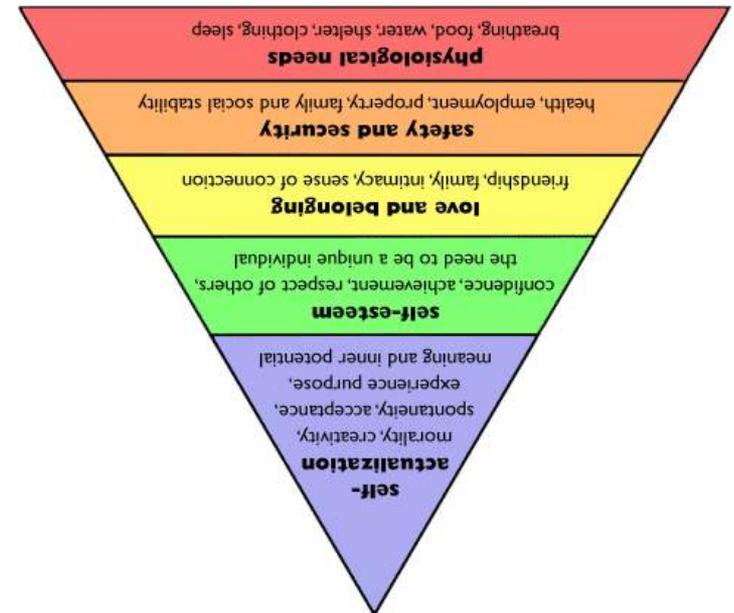
The Ladder of Citizenship

- There is a ladder of citizenship akin to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs....
- People will move up this “ladder” or hierarchy and settle at their own level.
- It is a pyramid with a broad base: a lot of people will never go beyond simple, neighbourly actions or informal community groups.



The Ladder of Citizenship

- Baby steps / simple neighbourly actions: a Big Lunch.
- Joining a hobby-based group e.g. Stitch and Bitch, football club, local choir; volunteering around a passion / knowledge.
- Starting a group or driving an existing one towards lobbying/ social change/ taking part in Participatory Budgeting.
- Starting a social enterprise or co-op.
- Expanding/ replicating social/ community enterprise.



Leveraging PB

Creating a PB Movement: Learning from The Big Lunch

The Big Lunch

- Co-founded The Big Lunch with Tim Smit from the Eden Project and June Mason led it across Government.
- The idea was to establish street parties as a “Thanksgiving Day for Neighbours”: not just for Jubilees.
- Communities are the key missing link in environmental action; social isolation is growing.



The Big Lunch

- Growing movement:
- 2009: 730,000 participants
- 2010: 850,000
- 2011: 2 million
- 2012: 8.5 million (part of the Diamond Jubilee)
- 2013: 3.65 million
- 2014: 4.83 million
- 2015: 6 million



The Big Lunch

- 84% scored the 2012 event 8.8 out of 10 or higher.
- Has catalysed change across a wide variety of communities in the UK, including the most deprived.



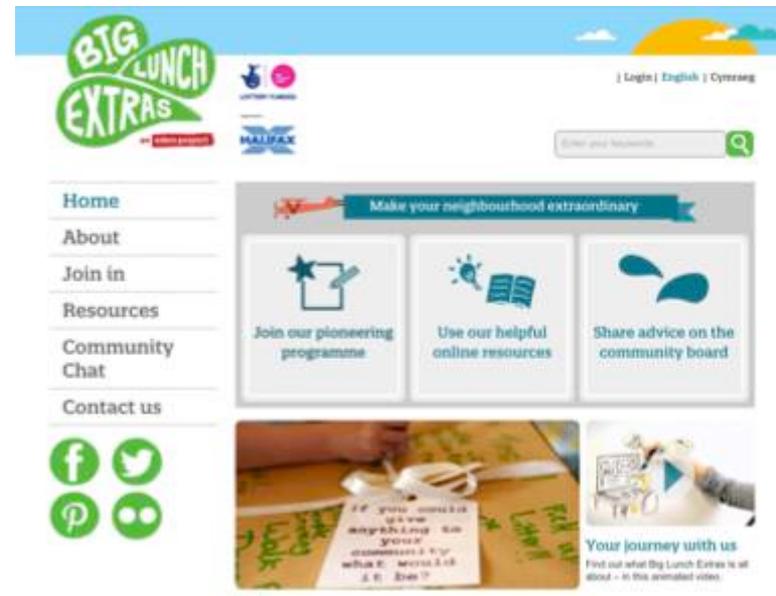
Learning from The Big Lunch

- Provide a framework, lots of ideas and a kit of parts but encourage people to run parties their way.
- Reduce barriers e.g. complications of street closure.
- Used every form of motivation: indulgence, curiosity, solidarity, practicality, self-interest, social justice.



Learning from The Big Lunch

- Give localism national scale: millions sitting down with their neighbours on the same day.
- Involve business locally & nationally.
- Draw people in through something fun and rewarding, then graduate a proportion into something more meaningful: Big Lunch Extras.
- Perhaps PB sessions should be accompanied by a local market/ street food event or skills exchange.



Create a national movement for PB

- Create a national movement.
- Encourage PB sessions across the UK in a single day, with media partners such as Trinity Mirror and the BBC.
- Tie this in with the UN Day of Democracy?
- Twin PB communities with others across the UK or across the world?



PB Workshops/ Public Sessions



YSM Community Workshops

- YSM has typically held workshops with 30 local councillors, community groups, charities, teachers, volunteering agencies, police, health and social workers combined with....
- 50 people, aged 16 to 85, from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds, who are unengaged in community life, including and especially whose voice is rarely heard.
- It takes time and creative thinking to recruit the disengaged but it pays back....



Recruit the widest possible range of citizens for PB sessions

- In Scunthorpe, the neighbourhood management team recruited normally disengaged men in pubs.
- They also recruited people with addiction problems in pharmacies.
- In Walsall, the council worked with 8 local primary schools in deciding how to spend £15,000 linked to “Every Child Matters” outcomes.
- In Newcastle, 450 5-13 year olds helped to decide how to spend the city’s £2.25m Youth Opportunities Fund.



YSM Community Workshops

- In the YSM Community workshops we:
- Take a poll on perceived social capital.
- Define local strengths, weaknesses and needs.
- Physically map all local assets.
- Educate everyone on their citizen rights and inspire them with case histories.
- Brainstorm and vote on local projects (no more than 5).
- Draw up Action Plans for the 5 projects.



Planning for Real

- Tony Gibson was a pioneer for inclusive urban planning around the world.
- His “Planning for Real” workshops used basic models using cardboard, glue, Lego, model houses etc.
- Everyone would gather round the model and move it/ build it together.
- Overcame the problem of middle class NIMBY’s dominating.
- Equivalent in PB workshops?



YSM's Original 16 Pilot Areas

England

- Birmingham - Northfield
- Great Yarmouth – Gorleston
- Cumbria - Wigton *Rural*
- Liverpool - Toxteth
- Nottinghamshire - Manton
- Yorkshire - Todmorden - *Rural*

London:

- Tower Hamlets - Weavers (Boundary Estate)
- Lewisham – North Brockley / St John's
- Hackney - Hoxton and Shoreditch

Northern Ireland

- North Belfast - Mount Vernon
- Londonderry / Derry - Caw & Galliagh – *Semi Rural*

Scotland

- Greenock
- Glasgow – Pollockshields

Wales

- Newport – Bettws
- Rhondda Valleys – Glyncoch – *Semi Rural*

Tangible Results and Successful Impact

- We almost doubled regular, constructive contact between citizens and the local authorities across these 16 areas.
- Increased from 50% to 63% the number of people who feel they can influence local decisions.
- Increased from 37% to 50% the number of people having weekly contact with their neighbors.
- The percentage saying they like their area a lot has risen from 47% to 55%.

The Role of Digital

The New On-Line Tool for Communities

- YSM spent 2.5 years developing the on-line equivalent of the notice-boards in local post offices.
- We researched the content that communities most wanted and needed to share, through our work in 19 communities.
- We designed something built around the best content, presented via ruggedised tablets, with a touch-screen and simple icon-based navigation....



Community Infopoint

- Displays live local weather and time.
- Allows you to create a local petition or vote on a local issue.
- Enables you to share and borrow tools, resources and time.
- Advertises and enables local deals, supporting independent shops and local facilities.
- Promotes local events.



Community Infopoints

- We have put Community Infopoints on trial in 4 Ideas Stores (libraries) and the East London mosque in Tower Hamlets.
- The 1850 exit polls were very encouraging:
 - 13% had never used the internet before
 - 93% said the user experience was positive
 - 45% would like Infopoints located in retailers and Post Offices
- Trial the use of Community Infopoints in PB? Ask local banks and building societies to promote PB events on their ATM machines?



Community Reporting

Community Reporting

- Encourage PB participants to act as community reporters and spread the word via blogs, hyperlocal websites, interviews for local radio, short videos.
- Media Trust offer excellent training.
- Close and symbiotic relationship with the local press.



Incentives

The Role of Incentives

- Incentivise participation by issuing time bank notes redeemable against local facilities, events or services, to those who attend a PB session?
- Have a street food festival/ market to accompany, promote and reward a PB session, as mentioned above?



The Role of Local Authorities and Community Alliances

Interactive, Progressive Local Authorities

- Stone Parish Council in Kent aim to “make even the boring interesting”.
- They make strong use of infographics to present their budgets.
- They have an excellent web-site with intuitive navigation.
- They have project-specific websites and social media accounts.



Interactive, Progressive Local Authorities

- They are developing an interactive map on their Neighbourhood Plan website including a private forum for the steering group.
- They digitise and tag council minutes.
- They have a digital council newspaper.
- They use Survey Monkey for public consultation on-line.



Community Alliances

- There is tremendous value in a community organisation working alongside the Local Authority, pulling together public, not for profit and business participants.
- Manton Community Alliance believed that the old way of neighbourhood renewal was not sustainable.
- In 2004 it developed its own social capital model and adopted “**residents are part of the solution rather than passive consumers of public services**” as its ethic.



Community Alliances

- After 3 years in a very deprived, former mining community with very low levels of engagement:
- 62% of the population participated in the life of their neighbourhood.
- 41% of residents believed they could influence what is going on in their community, 11% higher than the national level.
- Through a Participatory Budgeting programme 1526 people (25% of the population) voted.
- Many of these people had never voted in an election before and for some of these people it encouraged them to vote in subsequent local elections.



A Small Group of Citizens, A Great Deal of Power

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

*Margaret Mead,
Cultural Anthropologist*

