

**South West  
Forum**

informing • connecting • influencing

**May 2013**

# **Localism in the South West**



**A Snapshot**

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### ABOUT SOUTH WEST FORUM

South West Forum supports voluntary groups to be better at doing what they want to do. But we also work with local authorities, health agencies, universities and other public bodies as well as businesses to help them build strong relationships and partnerships with voluntary and community groups. We help organisations to understand and interpret what government policies such as localism, big society and social value mean in practice. Above all we strive to be an influential voice for South West voluntary groups with government and other key decision-makers.

<http://southwestforum.org.uk>

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to all the people and organisations that have participated in the survey and case studies.

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This report was researched and written by John Skrine, Head of Empowerment at Creating Excellence, and Deborah Fisher, OBE, South West Forum.

# Introduction

**South West Forum's Stronger Voice Project** is designed to strengthen the influence of voluntary and community organisations and help ensure that marginalised groups get their voices heard at local and regional levels. Part of its remit is to demystify fast changing policy and explain new structures, supporting the voluntary and community sector to find routes to influence, and agendas to influence.

The Localism Act, which received Royal Assent in November 2011, is part of the Government's scheme to 'put communities in control'. As Secretary of State Nick Hurd wrote to ACEVO in January 2013:

*'The new rights that this grants should indeed support charities to transform local places and services, while also giving local communities powers to do things for themselves, such as neighbourhood planning.'*

This paper explores progress towards these goals in the South West in the words of people from the community, voluntary and statutory sectors who have direct experience, and in many cases expert knowledge, of putting provisions in the Localism Act into action. It concentrates in particular on neighbourhood planning, asset transfer and the community rights to bid, build and challenge. We also ask what people understand by localism, and their hopes and expectations in relation to it.

This document this will be of interest to:

- **Policy makers** who want to know how social purpose organisations and local communities understand, and are making use of, the tools for local influence and action in the Act.
- **Community groups** seeking inspiration and useful ideas to help them make greater use of the new rights.
- **Local authorities** wishing to remove barriers to using the rights.

This is a quick study – a snapshot of views taken between December 2012 and February 2013. The sources include those who attended Locality, Urban Forum, DACVS and SWF's Community Rights in the South West event, members of the South West Localism Group convened by Creating Excellence, and all those who contributed to an online survey carried out for this report.

Key issues emerging include:

- That there is **some great practice and new models of working** that other communities can learn from. Sharing this learning is vital.
- However, as resources tighten in both community and statutory sectors, **lack of capacity and funding is affecting levels of community action**. Groups need support to access the new rights.
- There is **scope to reduce the bureaucracy** associated with using the rights.
- Communities with fewest resources, and lowest social capital, are least able to access the rights.

Since the Stronger Voice Project is about hearing and representing what people in the sector have to say, we sought to write this report using the words of our informants rather than our own, wherever we could.

We are grateful to all our informants, especially to those who have contributed case studies; we hope that what we have chosen from their words, and concluded from them, is a fair reflection of what they were feeling at that point in time.





## Localism – General Impressions

‘Localism’ has become a word referring to much more than certain provisions of the Localism Act. It is now used to describe the approach of this government to a related, if not identical, set of activities. What did our informants make of localism in its broadest sense?

### HIGH EXPECTATIONS...

Expectations on how the new community rights will extend the power of community activists have been raised:

*“I think it’s about people who have got the things that they need in communities helping the people who haven’t. That’s what localism means to me – it’s about people pulling together and very, very relevant where I live.”*

*“Basically it means involving the community more in the government of the local area, and with District Councils etc. We were hoping that localism would mean we would actually get more involved. As community organisations, we have over the last ten years spent an awful lot of time looking at our town, working out what improvements can be made and so on. Up until now the Council has really said sorry, the Councillors choose and decide, you can do what you like.”*

The ideals of empowerment and community development remain strong, if under challenge:

*“The bit that we are still struggling with, as ever, is about doing community development work on the ground and trying to enable*

*communities, residents, to come together and actually have a voice. So we could interpret that as being localism – what’s happening at a local level, looking at how people have a voice, organise between them what sort of priorities they have in their communities and take some of those issues forward.”*

### AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES...

Others see opportunities, even if these are limited to communities with the skills to make use of them:

*“I think all of the community rights have the capacity to be useful tools in the hands of the well-informed and engaged parish councils and communities. However, at the moment you would have to conclude that they are ‘having no impact’; but in time could migrate up to being ‘of limited practical use’”.*

### BUT SOME FRUSTRATIONS...

New initiatives carry an element of uncertainty:

*“It always meant something to me before the present government initiative came along. It’s the sense of people in the community taking some responsibility and organising – doing rather than being done to. Now, in the context of the recent government thing on localism, I understand it’s got to become a formalised structure and it involves a lot of different things about which I’m not entirely certain.”*

In the view of one voluntary sector leader,

*“There’s a confusion that this is all about people making decisions at a local level and that everything is devolved down to local communities, which isn’t the case.”*

One of the respondents to the survey was more trenchant:

*“None of the [community rights] have been thought through properly. They raise expectations in the community without any real teeth.”*

## CASE STUDY: ASPIRATION AND REALITY IN DULVERTON

This small market town of 1,500 residents serves a population of 4,500 on southern Exmoor, swelling to 10,000 during parts of the tourist season, and is the headquarters of Exmoor National Park. Eight authorities spend £10 million each year delivering local public services in the Parish.

Dulverton embraced localism four years ago with a Parish Plan and a mainstream-funded participatory budgeting pilot. In 2011’s coldest weather, 430 people attended two public events to consider local services; they agreed to raise the parish precept by 50%, and 70 volunteers joined action groups.

The community owns or manages 24 public facilities, including the town hall, heritage centre, fire station, youth club, churchyards, recreation grounds and sports centre. Now it wants to manage traffic, highways, parking, the environment, leisure and education. The Council has a comprehensive, integrated traffic management plan to support village shopping, business development, and tourism.

Recently, local residents tried to save the care home, recycling centre, library, and youth club; local action groups were

successful with the last three of those. Assets of community value have been listed.

Along with the successes, there are frustrations.

Residents consider that the District and County Councils are slow, choked by procedures, reorganisations, cuts to budgets and externally let contracts (Dulverton’s parking enforcement is managed in Southampton).

According to Cllr Leslie Silverlock – who is a national expert on participatory budgeting – 21 part-time jobs which could have been managed locally have been lost in the last year.

Silverlock is convinced that with further localism, and the community knowledge and common sense that comes with it, costs could be cut and Council Tax reduced. *“Traffic management can be delivered cheaply and more effectively locally. And as for grass cutting, there are five different grass cutting contracts in the town, with five sets of equipment. This could all be managed by the locally funded Parish Lengthsman.*

*“Parish Councils, volunteers all, are traditionally bottom of the budget and delivery chain. The Coalition wants to turn Government upside down. More pressure is needed through the Localism Act if the larger, distant, cash strapped authorities are to be persuaded to devolve responsibilities that can be delivered more effectively locally.”*

If you want to find out more you can contact Leslie at [lesliesilverlock@groupswork.com](mailto:lesliesilverlock@groupswork.com)

CONCERNS...

Concern about resources is widespread.

*“The ability of Councils to support anything other than the statutory requirements will be very limited in light of finances.”*

Voluntary sector professionals also expressed concern:

*“In each major area of the work of the charity I lead, localism appears to be grossly undermined through funding changes – this includes funding for adult support work, local authority support for looked after children and adult education.”*

The concern about funding cuts has a particular focus on the need for resources to make localism work.

*“What is missing today is bridging skills. I know it has not been done before, but to really effect a healthy localism policy and real input there has to be support in bridging, and not just cutting off services and existing networks.”*

This reflects general feedback that infrastructure support is weakening, not strengthening.

*“I think Locality, and the work they are trying to do sharing information is helpful, but generally on the ground we need a whole lot more infrastructure support to help do the work, and that hasn't come through – and in fact has disappeared! Well, it's not disappeared, but it's kind of struggling to survive.”*

There is some anger about this.

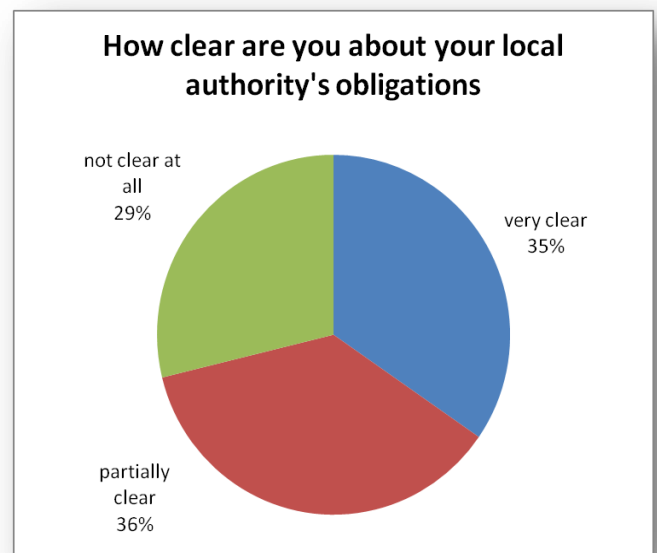
*“Do we really believe that localism is really intended to benefit local communities, when the support infrastructure is being systematically dismantled?”*

And still some lack of clarity – many communities do not know much about the community rights in the Localism Act:

*“Very little public understanding about the rights.”*

*“The community activists I know appear not to need or know about these rights – how do volunteers get the time or resources to use them?”*

Our survey showed that many groups are still unclear about local authority obligations in relation to the Localism Act.



*“Overall, it is too soon to assess the likely impact of the new rights...”*

‘Very early’ was a frequent phrase in the responses – especially in view of the time, and often complex procedures, required to bring the rights into effect.

*“It’s very early yet to talk about impact but even so, we believe it is unlikely to have much impact, given the hoops. However, we do hope that it will be useful leverage to*

*improve partnership working with communities and voluntary organisations.”*

The next sections give more detail on each of the rights in the Localism Act, offering some case studies examples of the positive aspects of Localism, and also the challenges facing communities that want to take more control.



## Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood planning is by far the most popular of the suite of neighbourhood development measures in the Localism Act, and by February 2013 about 60 communities in the South West had embarked on this.

Community Right to Build Orders and Neighbourhood Development Orders are related rights, for which the procedure is similar.

Neighbourhood planning gives local communities significant power over future development, growth and land use. There are limitations, however, on how this power can be used. For example, plans must conform with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; if the local plan calls for housing in the area, the Neighbourhood Plan will allow the community to choose where the housing goes, but not to reject its allocation.



The Plan has statutory status, and therefore much greater weight than previous community planning documents such as Parish Plans; making it part of the local statutory planning system necessarily requires careful public scrutiny. Locality's Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Plans runs to 15 pages, covering the process from establishing a neighbourhood forum (if necessary) through consultation, submission of the plan for independent examination, and finally a local referendum. At the time of writing, it is understood that government is considering whether this process can be simplified.

Government funding continues to be available to stimulate neighbourhood planning activity. In March a two year programme of support and grants payable to Town and Parish Councils and neighbourhood forums was announced, with up to £7,000 per neighbourhood area available for the cost of preparing a neighbourhood plan or development order. From April, local planning authorities will be funded to start up to 20 plans in each area, and can claim £30,000 for every neighbourhood plan that gets through a successful examination.

## CASE STUDY: EXETER

The country's second neighbourhood plan to pass the examination stage – the first from a newly created neighbourhood forum – is that of Exeter St James in February 2013. The process will have taken a little over two years from the forum's origination to a referendum in May 2013. Several factors are contributing

to a successful process.

Changes over the last decade including increasing student housing pressure motivated this community situated between the city centre and the university area, which is well endowed with people with relevant skills, including Forum Chairman Jo Hawkins:

*"It did take the few of us who've had the determination and drive to do it. And we have so many people who live in the ward, working and retired, who have been interested and willing to give some of their time."*

The forum also has an excellent relationship with the City Council. The process has benefited from £20,000 Front Runner funding, and a £1,000 County Council grant. The process is expected to be completed within budget, the main expense for the Forum being planning consultancy assistance in drafting the plan and supporting documents.

The Government is urging communities across the country to make use of these new neighbourhood planning powers. However, communities will need to consider for themselves what can be gained by taking this process forward. Planning Minister Nick Boles' announcement that communities adopting neighbourhood plans will receive 25% of the income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) if they accept new development may encourage more communities to go ahead.

However, the advice from Jo Hawkins is: *"Don't start unless you have a clear idea of why you need a neighbourhood plan and you have a positive goal in mind."*

<http://www.exeterstjamesforum.org/>

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

It is surely no coincidence that the community right with most financial support is the one which has had the most take-up. Our survey showed that it is also valued: *“Neighbourhood planning is emerging as a clear and useful tool.”* Even in an area of low take-up, a practitioner felt that it was *“still really worth going out there and trying to communicate it.”*

Naturally, the views reflect that it is early days:

*“Neighbourhood planning is currently helping the more active communities to become neighbourhood forums, although we will need to see whether this develops neighbourhood plans or community right to build orders.”*

And the positive views were often mixed:

*“Most interest in this right”,* commented a respondent to the survey, *“but community hopes in all the rights are often dashed when they realise the complexities and caveats involved.”*

A local government officer set out some of these caveats:

*“In rural areas there's often a resistance to growth. Neighbourhood plans have given the impression that they could help people fight the planning authority and actually that isn't the government's intention. So from a local authority point of view there are some tensions in that. We get the government's aspiration – it's our job to help implement policy. But translating that, rather than us getting the blame when it all goes horribly wrong, is quite a challenge. There are genuine people in the community who want to influence planning, and there are ways you*

*can influence planning, so if it's made us have a conversation, that's good. But you still have to have the resources to have that conversation.”*

And the gain at a very local level may come with losses elsewhere:

*“Neighbourhood planning can form an effective platform to speak to your community, understand how local people wish to see their area developed and use community rights to help achieve these. There is, however, a risk that some opportunities could be missed if local communities aren't supported in visioning the opportunities available to them”.*

A specific concern here was

*“that communities could miss opportunities in sustainable energy and their valued contributions to combating climate change.”*

An interesting, and arguably related view, suggests that neighbourhood planning, and perhaps the rights more generally, may make the work of those seeking to create good practice across communities and local authority areas more difficult:

*“My organisation has particular concerns regarding local control of planning. In the past, we had a few different people in one place to influence in our aim of ensuring maximum accessibility; now we will have multiple people and places to go to and influence without the resources to do so.*

*The result is that planning is being approved that meets only the barest access requirements. It was going to be more difficult for us when planning was solely a local authority task because our authority recently*

*re-wrote its Environmental Access Standard, taking out much of the access standard requirements relating to public spaces. Now it will be almost impossible.”*

Recent LGiU research, conducted in partnership with the National Trust, demonstrates that local government has low confidence in the National Planning Policy Framework’s (NPPF) ability to create real opportunities for local communities to be involved in setting the planning agenda in their local area.

*“This falls short of the government’s own localist ambitions”.*

The report highlights a number of challenges that face Neighbourhood Planning. Neighbourhood plans will not be right, or

feasible, in all communities. It seems unlikely that neighbourhood plans will come forward in areas of medium to low social capital without some support. And according to one interviewee,

*“neighbourhood planning in rural areas is probably a sledge-hammer to crack a nut”.*

One practitioner we spoke to recommended keeping community plans going in case a neighbourhood plan was needed. The tools of community-led planning may be getting less attention at the moment, or simply seen as part of the new processes, but they remain as vital as ever. Many experts suggest that a neighbourhood plan should be the last, not the first, resort of communities wishing to engage in planning.



# Right to Challenge

Community groups and Parish Councils now have the right to start a process to take over local services from local authorities and fire and rescue services if they think they can run them better. Their challenge, if successful, will trigger a tendering exercise open to all, including the private sector.

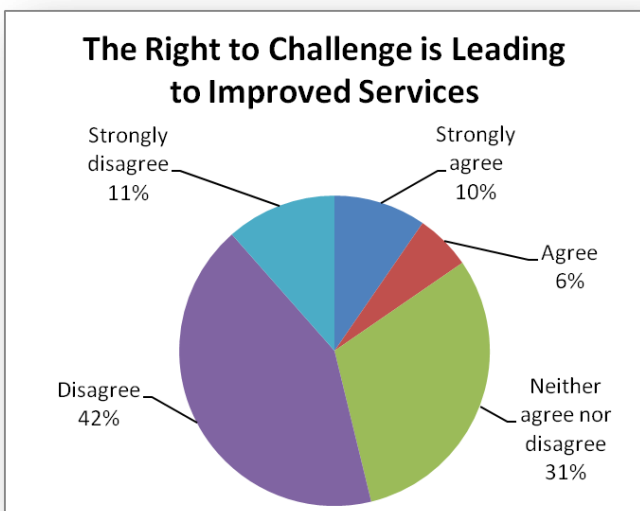
## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

This right attracted few responses to us, all of them doubtful that the voluntary sector is likely to find benefits in it:

A particular concern is that exercising the right will simply lead to privatisation: *“A personal viewpoint would be that it is likely to lead to private sector run services.”*

*“The community right to challenge may not result in communities having greater control, as it simply triggers an open procurement process that all organisations can bid for.”*

There was also concern from survey respondents that the right will not deliver better services.

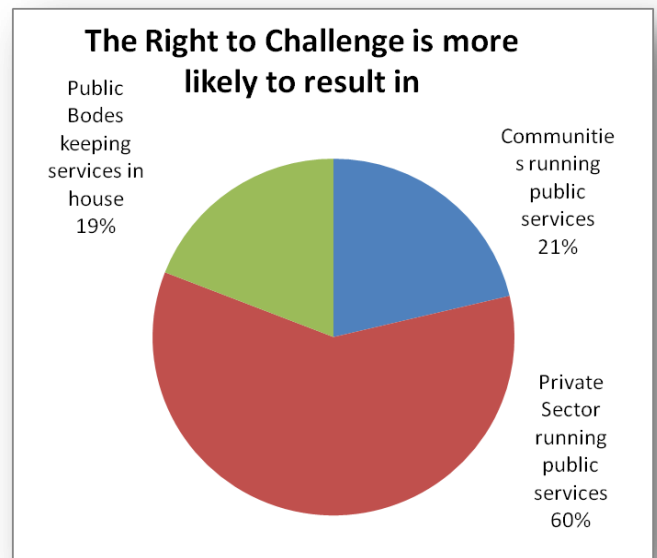


Grants of up to £10,000 for organisations to build capacity to bid, and up to £100,000 to prepare for competing in procurement bids, may yet encourage activity.

Would be bidders need to be aware, however, of the very significant level of support offered by the Mutuals Support Programme to local authority employees who choose to ‘spin out into ‘employee mutuals’

Once again, however, and perhaps particularly with this right, it is too soon to tell.

*“Far too early to answer this question. Not only have there yet to be any successful ‘challenges’ under the new right, but in order to assess the impact you would need a reasonable passage of time.”*



There was a strong degree of scepticism among survey respondents when asked whether the right to challenge would result in more communities running public services. It seems unlikely that many will feel able to compete.



## The Right to Bid and Asset Transfer

The right to bid, included in the Localism Act after energetic input from both the voluntary sector and land-owning lobbies, is a significant addition to the armoury of local groups seeking to keep private as well as public sector assets in community hands. It is closely related to the well-developed field of asset transfer from public to community ownership; our case studies reflect both of these at work.

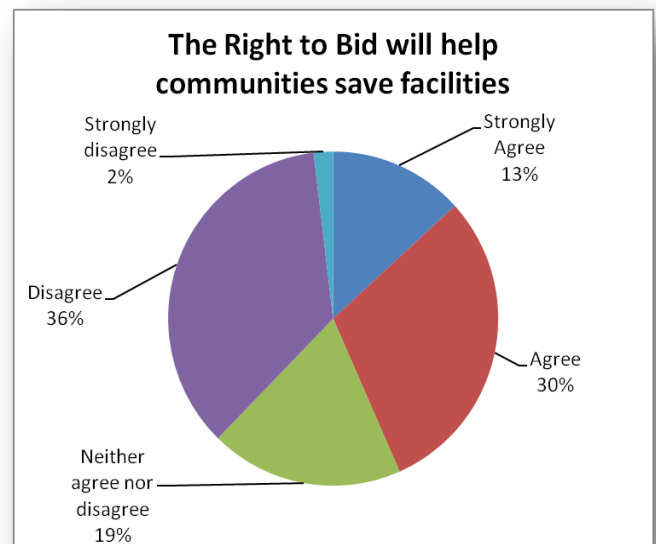
The right to bid creates the possibility of a six month moratorium on the sale of buildings such as shops, schools and sports centres, giving community groups a better chance to raise money to buy the asset on the open market and work out how to sustain it. Assets must meet a definition of 'community value', have been nominated for and added to a local authority register.

Public sector members of Creating Excellence's Localism Group expressed considerable scepticism about the right to bid. There is particular concern that public expectations have been raised, creating work for local authorities and disappointment for the public. Authorities were struggling with the complicated nature of the right, and resources to implement it.

Some also felt that the reality is that if the possibility of purchase does arise, the community will be unlikely to be able to find the money. The nomination process was frustrating for community groups, and it was feared that the right may prove to be a stick with which to beat local authorities:

*"Where assets are not in council hands, it won't work; we'll end up having to manage expectations".*

This fear was confirmed by the survey:



*"The right to bid is a joke as the council wraps it up in red tape. They have no desire to help and give no information for you to help yourself."*

Expectations about the right were mixed:

*"Will help in a limited number of cases ... it is too early to have made a difference."*

And comments also reflected wider concerns over expectations and capacity:

*"Something like the right to bid in my view has rather conveyed the impression that it gives people rights over property, and of course it doesn't really. And actually what you need is capacity to enter into the marketplace. Where's the resource for supporting that kind of capacity building?"*

## ASSET TRANSFER CASE STUDY: THE YOUTH CENTRE IN WELLINGTON

Asset transfers are not just about buildings. As this case study illustrates, high-level skills are required to acquire assets and make services sustainable.

When Somerset County Council announced its intention to withdraw from directly providing youth services in the county there was a risk that this would lead to the closure of Wellington Young People's Centre, and a reduction in funded youth services in the town.

Local leaders, including the Rotary Club, a solicitor and Cllr Andrew Govier set up a charitable company, Wellington Community Support Services (WCSS), to be responsible for the building and to commission youth services. Wellington Town Council acted as managing agent for the funds given to WCSS by Somerset County Council to support the transition. The three youth workers, who were made redundant by SCC, decided to form Revive CIC to offer youth services to the local community and schools.

WCSS is now taking over the youth club building from the County Council, initially on a two-year lease, and hopes to acquire it in due course on a Community Asset Transfer. WCSS has commissioned Revive to run the services for the first year, and is finding additional users for the non-youth end of the building, such as the preschool and health professionals, to help cover costs.



The withdrawal of the County has had some positive effects. The community came in behind the initiative: the Rotary Club raised £5,000 in one week from a book sale to support the transition; and some of the people who are leading the initiative have never been involved in this kind of activity before. Being free from the County Council has allowed the youth workers to be more dynamic both their delivery and the range of services that they offer. They are working with schools and NEETS projects to help cover costs, and have recruited new volunteers to help them.

Andrew Govier sees localism as a new buzzword: *"The community rights highlight the possibility of doing something with your local community for your local community, but they aren't necessarily the only route to take."* Events in Somerset have proved to him the value of asset based community development. *"It pays to look from the grassroots up rather than from top-down. The County may be realising that it started from the wrong way round. Breaking down the barriers is the key thing."*

The big challenge is long-term survival. *"The emphasis is on community resilience, but*

*there is a real risk if the resources are removed before the community has had a chance to organise itself," Cllr Govier says. "There are huge ethical dilemmas – but the fact that the Council was actually planning to close the youth centre made it easier to work with others to deliver a positive outcome. But it's survival of the fittest. My concern is who is going to do that in more challenging parts of the county?"*

Andrew Govier: [ajgovier@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ajgovier@somerset.gov.uk)

## ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE CASE STUDY:

### THE NOTLEY ARMS, MONKSILVER

Locals in Monksilver, a village in Exmoor National Park, had already formed MAGNA, an action group to save their pub, and had offered to put volunteers behind the bar, when the owner decided to sell it for residential use in September 2012. MAGNA leader Tony Goldsmith then discovered



support group The Pub is the Hub on the internet, and was told about the Localism Act, which he "had never heard of".

Goldsmith had been working closely with the Parish Clerk, and both the Parish Council and MAGNA applied to West Somerset District Council to nominate the Notley Arms as an asset of community value. The nomination was accepted in November, but was appealed by the owner. West Somerset held its ground, and in late February 2013 the owner agreed to sell it to a new landlord. It will re-open as a village pub less than a year after it was threatened with closure, with the community ready to rally round it.

In the view of Parish Clerk Ross Urquhart, the right to bid was certainly helpful:

*"It was a reinforcement, in a way, because once that was in place he couldn't sell it as a change of use property. It provided a legal backing to the National Park's policies."*

Tony Goldsmith thinks the right to bid needs strengthening. Goldsmith advocates giving the community first right to buy at market value after two or three years' non-use: *"If someone knew that if they did nothing they would be compelled to sell, they wouldn't be so blasé about their attitudes in the interim."*

So, even though users have their doubts about it, and the right has not been tested in full as the community has not acquired the pub, the right to bid strengthened this community's hand and helped ensure that the Notley Arms is still a pub.

[www.pubisthehub.org.uk/](http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk/)

## THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL IN LOCALISM CASE STUDY: WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

Many communities in Wiltshire are keen to secure the future of much loved local facilities such as pubs and village halls and would like to see the best possible use of other assets such as high street shops and derelict land. Community asset ownership can be one way of channelling the resourcefulness of local groups to take over and transform properties for the benefit of the whole community.

Wiltshire Council is keen to support community ownership of assets and is bringing together local voluntary and community groups, local businesses and other private landowners to build a constructive partnership to support an increase in the number of community assets. In addition to this:

- Wiltshire Council's **Community Area Strategies** (part of the Core Strategy) capture some of the current and future infrastructure requirements in each community area and neighbourhood plans provide an opportunity to consider this in more detail. The Council will work with communities to build a shared understanding of the community's needs, ambitions and capacities to see how these can be met in future.

- Wiltshire Council's **Area Boards** are overseeing the work of the shadow **Community Operation Boards**, which bring together public sector partners to develop new campuses, and will set out the intentions for publicly owned buildings in each

community area. This allows community ownership to be considered as part of the process.

- Wiltshire's Area Boards will consider applications for grants to explore the feasibility of the development of community assets where this meets identified community needs.

In addition to direct support from the council, Wiltshire Community Land Trust (Wiltshire CLT) has been set up to help community groups take on the ownership and management of assets, such as affordable housing, workspace, land for growing food and for recreation, wildlife reserves, pubs, shops and a range of community facilities and local services. Wiltshire CLT works with the Rural Community Council (Community First) and national organisations such as the national CLT network and Locality to ensure that community groups get the right support and advice.

Most recently, Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire CLT have produced a community ownership of assets toolkit setting out the various tools available for increasing community ownership of assets. This has been publicised further with the results of the Rural Facilities Survey which highlights that of the 324 rural settlements across Wiltshire, 76 have only one shop remaining and 165 only one pub.

**For more information** on the Wiltshire approach, see the 'Community Ownership of Assets Toolkit':

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshire-community-ownership-of-assets-toolkit.pdf>



## Our Conclusions

How much can be concluded from what people told us? With a small sample, and at this early stage with the community rights, caution is in order. Some themes emerge, however. While people can generally say what they think Localism means – it is not a new coinage, like 'Big Society' – many are less certain about the reality, and what the Localism Act has so far achieved to bring it about.

There are some real benefits in localism and communities that have successfully used the new rights – neighbourhood planning in particular – have seen these. But the evidence is that communities need strong and committed leadership to stay the course.

There are further reservations. The first concerns resources. Support from voluntary sector infrastructure organisations and local authorities is diminishing. There is less help for communities to take advantage of the new rights.

Another reservation is about the rights themselves. These are seen as complicated, bureaucratic and, by some, as double-edged swords. While the procedures may be necessary to protect the interests of all, the reality of using the rights, which includes significant local authority input in new referenda and the register of assets of community value, cuts across the broader narrative of freeing citizens from unnecessary bureaucracy. But as our case studies show, these reservations have not stopped people exploring and making use of the rights – especially where support is available.

So how can social purpose organisations make best use of the rights given to communities in the Localism Act?

They need to continue to argue that resources should be devoted to ensuring that groups and communities understand the new rights and are supported to make use of them. The Wiltshire toolkit is one example of how groups can be supported.

Continued work is necessary to help groups understand the rights and how to use them. Resources are available, and infrastructure organisations and local authorities need to ensure that this information reaches local communities. A list of useful websites is at the back of this paper.

On a local level, social purpose organisations can help to shape the right to challenge to ensure that it is managed in a way that delivers better outcomes for local communities in as fair and accessible way as possible.

The lesson from neighbourhood planning and asset transfer is that processes take a long time, are expensive and intensely demanding for community activists. Staying power and resilience are paramount and groups need ongoing support to encourage them to stay the course. Learning from others is essential. Locality and other organisations bring groups together to learn from each other. This networking and support needs to continue.

There is a risk that localism will not reach everyone, and will simply be for communities that already have rich social networks. Social purpose organisations need to keep up the pressure to ensure that equalities, engagement and inclusion are not forgotten in the localism agenda.

## Useful Links

ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England) community-led planning pages:

[www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning](http://www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning)

AMT (Action for Market Towns) localism page:

<http://towns.org.uk/knowledge-hub/localism-ladder/>

Localism in Action guide online:

[www.creatingexcellence.org.uk/regeneration-renewal-news-497-thread-0-0.html](http://www.creatingexcellence.org.uk/regeneration-renewal-news-497-thread-0-0.html)

Locality – Community Rights: <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/>

Locality – Community Asset Transfer

<http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/community-asset-transfer/>

Locality – Quick Guide to Neighbourhood Plans:

[http://planning.communityknowledgehub.org.uk/sites/planning.communityknowledgehub.org.uk/files/quick\\_guide.pdf](http://planning.communityknowledgehub.org.uk/sites/planning.communityknowledgehub.org.uk/files/quick_guide.pdf)

Planning Aid – Neighbourhood Development Orders leaflet

[http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1621636/what\\_is\\_a\\_neighbourhood\\_development\\_order.pdf](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1621636/what_is_a_neighbourhood_development_order.pdf)

Participation Compass: <http://participationcompass.org/>

St James Exeter Neighbourhood Plan: <http://www.exeterstjamesforum.org/>

Wiltshire Community Ownership of Assets Toolkit:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshire-community-ownership-of-assets-toolkit.pdf>

TUC Localism Guide: [https://www.tuc.org.uk/tucfiles/354/Localism\\_Guide\\_2012.pdf](https://www.tuc.org.uk/tucfiles/354/Localism_Guide_2012.pdf)

Plunkett Foundation: <http://www.plunkett.co.uk/>

The Pub is the Hub: [www.pubisthehub.org.uk/](http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk/)

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