Digital Butterflies of the Backstreets: Participatory Art and the Digital Divide

Volume 2 of 2 (Documentation)

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Abstract

Through this practice-based research I interrogate the terms community art, activism, social and digital media, as well as community and place. It is an investigation into both theoretical and practical aspects of community art practice and its connection to national and local policies on community, arts and digital media. It considers the increasing role digital technology and social media have in communities and community organisations, in particular under the guise of austerity, and how community organisations (do not) use social media and digital technology to encourage participation. It considers my position and role as an artist, curator and resident within the community that I live in and how, through becoming active and engaged with the place, I can develop a strategy for sustainable and long-term social engagement.

This practice based Ph.D. takes as a starting point the stalled housing regeneration, due to the halting of the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, in the community where I live. The research builds upon my experience of working as an artist, curator and arts educator since the turn of the millennium where, under consecutive governments have seen prioritise the purpose of contemporary art and its educational use as either to effect social change (New Labour) or its economic value (current coalition government). Through the creation of a series of participatory and digital engagement events and workshops the research interrogates and considers the connections and conflict between the 'physical' (public space) and the digital and supposedly 'open' (the online). The research will be of use to those who feel an increasing and urgent need to engage with their own community as practitioners as well as community members.

Contents

VOLUME 1

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	٧
List of Images	ix
Projects online presence	χi
1. Introduction 1.1 Research Question 1.2 Contribution 1.3 Structure of the Research and Thesis	1 3 4 5
2. Theoretical Framework: Critical Artistic Discourse 2.1 Socially Engaged Artistic Practice 2.1.1 Community and participatory art 2.2 Theories on Community 2.3 Digital Art, Technology and Social Media	8 9 13 16 19
3. Contextual Framework: National And Local Policies For Community And The Arts 3.1 UK Social Policies And Research 3.1.1 The Big Society 3.1.2 Working 'below the radar' 3.1.3 Volunteering and the Big Society 3.2 Arts Funding In England 3.2.1 Arts Council England National Plan 3.2.2 Arts Council England National Portfolio 3.3 The North East: Participation and digital policy 3.3.1 Cultural participation and digital use in the North East 3.3.2 Vision 2030	26 27 28 29 30 31 32 35 41 42 44
4: Research Methodology 4.1 Methodologies of Engagement with a Community 4.2 The Blurring of Artist/Curator, Researcher and Resident 4.2.1 Community Based Participatory Research 4.2.2 The 'outsider' and the 'other' 4.3 Digital Technology and Media as a Grass Roots Tool 4.3.2 'Strategies' and 'tactics' 4.3.2 'Symbolic' and 'actual' practice 4.4 Artist as 'Non-Expert' 4.4.1 Participant observation 4.4.2 The workshop as a creative medium 4.5 Deveron Arts, 'the town is the venue' 4.5.1 Cultural Health Visitor 4.6 '2up 2down'- ' it isn't called a fortress for nothing' 4.6.1 Digital technology and 2Up 2Down	46 47 50 51 52 55 57 58 59 60 61 63 65 68

4.6.2 Creator not Consumer	69
5. Bensham And Saltwell 5.1 Regeneration and Social Renewal Policy and Action 5.2 Local Community Organisations 5.2.1 Bensham Grove Community Centre 5.2.2 St. Chad's Community Project 5.2.3 Windmill Hills Centre 5.3 Who Participates, How And Why 5.3.1 Bensham & Saltwell Alive 5.3.2 Bensham & Saltwell Community Festival 5.3.3 K-Alive-oscope 5.3.4 BASE newspaper	71 73 76 76 78 79 80 80 81 81
6. Saltwell Road Project 6.1 Online Presence 6.2 Physical Presence 6.3 Physical Distribution 6.4 Voting Box: Bensham & Saltwell Community Festival 6.5 Voting Box: Bensham Grove Community Centre 6.6 Voting Box: Dominic's Café 6.7 Voting Box: Saltwell Road Post Office 6.8 Voting Box: St Chads Community Project 6.9 'Reduction' 6.10 Reflecting on the First Stage	84 85 86 87 89 92 95 98 100 103
7. Saltwell Road Project: Cooking And Growing 7.1 Bensham & Saltwell Cooks 7.2 Bensham & Saltwell Grows 7.3 Building Bridges (Community Food Project) 7.4 Reflecting on the Second Stage 7.5 The Ones that Got Away	109 112 119 124 127
8. Outcomes: Community Activism And Socially Engaged Art 8.1 Bensham & Saltwell: Future Directions 8.2 A Place To Be, A Place To Grow 8.3 Spence Watson Archive Project 8.4 Social versus Aesthetic?	130 131 132 134 135
9. Conclusion	
10 Appendix Appendix A: History of Bensham & Saltwell Appendix B: Demographic And Statistics Appendix C: Saltwell Community Voting Box results Appendix D: Example cooking participant questionnaire	146 147 151 155 157
11. Bibliography	

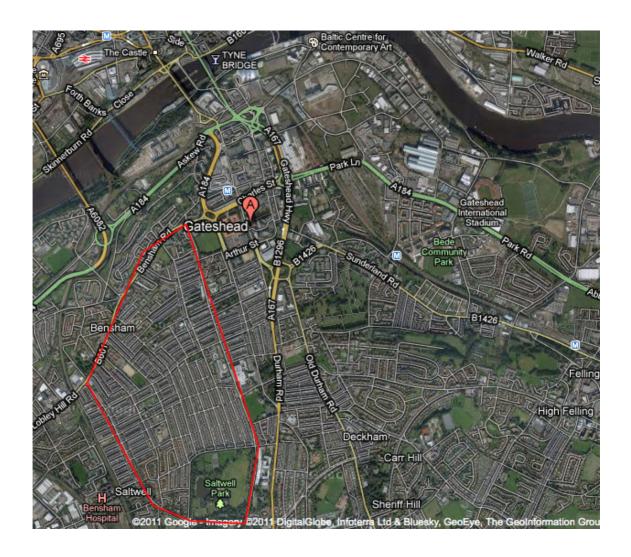
VOLUME 2

Abstract		ii
Tab	le of Contents	iii
1. B	Bensham & Saltwell, Gateshead	177
	Screenshot of Bensham & Saltwell	178
	Boarded up houses, Saltwell Road, Gateshead, February 2011	179
	Land where boarded housing was, Saltwell Road, October 2011	182
	Kelvin Grove, Dunmuir Grove and Westminster Street, October 2011	185
	Kelvin Grove, Dunmuir Grove and Westminster Street, September 2014	187
2. S	altwell Road Project	188
	Saltwell Road Logos	189
	Saltwell Road Project leaflet and poster	190
	Saltwell Road Project blog screen capture	191
	Publicising the project locally	192
3. S	altwell Community Voting Box	194
	Map of Saltwell Community Voting box	195
	BASE Newsletter, Issue 2, Summer 2012	196
	Bensham & Saltwell Community Festival, 24 June 2012	197
	Bensham Grove Community Centre, 27 June - 6 July 2012	198
	Dominic's Café, Saltwell Road, 10-21 July 2012	199
	Saltwell Road Post Office, 25 July – 4 August 2012	200
	St Chads Community Project, 8 -31 August 2012	201
	Saltwell Community Voting Box results poster	202
	BASE Newspaper Winter 2012	203
4. B	4. Bensham & Saltwell Cooks	
	Bensham & Saltwell Cooks' Logo	205
	BASE Newsletter, Issue 4, Summer 2013	206

'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks' Livestream drawing	207
Example poster for 'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks'	208
'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks' comments postcard	209
Example 'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks' recipe card	210
Ourgateshead.org	211
Facebook group	211
'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks' Workshop	212
Bensham & Saltwell Cooks' filled in postcards	214
Screenshot of blog with video and recipe card	215
Screenshot from Saltwell Road project Twitter	216
Local Makers event, Shipley Gallery, 23 March 2013	217
St Chads Community Project drop in, 20 February 2013	217
5. Bensham & Saltwell Grows	218
'Bensham & Saltwell Grows' logo	219
Screenshot of 'Bensham & Saltwell Grows' land map	220
'Bensham & Saltwell Grows' postcard	221
'Bensham & Saltwell Grows' comments postcard	221
'Bensham & Saltwell Grows' workshops	222
6. Building Bridges (Community Food Project)	226
Building Bridges postcard	227
Building Bridges workshops	228
7. Reduction	229
'Reduction', Paul Buchanan and Ben Jones, June 2012	230
8. 'A Place to Be, A Place to Grow'	233
Gateshead Library, Drop in workshops 4 September 2014	234
'A Place To Be, A Place To Grow' posters	235
9. The Spence Watson Archive Project	236
Spence Watson Archive Project workshop Bensham Grove Community Centre, 2014	237
Spence Watson Archive Project exhibition, Bensham Grove Community Centre, 2014	237

Bensham & Saltwell, Gateshead

Screenshot of Bensham & Saltwell in relation to central Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne and Newcastle and Gateshead Quayside (The red boundary added by the author to mark the area the research took place)

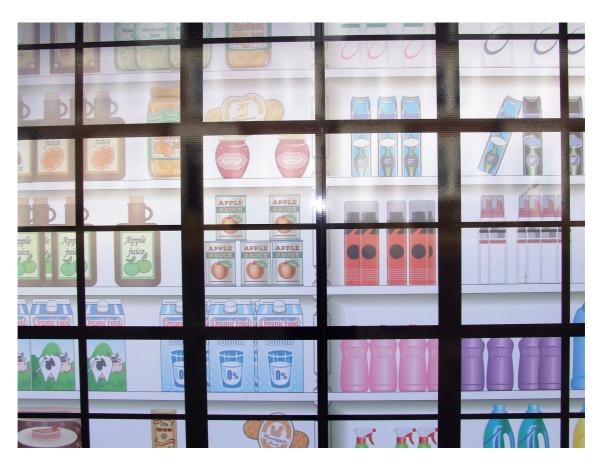


Boarded up houses, Saltwell Road, Gateshead; February 2011













Land where boarded housing was, Saltwell Road, October 2011













Kelvin Grove, Dunmuir Grove and Westminster Street, October 2011

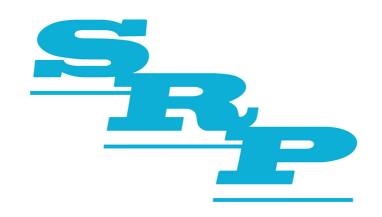




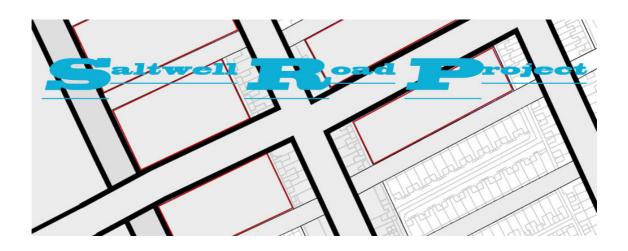


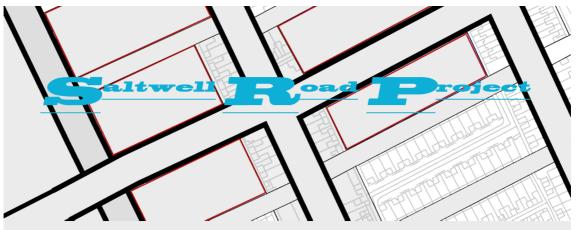












PEOPLE + PLACE

What community events would you like to see taking place in Saltwell?

What spaces and places would you like to see used more and how?

What do you want to know about the place we live?

How can we make Saltwell a better place to live, work and play?

What skills and knowledge can you bring to Saltwell?

The Saltwell Road Project (SRP) has been created for the people of Saltwell. SRP would like to know what events you would like to see happening in the area and what changes you would like to make. SRP wants to support and work with you to develop creative ideas in the community of Saltwell and make changes to create a better place to live, work and play.

If you are interested in knowing more you can contact us and find out more at:

Email: the salt well road project@gmail.com

Blog: http://thesaltwellroadproject.wordpress.com/

Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/SaltwellRoadProject

Twitter: @SaltwellRdProj

Saltwell Road Project blog screen capture

How would you use the space?

Posted on March 21, 2012

To the west of Saltwell Road next to the main railway line to the north is three large football pitch sized spaces where housing used to be.







This space is to built on with new family housing in the near future.

What would you do with the space in the meantime before the housing is built? What can it be used for? Community projects? Sport or cultural events? What would you recommend?

How do you use the site now? What do you do on it? If you don't, what stops you?

What would you like to see in the community?

We would like to hear your ideas and thoughts on how these spaces can be used temporarily, maybe a one off event or short term project. Through developing short term projects what long term ideas can be brought to the area of Saltwell for the benefit of the community? What do you feel is missing from the area and how can we, as residents, improve the place where we live?

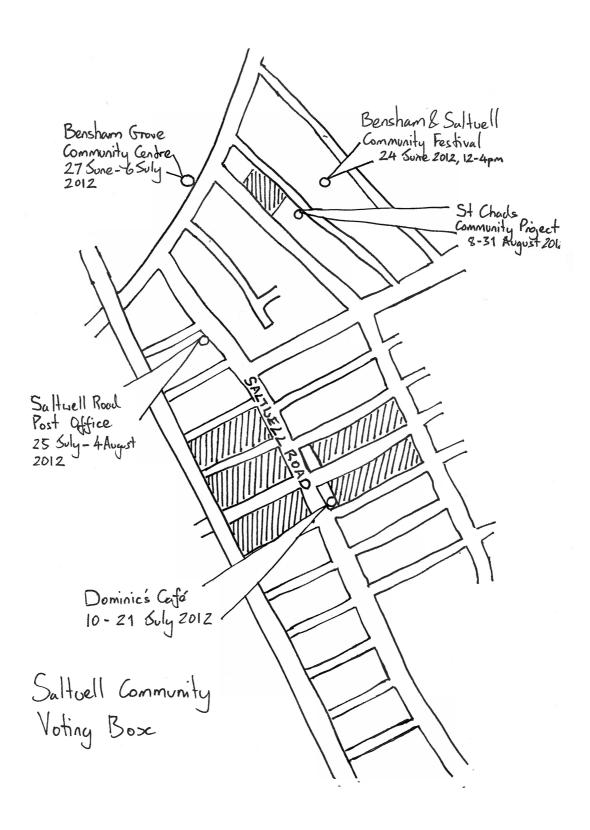
Publicising the project locally











BASE Newsletter, Issue 2, Summer 2012



Premier League Reading Stars is a project designed to attract children into reading through a love of football, proving that reading is fun and is an activity that some high profile footballers share.

Everyone is welcome at this year's Bensham and Saltwell Community festival. There will be many attractions, including music, food, face painting and much more. If we get the same weather as for last year's festival, it would be wise to

Each Premier League Club nominates a player to be a Reading Star. Newcastle United's Reading star is deWelcome to Issue 2 of BASE, Summer 2012. Could you write stories, or take photographs for BASE? Could you help make decisions about what goes into BASE? Contact us now, and get involved!! Inside issue 2:

COATSWORTH ROAD: Meet some of the people behind businesses at the North End of The Road. Page 2

SCHOOLYARD: What's been happening In some of our Local Schools. Meet the young reporters. Pages 4-5

NEW NEIGHBOURS AT BRIGHTON ROAD STUDIOS. Meet some of the artists who've made it their new home... Page 6

WHERE IN GATESHEAD? Can you spot where these pictures were taken? Page 8

Central Library Garden -Grow with Us!

Do you enjoy gardening? Have you some free time? Can you help?

The Friends of Gateshead Central Library have received an award from the Councillors of the Saltwell ward to help develop and maintain a community garden at the rear of the Central Library.

The grant will enable the Friends to arrange a series of gardening talks and events to encourage local residents to grow their own fruit, vegetables and flow-



'Coming soon - The 'Bespoke Machine', BASE, Issue 2, Summer 2012

EWCASTLE

GREEN LIGHT

Bensham and Saltwell Community Festival

some very good friendships with the arers and the users who have attended. are so many different stories of success have been observed during my experi-One concerned a young man recoverom a stroke learning how to regain the the left side of his body. He is now able his left leg thanks to the specially delequipment, and he is able to ride a bike.

urn Activity Centre is committed to ding its already amazing fleet of cy-To help raise funds, we have organsponsored one mile bike ride which the can participate in, over the course week starting Monday 11th of June.

ng my time at the Newburn Centre, I been inspired by the wonderful peoho attend the drop in sessions. I would a recommend this to anyone who might erested or who are looking to volunteer. rop in sessions are on Tuesdays and Frietween 10am till 12pm. The Newburn ity Centre can be found on Grange or if you have any queries you can ct Neil McNamars on 0191 264 0014,

create a better place to live, work and play.

SRP will be where people can talk about Saltwell, show photographs, films, and write about the area. It also wants to be a place where residents can suggest ideas for one off events or long-term projects in Saltwell that

COMING SOON -THE 'BESPOKE MACHINE'

Coming soon to Saltwell. Look out for 'Bespoke', the digital voting system that will be placed in prominent locations in the area through Summer 2012. Bespoke' will provide residents with a 'voice' in local matters where you can ask questions of the community and get answers back. If you want to ask a question or just want more information please contact Ben on 07910 654714 or 'thesaltwellroadproject@gmail.com

Play Day Returns

Play Day – featuring free games and activities for children and young people of all ages – will return to Saltwell Park on Wednesday, 1st August. Blog: http://thesaltwellroadproject.wordpress.com/

Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/SaltwellRoadProject

Twitter: @SaltwellRdProj



PAGE 8 ANSWERS:

- 1. Gateshead Old Town Hall
- 2. The Soundroom
- 3. Windmill Hills Centre

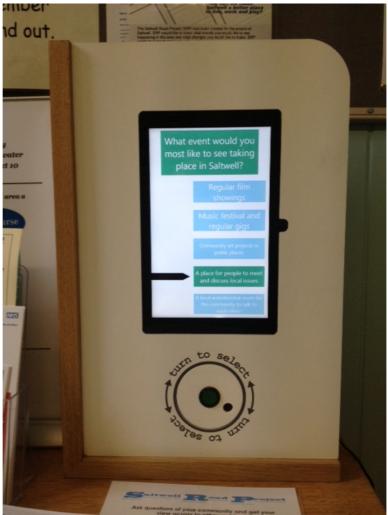
LTR, 21 Liddell Terrace, Bensham, GATESHEAD, Tyne and Wear. NE8 1YN

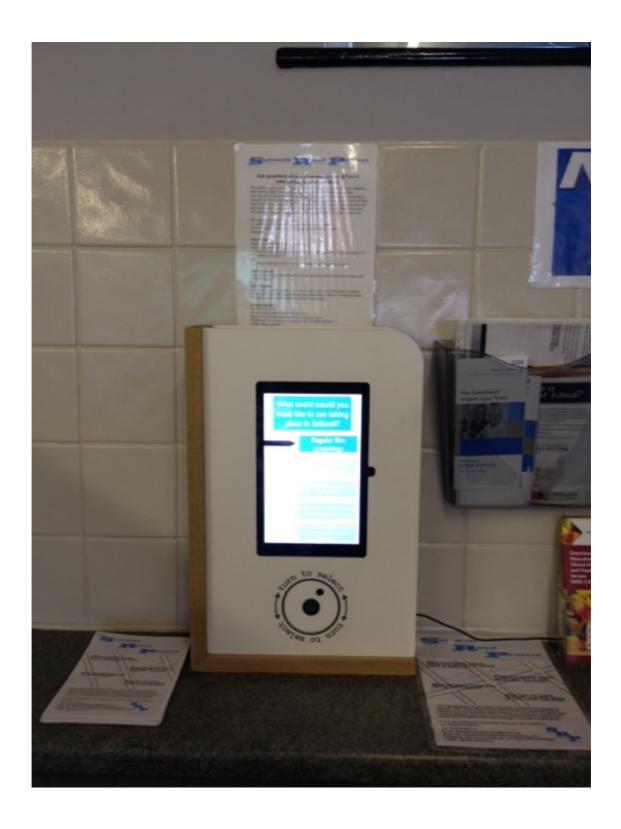
Bensham & Saltwell Community Festival, 24 June 2012









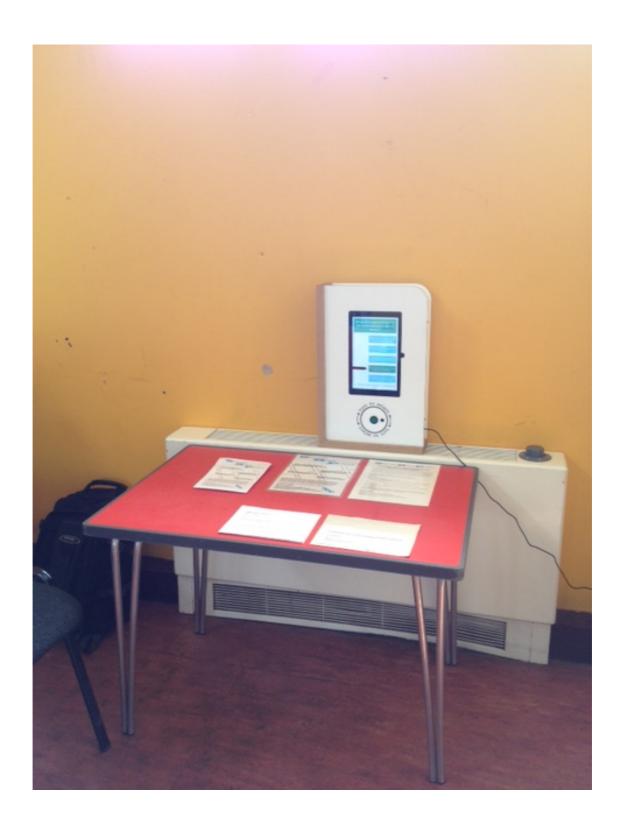


Saltwell Road Post Office, 25 July – 4 August 2012

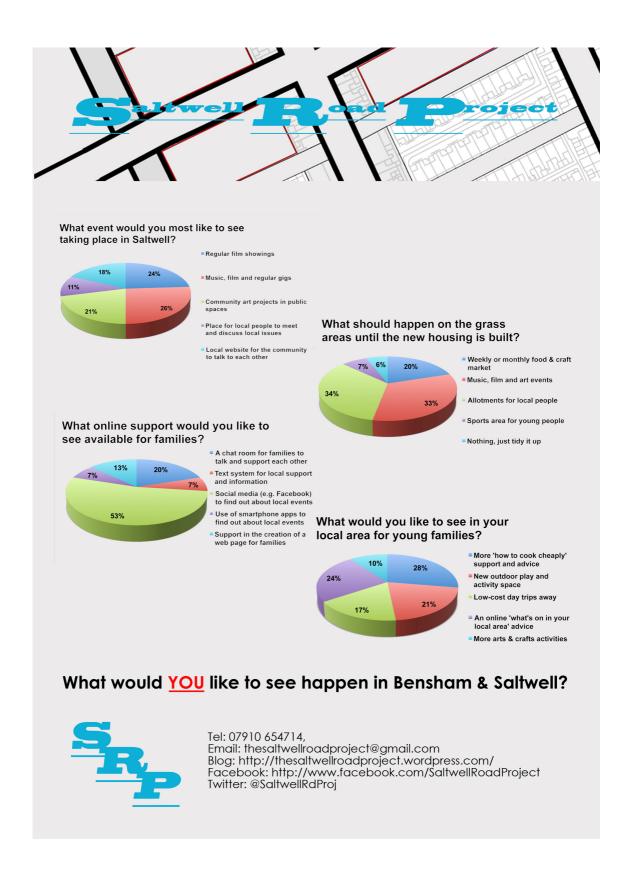




St Chads Community Project, 8 -31 August 2012



Saltwell Community Voting Box results poster





About

rthumberland countryside. The advene includes learning the basic techniques map reading and navigation and enjoying rewarding scenery whilst improving ysical fitness and well-being.

All outdoor education activities are dened to motivate, inspire and improve the ntal and physical wellbeing of older peot, challenging stereotypes and attitudes, inpassing self esteem, reducing social isolation d providing life long learning opportunities ough adventure activities to make a susnable difference to older people's lives.

The programmes make use of the existg fully qualified and licensed outdoor inructors to deliver each activity together th the use of all necessary WinG outdoor automent, outdoor centre facilities and inibus transport.

If you'd like to find out more then conct Nick Coates - Outdoor Instructor at finG on telephone no. 0191 487 9356 or mail: nickcoates.wing@yahoo.co.uk



www.ourgateshead.org/BASE

Saltwell Community Voting Box

Through summer 2012 the Saltwell Community Voting Box was located in various places around Saltwell. Locations included Bensham Grove Community Centre, Dominio's Café, Saltwell Road Post Office and St Chads Community Project. Initiated by the Saltwell Road Project (SRP), the box was placed in each location for a few weeks at a time with a new question put on it every few days. The questions came from the community itself; so people could ask other community members and find out their thoughts on subjects that they felt were relevant to the community. Questions included:

- 1. 'What event would you most like to see taking place in Saltwell?'
- 2. 'What should happen on the grass areas until the new housing is built?'
- 3. 'What would you like to see in your local area for young families?'
- 4. 'What online support would you like to see available locally for young families?'

A good number of local people placed their votes concerning what they would like to see in Saltwell. Possible included regular music, film and art events, regular film showings, allotments for local people, a local website for the community to talk to each other, and the use of social media to advertise local events.

What happens now? SRP wants to work with the community to make some of these events happen. SRP is already working with a local graphic designer to create an online community hub but would like you to get involved too and make some of these events happen? Maybe you have another



idea you would like to suggest. Do know someone who is already doing something similar and you think would like to work with us? If so please contact SRP on the below phone or email address and lets work together to make Saltwell a great place to live.

The Saltwell Road Project (SRP) was set up by local resident Ben Jones to find out what events and changes you would like to see happening in Saltwell. SRP wants to work with residents to develop creative ideas and make changes in the local community.

If you are interested in knowing more about The Saltwell Road Project you can read more and contact Ben on 07910 654714, or email him at thesaltwellroadproject@gmail.com.

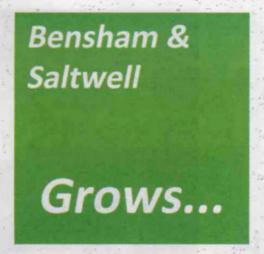
local Writers Involved In

Bensham & Saltwell Cooks...

Bensham & Saltwell

Cooks...

www.ourgateshead.org/BASE



The Saltwell Road Project is currently working on a number of projects in Bensham & Saltwell and we are looking for residents to get involved.

'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks...' is a 6month cooking project working with professional chef Rob Stewart where residents are developing a series of cooking demonstrations and workshops. Participants help to decide what the next workshop will be about and cook along with the chef. These workshops and demonstrations are being recorded and viewable online for residents to act as a community cooking resource for people to follow and cook along with. Each demonstration takes place once a month on a Saturday at St Chads Community Project, 1-3pm. If you want to get involved contact Ben on the below phone number or email.

Bensham & Saltwell Grows... is a food-growing project that aims to work with residents, community organisations, allotments and businesses to think about how we can use the spaces around Bensham & Saltwell. Inspired by Incredible Edible in Todmorden, West

Yorkshire and which grows food in underused and derelict grass areas around the town; 'Bensham & Saltwell Grows...' wants to work with groups and Individuals to develop community spaces for growing food. If you want to get involved contact Ben on the below phone number or email.

Bensham Digital Community Cooking Kit

Are you interested in showing how great a cook you are? Would you like to show other residents of

Bensham & Saltwell how to cook a family favourite? Would you like to be a local online cooking star? We are looking for enthusiastic local cooks who would be interested in presenting short live cooking demonstrations online from their own kitchen. Residents would be able to watch you cook a family favourite or a special dish from their own homes and find out how to cook it themselves. All you need is a Wi-Fi connection in your house. cooking equipment, and be enthusiastic about cooking and presenting to other people. The Saltwell Road Project will supply everything else. If you are interested get in touch with Ben on the below phone number or email.

Ben Jones

Tel: 07910 654714 Email: thesaltwellroadproject@gmail.com

Blog: thesaltwellroadproject.wordpress.com/ Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/BenshamandSaltwellCooks/

http://vimeo.com/benshamandsaltwellcooks

Twitter: @SaltwellRdProj

Health Walks Saltw Park

Health Walk every Tuesda Park. Join us for this around one of Gateshe gems. 2 miles. Meet at the (beside the tennis courts)



Light Circuits at Dun Centre every Thursday 9:

Put your health first a our Health Trainer drop Thursdays from 11-1 in Gateshead Civic Centre FREE health advice and personal health plan.

Enjoy the benefits of outside at our green gyr Park, FREE. To find out mone of our advisors there Friday mornings.

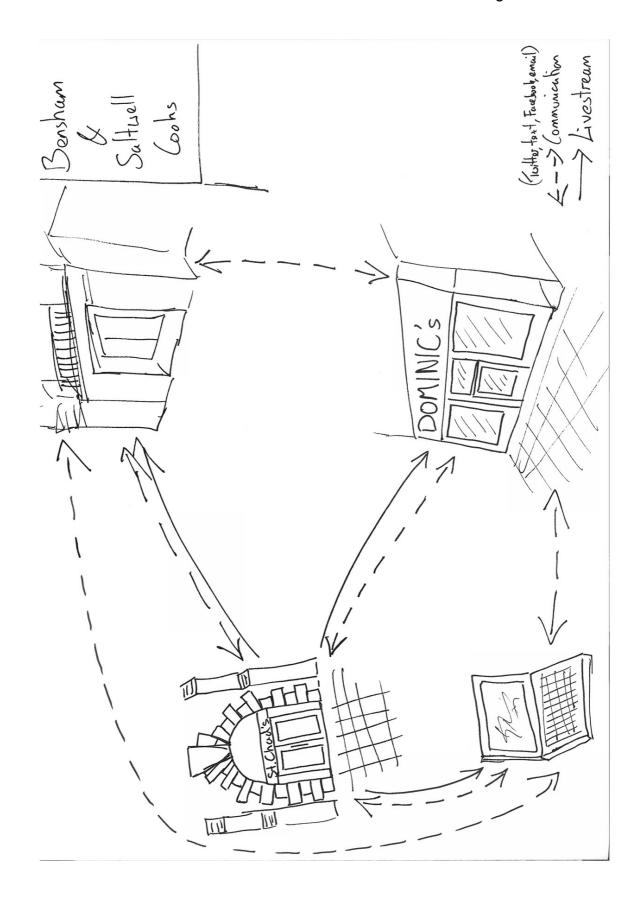
For information about sessions contact 0191 433 8 sportdevelopment@gates



'Guidepe Points The V At Windmill

The Windmill Hills Centre

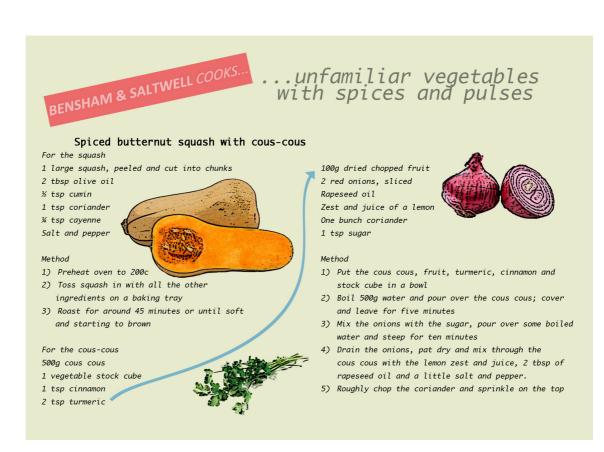
'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks...' Livestream drawing







Example 'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks...' recipe card





3) Add the lentils and tomato puree followed by the

4) Bring to the boil then allow to simmer until the

5) Season to taste and correct the consistency

veg stock

lentils are soft

Baba Ganoush

2 aubergines, peeled and chopped Rapeseed oil % tsp turmeric ½ tsp corriander

½ red onion, sliced 2 cloves garlic, chopped

Fresh coriander

Method

- 1) Heat some oil in a pan then add the aubergine, onion and the spices.
- 2) Cook until softened then add the garlic and cook for a couple more minutes.
- 3) Blend to form a chunky dip and serve with some chopped coriander on top

All ingredients were bought locally. To find out where go to the 'Saltwell Road Project' website or use the 'QR code' to the right to get online using your mobile phone.









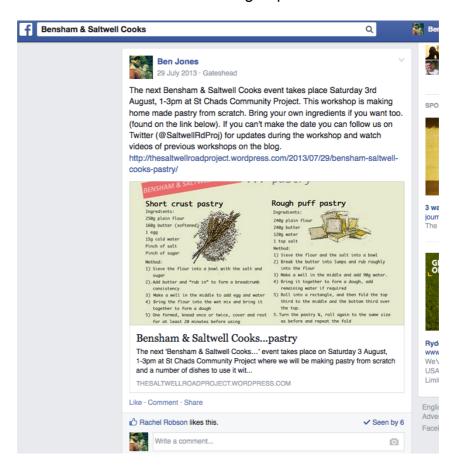




Ourgateshead.org



Facebook group



'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks...' Workshop









'Bensham & Saltwell Cooks...' filled in postcards





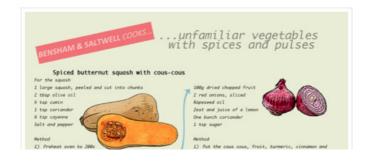
Screenshot of blog with video and recipe card



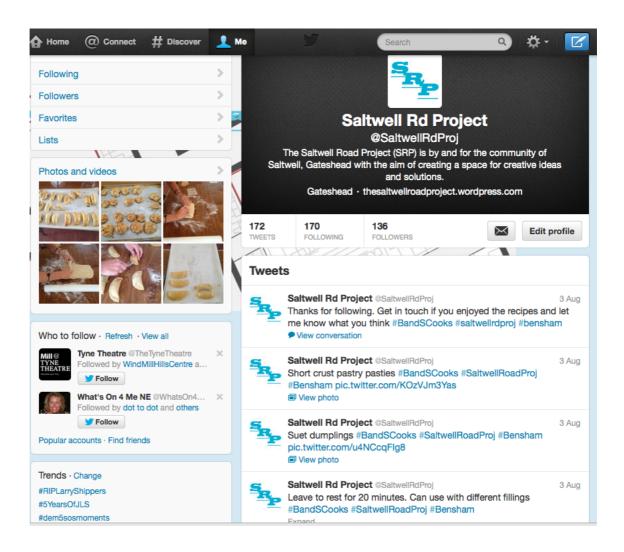
Bensham & Saltwell Cooks... unfamiliar vegetables, spices and pulses



Bensham & Saltwell Cooks... unfamiliar vegetables, spices and pulses from Ben Jones on Vimeo.



Screenshot from Saltwell Road project Twitter



Local Makers event, Shipley Gallery, 23 March 2013



St Chads Community Project drop in, 20 February 2013



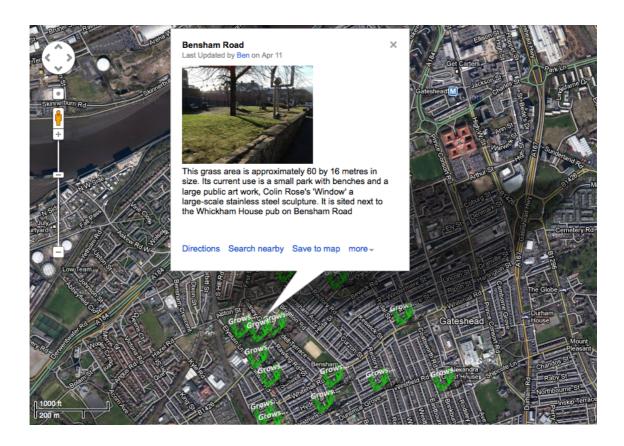
Bensham & Saltwell Grows...

Bensham & Saltwell

Grows...

Screenshot of 'Bensham & Saltwell Grows...' land map





'Bensham & Saltwell Grows...' postcard



'Bensham & Saltwell Grows...' comments postcard



'Bensham & Saltwell Grows...' workshops (photos: The4Cs)

















Building Bridges (Community Food Project)
226

Building Bridges postcard





Building Bridges workshops





Reduction

'Reduction', Paul Buchanan and Ben Jones, June 2012













'A Place To Be, A Place To Grow'

Gateshead Library, Drop in workshops 4 September 2014





'A Place To Be, A Place To Grow' posters

wildlife and wild growing community garden farmers market DIY and practical skills /license to sell goods children's provision and interactive area bee keeping resting spaces throughout MUGA pitch think spots social groups for events 'pick your own' days raised beds all over drop in and open days regular community days youth work arts and crafts exhibitions training creating business opportunities healthy eating gardening, cooking ng clubs letting spaces for festivals green spaces all year round sport and area local businesses involved volunteer opportunities LETS Local Economic Trading Scheme's income generating scheme recycling local schools involved with healthy eating, growing and cooking support schools to manage their gardens all ear round shed for garden and soc ial cup of tea growing herbs and vegetables childrens play area with natural environment theme bread oven with bread baking workshops wild area with pond and flowers community allotments learning community - business community charity organisation managing the space learning site affiliated with local colleges creating a world garden so local community can orchard foraging quiet space with seats, be area windmill raised beds polytunnel access from Coatsworth Road to connect to local businesses and the community secure crèche pizza oven



Spence Watson Archive Project workshop Bensham Grove Community Centre, 2014



Spence Watson Archive Project exhibition, Bensham Grove Community Centre, 2014

