



Imagining Benwell

Past, Present and Future



Contents

1. The <i>Imagine North East</i> project	01
2. Brief history of Benwell	02
3. The National Community Development Project	04
4. Benwell Community Development Project	05
5. Benwell CDP area statistics: 1971 and 2011	07
6. Subsequent regeneration programmes in Benwell and the West End	08
7. Benwell and Newcastle upon Tyne policies and politics timeline	10
8. <i>Imagine North East</i> community partner projects	12
• Never Felt So Good: a felting art project, by St James' Centre for Heritage and Culture	12
• Growing Old in West Newcastle: events and activities for older people on the theme of local history, by Search	14
• Remembering Benwell: developing new ways to reach communities, by the West Newcastle Picture History Collection	15
• Hopes and Fears: a film making project with young people, by the Patchwork Project	16
• Time Traveller : an intergenerational project, by the Pendower Good Neighbour Project	17
• Playing with Change and Ideas: creating a mobile interactive toy, by Riverside Community Health Project	18
• Filming Change: creating a film of the historic graveyard, by St James' Heritage and Environment Group	19
• West End Stories: creating digital stories, by Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums	20
9. Benwell CDP reports	21
10. Websites and contact details	Back Cover

This booklet was published by the Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University, UK, June 2015

socialjustice@durham.ac.uk

www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice

Contributors: This booklet was edited by Andrea Armstrong and Sarah Banks with contributions from Judith Green (history of Benwell, Benwell CDP, community projects), Fred Robinson (regeneration, policy timeline), Alan Townsend (statistics) and members of Search, West Newcastle Picture History Collection, Riverside Community Health Project, Pendower Good Neighbour Project, Patchwork Project, St James' Centre for Heritage and Culture, St James' Heritage and Environment Group and Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums.

Acknowledgements: We are grateful to the Economic and Social Research Council for funding the *Imagine* research project; the AHRC Connected Communities Festival 2015 for funding the design and printing of this booklet; and Emma Renno, *Imagine North East* Project Secretary, for administrative support. Special thanks to Judith Green, Fred Robinson, David Gray, Ian Farrier, Gary Craig, Ruth Taylor, Clare Levi and Anne Bonner for feedback on earlier drafts; all the people who gave interviews; the residents involved in the *Imagine North East* community projects for their substantial contribution to the research; and Judith Green for her work coordinating the community projects. We are very grateful to Derek Smith for giving us permission to use his photos. Derek Smith was commissioned by the National Community Development Project to document life and work in Benwell.

Photograph credits: Derek Smith; West Newcastle Picture History Collection and members of the *Imagine North East* project.

1. The *Imagine North East* project

This booklet has been produced as part of the *Imagine North East* research project.

Imagine North East is part of a UK-wide project, *Imagine – Connecting communities through research*, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The focus of *Imagine* is 'civic participation' - how people get involved and influence life in their communities.

In the North East, during 2014-15, we examined the historical dimensions of community participation in two areas: Benwell (Newcastle upon Tyne) and North Shields. In the 1970s both areas had government-funded Community Development Projects (CDPs) designed to tackle poverty. The CDPs involved community workers and researchers working alongside local people on issues such as housing, welfare rights and employment. They produced many detailed and critical reports, which located the causes of local social and economic problems in the decline of traditional industries along the Tyne, failures of government policy and international pressure to cut public spending. They stimulated community action and campaigns, to fight for greater community involvement in decision-making, better quality housing, services and welfare rights.

While starting with the past, *Imagine North East* recorded the massive process

of change in the past 40 years, and explored the present and future state of communities in Benwell and North Shields. In both areas, researchers from Durham University and 12 community organisations undertook a programme of research and related activities. We looked at the history of community development and regeneration in each area, the extent to which local people were involved in decision-making and the different visions of residents, community workers, policy-makers and politicians (and how these differed). We considered the lessons about how local communities can be engaged in imagining and creating better futures for their areas. About 70 interviews were conducted with a range of people (former and current residents, community activists/workers, politicians/policymakers and others) - seeking their views on the CDP, community participation and changes in North Shields and Benwell. Not surprisingly, there are many versions of the history of the area and visions of the future. The findings of this part of the research will be written up in detail in the *Community Development Journal* in 2016/17.

This booklet is a short overview based on our work in Benwell. Fuller details of the research findings will be available on our website, www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/imagine

“Connecting communities through research”



2. Brief history of Benwell

Benwell has a long and interesting history. Wave upon wave of industrial decline, housing demolition and redevelopment has all but erased this from the landscape, but the evidence is there in street names and old stone walls.

2,000 years ago the Romans came to Benwell. The area was chosen as the site for one of the most important forts along the route of the Wall that crossed Britain from coast to coast, marking the boundary of their vast empire. The fort was named Condercum, meaning 'place with a fine view'. As well as the fort with its large cavalry unit, there was a civilian town to the south, where Pendower Estate is now. Although the Romans are long gone, you can still visit the remains of a small temple and a vallum crossing tucked away in the middle of a local housing estate.

Benwell can also stake a claim to being one of the first coal-producing areas in the world. Here the coal seams were near to the surface of the steep riverbanks, which made the coal easy to access before the development of deep mining technology. Coal was mined locally at least as early as Roman times, but it was from the 12th century onwards that coal mining really developed. By the 18th century there were dozens of pits. A network of waggonways ran down to riverside staithes (landing stages), from where coal was exported to London and beyond. The area also hosted a number of important innovations in coal mining, such as some of the earliest railways and steam engines.

At this time, despite the extensive mining activities underground, Benwell was predominantly rural. It was a fashionable area to live, conveniently near the town but at a comfortable distance from its noise, smells and health hazards, such as

cholera epidemics. Many of Tyneside's wealthiest and most influential families lived here in large houses with landscaped grounds. Most derived their wealth from coal mining and the coal trade. Today the rich families are gone and only a very few of their houses remain.

In the second half of the 19th century the rapid development of heavy industry along the riverside began to transform the area. It was the combination of the presence of coal for fuel and the proximity to the river for transport that made this area attractive to the new industries. The most notable event was the establishment of Armstrong's engineering works at Elswick in 1847. Initially manufacturing hydraulic cranes, it soon diversified into other products, such as armaments, developing the capacity to build and equip entire warships from raw materials to guns. Soon the entire riverside was filled with a variety of industrial activities. The area grew to be of strategic importance to the national economy, with many of its companies being world leaders.

The new industries needed labour, and thousands of people were drawn into Tyneside for work. Over a few decades, the grassy banks above the riverside were largely filled with long terraces of housing, and Benwell became an urban area. For a period Benwell was a boom town. Armstrong's factories alone employed 20,000 people at their peak during World War 1.

The 20th century saw the continued development of new housing including

Pendower, one of the country's oldest council estates. However this period also witnessed the accelerating decline and ultimately destruction of the area's industrial base, until by 2000 there was scarcely any manufacturing industry on the riverside. Armstrong's (later Vickers) Elswick works, which had occupied some 50 acres of land, was demolished completely in the 1980s and replaced by a new business park, housing mainly office and storage activities. All that remains of the industrial past are the vestiges of the boundary walls, some road names and a series of heritage interpretation boards.

The elimination of the local industrial base is not the only major change Benwell has experienced in the last 50 years. During this period there have been several waves of housing clearance and new building across the area, which have affected thousands of people, some of whom have been compulsorily re-housed up to ten times in their lifetimes.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the demolition of a large proportion of the older terraced homes built during the rapid expansion of 'New Benwell'. These were partially replaced by new council and housing association homes, and demolished only a decade or so later. More recently most of the (mainly private) housing in West Benwell was cleared as part of a large-scale regeneration programme. The first of the promised new housing is currently under construction, but many former housing sites in Benwell and neighbouring Scotswood are still empty areas of grass or mud, awaiting future development.

Further reading: *Built on Coal* (2013) St James' Heritage and Environment Group and the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers; *Condercum: From the Romans to the bankers: a heritage trail* (2014) Search Project.



3. The National Community Development Project

Benwell and North Shields were chosen as the sites for *Imagine North East* because they were formerly locations for the National Community Development Project (CDP) in the 1970s.

This was Britain's response to the American 'War on Poverty' and consisted of 12 local community-based projects, each with a five-year life. The local teams were tasked with researching the causes of poverty in their areas and working with local residents to bring about change.

This was a period when cracks had begun to appear in the 'never had it so good' political rhetoric of post-war Britain after years of increasing affluence, low unemployment and an expanding welfare state. The National CDP was a response to the realisation that poverty still existed in parts of Britain. It was an experiment designed to find new ways of tackling these so-called 'pockets of deprivation'. The government believed that the causes of poverty were to be found within the poor communities themselves, and could be tackled at a local level.

“The National CDP was a response to the realisation that poverty still existed in parts of Britain.”

4. Benwell Community Development Project CDP

Benwell CDP ran from 1972 until 1978 and was based in former shop premises at 85/7 Adelaide Terrace.

It comprised an action team employed by the City Council (including a professional lawyer independently managed by a local management committee) and a research team initially linked with Newcastle University, but later transferred to Durham University. In practice all the workers chose to share the base in Benwell. While different workers had their particular areas of expertise, community workers and researchers worked directly with local residents helping to set up tenants associations, campaigning for housing improvements, providing welfare rights advice, and supporting local community action in other ways.

Pictured above is Pendower Estate in the 1970s, one of the areas where Benwell CDP worked. Pendower was built just after the First World War as part of the movement to provide good quality homes 'fit for heroes to live in'. Built to a high standard on a garden city model, the estate had become dilapidated and was in dire need of refurbishment. The CDP helped residents to set up a tenants' association to campaign for housing improvements, and produced a report setting out in detail the case for investment in the estate. The campaign resulted in a major modernisation programme for the whole of Pendower Estate.

Benwell CDP, in common with North Tyneside and many of the other CDPs across the country, concluded that the causes of poverty, unemployment and many social problems lay with external factors such as industrial decline. The project team documented their findings in a series of reports about the area.

- **Slums on the drawing board:** Noble Street consisted of 19 blocks of three and five storey flats, built in the 1950s. Badly designed and cheaply built, without lifts or any amenities, they were intended to accommodate as many people as possible at the lowest cost. Twenty years later they were demolished following a lengthy campaign by residents supported by the CDP. The report documents the history of the estate, the appalling conditions endured by its residents, and the difficult but ultimately successful campaign to secure re-housing. By showing how the estate's residents were stigmatised as 'problem families' and unfairly blamed for a situation that was actually a product of misguided housing policies and under-investment, the report also helped to illustrate the inadequacy of a view of deprivation that blames the victims.
- **The costs of industrial change:** It is common today to hear about 'de-industrialisation', but in the 1970s there was very little research on what was happening to the local economies of small areas and little awareness of the major social problems that were looming. Benwell CDP documented the impact of global corporate restructuring and technological change on the industrial base of the

West Newcastle communities in a series of local and national reports. As well as researching these issues, the project worked with trade union and community campaigns to try to stop factory closures and fight for reinvestment in local manufacturing industry.

- **Storing up trouble:** During the 1970s the decline of manufacturing industry in the West End of Newcastle accelerated. Factory closures meant growing unemployment, with around 20% of men out of work by 1975. They also left a legacy of derelict buildings and empty sites. *Storing up trouble* is a detailed account of what was replacing the former manufacturing industry – storage and distribution facilities for goods made elsewhere – and warned of the consequences of this for local job opportunities.
- **From blacksmiths to white elephants: Benwell's changing shops:** Adelaide Terrace has been Benwell's main shopping street since the beginning of the 20th century. Local residents have long complained about the decline of what was once a lively thoroughfare with a variety of independent shops, department stores and cinemas. This report chronicles the history of Benwell's shops and the reasons for the changes. It includes an account of the 1970s Benwell Shopping Centre, an ill-fated concrete monstrosity that replaced a row of popular terraced shops.

5. Benwell CDP area statistics: 1971 and 2011

	1971	2011
Population	13,070	6,320
Born outside the UK (%)	2.2	34.9
Employment (economically active) (% of working age)	47.4	59.9
Unemployment (% of economically active)	11.3	21.6
Access to a car, households (%)	18.0	28.9
Dwelling with hot water, inside WC and bath (%)	42.9	No data
Social rented housing including from Council (%)	21.3	53.9
Privately owned housing (%)	14.4	14.1
Private rented housing (%)	64.3	29.0

Census statistics for 1971 and 2011 show how much the area has changed.

The population of the original Benwell CDP area has halved over the past 40 years, largely as a result of de-industrialisation, the demolition of old housing, and the shift to smaller households. The West End of Newcastle as a whole has seen a substantial decline in population.

In 1971 nearly two-thirds of houses were privately rented (nearly all unfurnished lettings), and many of them were in very poor condition. In 2011, more than half the stock was social housing, the majority rented from the Council. Remarkably, nearly 60% of houses in 1971 did not have all the three basic amenities (hot water, inside WC and bath); these amenities are nowadays taken for granted and are no longer even counted in the Census.

The proportion of people who are economically active has increased, not least because of rising female participation in the labour market. But the unemployment rate doubled. The area's continuing low incomes are indicated by low car ownership: higher than in 1971, of course, but still relatively very low. Only 28.9% of households in 2011 had access to a car.

One of the biggest changes in the CDP area is the increasing diversity. In 1971, few residents had been born outside the UK, compared with just over a third of residents by 2011.

The statistics are from the 1971 and 2011 UK National Census. The area for comparison was the original Benwell CDP area, the boundaries of which were: to the north, West Rd; to the south, the River Tyne; to the east, Fairholm Rd, Northbourne St and Noble St and to the west, Condercum Rd, Atkinson Rd and South Benwell Rd. In practice the Benwell CDP team worked beyond these original boundaries but for statistical comparison between 1971 and 2011 a defined area has been used.



6. Subsequent regeneration programmes in Benwell and the West End

Benwell CDP was followed by a succession of policies and programmes aimed at tackling the area's economic and social problems as shown in the timeline on pages 10 - 11.

Over the past 40 years or so, Newcastle's West End has been a 'policy laboratory'—most things have been tried, with varying degrees of success. Here we highlight a few of the many initiatives.

After the CDP, a joint central-local government Inner City Partnership programme supported local economic development initiatives and also some community projects, such as the Benwell Law Project and the Trade Union Studies Information Unit (both set up by Benwell CDP and others) and the Riverside Child Health Project, which is still going today (now called the Riverside Community Health Project).

The emphasis in the 1980s was on property-led projects that prioritised economic development and business interests. The Tyneside Enterprise Zone and the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation promoted the establishment of a new business park on former

industrial areas next to the river. But the local benefit was very limited: the new job opportunities proved out of reach for most people in Benwell and the West End.

In the 1990s the government recognised the need for a more 'holistic' approach, combining economic and social interventions designed to support disadvantaged communities and respond to their needs. Newcastle was successful in bidding for a five-year City Challenge scheme for the West End. This was based on partnership, with local residents represented on the board, which oversaw and shaped the programme. There were opportunities for local people to discuss the area's needs and its future. City Challenge projects included some important and popular schemes such as the redevelopment of Benwell shopping centre, investment in housing improvements, and many community-based projects.

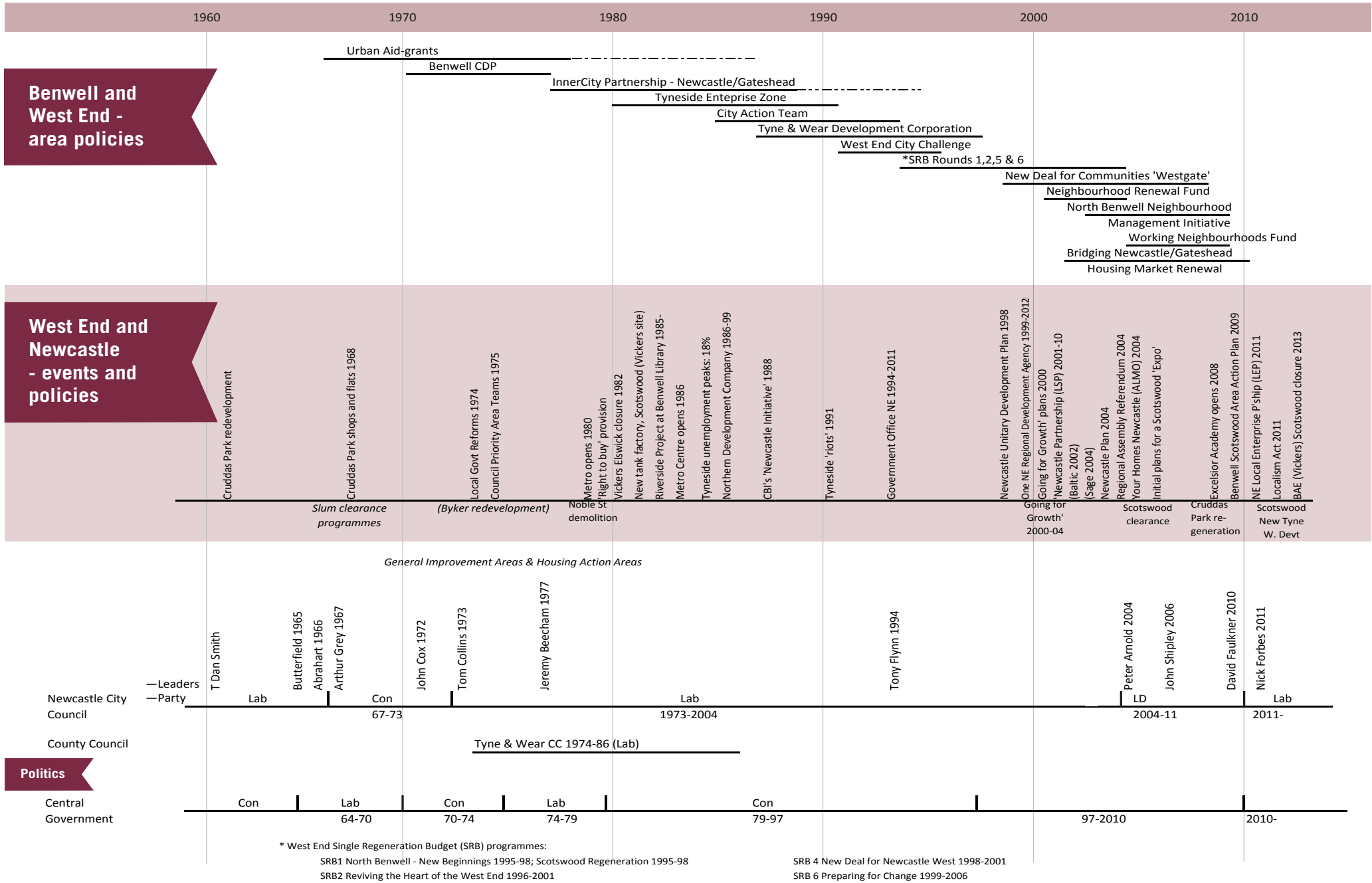
The successor to City Challenge was the Single Regeneration Budget, a programme also based on partnership and promoting community involvement. SRB schemes

helped to stabilise the North Benwell terraces, an area which was then suffering rapid deterioration, including high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. Community participation, multi-agency working and targeted investment were key features of these schemes. This kind of approach was continued under the New Labour government from 1997, which introduced a 10-year programme called New Deal for Communities (NDC). There was an NDC programme in the West End in Arthur's Hill and Cruddas Park.

From the late 1990s, the focus of attention shifted to the problem of empty and unwanted housing. In 2000, Newcastle City Council launched an initiative called 'Going for Growth', which was based on a view that previous policies had failed and a radical approach was needed. A major programme of demolition and redevelopment was planned. Of the proposed 6,600 demolitions, 5,000 were in the West End of Newcastle, particularly

in Scotswood. Inevitably, the threat to people's homes, with little consultation or information, created much opposition.

Subsequently, Newcastle City Council, working with Gateshead Council, secured funding from central government through the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (HMRP) programme and the sub-regional partnership board responsible for delivering this was called 'Bridging NewcastleGateshead'. In Scotswood and Benwell the aim was to create sustainable communities by the demolition of a further 1400 homes, refurbishment of others and the building of 2000 new homes. But redevelopment was severely hampered by the economic recession. By 2014/15 only 188 houses had been built on a development called 'The Rise', delivered by the New Tyne West Development Company, a partnership between Newcastle City Council, Barratt Homes and Keepmoat Homes.





8. *Imagine North East* community partner projects

Eight community organisations from Benwell have worked on projects for *Imagine North East*, based on their own interpretations of ‘imagining different communities’. Each one has involved local people working together in creative and exciting ways to gather histories and think of the future.

‘Never Felt So Good’ - a felting art project, by St James’ Centre for Heritage and Culture

The *Benwell and Scotswood in Felt* project worked with almost 300 local people of different age groups, backgrounds and neighbourhoods, from 19 different local groups and organisations including schools, churches and community groups.

The aim was to build on local residents’ knowledge, experiences and hopes in order to depict the story of the changing area using the craft of felting, which involves making a picture out of pieces of wool and applying water, soap and hard work to transform these into a robust fabric.

The project took place in different venues across the community - schools, community centres, churches and libraries - anywhere people meet and talk about their area and their lives.

Each group chose an image and decided how to depict it. They then worked with a specialist felting tutor to design and make their pictures. All the pictures were brought together in a big exhibition at the end of the project, and they have also been turned into a book called ‘Never felt so good’. They are now on permanent display at the Carnegie Centre, Benwell.

Here’s a comment made at the launch event in May 2015:

‘The schools have picked up on the bridges and the tank from the past – the bridges and the river, which is nice. The colours that have been used - the dragonfly - which is a symbol of the Scotswood Natural Community Garden. Others have done Noah’s Ark – the bright colours. And to me, people will feel happy here, because none of them are dowdy and drab; they’re all bright and colourful. And even the darker ones with the dark brick on the older buildings - the church clock and others – they still bring out the bright faces. So, I genuinely think, at the heart of it, people love the area where they’ve either been born, or moved to, and live, or where they work. And you can feel it from some of the pictures that are on display today.’

St James’ Centre for Heritage and Culture is a partnership of community-based organisations in Benwell that are working together to develop a centre for heritage and culture for the West End at St

James’ Church and run activities for the local community. These include cross-community projects that bring people together to celebrate the history and creativity of the local community including an annual community arts festival.

<http://www.imagenortheast.org/category/st-james-centre-for-heritage-and-culture/>

‘The project has illustrated yet again the creativity and community spirit to be found in the area. The individual images produced have shown in very different ways how much people value aspects of their physical environment and their community.’

‘It was the children in our project who focused on the future. They approached this task with great enthusiasm and imagination.’

'Growing Old in West Newcastle' - events and activities for older people on the theme of local history, by Search

Several hundred older residents have been involved in exploring the lived experience of regeneration, change and community activity through a programme of events and activities focusing on different historical periods and events in the area's history.

The project involved a programme of events, tours and visits to different places that evoked memories of earlier times and prompted discussion of participants' own lived experience and their perspectives on the changes they had seen in their lifetimes. The activities included a river boat trip down the Tyne, a 1960s event, and visits to Woodhorn Museum and Northumberland Archives (coal-mining), Newbiggin Maritime Centre and Preston Park Museum (Victorian and early 20th century life).

As well as sharing memories, participants also spent time discussing the major changes affecting the area now and imagining the future.

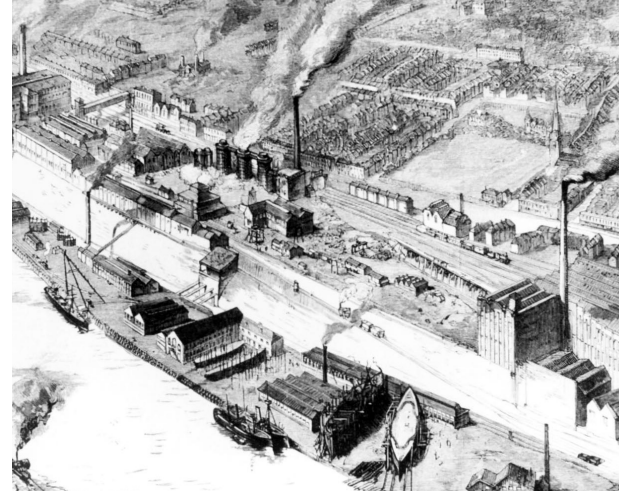
Here is a selection of comments:

'People should know about the past and what has gone and what people fought for, and compare it with the future. Nowadays a lot of people want everything at once.'

'You can learn so much from the past. In the past there were families in the area. You had cousins, aunts, uncles in the street and shared an outlook on how to keep the place clean. ... You haven't got that kind of community any more.'

Search is a community-based voluntary project working with and for local older people. It is part of the legacy of the Benwell Community Development Project, having been set up in the 1970s by the CDP working with a group of local older activists who wanted pensioners to have their own organisation to advise and support them in obtaining their rights and benefits and to oppose age discrimination. From its shop-front premises on Adelaide Terrace, it runs an advice and information service and a range of activities, including walking, local history, arts and crafts, music and exercise groups.

Website: www.searchproject.co.uk



'Remembering Benwell' - developing new ways to reach communities, by the West Newcastle Picture History Collection

'A picture is better than a 1000 words; it can trigger memories and start discussions and it's a way of generating memories of the past.'

The *Imagine* project by the West Newcastle Picture History Collection has involved innovative outreach activities and new resources for researching and learning about family and local history. This has enabled many more people to access photographs and other material relating to the history of Benwell and other neighbourhoods in the West End of Newcastle. An important part of the project has been to expand the scope of the photographic collection by actively documenting how the area is changing now.

A major exhibition was mounted at St James' Church featuring a set of newly acquired Ordnance Survey maps showing how the Benwell area was developed over a period of 150 years. New smaller themed photographic displays were placed in libraries, sheltered housing and other places. A series of themed binders of old

photographs and framed photographs has been placed in different venues across the area, such as GPs' surgeries, where people find themselves with time on their hands.

Through presenting themed slide shows in various local venues and at community events, the group has engaged many people in discussions and reminiscence not only about the area's past but also its present and future.

West Newcastle Picture History Collection is a wholly volunteer-run organisation with a growing collection of more than 19,000 photographs of West Newcastle from the 1880s to date. These are shared with the wider community through drop-in sessions at its base in the West End Library, slide shows in other venues, displays and other means.

Website: www.newcastle.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-tourism/libraries/branch-libraries-and-opening-hours/west-end-library



'Hopes and Fears' – a film making project with young people, by the Patchwork Project

'The people that live in these communities are sensitive; they're alive; they're human. The people that come in and intervene with the types of intervention - that's not human.'

'The film Hopes and Fears is based on conversations and research and it's looking at place and time. The West End regeneration failure is evident so we based our questions on emotion. As Milton said, the loss of hope create fears.'

Patchwork worked with local young people aged between 15-18 years old to make a film about their experiences of life in the area and how they imagined the future.

The theme of hopes and fears was chosen as a way of developing conversations with young people about their lives in the context of the local community and the wider society, with the aim of encouraging them to think about how they might shape their own lives and also contribute to shaping the future of their neighbourhood.

The young people were trained in filming and editing techniques. They interviewed other young people as well as a range of older residents and they asked these questions:

1. What do you hope for yourself, your family and your community?
2. What do you fear for yourself, your family and your community?

They produced a film at the end of the project called Hopes and Fears.

Patchwork is a neighbourhood youth project based on Benwell's main shopping street, Adelaide Terrace. It works with 8-25 year-olds, providing opportunities to learn and develop through discussion, training, individual support, employment advice and outdoor activities, as well as street work across the local area.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PATCHWORK.PROJECT.Newcastle

'Time Traveller' – an intergenerational project, by Pendower Good Neighbour Project

This project brought together a group of children to research the history of people who lived in their area and share their findings more widely through dramatic performances.

The work focused on two main themes: the changing community and the impact of the First World War on young people.

Illuminating Lives was inspired by the Heritage and Environment Group's 'A Guide to St James' Graveyard'. The children chose characters from the area's past and carried out research to find out more about their lives using old newspapers, census information, electoral rolls and trade directories. Their stories were then retold at a guided tour around the graveyard on a dark winter's evening. The children made beautiful light installations and lanterns to illuminate each grave.

Today's News. Yesterday's History told a story of Benwell's children in the First World War. The children used local newspapers from 1914 to 1918 to find articles involving children and young people, and imagined what their lives would have been like. Out of this they created a drama, which explored the media misrepresentation of young people, the consequences of poverty and austerity and the changing roles of children in society. Using props and costumes which they had made from newspaper, the children performed their show outdoors on Pendower Estate.

Alongside these activities the Pendower group worked with Rachel Shah, a research student from Durham University, to undertake peer research. They designed their own questions and interviewed each

other about what they liked best about living on Pendower.

These are some of their comments:

'My favourite place in Pendower is probably the Sunnybank Centre because I can meet friends, have fun and of course I don't get told off because I'm a good boy!'

'The community is welcoming, especially here. Here they do lots of family events and stuff, and welcome everyone in the estate.'

Pendower Good Neighbour Project is a locally based project that works with Pendower residents to explore ways to improve the estate for everyone. It offers a range of activities, events and support services for all ages.

Youtube film 'Homes for heroes' July 2013: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvUDamS113Q

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Pendower-Good-Neighbour-Project/82076472477





‘Playing with Change and Ideas’ – creating a mobile interactive toy, by Riverside Community Health Project

Riverside has been working with local children, families and other residents to design and create a large interactive mobile toy from recycled materials.

More than 100 people of different ages have been involved through a programme of family activities taking place during 2014-15. They have discussed ideas for different kinds of toys, drawn designs, experimented with ways of using a variety of recycled materials, and made models and templates. These sessions have provided a setting for lively discussions about the changes taking place in the local area and people’s hopes and expectations for the future.

The next stage will be a big community event to bring families together to look at the range of ideas developed so far and to choose a design for the large toy. Riverside then plan to raise money to build it.

Riverside Community Health Project works with local people, including new families arriving in the area from other countries, to support and help them to improve their life chances. From its base in the former library building on Atkinson Road, Benwell, it offers a range of activities including a playgroup, a toy library, welfare rights advice and volunteering opportunities.

Website: <http://riversidechp.co.uk/>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Riverside-Community-Health-Project/365997260199906

Twitter: @RiversideCHP

‘Filming Change’ – creating a film of the historic graveyard, by St James’ Heritage and Environment Group

The focus of the group’s film-making project was the historic graveyard.

As well as being a valuable and attractive green space in the heart of the urban area, the graveyard is important because it tells the story of the changing local area as it was transformed from green fields to become a highly industrialised urban area. Benwell a century ago was the site of some of the most advanced industry in the world and home to some of region’s most wealthy and powerful families, and this history is encapsulated in the graveyard. The group has worked with a local film-maker to make a short film that aims to capture the character of the graveyard and its significance for the local community.

St James’ Heritage and Environment Group

is a wholly volunteer-run community organisation which was responsible for rescuing the neglected graveyard attached to St James’ Church and making it once again into a place of beauty and tranquillity in the heart of Benwell. As well as maintaining and improving the graveyard, the group also runs a varied programme of local history activities, projects and publications with the aim of celebrating and sharing the fascinating history of the area.

Website: <http://stjameschurchnewcastle.wordpress.com>



West End Stories, by Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM)

The TWAM outreach team has supported *Imagine North East* by making some of the collections available for research by local partner organisations.

The intention is that some of the products of *Imagine*, such as oral history and other material, will be accessed via the permanent collection at the Discovery Museum.

The team has also developed a website called West End Stories which is a digital version of an exhibition jointly created by TWAM and St James' Centre for Heritage and Culture. This has run over three years as a rolling exhibition of objects, which in some way tell a particular story about the history of the West End of Newcastle. Some of these objects have come from the permanent collections of TWAM's museums and art galleries as part of the organisation's commitment to find new ways of sharing its collections with the wider community. Other objects have been given or loaned by individuals.

Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums has an outreach team which is based in the Discovery Museum on the edge of Newcastle city centre and works with local communities to support them in exploring and celebrating heritage.

Website: www.twmuseums.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thearchives

Twitter: @TWArchives

Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/twm_news/

'The intention is that some of the products of *Imagine*, such as oral history and other material, will be accessed via the permanent collection at the Discovery Museum.'

9. Benwell CDP reports

Final reports

Benwell Community Project (1978) *Storing up trouble: warehousing and distribution in West Newcastle*, Final Report Series No 1, Benwell Community Project, Benwell, Newcastle.

Benwell Community Project (1978) *Permanent unemployment: is this the best future we can offer our school leavers?* Final Report Series No 2, Benwell Community Project, Benwell, Newcastle.

Benwell Community Project (1978) *Private housing and the working class*, Final Report Series No 3, Benwell Community Project, Benwell, Newcastle.

Benwell Community Project (1978) *Slums on the drawing board*, Final Report Series No 4, Benwell Community Project, Benwell, Newcastle.

Benwell Community Project (1979) *The making of the ruling class*, Final Report Series No 6, Benwell Community Project, Benwell, Newcastle.

Benwell Community Project (1979) *From blacksmiths to white elephants: Benwell's changing shops*, Final Report Series No 7, Benwell Community Project, Benwell, Newcastle.

Benwell Community Project (1989) *Adamsez: the story of factory closure*, Final Report Series No 8, Benwell Community Project, Benwell, Newcastle.

Benwell Community Project (1981) *West Newcastle in growth and decline: a picture history*, Benwell Community Project, Benwell, Newcastle.

A selection of CDP inter-project reports

National CDP Inter-Project Editorial Team (1977) *Gilding the ghetto: the state and the poverty experiments*, London.

National CDP Inter-Project Editorial Team (1977) *Limits of the law*, London.

National CDP Report, (1981) *The costs of industrial change*, CDP Publications, Benwell.

Some of these local and inter-project reports are available electronically through a collection established by Sue Hyatt at the University Library, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, called *War on Poverty in Britain: Documents from the Community Development Projects*

www.ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/CDP

Hard copies of most of the original CDP reports are still available.

Contact: stjamesbenwell@gmail.com

10. Websites and contact details

Imagine North East website: www.durham.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/imagine

Timeline and blog for *Imagine North East*: www.imagenortheast.org

Contact for *Imagine North East*: s.j.banks@durham.ac.uk | Tel: **0191 3341497**

More details of the *Imagine* project as a whole can be found on the project website: www.imaginecommunity.org.uk | Follow the *Imagine* project on Twitter [@imagine_connect](https://twitter.com/imagine_connect)

Members of *Imagine North East* project team:

Durham University, Centre for Social Justice and Community Action:

Sarah Banks (coordinator), Andrea Armstrong (researcher), Emma Renno (secretary), Alan Townsend and David Byrne (statistics), Fred Robinson (policy), Gary Craig and Lena Dominelli (advisors).

Community partners: Judith Green (North East community projects coordinator), Clare Levi (Search), Anne Bonner and Bren Riley (Riverside Community Health Project), Michael Bell, Dean McMahon and Andi Kewley (Patchwork Youth Project), Judith Green (St James' Centre for Heritage and Culture and St James' Heritage and Environment Group), Ruth Taylor (Pender Good Neighbour Project), Michael Young and Ian Farrier (West Newcastle Picture History Collection); Philippa Southall and Paula McCormack (Meadow Well Connected), Phil McGrath and Yvonne Hall (Cedarwood Trust), Luke Johnston and Mike Burgess (Phoenix Detached Youth Project), Kath Smith (Remembering the Past, Resourcing the Future), Michael McHugh (Tyne and Wear Museums and Archives - Discovery Museum), Janette Hilton (Living History North East).

International advisors: Sue Hyatt (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis) and Harvinder Bedi (Development Support Team, Pune, India).