

## BELONGING TO BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

### Organisations Involved & Contact Details

**Organisation:** Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (UK)

**Email:** [info@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:info@blackburn.gov.uk)

**Website:** <http://www.bwdbelonging.org.uk/>

### Aims & Target Group

The aim of 'Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen' was to build more cohesive and, by definition, stronger communities. The borough recognises that this can only be achieved by strengthening citizenship and forging pride of place - a common understanding of a shared future where all citizens from every economic and cultural background are personal stakeholders.

Other objects of the project were to promote:

- citizenship values
- pride in the borough, its history and characteristics
- positive images of the different groups in society.

Heading the campaign is the Venerable John Hawley, Archdeacon of Blackburn, who chairs the 'Belonging' group, part of the Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion group of the Blackburn with Darwen Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

John said: "Since coming to the borough, I have been impressed by the rich cultural diversity and by the friendliness of the people. I believe that it's important to value everyone in society. This campaign aims to celebrate and build on the unity which is already here and acknowledge the contributions made by all sections of society."

The launch event, held at Ewood Park, home of premier league football side, Blackburn Rovers, was headed by the council's Leader, Sir Bill Taylor, and included a presentation by Ted Cattle, Chair of the Cross Ministerial Community Cohesion Group. Also in attendance were Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA) Executive Director Lucy de Groot and Ruby Dixon, the project sponsor for the IDeA's work with Blackburn with Darwen.

### Project Description & Components

#### Media campaign and charter

The 'Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen' campaign uses ordinary - and some extraordinary - citizens to get its message across. A poster and outdoor media campaign under the heading 'many lives ... many faces ... all belonging to Blackburn with Darwen' features local people saying why they are proud to belong to the borough and outlines some of their achievements.





The posters are backed up by stories in The Shuttle, the council's flagship monthly newspaper, and through the local media. All these citizens have a stake in the borough and its future and all have signed up to a 'charter of belonging', which is clear and uncompromising in its rejection of racism, prejudice and intolerance.

This formal charter was signed by the members of the LSP, and a shorter summary is being distributed across the borough so that the spirit of the charter is available to all.

### **Exhibition**

An exhibition entitled 'Transitions – 50 Years of Change in Blackburn with Darwen' was held from February to April 2004. This exhibition looked at how the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen had changed and improved over the previous 50 years.

Interviews with BwD residents conducted by the 'Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen' team were presented as written 'sound-bites' interspersed between the main exhibition panels. 'Fact flashes' looked at the statistics of change. The overriding message of the exhibition is one of optimism and a desire to make the most of our rich and diverse community.

After April, the exhibition went on tour to Community Centres, Schools, Libraries and Leisure Centres in the Borough. A member of staff was available to give an illustrated talk to community organisations.

### **Process**

The strategy for the campaign was developed through a strategic planning event held in June 2003 and facilitated by the IDeA. At this event, the LSP's community cohesion and social inclusion sub-group discussed launching a specific PR campaign that would operate through the local print, broadcast and outdoor advertising media.

### **Outcomes**

### **Challenges & Obstacles**

The challenges are:

1. While the main local newspaper did cover the campaign, its tone was initially grudging rather than enthusiastic. The LSP tried to tackle this by working to build better relationships with the editor, setting up a meeting with the chair of the Belonging Group the Venerable John Hawley, Archdeacon of Blackburn.
2. To secure resources and involve the community in the project on a more consistent and broader basis.

### **Funding**

The 'Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen' LSP campaign is funded by Government Office North West. The website is funded by the European Development Fund.

### **Images**

