

Wired Up for What?

More than 30 community champions gathered over two evenings in the new Wired Up Community centre at 291 Kensington to plan the ways that the Internet and other new technologies might help tackle problems of the area. All the participants had signed up to the programme and were due to take delivery of their computers shortly.

The champions are among the first of 2000 people to get computers as part of Kensington Wired Up Community (KWUC).

On the first evening, Robert Campbell introduced the session. Rob is head of Halcyon Consultants, the company that is helping establish KWUC. He explained: "The community champions will have a key role in the programme, working with local groups to help people use computers for the benefit of the community at large as well as themselves. They and others will get training and support, and help decide the direction KWUC takes".

The members of the support team then introduced themselves:

- Martin Dudley, Halcyon Consultants
- Sharon Doyle, Elaine Ford, community networkers
- Steve Edgar, Community Network Manager
- Steve Cantlay, Technical Director



Martin then introduced David Wilcox and Drew Mackie from *Making the Net Work* who would be running the workshops. David and Drew told how they had been working with communities throughout the UK, helping them to get online. The workshop process that the Kensington community was about to undertake, had already been tried by many other communities in the UK.

Workshop 1 Issues, Ideas & Projects

The audience was formed into five groups to discuss:

- The strengths of the area
- Its weaknesses
- Ideas for the future

After about 45 minutes, groups reported back to the rest of the audience. The results are shown overleaf.

Groups were now given a set of cards showing the sort of projects that might be used to benefit the community.

Each card had a point score to indicate its cost to run. Each group was asked to select the projects that would benefit the community most within a set number of points. Some of these projects were already being undertaken and were discarded. This left nine new projects (see list overleaf).

Workshop 2 Projects & First Steps

On the second evening, David introduced the results of the previous workshop showing that there were 9 projects that the community had suggested that were not already being done (see list overleaf). Volunteers were asked to act as a focus for these ideas. The audience split into idea discussion groups that thought through the first steps required to make the project idea happen. A second round of discussions allowed people to talk about more than one project idea.

Finally people were asked to sign up to assist one or more projects.

KENSINGTON WIRED UP COMMUNITY

KENSINGTON Wired Up Community (KWUC) is the first project of its kind in the country funded by the Department for Education and Employment under a £10 million programme. In Liverpool it is being developed with Kensington New Deal for Communities and Liverpool City Council.

Over the next two months 2000 computers will be offered free to local residents so that they can gain access to local information, learn and communicate using the Internet. In April 2000 the Department announced: "Homes in a number of pilot estates, tower blocks and rural areas will be brought online and linked to their own community web with access to government, job, health and education services. Families in these wired-up communities will find a range of ways to enhance their lives using new technology.

"A new mother will be able to tap into health services such as NHS Direct or the Parents website; children will access on-line revision and sites offering help with homework; an unemployed father could join an Internet job club and elderly relatives can take advantage of online shopping, cutting the burden of heavy shopping bags."

Other local people will benefit too:

- a local business can find out about government services, such as information on training and employment initiatives
- Local young people can tap into a range of services and create and design a web site made specifically for them.

Workshop 1 Results

Workshop 1—Issues and Ideas

In this part of the workshop, groups were asked to make lists of:

- **Strengths** (the things that make Kensington a good place to live and which can be built on for the future)
- **Weaknesses** (the things that detract from the quality of life in Kensington and which will lead to its decline)
- **Ideas** for the future.

Each group reported its findings back to the rest of the audience. The results had been recorded on paper and this was handed to the organisers for incorporation in this newsletter.

Groups were then given a set of cards, showing possible things a wired up community might want to do. These cards have been developed as part of a national programme. Groups selected the cards that seemed most appropriate to their assessment of Strengths / Weaknesses / Ideas. A member of each group then outlined the principles they had used to select the cards. The Thursday session ended with each group handing in the cards.



Strengths:

- People
- Community spirit, participation
- Belonging
- Local heritage
- Location, transport
- Parks, buildings
- Hopes, money coming, commitment
- New school planned
- Police
- Wired Up Community
- Land for development

Weaknesses

- Neglect, rubbish, waste land
- Loss of industry, banks, shopping
- Lack of training
- Dumping of problem families
- Hostels
- Crime: drugs, alcohol, prostitution
- Lack of police
- Run down property.
- Bad landlords
- No facilities for young people
- No one listening
- Health problems
- Unemployment
- Lack of investment
- No secondary school
- Apathy. Low self esteem
- Bad organisation. Confusion over roles.
- Racism
- Bad publicity and communications

Ideas

- Systems for better information and communication
- Network with businesses and business agencies
- Build on what's there
- Provide online access to services
- Develop online projects about housing design
- Develop projects to support local shopping
- Create a local area network
- Develop online health projects
- Put CCTV on the web
- Carry out a skills audit
- Create a civic centre
- Develop training to meet local employment
- Help parents and children to work together online
- Use online working to coordinate childcare and other group activities
- Develop education online
- Make money online
- Help those living alone

Workshop 2 Results

Workshop 2—Projects and Teams

On the Friday evening David presented an analysis of the previous night's results. This showed that the groups had selected a total of nine projects that were:

- Thought to be appropriate to the area
- Not being done at the moment or planned to for the future

Volunteers from the audience agreed to lead a discussion on these subjects and the audience split into interest groups. After a while the audience reformed into new groups as people followed up other groups in which they had an interest. Eventually people were asked to "sign up" to one or more projects so that each project had a team to take it forward. The projects (with teams in brackets) were:

Community grid/extranet

(Karen Flynn, Enid Bristow, Kathleen Hughes, Lucy Halligan, Rose Cody, Steve Niccol, A.T. Hankin, Y and T Mason, N. Darwin)

- Provides a local communication system with controlled access
- Would enable local agencies to get in touch with local people
- Way to access local skills
- Neighbours can be alerted easily
- Online neighbourhood watch
- Could promote local shopping
- Support credit union
- Work with schools, homework support
- Enable contact with local services

Support for local groups

(Enid Bristow, Barry Evans, Kathleen Hughes, Rose Cody, Norman Darwin)

- Audit of local groups and extent of IT knowledge
- Discover interests of these groups
- Consider funding needs and find volunteers to pull ideas together
- Share resources
- Cater for different languages
- Create a Website - Kennyweb

Disabilities support

(Pat Scanlon, Colette Nodwell, Kathleen Hughes, Enid Bristow, R. Cody)

- Issue of technology, training, ideas.
- Should cover all ages
- Technology: depends on needs identified. Ensure 'Bobby' compliant.
- Consider a range of delivery - email, Web, radio etc
- Trainers must be competent
- Existing computers may require upgrades, additions
- Translations may be needed
- Will require outreach worker
- Ideas: database of appropriate software; work with tech people; sell experience on to others.

Gateway web site

(Steve Niccol, Anne T. Hankin, Steve Edgar)

- Portal into Kensington, out to the world
- ICDC at John Moores University has suggested
 - Interactive history project
 - Journalism training
 - Contact with expats



MAKING THE NETWORK

THE WORKSHOPS were assisted by the *Making the Net Work* organisation. This is a group of people from the UK and the US who have been working with communities who are in the process of getting online.

MTNW has developed a series of aids for communities who are thinking of getting online. This consists of:

- Methods of auditing existing resources in the community
- Games to introduce ideas for what communications technology can do for the community and to demonstrate how to produce a business plan
- Ways of initiating and building online projects led by the community.

The organisation has been asked by Kensington Wired Up Community programme to assist in running workshops to get the community to explore what benefits communications technology can bring.

The danger in all community projects of this sort is that the technology becomes the starting point rather than the needs of the community itself.

The workshops are intended to start with community needs and then decide where the technology can help to address these.

See www.makingthenetwork.org.uk

(Continued on page 4)

Results

(Continued from page 3)

- Content on Liverpool bands
- Story telling by residents
- Online arts club

Literacy programme

(Pat Thomas, Andy Lockwood, Patience Jones, Curdial Rekhi)

- Parents work with children
- Support teaching of English as a second language
- Consider software needs
- Will require a worker
- Develop programmes to back up national curriculum

Faith-based activities

(Raymond Smith, Andy Lockwood, Kathleen Hughes, Enid Bristow, Kiran Khaneja)

- Multi-sectarian services—Web cast to those who cannot attend
- Requires a web designer
- Research religious web links
- Hymn and prayer libraries
- Information base about what is happening in churches

Fee-based services

(Steve Edgar, Steve Niccol, Doreen Morris, Eric Morris, Frank Meehan)

- Should address the issue of how the project sustains itself
- Training suite could provide web and other training, and could be let to other agencies
- Web site could provide services for traders, promote local shops—have captive audience of 2000 people
- Sell experience to other pilots
- Develop as a centre of excellence
- Build on Liverpool's creative resources

Local paper

(Alan Lightfoot, Barry Evans, Anne T. Hankin, Brian Kendal, Ian Fisher)

- Develop local news content/magazine on the gateway web site or linked
- Lively, monthly, aimed at all ages
- Reflect community interests
- Input from all community interests

Youthnet

(Anne Devin, Ann Brady, Marie Doran, Rose Cody, Sharon Doyle, Kelly Barton, Ian Fisher, Elaine Ford)

- Aim at 13-25 year olds
- Provide anytime chat facilities
- Problems page with a mentor
- Homework help
- Drug, drink advice
- Sexual health advice - doctor on site
- International links
- Places to go, local venues, bands, clubs, pubs
- Information on jobs, career advice, accommodation for students
- Site should be run by young people. Start with a survey. Will need tutors, volunteers.

What Next?

IMMEDIATELY AFTER the workshops, KWUC team members began to plan how to put some of the ideas into practice, working with those who 'signed up' to projects.

A top priority will be developing an online network to serve the champions, other users of the 2000 computers, and key interests in the area. This was discussed by the 'community grid/extranet' project team at the workshop.

The network will use a specially-designed email service to provide users with facilities to develop online newsletters and discussion forums as well as communicate one-to-one.

Users will be given password-protected accounts, and training in the use of the system.

The network will be linked to and complement and publicly-accessible web pages.

The network will be using the same system as that which already links other community technology centres and specialists around the country. In that way Kensington community champions would be able to share experience with others in the UK.

Another priority is to develop a training programme for the champions and other users. Experience elsewhere shows that people need training and support on several fronts:

- the basics of using computers and the Internet
- communication on a community network
- 'training for champions'

As well as working with the champions, the KWUC team is supported by a number of specialist groups. The Business Development group will be starting work shortly on how to support and involve local companies.

The Lifelong Learning group is already developing plans to link to local educational initiatives.

The Community Content group looks at skills already in the area and how, using the training and technology these can be improved