

The Granada Community Challenge

Developing the concept was the easy bit. Take five companies from the North West, take a group of dynamic managers with a broad range of skills from each of those companies, then ask five urban communities in the region, what could make a real difference to their everyday lives.

This 'wish list' drawn up by each community was the starting point for the Granada Community Challenge. Each area identified a lack of facilities for young people as its number one priority. What The Challenge then went on to achieve is breathtaking. Thanks to the skills, enthusiasm and endeavour of the teams, five housing estates are benefiting from facilities worth around £6.5 million.

Although the concept was simple, the reality was not. The communities and companies first had to learn to trust and understand each other before a real working partnership could be formed.

The next step was to convince close to 1000 companies to become involved - donating materials and services to help bring these five projects to life.

This brochure is a tribute to the five teams from BRITISH AEROSPACE AIRBUS, BNFL, MANWEB, GREENALLS and NORWEB; to their organisations, and to the people of Blacon, Medlock, Kirkby, the Blackbrook and Grasmere estates in Warrington, and Miles Platting in Manchester. Furthermore, it is a tribute to all the local authorities, police and countless other agencies whose contributions helped to ensure the success of The Challenge.

Thanks must go to Rob McLoughlin who has chaired The Challenge and steered it throughout; Joanna Hartley, the outstanding Challenge co-ordinator and producer; David Clark of Business in the Community (BiTC) who demonstrated all the necessary qualities of leadership and foresight; to Steve Jennings and Terry Thomas of The Co-operative Bank; The Duke of Westminster, Geoffrey Piper and the other members of the North West Business Leadership Team, and to Phil Harris and his colleagues at Manchester Metropolitan University, who are evaluating The Challenge and its impact.

Thanks also to everyone at Granada TV who played a key part - Dianne Nemes, Mike Spencer, Sue Woodward, Bob Greaves, Lucy Meacock, Mark Owen, Don Jones and Jillian Wood.

We also very much appreciate the support of BDH Advertising who have created this commemorative brochure, and we reserve a special word of thanks for the families of the teams, who throughout have shared the tears and laughter of this phenomenal Challenge.

Signed



Charles L. Allen
Chief Executive, Granada Television



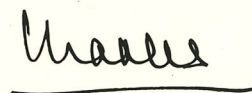
ST. JAMES'S PALACE

When I visited Manchester earlier this year I was delighted to see for myself the enormous difference that the Granada Community Challenge has made to people in the North West.

The Granada Challenge is about far more than putting up buildings. It is about building community spirit, putting neighbourhoods back on the map and bringing new opportunities to people living in the most difficult conditions.

For many years I have been a passionate believer in the positive changes that can happen when businesses work in partnership with their local communities. The experience drawn from many practical examples up and down Britain shows that these partnerships are most effective when local people are firmly in the driving seat, and when businesses invest the whole range of their resources - including, most critically, the skills and energy of their people.

I do congratulate Granada Television for the vision and courage which have inspired such an innovative way of engaging companies in their communities. I also want to pay tribute to the enormous commitment, enthusiasm and ingenuity of the teams of volunteers from British Aerospace, Norweb, Manweb, BNFL and Greenalls who have turned Granada's vision into five new facilities that will be tremendous assets for local people.



Chief Executives' Statement

For too long a lack of community facilities has characterised so many housing estates across the north west of England.

We are delighted that our company teams have been able to play their part in breathing new life and energy into five forgotten corners of our region.

The commitment, hard work and enthusiasm of everyone involved - the teams, the residents, the local authorities and the wealth of companies who have helped - must stand as a testament to the value of partnership.

We hope our combined achievements will inspire others to identify challenges of their own and come to realise that involvement of this kind really can make a profound difference to a community and ultimately, to the quality of all our lives.

Signed:



KEN HARVEY, Chairman & Chief Executive, Norweb plc



ANDREW THOMAS, Chairman & Chief Executive, The Greenalls Group plc



NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN CBE, Chief Executive, BNFL



JOHN ROBERTS, Chief Executive, Manweb plc



SYD GILLIBRAND, Vice Chairman, British Aerospace plc

Business in the Community

Business in the Community is an association of nearly 500 leading companies which aims to raise the quality and extent of business involvement in the community.

Five years ago HRH The Prince of Wales, the President of BiTC, invited Charles Allen to take part in his "Seeing is Believing" programme - where business leaders visit community projects to understand the issues facing local communities and the opportunities for business to help tackle community needs.

BiTC is delighted to play its part in The Challenge and thrilled to watch its stunning success.

Signed:



JULIA CLEVERDON, Chief Executive, BiTC



A team of four academic researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University's Business Studies Department are tracking the Granada Community Challenge.

John Avery, Cathy Bakewell, Alan Marsden and Phil Harris have been involved since September 1994 in monitoring developments. Their approach is that of a critical, independent observer.

The MMU study is not only evaluating the physical side of things - the way the building designs were developed and how the five teams have used their contacts to acquire resources - it also looks in depth at the various communities who stand to benefit. This has meant hundreds of hours of interviews plus a survey designed to measure the attitude of residents in all five Challenge areas.

Early findings indicate that the planning and erection of buildings are just one aspect of this initiative; the other vital element is the fostering and confidence-building of a local community in order that it can become self-sustaining. This is no easy task and will take time.

The Challenge seems, after much hard work by all parties, to be addressing this. It is pointing to how a partnership of leading businesses, agencies, local authorities and the media can enable communities to help themselves.

MMU's study also involves looking at the effectiveness of each company in meeting its objectives and at the efficacy of Granada and BiTC in co-ordinating and managing the overall project.

MMU's researchers, aided by a team of final year students, expect to publish their interim findings in Autumn 1995. This will be followed by a further report when the facilities are operational. The team will revisit each community over the next couple of years to see what long term progress has been made and how the various communities are coping with the on-going management of the facilities.

It is hoped that the detailed analysis being carried out by MMU and its subsequent publication will allow lessons to be learned and best practice to be emulated elsewhere.

For more details contact Phil Harris, Dept of Business Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University, Aytoun Building, Aytoun Street, Manchester M1 3GH.

Message from His Grace The Duke of Westminster

It is marvellous that through this Challenge inspired by Charles Allen and Granada Television, young people will have access to a range of state of the art facilities in which they are true stakeholders.

Having been present at Granada's studios for the launch of the Community Challenge, it was a great pleasure less than a year later, to be invited to open the first project at Blacon in Chester, in April 1995.

Here, the British Aerospace team skilfully engineered a purpose built centre, staffed by fully committed youth workers, which will provide excellent leisure and educational facilities alongside the chance to develop computer skills and opportunities for local teenagers to take part in a range of outdoor pursuits.

This, like all five Challenge projects, has only been made possible thanks to a monumental level of commitment by everyone involved.

Originally the teams were given nine months and told "see what you can achieve in that time". These men and women have shown remarkable stamina and tenacity - juggling their day jobs and personal lives with the pressures of meeting The Challenge and from what I have seen, invariably with good heart.

They have also demonstrated astounding ingenuity and determination in resolving finance, planning and bureaucratic stumbling blocks.

I have also been immensely impressed throughout by the way in which young people's views, so often overlooked, have been an integral part of the decision-making process and I feel sure this will contribute to the long-term success of The Challenge projects.

Chairman, North West Business Leadership Team

