



# Supporting wider community involvement in plans and decisions

2:15pm – 3:15pm



Local Trust



# Supporting Wider Community Involvement in plans and decisions.

Sara Bryson: Assistant Director, North at Citizens UK  
and Lead Organiser.

Val Barron: Community Organiser.





## Paint it orange! The charity turning anger into hope - and quick action

but this is classic scapegoating. Immigrants aren't the problem, the problem is they haven't been heard. People are losing faith that democracy works. Unless we can reimagine democracy and have people in their community at the heart, it worries me where it will lead. That's where you get confrontation and violence on the street."

At the bus station, Mish Sony relates another win. When she was at St Thomas More she and a lot of other sixth formers were struggling to pay full-price bus fares after turning 16. Some were skipping classes or getting off the bus early because they couldn't afford the whole journey. Mish emailed the bus company, Arriva, but didn't get a reply. "Through our relationship with Citizens we managed to get a seat at the table with the mayor, explained our situation. He emailed Arriva and, lo and behold, got an answer within an hour."

Mish and her friends arranged a meeting with Aviva's top brass and went along wearing their parents' work clothes to emphasise they weren't adults. "My mum's a nurse so I wore her scrubs," she says.

The result of this audaciousness was the Get Round For £1 scheme across the north-east, offering single fares for £1 on the bus and metro up to the age of 21. It can feel hopeless at the moment, especially as a young person, says Mish, who is now studying pharmacy at Newcastle University. "On your own it's like there's no point in talking about or sharing this, who's going to listen?" she says. "But having been involved with Citizens UK it's clear you can make a change, people will listen to you."

Alexander Scott Park used to be an unappealing place, strewn with bottles, needles and dog poo. The swings didn't have seats, because

## ROUNDS QUESTION

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**How much power do  
you feel your  
community has?**







