



PRIDE IN PLACE

LED BY YOU – BACKED BY UK GOVERNMENT

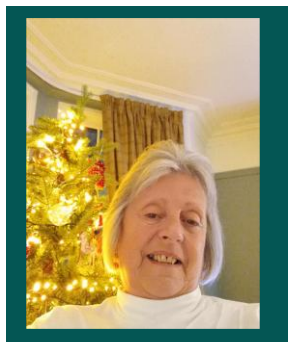
Workshop facilitators

Jeanette Harold, Big Local area advisor

Setting up and making plans

Jeanette's passion about local people being heard and involved in decisions affecting their lives led to her 40+ years working across the sectors in neighbourhoods now classed as doubly disadvantaged. She developed and managed various projects/programmes including Retford Action Centre, Nottinghamshire, Anti Poverty Work Nationally, Health Partnerships in Southwest Scotland and Sure Start and Community Networks in Cumbria and the Northeast. Jeanette has been involved as a rep and assessor for the Big Local Programme since the start. She also developed the powerful "I am ME" (Independent, Assertive, Mature, Motivated and Empowered) programme initially for children also now delivered to Women in the Justice System, Mixed Mental Health Groups and Men's Groups. She has undertaken research with Mental Health Service Users and BME Communities and is a member of the lived experience group contributing to the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods.

Always an active volunteer in her own communities from setting up a youth club with her sisters after moving to England to her present position as Chair of the Eden Miners Centre. Coming up through the "ranks" she came to academia later and holds a degree in Business Management, a Post Graduate Diploma in Management Studies as well as City & Guilds Adult Teaching Qualification and an OCN Level 3: Understanding and Implementing a Restorative Approach and Peace Circles.



Rita Lawson, Tees Valley Rural Action

Setting up and making plans

Rita Lawson is Chief Executive of Tees Valley Rural Action (TVRA) and has over 35 years' experience supporting rural and community-led development across the North East and North Yorkshire. She has led TVRA for the past 11 years, following a career in senior roles across the public, private and voluntary sectors, with a long-standing focus on tackling rural disadvantage and enabling inclusive, place-based change.

A core principle of Rita's work is supporting communities to shape their own futures. She has worked closely with residents, local authorities, funders and voluntary organisations to ensure that local voices, lived experience and community pride are embedded in decision-making and investment.

Rita played a key role in the Big Local programme as CEO of TVRA, which acted as the Locally Trusted Organisation for the East Cleveland Villages Big Local. In this role, she provided financial stewardship, monitoring and governance support, ensuring that Big Local investment was managed transparently, responsibly and in line with residents' priorities. Alongside this formal role, Rita supported the East Cleveland Villages partnership to develop strong ways of working, build trust, and collaborate effectively for the long-term benefit of their communities. This included supporting partnership development, shared leadership and collective ownership—central to fostering local Pride in Place.

Rita is a Trustee and Treasurer of two charities and was previously nominated to join the ACRE Board, reflecting her commitment to strong governance and rural advocacy. She brings a blend of strategic leadership, practical experience and a deep belief in community power.

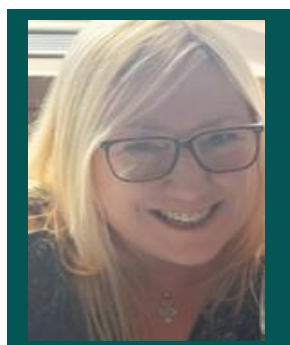


Dan Crowe, 3ni

Building strong partnerships - local authority perspective

Dan is director of 3ni, a new social value partnership, recently spun-out from Local Trust. 3ni brings together policy, practice, and the latest research and cutting-edge data and diagnostic tools to support local government and public sector partners to work with disadvantaged communities to transform neighbourhoods across the country. It also hosts the national network for neighbourhood improvement, sharing best and next practice to support community-led regeneration.

He incubated 3ni at Local Trust, where he previously led the policy team, in particular on the work and research programme for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for 'left behind' neighbourhoods, advocating for a Community Wealth Fund, and making the case for C4, the ESRC-funded Centre for Collaboration in Community Connectedness. Dan has a background in local and regional government, working for the elected Mayors of London and in the north east of England, in regeneration policy at the Homes and Communities Agency, and for the think tanks Localis, New Europe, The Young Foundation, and Collaborate. He has been an elected leader in the British co-operative movement, serving as Vice-President of the Co-operative Group where he led on the creation of its community strategy and as a trustee of the Co-operative Foundation. He is a Fellow of the RSA.



Barbara Slasor, Gaunless Gateway Big Local

Building strong partnerships - local authority perspective

Barbara has overseen the strategic use of £1.15 million in Big Local funding, working closely with residents, local authorities, voluntary organisations and other partners to build trust, navigate challenge and sustain collaboration over time. Her work focuses on creating practical ways for diverse partners to work together, particularly in contexts shaped by historical tension, inequality and limited trust.

A strong advocate for inclusive governance and shared leadership, Barbara has supported communities whose voices are often unheard, including contributing to the UK Covid Inquiry through the Communities Matter programme. Alongside her community development role, she brings governance and partnership experience as a school governor, charity trustee, and director of BS Consultancy and Continuum CIC.



At the Pride in Place Winter Event Series, Barbara will share practical insights into building and maintaining cross-sector partnerships, supporting resident leadership, and creating the conditions for long-term, collective action at neighbourhood level.



Alex Boys, Local Trust

Looking ahead: legacy in 2036 and beyond

Alex has over 20 years' experience of supporting resident-led action and community empowerment.

Joining Local Trust in 2024, he leads our Delivery Team, with responsibility for delivery of the Big Local programme, our grant funding process and support offer.

In previous roles, Alex supported development of the Big Local programme at the National Lottery Community Fund and led a local infrastructure organisation in the West Midlands, providing support to resident-led partnerships and community organisations.

Prior to joining Local Trust, Alex held the position of Deputy CEO of NAVCA, the national body for local VCSE infrastructure organisations, where he played a key national role in developing the quality of local community sector support, and building voluntary sector engagement in new health and care structures.

He is a trustee of Black Country Together, a charity supporting community and public sector collaboration.



David Carnaffan, North Tyneside Big Local

Looking ahead: legacy in 2036 and beyond

David Carnaffan has worked as Chief Executive of North Tyneside Big Local (formerly Whitley Bay Big Local) since 2020. He has worked in the voluntary sector for almost 20 years, including 11 years as a funder and a further 9 years in various roles for delivery organisations. A member of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising, David has developed expertise in applying for funding to trusts and foundations, but takes a particular interest in different approaches taken by charities to achieve financial and environmental sustainability. Alongside his day job, David is also chair of a grassroots community organisation in his home-town of North Shields.



Vicky Garfitt, North Tyneside Big Local

Looking ahead: legacy in 2036 and beyond

Vicky Garfitt is a community-focused programme leader from Whitley Bay. She is a Board member of Whitley Bay/North Tyneside Big Local, supporting resident-led development, good governance, and strategic planning. Professionally, Vicky is a UK Portfolio Manager at The National Lottery Community Fund, where she helps shape and deliver large-scale programmes that strengthen communities across the UK. She works collaboratively and inclusively, helping create spaces where people can learn from one another, build confidence, and drive meaningful, long-term change.

Stephanie Draper, Involve

Inclusive partnerships and decision making

Stephanie is Acting CEO of Involve, a charity working to make public participation an everyday part of our democracy and help solve the big challenges of our time. She has over 20 years experience working on complex projects, bringing people together, to deliver sustainability and equity. She is skilled in participation and deliberation and has spent much of her career designing, innovating and delivering participatory change processes with the public and other actors. She advises many organisations on public engagement and works extensively to deliver impact engagements on a range of issues.

She is a member of the DESNZ Public Engagement Working Group. She joined Involve from Bond - the membership body for the UK's international development agencies where she was their CEO. She was previously Deputy CEO and Chief Change Officer at Forum for the Future. She is dedicated to improving our democracy, ensuring that people are able to shape the decisions that affect them and creating a just and sustainable future. She oversaw Bond's work on protecting civic space and democracy in the UK and around the world. She founded and chaired the Sustainable Shipping Initiative and is Chair of Creative Response, an arts based mental health charity.



Nick Plumb, Power to Change



Building strong partnerships - community/third sector perspective

Nick leads Power to Change's think-do work on community renewal, shaping the research, policy and storytelling that help communities build power through community business. He designs and delivers mixed-methods programmes—combining participatory insight with practical testing in place—then translates what works into policy ideas, narratives and coalitions that can shift how institutions invest in communities.

Over the past decade Nick has worked across local economics, cohesion, climate, immigration, democratic reform and devolution, with a consistent focus on how places rebuild resilience, belonging and opportunity. At Power to Change he built the organisation's policy and advocacy function and later brought together policy, research and communications to strengthen external influence. He also served on the Board of the Government's High Streets Task Force, contributing to national thinking on high street renewal and place-based regeneration.

Jo Cooper, Back on the Map



Building strong partnerships - community/third sector perspective

Jo is CEO of Back on the Map; a Charity and community business with £4.8M of residential and commercial assets in Hendon, Sunderland. Responsible for providing strategic leadership, management and direction. Jo has over 15 years of experience working in the VCS sector and is passionate about the vital and broad work of the sector. She sits on the Board of the Sunderland VCS Alliance, is Chair of Global Teacher and gives her time generously to support other VCS organisations.

She is driven by and committed to putting local people at the heart of regeneration. She is motivated by people in supporting disadvantaged communities to codesign locally-responsive and sustainable solutions to entrenched problems, including housing and high street regeneration.



Shaheen Warren, Power to Change

Building strong partnerships - community/third sector perspective

Shaheen provides leadership to our Practice and Innovation work, focused on developing partnerships to catalyse our future impact. She works at the intersection of policy and practice innovation, regularly convening partners at local, regional and national level to work alongside community businesses—improving outcomes for people and places and generating insights to influence policy. She brings extensive experience in service design, community engagement and public sector reform, with a focus on building more inclusive and sustainable local economies. She believes in meaningful collaboration at the local level and is passionate about creating the conditions for communities to take power and shape their futures.



Laura Fisher, Local Trust

Practical approaches to measuring success

Laura has worked in Local Trust's research team since summer 2019. She led on the Measuring Change support offer which matched evaluation specialists with Big Local partnerships and plays a key role in gathering the achievements and learning from Big Local areas as part of the Learning from Big Local project.

Before joining Local Trust, Laura worked at London Youth, a membership and advocacy organisation for youth organisations across London. Here, she was involved in programme evaluation and a variety of research projects, including a report on young people and communities.



Jack Loughanane, Local Trust

Practical approaches to measuring success

Jack has worked at Local Trust since August 2023 as a senior researcher. He leads on a range of projects including the Partnership Reviews and Partnership Member Surveys. Jack's background is in social psychology. Before joining Local Trust, Jack completed his PhD in the University of Limerick, Ireland which was funded by the Irish Research Council.

His research utilises advanced quantitative research methods and he has previously taught analysis and research methods at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.



Lisa Goodwin, Connected Voice

Providing the support infrastructure

Lisa Goodwin is Chief Executive of Connected Voice, the VCSE infrastructure organisation for Newcastle and Gateshead, where she has worked since 2019. Lisa has worked in VCSE infrastructure roles in the North East for the past 20 years and is particularly interested in community building, innovation, and developing the role that the VCSE sector plays in public sector partnerships.

Sara Bryson, Tyne and Wear Citizens

Supporting wider community involvement in plans and decisions

Sara has previously worked with children, young people, and communities to ensure their views and experiences inform policy, practice, and research for over 25 years - both regionally and nationally within Sure Start Children's Centres, Children's Fund, The Children's Society, and the Office for the Children's Commissioner for England. As Head of Policy & Research at Children North East, she developed 'Poverty Proofing the School Day,' a nationally celebrated programme to remove barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils.

In a voluntary capacity, Sara is currently Chair of Trustees at West End Women & Girls Centre. Sara also served as a Commissioner on IPPR's Commission on Economic Justice (2016-2018). Sara was born and raised in the west end of Newcastle and studied at the London School of Economics (LSE). She is a 2016 (North East Specialist) Clore Social Leadership Fellow and a Fellow at the RSA. She lives in Newcastle with her two children and is passionate about social justice and tackling poverty and inequality.

Val Barron, Tyne and Wear Citizens

Supporting wider community involvement in plans and decisions

Val Barron is a community organiser working across communities in the North East. She currently works for Tyne and Wear Citizens, which brings together 35 institutions from civil society to work together for the common good. With over a decade of experience of community



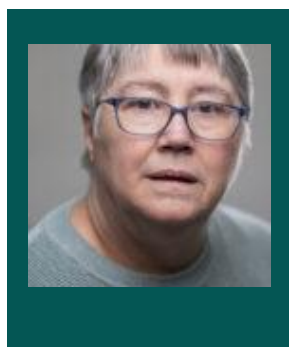
Some of the campaigns Val has been involved in has resulted in higher wages, equality within the free school meal system and a Hate Crime Charter for public transport. The latest campaign was lead by primary school children in Elswick Newcastle who won £250,000 to improve their local park.

All this change is won by local leaders, and Val is a competent coach delivering organising training to hundreds of community members from very different background and in different settings.

Val has a doctorate and is a guest lecturer at Durham University and other training institutions. Val is a trained nurse and is currently a trustee of the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead.

Debbie Lamb, Locality

Investing in community buildings



Debbie Lamb is Locality's Development Manager based in North-East England. She is an advocate of community asset ownership, and her work has included support for community organisations around the acquisition, refurbishment and management of assets and support for local authorities in developing and implementing asset transfer strategies. Debbie's experience also includes business planning, governance and investment readiness. Debbie has a detailed understanding of community shares and social investment. She is a SFEDI qualified social enterprise adviser and an advisor on Community Led Housing.

Alison Berwick, Locality

Investing in community buildings



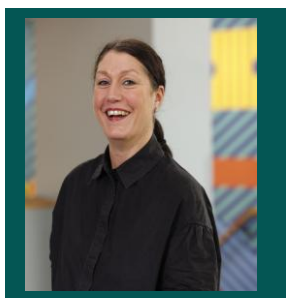
Alison leads the Locality Central and North team and is based in the East Midlands. She has 30 years' experience in the voluntary and charity sector. She has a strong focus on heritage, arts and culture, place-based initiatives, as well as blue and green and high street regeneration. These have ranged from small volunteer-led community groups to local authority multimillion-dollar regeneration projects. She has a wide range of experience around assets and also worked on the MHCLG's Community Ownership Project. Experience includes options appraisals, feasibility studies, master planning, business planning, business support, governance and finance, community engagement, project development, volunteering, capacity building and mentoring, developing and delivering training, monitoring and evaluation. Alison specialised in funding for projects and is also a community shares practitioner.



Rob Huggins, Liberdade Community Development Trust

Investing in community buildings

Rob Huggins is the founder and CEO of Liberdade Community Development Trust. Liberdade is a disability arts organisation based in Newcastle upon Tyne. In 2012, the Liberdade company members (all of whom have a learning disability) decided that they wanted a building of their own, and so Gosforth Civic Theatre (GCT) was opened in 2016. GCT was obtained via a CAT and was recently voted the best Northeast Cultural Venue of the Year at the 2025 Culture Awards. Rob has 25 years of experience in running voluntary organisations at board and director level, and he has skills around fundraising/business development, capital project delivery, and Theory of Change. He is passionate about fairness, community cohesion, and empowering people with learning disabilities to create the world they want to live in.



Natasha Almond, Local Trust

Meaningful resident leadership in decision making about resources

Natasha coordinates support for Big Local partnerships in the Northeast region and parts of Yorkshire. She aims to support areas to have the resources, information, advice, and guidance to complete the implementation of each Big Local area plan.

Natasha is experienced in community engagement, and development, setting up several grassroots organisations and movements that include: York Timebank, Refugee Action York, Magnetic Arts, Good Organisation and Cotermious.

Natasha is passionate about systems change, and Asset Based Community Development and has worked at a strategic level in the transformation of health and wellbeing support across the Yorkshire region. Natasha is an experienced facilitator, developing models to support consensus within community conflict resolution, coproduction processes, and service transformation.



Sadie Oddy, BEAT

Meaningful resident leadership in decision making about resources

Sadie Oddy leads BEAT with a clear belief in the power of belonging and community. With deep roots in Leeds and many years of community work behind her, she brings warmth, creativity, and a clear strategic vision to the charity. Her work balances everyday connection with residents and long-term leadership — strengthening partnerships, securing opportunities, and guiding the development of BEAT's spaces and services. Sadie is deeply committed to ensuring community voices shape decision making, not only within BEAT but across the wider city, championing lived experience as a driving force for meaningful, lasting change. Central to her approach is supporting people to recognise their own strengths, use their voice, and shape meaningful change.
