



10 DOWNING STREET

Press Notice

BIG SOCIETY AWARDS

2012

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The Social Media Surgery is the latest Big Society Award Winner

The Social Media Surgery, created to support community and voluntary groups, is the latest winner of the Prime Minister's Big Society Award.

The first Social Media Surgery was organised by Birmingham entrepreneur Nick Booth in 2008. Having set up his own successful social media company, Podnosh, Nick wanted to help charities and other voluntary groups to make the most of social media to support their work. For many local groups social media is a much cheaper and more effective way of reaching target groups than traditional communications. With support from the Birmingham Bloggers group, he held the first 'social media surgery' in Birmingham in October 2008. These are very informal events bringing together people with web expertise and the desire to share it with people who need help to get their community group online. No lectures, no curriculum, just a relaxed space where people can learn together.

The surgeries were incredibly popular and led Nick to create the Social Media Surgery Plus website to help people all over the country to coordinate their own events. Surgeries are now held in 60 locations around the UK with nearly 400 volunteer "surgeons" giving their time to help nearly 1,700 local groups and active citizens take advantage of the internet to support their cause.

Congratulating Nick Booth on the award, the Prime Minister said:

"This is an excellent initiative - such a simple idea and yet so effective. The popularity of these surgeries and the fact that they have inspired so many others across the country to follow in their footsteps, is testament to its brilliance.

"Congratulations to Nick and all the volunteers who have shared their time and expertise to help so many local groups make the most of the internet to support their community. A great example of the Big Society in action."

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Nick Booth User
Monday, 12:32 PM
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Accepting the award, Nick Booth said:

“It’s wonderful to have recognition for everyone who has organised a social media surgery or turned up to volunteer their help. I think the surgeries work because they are simple. They are very easy to organise, fun to do and not in the least bit intimidating for people who want some help. They give active citizens and community groups the confidence and skills to use social media to campaign, organise and hold power to account. They’ve grown because of the passion and energy of bloggers and voluntary groups up and down the country.”

Some of the success stories from the surgeries include:

- **The Central Birmingham Neighbourhood Forum** was one of the first to benefit, creating a blog to share their news and campaign for better planning in the city centre. Karen Caine used the surgery initially to get advice and help, then became confident enough in using social media to become an expert helper in her own right. She also uses flip cameras to capture residents’ stories and share those with local councillors. <http://brumcitycentre.wordpress.com/>
- **Alison Smith from Telford** sought advice at a social media surgery to help her campaign for improved access to venues and service for disabled people. “When I started I didn’t know how powerful social media could be, the surgeries were a huge help in getting Pesky People started” Since then she has gone onto develop <http://www.peskypeople.co.uk/> , including creating mobile applications which help people track and review access to venues across the UK. “What I remember was how helpful people were, everyone was smiling and enjoying themselves. It was really informal and very welcoming. I didn’t feel stupid asking any of my questions and it gave me confidence to go away and experiment. I was unemployed at the time and certainly couldn’t afford to pay anyone for that advice.”
- **Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery in Birmingham** now use social media to organise, share news and raise funds. Sarah Courbet said “The surgeries are such a perfect way to learn. You get what you need: friendly approachable help.” <http://fbec.org.uk/>

Notes to Editors

On Social Media Surgery Plus

www.socialmediasurgery.com was built to make it easier for people to set up and manage social media surgeries. It’s free for any individual to use, although is now also used commercially by organisations such as housing associations and local government to help them nurture and track online civic conversations. Much of the work on social media surgery plus was the volunteer effort of Podnosh and Birmingham based coder Josh Hart <http://www.thatjoshhart.co.uk/>

Nick Booth contact details. nick.booth@podnosh.com / 0777 9095692 / 0121 224 7400

On the Big Society Awards:

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The Big Society Awards were set up by the Prime Minister in November 2010. The aim is to acknowledge individuals and organisations across the UK that demonstrate the Big Society in their work or activities. In so doing, the aim is also to galvanise others to follow.

The award focuses upon three specific areas:

- Promoting social action – people being, and being encouraged to be, more involved in their communities through giving time, money and other resources.
- Empowering communities – local people taking control of how things are done in their area and being helped to do this by local government and others.
- Opening up public services – public sector organisations and individuals demonstrating innovative ways of delivering public services and charities, social enterprises and private companies showing new ways of delivering public services.

Launching the awards, the Prime Minister said:

“There are some amazing projects and remarkable voluntary work going on in towns and cities up and down the country, by all kinds of organisations from large enterprises to tiny grassroots schemes and inspirational individuals.

“These awards are a chance to pay tribute to those making a valuable contribution to their community, the real champions of the Big Society, but perhaps more importantly, I hope they will motivate many others to take action, get involved and drive change in their area.”

Nominations come in from the general public after which there follows a process of scoring and short-listing by officials and a further short-listing by a Panel of Ministers and independent external experts. This Panel makes recommendations to the Prime Minister who then presents the final award. Around twelve winners are decided each quarter meeting and then announced throughout the year.

For more information visit: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/bigsocietawards>

Thirty - two winners have been announced to date:

Make a Difference	South East – a project that inspires young people in Milton Keynes to better their lives and those around them through positive action and volunteering
Why Not Change	North West – a social enterprise which builds the confidence and capability of individuals and organisations to make a positive difference
HERO	North West – a project that inspires an enterprise culture amongst young people in Blackpool and beyond
Food Cycle	London – a project that brings together young volunteers, surplus food and free kitchen space to create nutritious meals for people affected by food poverty in the UK.
Biddick Hall Community Focus Group	North East – a project that has transformed the community through local action on health, crime, employment and activities for young people
Altogether Better	Yorks & Humber – a programme involving volunteer Community Health Champions engaging with communities to help them lead healthier lifestyles
Greenwich Leisure Limited	London – a social enterprise that manages over 70 public leisure centres in partnership with 20 councils across the South East
Kendray Initiative	Yorks & Humber – a project that has transformed the community through local action on housing, crime, employment and activities for young people
CREATE	Yorks & Humber – a not-for-profit company which delivers innovative training and employment opportunities for people who have been homeless, marginalised or vulnerable.
Central Surrey Health	South East – a social enterprise providing community nursing and therapy services on behalf of NHS Surrey and other partners
The Old Vic Tunnels	South East – A unique performance space offering opportunities for young people to gain experience in production and be part of an innovative and diverse arts venue
Shelley Community Association	Yorks – Shelley Community Association, a voluntary organisation that represents and brings together village residents
The Sweet Project	A social enterprise that develops and trains students while supporting families in deprived areas

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Bevendean Local Action Team	A volunteer run initiative that aims to reduce anti-social behaviour and promote pride in their local community.
Disability Challengers	South East – A children’s charity offering exciting activities and play opportunities for disabled children and young people
Higher Croft Action Group	North West – A group of volunteers making a difference to the lives of young people in Blackburn
Wotton under Edge Swimming Pool	South West – Wotton under Edge Swimming Pool Club, a group of volunteer swimming enthusiasts who mobilised the whole community in support of their local pool
Christine Gibson	East – An individual who brought together people from her community and worked with her housing association to make a real difference to her fellow residents.
Digi Steps	South West – a social enterprise run by school pupils who wanted to share their internet and computer skills with senior citizens in their area
Anfield Breckside Community Council	North West – an umbrella group that works with 14 residents associations, linking different groups together, providing training and advice, assisting with securing funding, helping the community with planning and regeneration and resolving issues such as anti-social behaviour.
The Children’s Forum	South East – offering children the chance to play an active role in developing and improving local services for young people
The Welcome	North West – a community centre which has been providing activities and vital services for the local community in Knutsford for over 15 years
Magic Breakfast	National – A charity dedicated to ensuring every child starts the school day with the right breakfast
Orange RockCorps	National – inspires people to volunteer within their community by producing concerts for which you can’t buy a ticket as a reward
Blacon Community Trust	North West – a social enterprise in Chester offering a wide range of community-based activities and services, all focused on ‘Building a better Blacon’
Sports Traider/ Lance Haggith	East – Lance Haggith runs a chain of charity sports shops offering affordable sporting goods and employment opportunities for the long-term unemployed and ex-offenders
Mitzvah Day	National - a national day of social action where thousands of people take part in hands on projects top support charities and build stronger communities
Creation Development Trust	Wales - a social enterprise set up to revitalise the local area in Bridgend which has become the largest timebanking scheme in Europe
UBS Bridge Academy	London - The UBS Bridge Academy partnership, where UBS employees work with the Academy to support and inspire students
Gateway 97.8	East - a community radio station in Basildon which aims to enrich the lives of young people and to tackle anti social behaviour
Waitrose Community Matters Scheme	National – an innovative scheme which allows shoppers to choose three charitable causes each month to receive a £1,000 donation from their store by voting at the check-out and has given over £10 million to good causes
Social Media Surgeries	West Midlands – Nick Booth started up ‘social media surgeries’ to help local community groups to make the most of the internet to support their work. He developed this into a network of experts helping groups all over the country.

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