

BRL INITIATIVES FOR COMBATING ANTI-COMMUNITY BEHAVIOUR

A REPLY TO THE CITIZENS' JURY REPORT

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1. Foreword

BRL would like to thank the members of the Citizens' Jury and Vision 21 for working together to produce an informative and specific report that conveys a sense of their engagement with the Jury process. This dialogue marks the beginning of a new chapter in Ballymun's story - the fostering of dedicated partnerships working together to tackle the problems that affect the local community and, just as importantly, to build on the positive energy also contained within that community.

2. Recap on the Citizens' Jury Process

In May 2003, BRL employed Vision 21 to run a 4-day Citizens' Jury in Ballymun. The Citizens' Jury process is designed to allow decision-makers to learn what an informed public wants. The Jury consisted of 14 members, selected at random from the Ballymun community.

Over the four days, the Jury listened to 20 'witness' presentations by local, national and international groups on the key aspects of anti-community behaviour. A range of perspectives and opinions was presented, and the Jury questioned witnesses and deliberated over relevant issues.

Following the development of recommendations on the final day, a report was produced by the Jurors, with the help of Vision 21, and then presented to BRL.



Computer generated images of the Ballymun Central Youth Facility building, now on site.

2.1 Summary of Jury Recommendations

The Jury made recommendations across a wide range of areas that encompassed education, preventative measures, enforcement, community service agreements, funding, and communication issues.

Listed below are some of the specific recommendations from the report that are directly related to projects or programmes being facilitated by BRL:

- Informal educational activities for young people: such as recycling schemes; informing young people about the new Ballymun.
- Reduce truancy, keep more children in school.
- Focus on families to help solve problems.
- Prevention: interventions, youth activities and facilities.
- Unite community through social interaction; need meeting places for old and young.
- Maintenance of public spaces; wardens to monitor litter, etc.
- Enforcement: community policing initiatives; strengthen links to Garda?
- Communication: directory of local services; community radio.

3. BRL Actions to address Jury Recommendations

BRL recognises that anti-social behaviour is a complex and pressing problem, as is also recognised in the Jury's report. BRL is appreciative of the stress the Jury places on active community involvement and responsibility as well as on education, prevention and enforcement. Given time, effort and a sustained partnership approach that actively involves the community, Ballymun's anti-community problems can be tackled.



The Aisling Project kids with artist Aoife Kane.



BRL is addressing the problem of anti-social behaviour through the implementation of its [Community Sustainability Strategy \(CSS\)](#), which is derived from BRL's overall Masterplan for the regeneration of Ballymun. The *Community Sustainability Strategy* contains the [framework for the development of programmes to enhance social and community development in Ballymun](#). This flexible document is the backbone of the social regeneration of the area and a vital complement to the physical regeneration process.

Some of the specific problems that have been identified by BRL, and the Jury in their report, include the following: teenage gangs hanging around; intimidating behaviour by groups of young people; other gang behaviour based on 'territories'; youths on speeding motorbikes; joyriding; drug and alcohol abuse.

BRL is addressing many of the Jury's recommendations in the implementation and development of the CSS, as is outlined under the headings in [Section 5](#) below. Several initiatives have been established to deal with the problem of anti-community behaviour in Ballymun. These initiatives are complementary of each other and they will, in time, have a positive impact on the problems caused by anti-social behaviour in Ballymun.

BRL acknowledges that it is vital that anti-social behaviour is tackled from many angles and that education, prevention and enforcement, as recommended by the Jury, must underpin any attempts to tackle local problems. Some of the programmes detailed here do just that: from early interventions provided by the *Aisling Afterschool Project* ([Section 4](#)) to preventative measures like the *Youth in Ballymun Initiative* ([Section 6](#)) and enforcement programmes such as the *Safer Ballymun Working Group*. ([Section 6](#)).

Some of the initiatives currently in place involve partnerships with other stakeholders, including the Garda?, Dublin City Council, Youth and Community projects and workers. This report outlines the main tenets of the current initiatives, many of which are still at early stages of development.

4. Executive Summary

The report is divided into six main sections:

- 5.1 Social and Community Supports
- 5.2 Environmental Supports and Initiatives
- 5.3 Sport, Leisure and Recreation
- 5.4 Community Education and Training
- 5.5 Arts and Culture
- 5.6 Crime, Anti-social Behaviour and Reassurance

The supports detailed in [Section 5.1](#) are designed to help families, young homeless people, those dealing with disputes and to facilitate better communication between BRL and the local community.

[Section 5.2](#) presents a summary of the types of environmental programmes for adults and children that are in place that encourage a positive attitude to recycling, private property and gardens, and to public spaces.

[Section 5.3](#) details the array of sport and leisure programmes available to children, teenagers and young adults, some of whom have been targeted because of their anti-social behaviour – as recommended by the Jury. Some of these programmes are specifically designed to meet the social needs of older children in Ballymun: for example the incorporation of *Teen Zones* into playgrounds.

Educational and artistic programmes for adults, teenagers and children in the Ballymun area are examined in [Section 5.4](#) and [Section 5.5](#) respectively. Section 5.4 covers a wide range of learning opportunities including courses that cover subjects as diverse as Community Radio Production Skills – which was developed in direct response to the Jury’s report – and Volunteer Training in Mediation Skills.

Section 5.5 details art projects developed for teenagers, young adults and children that include photography, printmaking, bronze casting, drama and music amongst many other innovative artistic programmes. Some of the art initiatives are targeted at ‘*the people who are causing the problems*’ as the Jury suggested.



In an effort to deal with the problem of anti-social behaviour, BRL has become involved in three specific initiatives: [Safer Ballymun](#), the [Ballymun Reassurance Programme](#) and the [Young Adult Initiative](#). These initiatives will be detailed in [Section 5.6](#) as will other enforcement and preventative measures that are under consideration. Also included here is a brief synopsis of Dublin City Council’s policy in relation to anti-social behaviour.

5. Community Sustainability Strategy

From the very beginning of the regeneration process, community and social development has been considered to be just as important as the physical and economic development of Ballymun.

Through its implementation of the *Community Sustainability Strategy*, BRL is addressing many of the Jury's recommendations in the areas of family and community support, education, increased information on services and access to meeting places for all ages.

Furthermore, BRL has been inspired by the Citizens' Jury process and [the Jury's suggestions on crime and fear of crime](#) to instigate a series of initiatives aimed at combating anti-social behaviour, vandalism and neglect of the environment in Ballymun. These initiatives are complementary of each other and they will, in time, have a positive impact on the problems caused by anti-social behaviour in Ballymun.

5.1 Social and Community Supports

In order to enhance social and community development in Ballymun, BRL has a number of objectives, drawn from the Masterplan and the Integrated Area Plan, which aim to enhance social and community cohesion. The Ballymun community plays a pivotal role in identifying and initiating developments suited to their neighbourhood and their needs.

In practical terms, the supports detailed in this section will help foster long-term community facilities for each neighbourhood and as well as fostering a strong community identity. The creation of a [united community](#) was considered by the Jury as being vital in tackling anti-community behaviour and BRL aims to provide sustainable community facilities, to encourage community involvement in all aspects of social strategies and the continued development of the community/voluntary sector. The new Neighbourhood Centres will provide communities with much needed meeting places – the previous lack of which the Jury pointed out in their report. The provision of meeting places for both young and old is included in BRL's objectives.



Coultry and Shangan Neighbourhood Centres.



In relation to homelessness, the Jury stressed the importance of early interventions. One of BRL's main aims is to increase accommodation spaces and move young

homeless people into permanent dwellings. The provision of mediation services for the family and the community is an important early intervention measure that is up and running. There are also plans to extend mediation services to children to help counteract bullying and disputes or as the Jury stated '*to arrest potential problems at an early stage.*'

Another aspect that the Jury stressed several times in their report was the importance of informing the public about local services and supports available to them. To achieve this end, recent developments have helped facilitate better communication between BRL and the local community. The availability from November of a local Directory of Services, the *infoLink* Dublin North West Directory, should address the Jury's wish to see better access to information on local services.

Homelessness

The Ballymun Homelessness Forum was set up 18 months ago to address the problem of homelessness in Ballymun as indicated by a number of concerned residents and community voluntary organisations. Subsequently a research study was carried out to measure the type and level of homeless in the area and consequently an action plan was drawn up on how to tackle the problem. About 87 families at any one time are homeless. There is also a level of hidden homelessness - that is, people staying with other people. Many are young people, drifting in and out of friends' and relatives' houses to avoid chaotic situations at home.

BRL are planning to offer young people the opportunity to move on from emergency accommodation to something more permanent. So the emphasis is on permanent accommodation and not transitional or emergency measures. BRL will build a new boys' and girls' hostel in Ballymun and plan to provide move on accommodation from those hostels. BRL will work with other housing associations to provide support services and accommodation. This isn't an area of expertise for BRL who will be very much reliant on co-operation with the health board and local housing associations.

Ballymun Community Law Centre

The Ballymun Community Law Centre was established in 2002 in response to a community request for increased access to legal services in Ballymun. Until then there were no legal services or solicitors in the area.

Members of the community are encouraged to make contact with the Community Law Centre for advice on any legal issues such as legal rights on a range of issues including landlord / tenant agreements, equality, debt, employment law, consumer law and social welfare tribunals.

The centre provides legal information, advice and advocacy in partnership with the Legal Aid Board. Twice a month community groups and local people have the opportunity to attend clinics on company and employment law. Future plans include the design of a Housing Advice Course in partnership with Threshold and Respond! Housing Association.

Mediation Ballymun

Mediation Ballymun is an independent community based organisation set up in 2003, with the support of *Ballymun Community Law Centre*, with the aim of offering alternative dispute resolution methods to people in Ballymun. Some common problems dealt with through community mediation include disputes over noise, housing, debts, harassment, property damage, and invasion of privacy.

Mediation Ballymun has up to 20 volunteers going through a Training Programme, accredited by the Mediators Institute of Ireland. Once the volunteers have completed the training programme, they will go on to practical training in mediation which will be supervised by fully qualified mediators. The aim of the project is to provide a panel of mediators to the community who will be able to assist people in resolving their own disputes without having to resort to the legal system.

Mediation Ballymun is planning to develop a family mediation service for people going through separations or who have maintenance issues. Other plans for 2005 include *Peer Mediation* and *Victim/Offender Mediation*. The former would offer mediation to schoolchildren to solve disputes and bullying issues while the latter would offer victims, who so wished to do so, the chance to meet offenders in an effort to encourage rehabilitation.

Childcare

BRL is working with a Childcare Sub-committee to implement the *Ballymun Partnership Childcare Action Plan* in order to improve access to quality childcare, to increase the number of childcare places and assist in sourcing of funding.

New childcare facilities are being developed at Shangan Nursery, Aisling and Glor na nGael with further facilities planned for the future. The new Dublin NorthWest Childcare Resource Centre was launched in July by the Ballymun Partnership. The resource centre aims to provide a focal point for childcare services and serves Ballymun, Whitehall, Finglas, Glasnevin North and Santry. The service will help parents choose between local childcare options and will also support childcare providers.

Improvements in Communication with Residents

- Directory of Local Services: the *infoLink* Dublin North West Directory is the most comprehensive listing of community, voluntary and statutory services in Dublin 7, 9 and 11 with 2,000 entries covering everything from youth clubs to childcare. The directory is available online at www.dublin.ie/infolinkdubnw and will be published in book format at the end of November.
- Monthly BRL newsletters are delivered to approximately 7,500 homes and organisations in Ballymun and the surrounding area.
- IT point and exhibition area in foyer.
- Local people have been consulted throughout the project and their views integrated into the planning and development process. Consultation with the community is through workshops, smaller area meetings, questionnaires and one-to-one meetings in BRL and in people's homes.
- Residents have been involved in naming their own new streets and roads through the History Project. (See below for more details).
- The website (www.brl.ie) is maintained for local people and interested parties all over the world. Visitors can call into BRL's offices daily and feedback is always welcome – in person, in writing, via email (brl@brl.ie) or by telephone (01-675 5660).
- *Ballymun Frequently Asked Questions About Masterplan Implementation 1998 to 2005* will be published in early 2005.

BRL's Neighbourhood Strategy

Each of Ballymun's neighbourhoods will have its own Neighbourhood Centre, providing a focal point in each community. The Neighbourhood Strategy aims to strengthen the community which in itself is a step in the right direction in terms of discouraging anti-social behaviour.

The Centres will cater for the unique aspects of each community. The aim of the Neighbourhood Strategy is that each area will have local access to facilities such as childcare; meeting rooms; play areas; retail space and facilities for small enterprises. The Poppintree and Coultry centres are under construction; Shangan is on site and the Sillogue Centre is at approval stage and due to go on site early in 2005.

5.2 Environmental Supports and Educational Initiatives

An important element in BRL's *Community Sustainability Strategy* is to encourage the community to grow in a more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable direction. BRL invited the *Global Action Project* (GAP) into Ballymun and provide most of its funding. BRL have sponsored GAP to work with local adults and children to

improve awareness of environmental and energy issues. They have set up environmental teams to work on a neighbourhood basis.

GAP's environmental initiatives together with the *Ballymun Reassurance Programme* (Section 6) address many of the Jury's concerns about the maintenance of public and private spaces. These initiatives encompass what the Jury termed 'informal educational activities' aimed at children. They help children foster a positive attitude towards their own neighbourhoods and encourage them to take responsibility for their living spaces. As the Jury stated: *'Children can't be expected to respect their environment if they just see the area littered and vandalised... so when the area is regenerated they value it and keep it in order.'*

MAIN GAP PROJECTS

Environmental Action Teams

The development of Environmental Action Teams has been the core of GAP's work in Ballymun enabling people to turn their concerns about the environment into positive action. These teams consist of people recruited from the local community, often neighbours from the same area. Each Action Team usually consists of approximately 15 people. With the support of a trained Action Team leader, the teams organise their own schedule of six to seven two-hour meetings.



Environmental Action Team at work.

During these meetings participants learn about lifestyle sustainability in the areas of waste, shopping, energy, transport and water. Environmental pledges are taken to encourage Action Team members to move towards a more sustainable way of life. GAP also facilitates training for trainers so those local residents who complete an Action Team can avail of training to become leaders of future Action Teams.

Wheelie Bins Project

As part of implementing the Waste Management Strategy in consultation and co-ordination with the Dublin City Council Waste Management Strategy, GAP runs an awareness programme to enable people to make better use of their wheelie bins and green bins. In addition, locations for bring centres are being identified throughout the area to enable maximum recycling to be achieved.

Children's Projects & Youth Awareness

GAP's **Schools Programme** was launched in September 2002 and since then the **Schools Environmental Awareness Programme** has been introduced in 9 of the local schools in Ballymun. GAP also run an **After Schools Programme** in order to raise environmental awareness with local youth groups. In addition, more than 90 children aged 5-12 who live in the



GAP's Schools Programme.

Shangan Patrick Pearse Tower area have signed up to be part of the Bounty Hunter project. For items collected, the children are rewarded with environmental eco-points that can be cashed in against Fair Trade, environmental or educational products. The Bounty Hunters project has been very popular with a regular attendance.

The Rediscovery Centre

Plans for the development of a centre of excellence for waste recycling in Ballymun are underway. BRL is responsible for managing and funding the Rediscovery Centre and is currently seeking to appoint a Development Manager to the project. The Rediscovery Centre would act as a recycling centre where recyclable goods are not only redistributed but are recovered, reused and redesigned. The facility will also create local employment and training opportunities, provide facilities to educate local residents about environmental issues and would also accommodate add on visitor facilities, artist and craft workshops, an educational centre and café. The development of the rediscovery Centre would place Ballymun at the forefront of waste recycling in Ireland.

5.3 Sport, Leisure and Recreation

In terms of amenities and recreation, BRL's objectives are to improve community facilities for all ages and to implement a landscape strategy of linked parks, greens, playgrounds and playing pitches.

The programmes and plans outlined here go a long way in meeting the Jury's request for more meeting places for people of all ages (see also Sections 5.1 and 5.5). In terms of what the Jury called for in the way of '*diversionary schemes for young people*' and developing '*early interventions*', BRL has acted directly on the recommendation to provide activities and meeting places for young people to divert them away from anti-social behaviour.

The needs of teenagers are being addressed by the provision of youth shelters, also called *Teen Zones*, which give them somewhere to socialise other than on the street or in areas that cause disruption. Adventure activities have been developed especially for teenage males as a *preventative measure* in terms of anti-social behaviour. These activities also provide *social interaction* for children of all ages something the Jury wished to see encouraged in the community.

Ballymun Adventure Activities

Run in conjunction with the Columban Youth Project, this programme was designed to introduce a group of 12 males, between the ages of 14 and 19, to new and exciting sporting activities over a seven-week period. The target group was young men who were not participating in any activities but who were identified as being involved in anti-community behaviour.



Columban Youth Project.

The programme was designed to encourage mental, emotional and physical development. The activities included canoeing, rock-climbing, caving, gorge walking and orienteering. Having proved to be a success, discussions are in progress to extend the programme and run it regularly both on an afterschool basis and for early school-leavers.

Youth Summer Diversions Programme

BRL organised summer activities during the last two weeks in July and the first two weeks in August. Between 60 - 80 children per day took part and their ages ranged from 6 to 15 years. They came from Ballymun and the surrounding area. The children worked with a wide variety of materials and equipment. The programme was implemented and co-ordinated by BRL staff.

Activities included soccer, Gaelic games, tag rugby, swimming, drama and dance, juggling, drumming and arts and crafts. Friday was entitled *Freaky Friday* when a production or show took place catering for 100 - 150 children. The summer activities finished with a celebration disco and a performance by a band called *Westlike*.

Breaking Ground and BRL also ran a series of hugely popular Art Workshops for 6 - 10 year-olds and 11 - 15 year-olds during August. Printmaker Michael Timmons led

the first week of workshops and the groups used the printing press in Axis to explore a series of printmaking techniques. During the second week, the participants worked with Sculptor Orla Kelly. For week three, the children worked with artist Gillian Field to create mythological creatures with acrylic paints on canvas.



Breaking Ground's summer sculpture and painting workshops.

Teen Zones in Playgrounds

BRL are currently examining the effectiveness of youth shelters or *Teen Zones* in meeting the social needs of older children in Ballymun. The provision of *Teen Zones* is also being considered as a measure to reduce anti-social activity in designated play areas, adjacent to sports areas, and in other areas.

A *Teen Zone* is a structure that provides informal seating and reasonable shelter; it is a place for young people to meet and socialise safely within their communities, it is somewhere to hang out without causing inconvenience to the other members of the community.

It has been proven¹ that the provision of youth shelters reduces vandalism and anti-social behaviour, and that it improves community safety. *Teen Zones* allow teenagers to socialise locally whilst still complying with loitering laws. This should assist in improving relations between young people and the Garda?.

Balcurris playground has a designated *Teen Zone* with informal seating and 'superior' equipment suited to them. It has been a success to date, with younger children using the area earlier in the day and the older children later in the day. Connolly playground has a raised platform area designated for teens and there are plans to buy more equipment suitable for 10-15 year-olds. It is also envisaged that teenagers themselves will get involved in choosing equipment, areas and maintaining the equipment. They can paint it, decorate with their own graffiti, then clean it up when they outgrow it and pass it on to the next set of teens.

BRL Play Strategy

As part of its Play Strategy for local children, BRL has appointed Debby Clarke as Play Development Worker. Debby works with parents, children (including traveller children), youth workers, childcare workers and community groups to raise awareness of the value of play and play opportunities in Ballymun. Debby will also consult parents and children regarding playgrounds and play areas, and design a programme of activities to increase people's awareness of local play opportunities.

Midnight Basketball League and Tournament

The Midnight Basketball League targeted an age group who had been identified as getting into trouble or causing some local fear. The League engaged young people to take part in a late-night tournament, and having engaged with them at night it's easier to get them involved and interested in day programmes.

Sports Coaching Programme

BRL and DCC team will visit Newcastle to research implementing De Paul Trust sports coaching programme for disadvantaged and homeless young people.

Leisure Facilities in Development in Ballymun

- Ballymun Central Youth Facility: run by BRYP² these facilities will be refurbished and extended to include a café, a youth information room, an arts room, workroom, small gym, and internet training and access facility.
- Poppintree Community Centre is to be upgraded to include the refurbishment of the existing hall, boxing club, 5-a-side, playground and landscape features.
- An all weather five-a-side pitch was opened in Shangan.
- Parks: each of the new local parks in Ballymun will have high quality leisure facilities for all age groups, from children's playgrounds and playing fields to bowling greens and other facilities for older people.
- The Pool and Fitness Centre will open its doors soon and will be available for all locals to enjoy at the same rates as other local authority facilities. The Centre will have a swimming pool, slides, baby pool, sauna and other facilities.



Swimming pool locker room.



Swimming pool interior.

- Skateboarding Park: this initiative is at discussion stage.
- Ballymun Comprehensive Sports Complex: there are plans for an all-weather pitch, a new sports hall and a covered soccer dome to which the public will have access outside of school hours.
- Ballymun Animal Care Association Equine Centre has received funding and is in development.

Active Living Group

This group provides a forum for older people to use leisure and recreation facilities and to participate in activities that encourage them to socialise with those of their age and with other age groups. The organised activities include art and dance classes in Axis, swimming and pitch & putt.

5.4 Community Education and Training

Education and training is considered to be crucial to the whole regeneration process and BRL has supported and developed a number of initiatives. BRL has worked in partnership with the National College of Ireland, and with the voluntary and community sector, to develop educational interventions and identify local needs for pre-school children right up to adults.

One of BRL's major objectives in this area is to encourage and facilitate the statutory, voluntary and community sector in the development of innovative educational interventions from pre-school to third level.

The Jury wished to see young people educated about the new Ballymun and this remit will be fulfilled by the proposed [Transition programme for Young People](#) which would aim to educate children in areas such as recycling, respecting public spaces, rights and responsibilities.

BRL/NCI Partnership Education Programmes

National College of Ireland (NCI) is a third level institution dedicated to providing access to educational opportunities and to helping people achieve their potential through lifelong learning. NCI has recognised education as vital to the creation of vibrant communities and to this end has worked in partnership within programmes of local development in Dublin since 1997.

One of its biggest commitments to local development has been to the regeneration programme in Ballymun. BRL engaged NCI to develop avenues for learning, personal development and community sustainability through the provision of educational opportunities linked to the regeneration programme.

Since 1998 over 500 people from Ballymun have attended National College of Ireland (NCI) courses through sponsorship raised through local organisations including BRL. This has enabled NCI to develop and deliver free courses tailored to the needs of local people. Some of the ongoing programmes include:

Housing Transition Programme for Adults

The Housing Transition programme provides support to people who are moving from their flats to their new homes. People on the programme have an opportunity to ask questions, to meet their neighbours and to work together to foster a community spirit.



CAFTA course in AXIS.

The programme is organised by CAFTA (Community and Family Training Agency) in partnership with the National College of Ireland, BRL and Dublin City Council. CAFTA's 'Post Transition' team works alongside Dublin City Council to provide support to people after they move into their new areas.

Other Transition Programmes in development include:

- **Travellers' Transition Programme:** to ease the transition to new housing and a new community.
- **Transition programme for Young People:** which would aim to educate children in areas such as recycling, respecting public spaces, rights and responsibilities.

Active Citizenship Local Development

Developed by NCI and Ballymun Community Law Centre in response to a request for training to enhance the skills of local community representatives. These representatives would then be well equipped to facilitate community development initiatives. Eight participants graduated in 2004.

Participatory Community Research: Oral History

The Ballymun Oral History Project was part of the History Project sponsored by BRL, between September 2000 and September 2001. The Oral History team was involved in a community consultation, from which two groups of participants emerged – a group of 6 local adults and 7 young people from Ballymun Youthreach.

Other aspects of the project included a documentary history of Ballymun from earliest times to the present, the compilation of a community archive and an oral history project. Upon completion, the projects were presented to Ballymun Library to form a community archive. As part of the project a training course on community based research practise was developed called *Participatory Community Research: Oral History* that is accredited by NCI.

Committee Effectiveness Skills

The aim of this course is to enhance management and business skills and is designed for community representatives, both paid and unpaid, working in community organisations.

Parents in Education

This course is designed to inform parents of the importance of education and training.

Other courses:

- Computer Fundamentals
- Discovering University Programme
- Ongoing History Project with young people

Community Radio Production Skills

The Jury proposed that '*community radio station would build community cohesion and help publicise services.*' Rather than trying to establish a local radio station, it was deemed to be more practical to train interested parties in Radio Production Skills. The course would provide them with the skills to make local programming and to access airtime on community stations such as *Anna Livia FM*.

Twelve participants, of various ages, completed this course in June 2004 – six from Ballymun and six from Finglas. Funded by BRL, Ballymun Partnership, NorDubCo and the Finglas & Cabra Partnership, the course ran over five weeks and covered subjects such as *Interview Skills, Production Skills, and Media in the Community*. Participants worked in teams to produce programmes about their community. To encourage the course participants to continue using their skills, links with *Anna Livia FM* are being encouraged, and BRL has purchased recording equipment for their use. The course may be run again but this will depend on local demand and interest.

Aisling Afterschool Project

The Jury recommended that any schemes, which encouraged children to stay in school, would be properly supported. They also stressed the importance of mentors or positive role models for children.

The *Aisling Afterschool Project*, run by Sr Malen, began seven years ago. The project aims to provide positive role models to children (aged 8 and upwards) from chaotic homes and to maintain a relationship with them in order to prevent them leaving school.

By providing support, meals and a place to work in 4 days a week, the *Aisling Project* acts as a development centre for children. There are three such projects operating in Ballymun and 34 children have been supported in their schooling up to secondary level, some of them being the first in their family to achieve a Leaving Certificate. The *Aisling Project* is currently awaiting new premises to be provided by BRL.



Project Leader Mairead McGuinness and other members of the Aisling Project.

5.5 Arts and Culture

As part of its Strategy for the Arts, BRL encourages local participation in artistic and cultural events that provide entertainment, help unite the community and make Ballymun an increasingly attractive place for people to live, work and relax in. The implementation of the Arts Programme offers an opportunity for Ballymun to develop a vibrant new identity at home and abroad. The positive attention given by local, national and international media to artistic events - such as the recent mini festival of Irish Language Theatre - will help put Ballymun on the Dublin City's cultural and artistic map.

The art programmes developed for children fulfil many of the Jury's requests for activities that encourage social interaction, encourage tolerance, that entertain *and* inform children and young adults. Not to be underestimated also is the positive effect these activities have on self-esteem and identity – both for those who are, and those who aren't, involved in anti-community behaviour.

AXIS Ballymun's Arts and Community Resource Centre

Axis opened its doors to the public in 2001, with facilities including a 220 seater theatre space, a dance studio, a mezzanine, Gallery (which hosts a variety of visual arts exhibitions) recording studios, rehearsal rooms and an art workshop space.

The new director of AXIS is Ray Yeats who is assisted by a dedicated arts team consisting of Mark O' Brien and Roisin McGarr. The team will help cultivate a strong

identity for AXIS by creating a centre of excellence for the arts with the community at its heart.

Borradh Buan, the first ever mini-festival of Irish language theatre in Axis, was a resounding success and attracted much attention and praise from the Arts Council and from national media including TG4, The Irish Times and the BBC.

Otherworld Festival

The Ballymun *Otherworld Festival* was a one-day event on October 31 - the culmination of two months of preparation by youth clubs in the Ballymun Area. The event consisted of a parade, pageant, a fire sculpture, fireworks and shadow projections. The festival aimed to give young people an alternative to 'home-made' bonfires and to give them an artistic focus on



Otherworld Festival's fire sculpture.

Halloween night. The night was organised by the Ballymun Festival Steering Committee who worked with schools, youth clubs and community groups since May. The festival was supported by The Arts Council for Ireland and community groups throughout Ballymun alongside Dublin City Council, Ballymun Regeneration Ltd and Axis.

Breaking Ground Project

Launched in February 2002, *Breaking Ground* is the body that has been set up to organise and promote public art projects in Ballymun. *Breaking Ground* aims to engage local children and adults in a variety of art projects, and also to establish Ballymun as a place of international standing within the arts community.

Opportunities are available for local, national and international artists to make artworks and create art projects in partnership with local community groups, schools and agencies. Projects include creative writing, photography, printmaking, bronze casting, drama and music.

Art projects have been carried out with the St Margaret's Traveller Women's Group, with BRYR, the St Joseph's Wind Band, the Holy Spirit National School and the newly established Tierney Writing group. Listed below are some of the specific projects that have been undertaken with children and young adults. Their involvement encourages

young people to take pride in their area and in their work, to learn new skills and become familiar with the facilities available to them in Axis.

The Hoardings Project

This project began as a response to the intrusive and visually uninteresting hoarding that has been erected in the area due to the regeneration of Ballymun. Local groups were invited to take part in an arts project with a view to making art for the hoardings.

This is a cross-community initiative between local youth groups including Columban Youth Project (males aged 16 to 18 years), Aisling Project (ages 8 to 12 years), BRYR, BADIG, Community Arts Factory, and Balcurris Boys Home (ages 18+) and *Breaking Ground* and is supported by BRL, GAMA and Piersce.

Each group works with an artist, exploring different themes and materials during a series of weekly workshops. An exhibition of the final work produced is shown in Axis and the work is then placed on hoardings. This is an ongoing project.



Art and Creativity Summer Camps

BRL and *Breaking Ground* ran art and creativity camps in 2003 and 2004, during August, for children aged 6 –10 and teenagers aged 11 –15. Each camp lasted a week with a different artist and activity each week that included painting, printmaking, sculpture and photography. Overall the summer camps have proved highly successful and many children have requested more workshops. The Summer Workshops and Hoardings Projects will continue in 2005.

The Virgin Mary School Print Workshops

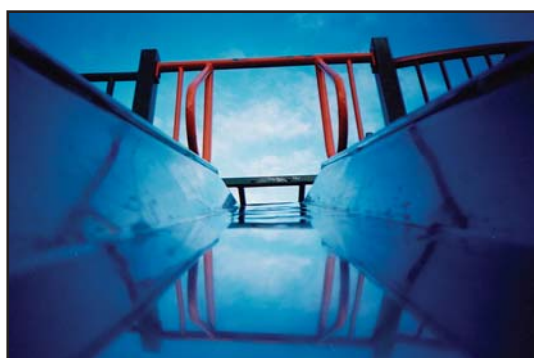
The school's fourth and second classes were invited to take part in an art project linked to Jochen Gerz's *A Map to Care Project*. The students initially did some classroom workshops and then took part in a series of printmaking workshops in Axis where they learned to make monoprints. The response from the students to the project was very positive and great enthusiasm was shown from all those involved. The

project enabled the students to learn new skills and also made them aware of the work Jochen Gerz was doing.

Photography: *Positive/Negative*

Perry Ogden, an internationally renowned photographer works on a Photography Project with Holy Spirit National Boys School, Ballymun. The project involves weekly workshops during the school year with 12-year-old boys from two 6th year classes. .

The Photography Project with Perry Ogden is ongoing and shows children how to use cameras, compose shots, etc. They are given a camera to do their project which gives them an interest in their community and environment around them.



Music: *Fanfare for Ballymun*

Composer Elaine Agnew and musician Ron Cooney composed a contemporary piece of music entitled 'Fire' with St Joseph's Primary School Wind Band. The project involved a series of music creation workshops. 'Fire' was premiered in Axis on April 10th 2003 to a packed house. Children came in an hour before school started and were very enthusiastic throughout.



St. Joseph's Primary School Wind Band.

Aisling Bhaine Munna

Artist Niamh worked on 'Playhouses', a series of art workshops with children from the Aisling Afterschool Project in which they designed their own houses. These designs will now be translated in to playhouses and suitably located in Ballymun.

Mime: *7 Days a Week*

Rowan Tolley, an international mime artist, worked intensively on a series of mime

workshops with Roundabout Youth Theatre, Munch and BRYR, to develop an exciting piece of theatre using only gesture. The workshops took place over a six-month period and culminated in a powerful performance, which took place in Axis in April 2004. The performance was a physical, challenging and at times hilarious look at the lives of young people in Ballymun.

Roundabout Youth Theatre and Munch

Roundabout Youth Theatre - set up in April 2001 by Axis and Ballymun Regional Youth Resource (BRYR), local teenagers participate in performance workshops.

Munch - Samba School - open to all young people living in Ballymun, aged between 10 and 21. The group meets weekly to develop musical skills and explore musical potential.

Stephen Brandes: *Superbia*

54 Coultry Gardens was used as an alternative gallery space for artists' work. Photographs taken by pupils of the Ballymun Senior Comprehensive School along with drawings and paintings by children from Gaelscoil Baile Munna were exhibited along side national and international artists for this project.

Writing Workshop for Adults

Adults of a mixed ages and genders worked on a creative writing course and produced a book *You Had to Be There* with illustrations by Alice Maher.



Writing Workshop for Adults.

Ongoing Activities in AXIS

- Classes in acting, dance, music, arts & crafts.
- Music rehearsal rooms and recording studios will be available to hire from November.
- Printmaking Room in AXIS: this is a community-based facility. Through a printing workshop, local artists learned how to use the press. They in turn can pass on the skill to others and have use of the facility.

5.6 Crime, Anti-social Behaviour and Reassurance

Ballymun has a large population of young people, the majority of whom are not involved in anti-social behaviour. However, anti-social behaviour by a small proportion of people is a problem in Ballymun, more so in certain areas and at certain times e.g. in the early hours of the morning.

In an effort to deal with such problems as crime, fear of crime, graffiti/neglected areas and anti-community behaviour as identified by the Jury in their report, BRL has gone beyond the remit of developing preventative measures. It is involved with three specific initiatives to deal with these issues: *Safer Ballymun Partnership*, *the Ballymun Reassurance Programme* and the *Young Adult Initiative*.

The *Youth Adult Initiative* has been specifically tailored to address the problem of older teenagers and youths in their twenties who have little to occupy them, and who have been identified as being involved in anti-social behaviour.

These initiatives, and many of the cross-community and partnership programmes presented in this report, are being managed or co-ordinated by BRL's Social Regeneration Development Manager, Patricia Scanlon. This role closely matches the Jury's recommendation to appoint a Programme Manager to oversee anti-social programmes. Other related enforcement and preventative measures that are in development are also included here. (See also Section 5.3).

Safer Ballymun Working Group

Safer Ballymun is a newly formed working group whose aim is to achieve a united approach to tackling local problems of anti-social behaviour, to make recommendations, and to take appropriate action which will have a maximum impact on the reduction of these problems at a local level.

Stakeholders include the Garda Siochana, DCC, BRL, the area Forums, Local Drugs Task Force, young people, the Travelling Community and Residents Associations from Ballymun and from neighbourhoods on the periphery of Ballymun. The working group will have an 'empty seat' reserved for various other interested parties e.g. members of the Citizens' Jury; the local drugs task force; or school representatives who want to contribute to finding solutions for antisocial activity.

This is the first time a partnership approach has been utilised in this way in an effort to address issues more effectively in terms of resources and communication and therefore to come up with some practical solutions to anti-social behaviour in Ballymun.

The first meeting will be held in October. It will be a facilitated session to help the Partnership draw up a work-plan for its first year of activities. Other anti-social initiatives, such as the *Ballymun Reassurance Programme*, will link in with this working group. Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis to both inform people of the specific problems and to work on devising recommendations that will be brought back to individual agencies for implementation.

The Safer Ballymun partnership aims to help reduce anti-social problems by allocating resources to specific areas of need. For example, in Poppintree Park there was a problem with anti-social behaviour at night, namely the use of motorbikes. In response DCC erected twelve new gates to all entrances to the park. This simple action resulted in the effective eradication of this specific problem.

A forum such as the Safer Ballymun partnership would be the ideal place for members of the Jury to air their concerns such as those expressed in the report i.e. a request for increased Garda presence and an increase in CCTV cameras.

Ballymun Reassurance Programme

The *Ballymun Reassurance Programme* concept is simple; by reducing petty crime and disorder, it is possible to indirectly create an environment less susceptible to serious crime, thereby increasing the community's sense of security.

The programme focuses on **identifying, prioritising and tackling** local crime and disorder (including litter and graffiti) in order to increase the feelings of neighbourhood security in Ballymun. The community, local Gardaí and other local agencies will work together to identify and prioritise visible problems such as graffiti, vandalism and gang behaviour.

Visual Audits

The main tool used to identify Signal Disorders³ is an Environmental Visual Audit (EVA). The purpose of an EVA is to provide an independent snapshot (using written and photographic data) of a defined neighbourhood to help identify problems to be solved by joint activity by the stakeholders and in particular statutory agencies.

The visual audit measures and identifies signal disorders by characteristics including:

- Antisocial behaviour
- Damage to buildings
- Signs of neglect such as graffiti
- Isolating features e.g. alleyways or poor lighting
- General environmental features e.g. litter

Visual Audits are a powerful lever to assist partner agencies to tackle identified environmental problems and assist in informing neighbourhood police and agency teams of community priorities.

By using EVAs, it is possible not only to identify specific problems, but also to pinpoint why those problems are prevalent in certain areas, and therefore to develop solutions to contain and prevent further occurrences. Data from the EVAs and surveys will be compiled and mapped to make a list of 'hotspots' within areas where problems need to be addressed.

BRL, Dublin City Council, the community and the Gardai need to work together to develop strategies to tackle the problems, both independently and through the *Safer Ballymun* working group.

Ballymun Area Audits

BRL have conducted preliminary surveys of each of the new Ballymun neighbourhoods to begin the process of identifying local signal disorders or triggers for fear. Each area will be surveyed several times, at different times of the day, to build up a detailed picture of the environmental and social problems in the area. Surveys will also function to report on any improvements made to an area and to monitor where problems might reoccur.

Young Adult Initiative

The *Ballymun Young Adult Initiative* aims to provide facilities and a programme of activities for a target group of young adults, aged seventeen and upward. This target group will consist of young people who are perceived to be troublemakers and those who have slipped through the net of engagement with youth or education services in the past.

The main objective is to divert these young adults away from anti-community behaviour and to provide opportunities for them to become involved in sport and leisure activities.

The *Young Adult Initiative* intends to provide supervised drop-in centres in several areas of Ballymun, for example in basements or existing youth facilities. The centres will be supervised by trained workers who will provide opportunities to young people to participate in interesting recreational activities such as extreme sports.

The drop-in facilities will provide a link with existing and relevant support services. The project is a partnership with BRL, DCC and local youth service providers including BRYR and The Columban Youth Project.

Community Warden Scheme

During the summer, BRL employed six Community Wardens. Two were employed in Balcurris Park as a special initiative to maintain the security and cleanliness of the park in the first few months of its life before it was handed over to DCC. The other four wardens worked in the community – two on east, two on west. Their main function during school holidays was to:

- Deter children from entering building sites or playing near building site entrances
- Report suspicious behaviour to the Gardai
- Liase with parents, community representatives, Gardai, Dublin City Council regional office representatives and BRL

Currently there are two wardens employed by BRL. Plans to expand their role to include a community liaison brief are currently under consideration. In a new role, wardens could liase with locals on litter, graffiti, burnt out cars, broken lights or improved lighting and so on in order to link in with the *Ballymun Reassurance Project* and the *Environmental Visual Audit* scheme.

Dublin City Council and Anti-social Behaviour

The Jury presented interesting ideas in relation to Enforcement and concepts such as *Acceptable Behaviour Contracts*. While BRL have no brief in relation to tenancy management, they work closely with Dublin City Council who are one of the stakeholders in the *Safer Ballymun* forum. Below is a brief summary of DCC's policy in relation to anti-social behaviour.

Dublin City Council has a duty to manage and control its tenancy dwellings let under the Housing Acts and to secure and protect the interests of its tenants, as far as is reasonably possible, in the peaceful occupation of those dwellings. To this end, the Housing, Social and Community Services, Estate Management Section is committed to taking action to avoid, prevent or abate anti-social behaviour.

These actions include:

- Investigation of complaints
- Interview / challenge / caution of perpetrators (offenders)
- To take preventative measures
- Pursuit of legal remedies, including court orders for eviction, where necessary

- The Estate Management Section works with the 12 Area Housing Offices, other relevant agencies and community groups in delivering a more integrated approach and response to anti-social behaviour and its related problems.

Dublin City Council has reinforced its commitment to addressing the serious problem of anti-social behaviour, and with a view to consolidating policy and procedure, by publishing the document ***Anti-Social Behaviour - Policy and Procedure***.

In the conclusion of ***Anti-Social Behaviour - Policy and Procedure***, Dublin City Council affirms its commitment to working with the community and other bodies to combat anti-social behaviour:

'There is no doubt that anti-social behaviour, although relatively few cases in number, has become a serious problem in some local authority housing estates. Dublin City Council is totally committed to playing its part in combating this very real and unacceptable activity. In order to achieve success in this area it is very helpful to establish links with community groups, An Garda Síochána and other statutory bodies and the City Council's new area management structures and offices facilitate this process.'

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

BRL are examining the possible implementation of a new project to establish the viability and demand for Neighbourhood Watch schemes in new housing areas. The schemes would require the co-operation of the community and Gardaí and would help improve communication between them. This co-operation would also fulfil an important role in uniting communities against the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. This remit may fall under the Safer Ballymun Partnership.

6. Conclusion

The members of the Jury, in The Citizens' Jury report, stressed that they felt it was worthwhile being optimistic about the future of Ballymun. The Jury pointed out that change could not happen without a vision for the future. The community strategies that are being implemented by BRL in partnership with the community, local agencies and the Garda Síochána can contribute to that vision, and then help make the vision become a reality.