

Pointing out People Power

A local, active citizen has been standing in the spotlight at a conference in The Hague, Netherlands, to give a resident's eye view of urban renewal.



Naseem Akhtar of the Balsall Heath Forum was the key guest speaker last week (Monday 27 March) at a masterclass on citizen's participation, Confidence in the Neighbourhood. "I was invited as a member of Residents for Regeneration," explains Naseem. "R4R- EUROPE has a network of residents' organisations across the UK and the Continent with new members in Poland, Lithuania and Estonia.

"We meet regularly and are planning an international conference in September at the University of Birmingham. This highlights our local initiatives in Balsall Heath, Perry Common and Castle Vale.

"It will focus on how we tackle neighbourhood problems ourselves. The problems of city life are the same everywhere. The solution is for residents to build sustainable alliances with public service providers. We work closely with the local authority, police, fire service and health service to tackle things together and get things done."

Confidence in the Neighbourhood, inspired by a Dutch cabinet think tank, was organised by the The Hague City Council. More than 60 guests attended from local government, housing associations and local residents associations across Europe, including Holland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark and Germany.