Regarding the call for evidence to the Community Empowerment Bill. Lynne Palmer 4thSept; 2014

I have already contributed on the consultation paper which had to be in by 24th, June. This is a further attempt, on the 5 questions.

Q1. I have to say that I don’t think the Bill will empower communities; what it will do is make a start on empowering communities & individuals. Groups & individuals must come forward genuinely wanting to make changes. Changes in their personal lives will come before this so that a person or a few people realise they are disempowered. The problem known as ‘the Scottish psyche’ is at the back of this, but people don’t realise the power it has over them. If people moved to change themselves, years & years of training & adjustment of their personality to a certain extent would be necessary.

Q2. The benefits would be that some volunteers could be given responsibility for some tasks, relieving some staff & requiring less staff. This would help to remove the ‘them & us’ problem; a certain amount of equality with staff could be achieved, so genuine working together. This would help members of the public & groups to sense their own innate power. But Scottish people don’t want to do this! The disadvantages for public sector orgs. is that staff resent the above happening!, they will have to be assisted to get over this. There is also the problem of volunteers or any member of the public showing signs of becoming ‘semi-professional’ in their ability level. This is a good thing, but some professionals will not like it. Some volunteers when realising the effect they are having may shrink back, but mentoring should be used to keep them on track.

Q3. No they generally do not have the capabilities to take advantage of the Bill. Insert something in the Bill regarding mentoring. Keep raising the profile of personal empowerment in what ever way it can be done for the whole of Scotland. You could put something about empowerment in the Bill; something like an introduction to the theory of empowerment & what it can do for people. This should have to include an easy-read way of speaking about fear.

Q4. Yes; no doubt there will be amendments as years pass.
Q5. I have nothing that I can think of to say, except that equal rights must include the **chance** to become empowered for every Scottish person whether individual or group.

Lynne Palmer.