

Community Mediation

This case involved two families who had been on bad terms, since one of them bought their house from the council and began work on an extension. Numerous complaints and counter complaints were made about noise, damage to property etc to the council, police and the night-time noise team. Eventually the dispute spilled over to involve the children, who became abusive to each other and to the adults. This of course made the neighbour situation even more strained.

The night-time noise team obtained their agreement to contact us. However when we went out to visit, B were willing to mediate but A did not want to be involved. At that stage A were still looking for an outside agency to sort the problem. The case was then closed.

Six months later A contacted us again, as the situation had escalated and was unbearable now. This time when we visited A agreed to shuttle mediation. This is where mediators go between the two parties passing constructive messages and suggestions for resolving the disagreement. We arranged this on the condition that they considered meeting after the shuttle.

On the day of the mediation B phoned to say that they felt the problem could only be solved by meeting up. We managed to convince A to go ahead with a face to face.

The meeting began badly when B called to say they were going to be late. A saw this as B trying to control the proceedings and the mediators had to work very hard to convince them to stay to try to work things out.

The meeting began explosively with tension running high all round. However once the mediators calmed the situation down, A and B began to positively exchange views. Predominantly both mothers were concerned about the effect the dispute was having on their children. Once this had been acknowledged both families began to discuss practical ways of dealing with the other problems.

The meeting ended very positively with both families apologising to each other and arranging to explain to the children what had happened at the meeting.

At the review, one month later, both families were delighted with the situation and happy that once again the children were playing together. A commented that they wished they had used mediation six months earlier as they couldn't believe the difference it had made.

Angus Community Mediation

