



a beginners' guide

Izwe is a social network for opinion and change. We've built it to give people everywhere a way of connecting, sharing and coming together to make changes they want to see.

Izwe has been built to make it easy to have your say and talk to others about what you care about. When you get used to it, you can be sharing your views quickly, easily and in your own time.

We've created this guide to explain a little about how it works and to make it as easy as possible to get started!

1. Communities

Izwe is built up of different **communities**.

A community is like a real life community. We can be part of an geographical community (like Bexley), or part of a community around an organisation (like the council, or a local charity).

In the community, there is often:

- a '**blog**' where you will hear or share the latest news from this community
- a '**forum**' where you can talk about anything relevant to that community
- different '**conversations**' where people can go to share their views and experience (see below).

This is a community space...

The screenshot shows the Bexley Talks website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'i-we beta', 'explore', 'community', 'live', and a search box. The main header features the 'Bexley Talks' logo and a 'join' button. A red callout box labeled 'community name' points to the 'Bexley Talks' text, and another labeled 'join button' points to the 'join' button.

On the left side, there is a sidebar with a login form (Email, Password, Log in), a 'sign up' button, and a 'Connect' button for Facebook. Below this is an 'Invite your friends' section.

The main content area is titled 'Information' and contains text about the community's purpose: 'This is Bexley Talks, a space provided by the London Borough of Bexley for residents to give their opinions, ideas and experience for a better Bexley.' It also includes a 'join this community' button. A red callout box labeled 'latest blogposts appear here - click to read' points to the '3 conversations' section.

Below the information is a 'Have your say' section with 'featured' and 'most recent' tabs. A red callout box labeled 'Find different 'conversations' and the forum in this list' points to this section. It lists three conversations:

- Meeting the Challenge - the Council's financial plans for 2011-2014**: Conversation by Bexley Talks. What's this all about? This is a site to share your opinions with other residents of the borough and see what everyone else thinks too. Share your ideas and we'll be checking the site every so often (at least once a week) to pass... End: 31/01/11. 2 followers, 1 quick poll, 0 surveys, 1 ideas.
- Adult Education College Bexley**: Conversation by Bexley Talks. We have just a few questions for you but feel free to open a forum with Adult Education College Bexley in mind to discuss any issues related to us that may be useful to us. Guidance: Click on the 'Have your say' tab above to... End: 01/02/11. 2 followers, 1 quick poll, 1 surveys, 1 ideas.
- How Can We Best Involve You?**: Conversation by Bexley Talks. This is our first conversation - it is a themed space seeking to get your views on how we can involve you more in our services and decisions. So show us where and how you want your voice to be heard, and let's together start moving towards... End: 30/11/10. 20 followers, 0 quick polls, 0 surveys, 0 ideas.

On the right side, there is a 'Blog' section with 'New conversations' and 'Come meet us!' posts. A red callout box labeled 'see other members of this community' points to the 'Members (44)' section, which lists members like Rachel (administrator), pdsue6, and Mr. Mobolaji Martins_Esq.

At the bottom, there is a 'Bexley Talks forum' section with 0 members, 0 comments, and 0 topics. A red callout box labeled 'community forum' points to this section.

2. Conversations

Inside community spaces, there are **conversations**

Each community needs to talk about things with its members, so we created 'conversations'. A conversation on izwe is like a real-life conversation, and is always about a particular issue or topic. They might be about, for example, how the community can save money, or play equipment provision, or courses in your local library etc.

Each community can have as many conversations going on about different issues as they like.

The conversations appear in a list on the community page down the middle of the page (e.g. 'Meeting the Challenge' above). **Click on the title of the conversation to go through to it.**

Inside a conversation

Within the conversation, there can be several different ways to share your opinions and thoughts.

- surveys – an easy way to privately give your thoughts and views.
- 'call for ideas' - you can go and share your ideas, and others can vote or comment on them.
- forums - where anyone can raise and discuss topics they care about (related to the conversation!) and ask for people's advice, opinions or ideas.
- quick polls – where you can quickly share your opinion on a hot topic and see immediately what others are thinking.

These are displayed in a list down the centre of the front page of the conversation, and also on the 'have your say' page.

A conversation might also have a **'blog'**.

The blog is where the administrators of the conversation can put news, updates, reports and stories or almost anything that is relevant to that conversation.

This is a conversation...

The screenshot shows a web application interface for 'Meeting the Challenge' on the 'iwe beta' platform. The interface is divided into a left sidebar and a main content area. The sidebar includes a user profile for 'mark' with links to 'profile', 'dashboard', and 'settings', and a list of navigation options: 'my friends', 'my communities', 'my conversations', 'my quick polls', and 'my groups'. A green box in the sidebar contains a poll question: 'winter: what better time to get involved in local online democracy?' with a 'Last update 1 day ago' timestamp and an 'Edit' button. Below this is an 'Invite your friends' button.

The main content area features a header with 'Bexley Talks' and the title 'Meeting the Challenge - the Council's financial plans for 2011-2014'. A navigation bar includes 'Main', 'Info', 'Have your say', and 'Blog'. The 'Info' section contains an 'Information' box with a link to 'www.bexley.gov.uk/strategy2014'. The 'Have your say' section is divided into 'featured', 'most recent', and 'most popular' categories. It lists three items: a forum post titled 'Meeting the Challenge - the Council's financial plans for 2011-2014 forum', a quick poll titled 'Have you seen the Council's proposals?', and a call for ideas titled 'What are your ideas for efficiency improvements and saving money?'. The right sidebar contains a 'Join' button, a 'Blog' section with '0 surveys' and '1 ideas', and a 'Members (2)' section listing 'Christina' and 'Thom'.

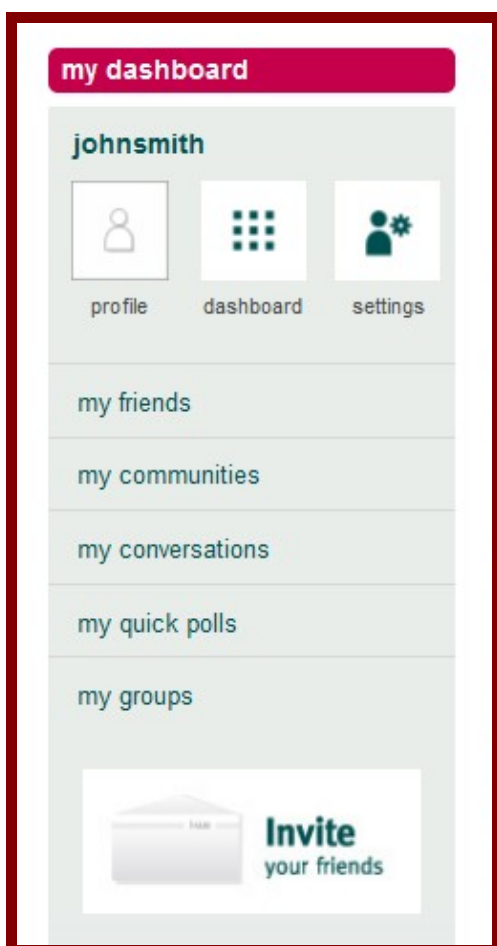
Red callout boxes with arrows point to specific elements:

- 'conversation title' points to the main title 'Meeting the Challenge'.
- 'the blog' points to the 'Blog' tab in the navigation bar.
- 'see more information about the conversation here' points to the 'Info' tab.
- 'different ways to contribute appear in this 'have your say' list' points to the 'Have your say' section.
- 'join' by clicking this button' points to the 'Join' button.
- 'latest blogposts will appear in this space - click to read' points to the 'Blog' section.
- 'see other members of this conversation' points to the 'Members (2)' section.

3. You on izwe

Izwe isn't just about organisations. Izwe is about each person, helping you find and connect to others as well as keeping track of the conversations you care about. To take part, you have to **sign up**. If you want guidance in doing this, see our [registration guide](#) or [video](#).

Your i-column



You can use this to get to your personal pages on izwe - your **profile**, **dashboard**, **settings**, **my communities** / **conversations** / **friends** / **groups** / **quickpolls**.

You don't need to use these personal pages if you don't want to - you can sign up and then interact just with individual conversations.

Your public profile

On izwe, you have a **profile**. The profile is your identity on izwe so that you can build relationships with people and organisations as well as keep track of the things that you take part in. This can be as private or as open as you choose. You can just give a username, or you can upload a photo and give more information about yourself.

Your profile page (hidden or open) also records your activity on the site in a feed - what conversations you've joined, ideas you've submitted, etc. This can help let your friends know about the conversations you're part of.

To connect with others you can write messages to your 'friends' on their profile pages.

*You can choose who can see this information in the '**settings**' panel.*

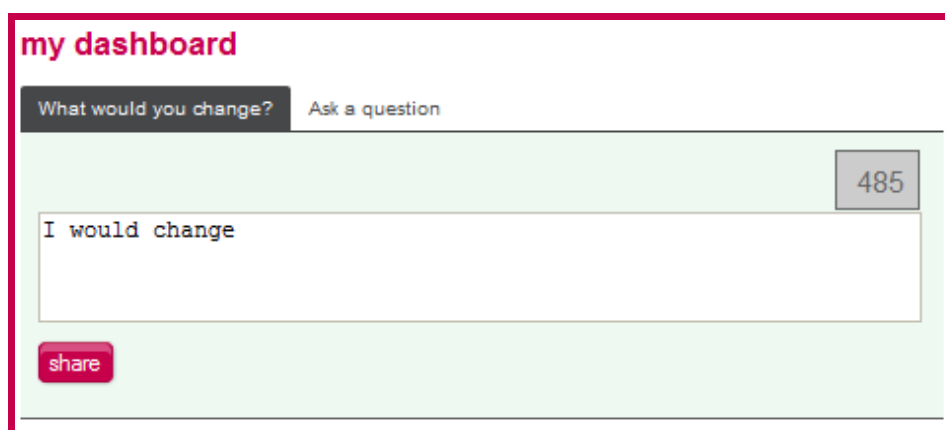
Keeping track of your conversations/communities

We have also made it easy for you to keep track of what you're interested in. To keep up to date with new questions and content in them, you can 'join' conversations and communities. You will get email notifications when

something new is created in them (a new call for ideas, for example), which you can control using the options in your settings. The list of communities and conversations you've joined appear in your '**my communities**' and '**my conversations**' list.

Your **dashboard** collects all the latest news from all of your communities, friends and conversations. So if a conversation you have joined has just published a new call for ideas, you'll hear about it in your dashboard.

From your dashboard, you can also update your 'status' ('**what would you change?**') - this is a little message you can post that anyone else on the site can read.

The image shows a screenshot of a web interface titled "my dashboard". At the top, there are two buttons: "What would you change?" and "Ask a question". Below these is a large text input field containing the text "I would change". To the right of the input field is a grey button with the number "485". At the bottom left of the input field is a red button with the word "share".

And you can start a 'quickpoll' ('**ask a question**'), which you can share with your friends and others on izwe - *it appears on your profile, and when you've voted on it you can send it via email, facebook or twitter.*

Your 'friends'

If you make someone a 'friend':

- You can see their activity on your dashboard (if they let you)
- You can see their profile (if they let you)
- They appear in your 'my friends' list

So if you're interested in talking to someone through the site, or would like to keep up to date with what they've got involved with in your dashboard, try becoming their 'friend':

- Go to their public **profile page** by:
 - clicking on their name whenever it appears on the site next to a comment they've made
 - searching for their username in the search box in the top right and then clicking on them
- Click the red 'become friends' button to the right

4. Help finding your way around

It can be a little confusing at times, because there's lots going on. So here are a couple of simple instructions for finding the right space:

Three ways to get to a community from anywhere on izwe

- 1) Search for its name (*search box top right*) and filter to 'communities'
- 2) If you've 'joined' the community, you can find it by clicking the 'my communities' link on the i-column (*the grey column to the left*)
- 3) Click the 'community' button on the top red navigation bar, select the big 'communities' button, and scroll down until you find your community!

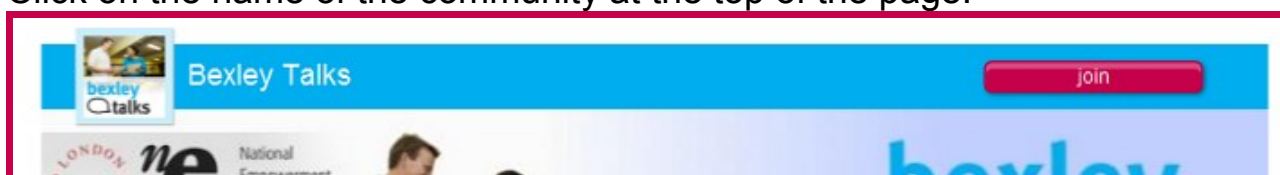
Four ways to get to a conversation from anywhere on izwe

- 1) Find your community page and then select from the list of conversations
- 2) Search for a name (*search box top right*) and filter to 'conversations' - *this only works if it is a public conversation*
- 3) If you've 'joined' the conversation, you can find it by clicking on the 'my conversations' tab on the i-column
- 4) you may have got an email update about what's going on in it. You can always click through from there...

(Remember to check you're logged in!)

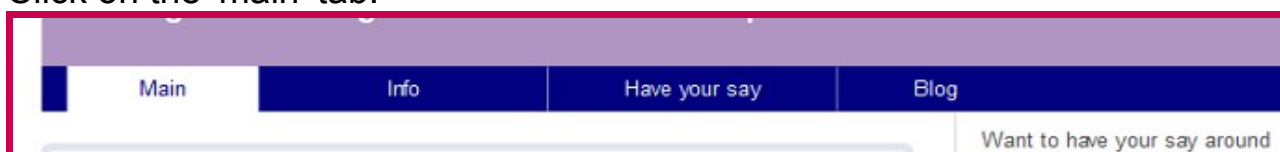
To get back to your community main page from anywhere inside that community:

Click on the name of the community at the top of the page:



To get back to your conversation main page from anywhere inside that conversation:

Click on the 'main' tab:



Would you like more assistance? Visit www.izwe.com/page/help or email help@izwe.com