

How to make your
Neighbourhood

a **better** place to live

The how to do it handbook



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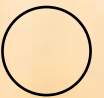
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* PLEASE NOTE, REFERENCES TO INITIATIVES AND FUNDING STREAMS OF ORGANISATIONS WERE CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

Making your **neighbourhood**

a **better** place to live
and how to achieve your aims

1





**MAKING YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE
AND HOW TO ACHIEVE YOUR AIMS**

This is a practical book written to help everyone work towards making his or her own neighbourhood a better place to live. A word often used to describe this process is sustainability. Sustainability is not only about your community becoming a better place to live, it is also about looking to the future and finding ways of living that will last for future generations. For a community to be fully sustainable there are a number of important features. They include features such as:

- > Jobs for those who need them
- > Less poverty and social exclusion
- > A range of environmentally friendly & affordable housing
- > Good educational opportunities
- > Frequent and affordable public transport
- > Accessible and responsive health and social welfare services
- > Low incidence of crime
- > Clean, productive and safe open spaces
- > Facilities for children and young people
- > High levels of public participation.

Of course we are never likely to see a truly sustainable community; the world is just not like that. But just because it is always out of our reach we should not stop trying to achieve greater sustainability for our own community, it is a useful target to aim for. We can work towards greater sustainability in a variety of ways. Some people will be happiest working on very practical tasks while others will want to concentrate on issues of policy. Others will want a combination of both. This handbook is written to help those who want to work in these ways but within their community. It is possible to carry out very practical local tasks, but there are many factors affecting the sustainability of a community which come from outside. Many of these can only be addressed by operating at a policy level.

We have made a number of assumptions in writing this book. Firstly, that people getting together and doing things for the community is more effective and enjoyable than individuals acting alone. Secondly, that anything which enhances the sustainability of a single neighbourhood also enhances the sustainability of the earth or, as someone once said, "think global, act local".

The book begins with a number of questions which act as pointers to the following sections. Section two looks in some detail at the issues or concerns and how some organisations have begun to work on them, while section three explains a number of techniques and practical information which people might use to become active locally.

We have also included a number of documents which may be of practical use to those planning to become involved in community based activity. We would encourage you to photocopy these pages as and when you need them.

People have been working to make their communities better places to live for centuries. Individuals and groups have been active on all sorts of issues and in all sorts of ways. This is not something new nor is it a mystical process. Everyone can get involved. You can, and if you do, not only will your neighbourhood benefit, you will enjoy yourself along the way.

WHAT CONCERNS YOU MOST ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY?

Maybe you are perfectly happy with where you live or maybe you don't give it much thought. Most of us, however, will probably be able to think of something that irritates us about our neighbourhood (as well as a good thing about it). It might be the constant noise of traffic, the distance to local shops or what they sell, poor public transport or litter in the streets.

Different people feel strongly about different issues. Parents who spend time at home looking after young children might feel strongly about the lack of childcare facilities or suitable jobs to fit in with the needs of their children, older people might be worried about being burgled, while teenagers might just want somewhere to meet with others.

Sometimes a single issue is an obvious concern and will affect most people, while elsewhere a combination of problems can lead to some in the community deciding that things are not working and then looking for somewhere else to live. It is at that stage when property prices begin to drop, the area begins to get a bad name and a spiral of decline starts. Clearly such a community cannot be described as sustainable.

Problems are not confined to areas that suffer poverty and other forms of disadvantage. In affluent areas property crime might be a problem but so too might be the lack of what some people call a 'community spirit'.

Sometimes the concerns might focus on people who live within the neighbourhood (noisy or anti-social neighbours). At other times of greatest concern might be the services provided by an organisation, including a poor waste disposal service. An elected body may be a remote, unresponsive local council, pollution may arise from a local factory or it may be threatened with closure. There may be a threat of development such as the construction of an out of town shopping centre with potential impact on local shops.

Whatever concerns you, maybe a large issue such as local unemployment, or a small one, an area of derelict land for example. Whatever it is, it is your concern and you have the right to voice that concern and attempt to do something about it. In doing so, the quality of life within your community may well be improved.

Along the way, you may want to test out your concerns on others to see if they are shared. If they are, a collective approach is often more successful than one person acting on his or her own (see section 3, techniques, processes and skills).

Of course, aspirations and hopes for your community are as important as your concerns. Not all wish lists are possible, but many are. You will not know what is possible unless you try to make your wishes a reality.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

You may of course want to do nothing about your concerns or aspirations and many people, because of their particular circumstances, are unable to do anything. It is the purpose of this handbook to show that your contribution, whatever it is, and however small it is, is still important.

There are all sorts of ways in which you can do something to make your neighbourhood a better place to live. You might choose to act as an individual to change your personal lifestyle or work jointly with your neighbours to make a change to the community. There are organisations that will help you with information and suggestions. You may decide that there is something which needs to be done and you are well placed yourself to do something about it. It might be a campaign for better services, to change some aspect of policy or to stop the change of use of valued local land. It might be a piece of practical work to tidy up some waste ground or letters written to the local paper alerting other people about your concern. Acting as an individual makes you a free agent, so it is entirely up to you what you choose to do.

On the other hand you might choose to work with others, particularly if they share your concern or aspiration. Working within a group, you will have to abide by the wishes of the group, but the group will have a range of skills to bring to bear on the issue and are more likely to make an impact. Certainly local authorities and other organisations are more likely to take notice of you if you are speaking as a group. You are also more likely to have more fun (and arguments!) in a group than if you are working on your own.

So what do you have to offer, or rather what do you want to offer a group, so that collectively you can increase the sustainability of your community?

WORKING IN A GROUP

People who either form groups or join existing ones have rarely had that sort of experience before. What they do have, however, is experience of life, of working with other people, of mixing with others socially and of growing up within a family. To be effective in a community group you need to be able to get on with other people. That is the most important skill you can bring and it should not be undervalued. Community groups need to be chaired (someone who can keep order, ensure everyone gets their say and keeps to the agenda). They also need a secretary who can make a record of the meeting and write letters. If the group is handling money then a treasurer will be needed to keep simple accounts. There are other jobs of course, such as the person who organises events, the press secretary, the editor of the newsletter and so on.

If you are more interested in the issues than working on a committee, there are numerous practical tasks such as:

- > Measuring pollution levels
- > Counting traffic on a busy stretch of road
- > Developing a credit union
- > Helping to develop a housing association to provide cheap local housing
- > Taking over and developing local allotments and an associated food co-op
- > Working out a safe route to school scheme with local parents and if necessary painting footprints on the pavement.

These are the sort of tasks that are not only important steps taken towards local sustainability but, by getting together with others from the local area, people actually enjoy a shared experience which helps to develop a sense of community.

POLICY ACTIVITY

As well as practical tasks there is work at a policy level. Not all issues can be dealt with by carrying out practical tasks, important though they are. Some issues such as making the case for a local integrated transport system, which will reduce rat runs and take commuter traffic off local streets, can only be addressed by engaging with council officers and politicians. Sometimes it will be necessary to join a transport consultative committee and develop an understanding of national transport policy. Sometimes it will be necessary to link up with a Local Strategic Partnership operating in your area. They have responsibility for implementing the Community Plan or Strategy and should be interested in the views you have about your

area. There are many ways in which it is possible to operate at this policy level but it is important to remember that linking policy with the practical experience will strengthen both. However, if working at a policy level you should never cut yourself off from your roots back in the neighbourhood.

Clearly there are a range of tasks needed if local sustainability is to be enhanced. It is up to you to decide which is the most appropriate one for you and if it will be a short or a long-term commitment.

ARE YOU STARTING FROM SCRATCH AND DO YOU HAVE ANY RESOURCES?

If you are thinking about doing something with others within your community for the first time, it's not easy. What right have you got to knock on neighbouring doors and ask them to be involved? Do you really want a reputation as a troublemaker? It might mean you miss your favourite soap on television! Anyway where do you start?

There are probably half a million community groups of one form or another throughout Britain. No one knows for certain because they are not on any central register. They come and go all the time and new ones are starting every week so you are not on your own! There are detailed guidance notes in section three for those who want to start a new group and for those who are interested in joining an existing organisation but don't know where to find the most appropriate one.

You have to ask yourself if you are really starting from scratch. If you have lived in your neighbourhood for some time you probably know more about your community than council officials and others who make policy which affects you and your neighbours. You know who people can turn to if they want help, who can look after young children at short notice, who is prepared to lend their gardening tools and who has a computer and can surf the internet. You know where young people gather in the evening and which streets are unsafe after dark. If you think about it you and your friends are the experts about your community. If you have just moved into a neighbourhood you have the experience of living somewhere else and the outsiders view can be valued by your new neighbours.

From this base it is not too difficult to take the next step. This might be to gather together other people to decide how you are going to work together.

WHAT INFORMATION DO YOU NEED?

Probably the most important information for you is the views of other residents in your neighbourhood. Unless you know what other people think and feel about issues, you will quickly lose credibility and will ultimately fail. There are various ways of finding out what other people in the community think and some of these are described in section three of this book.

You will need to learn something about the issue(s) that interests you, although this shouldn't put you off. There are many organisations with expertise on social, economic and environmental issues and you can go to them for help and information. There may well be an organisation that concentrates on your key issue (details again in section 3). If you cannot find one there is always the library or the internet for those with access to a computer to carry out your research.

You may need to gather information about levels of pollution, cars on the road or the number of young people unemployed in your area. There is now a service that provides detailed statistics on every neighbourhood (details later), however, you and the fellow members of your group may be able to gather up to date information yourselves. Sometimes people in authority place more importance on information if it is gathered by individuals or an organisation from outside the community. Academic institutions and students can be particularly useful here. You help them by providing a real life situation that is useful for their studies and they help you with free labour and technical expertise.

It may help you to know some information about those organisations with which you come into contact. For example, you might find it useful to know the names and telephone numbers of key staff, the management structure, how they operate, and their relationships with other organisations.

Whatever you do you are likely to come into contact with your local councillors. It may help your cause if you get to know them in advance, which wards they represent and if they chair any council committees. Don't forget information is power!

WHAT SKILLS DO YOU NEED TO ACQUIRE?

It is difficult before you start to predict what skills you will need. The type of skill depends upon the issue and how you intend to tackle it. You will also need to consider other people in the group and think of ways of complementing their skills.

Clearly it is important if you are working in a group to develop people skills. You not only need to get on well with other people socially but also develop the skill to work with them and learn to cope with any disputes or personality clashes.

Probably the most important skill, whatever the context, is the ability to work out how you are going to get from where you are now to where you want to get to with the issue. Working out the steps in the process to achieve your aims is critical, so too is the confidence and determination to succeed. You will need confidence and determination because there will be lots of obstacles in your way and you may get knocked back several times, but you will succeed if you keep going. These skills come largely with experience but it may be worth checking if there are any courses for community groups organised by the community development department of your local council.

WHAT SORT OF ORGANISATION DO YOU NEED?

It all depends on what you want to achieve and how you intend to operate. Some groups come together for a short period of time to carry out a simple task then, having achieved their purpose, they disband. You do not need the structure of a constitution with a formally elected chair, secretary and treasurer if you do not intend to write letters or handle money. For some tasks an informal action group (or whatever you want to call yourselves) with different people at each meeting is OK.

But in the main, if the group intends to communicate with others in the community and outside, if it intends to raise and spend money (in which case you need a bank account) and if it intends to be around for some time, then adopt a constitution (for sample constitutions and further comments on structures see section 4). You may, of course, start off small and informal, only adopting a constitution when you grow and start to be noticed.

DO YOU NEED OUTSIDE HELP?

You may be lucky! Your community may have people with a range of skills that are of use to you and they may be prepared to give their time at no cost. They may, of course, be too busy, not interested, or the issue which you want to address is so technical, complicated or extensive that you might need outside assistance.

The range of help from outside sources is very extensive but there are costs. Bringing in outside experts doesn't always work. They may be expert in their own technical skill but not have the skills of getting on with people. They will not know your community as well as you and may not think that this is important. They may have their own agenda, maybe they want to make a political point or publish an academic paper, which furthers their own careers. They may not fit in with your group and you might feel that you have lost some control.

On the other hand they will bring either the technical skill or valuable extra labour which may make all the difference. They also have the potential to add objectivity to whatever you do. Some people and organisations are more likely to listen to what you have to say if it is backed up by an organisation which is not part of the community. This is particularly true if it is an academic institution.

So far we have been talking about help which might be focused on your concern or issues. There is also the help which is more focused upon you and your group and the way in which you operate. This help towards the process is more likely to come from a group of people called community development workers. They can help with the setting up and working of a group, securing funding, producing a newsletter and negotiating with agencies. Unfortunately they have different titles in each area and are thin on the ground. Not all councils employ community workers and you might find them in different departments. You may, of course, feel that you don't need this sort of help anyway, but if you have never done anything like this before you may find them useful.

THE REST OF THE BOOK...

If you have got this far, the rest is easy!

What follows are lists of issues (in alphabetical order) you might be concerned about and examples of ways in which some local groups and more established organisations have tackled them.

- > **Don't forget (1)** - These are only examples, you do not have to do exactly the same but they might give you some ideas...
- > **Don't forget (2)** - They are probably only the successful ones, the unsuccessful ones rarely appear in any lists. (And don't forget also that failure is not always the fault of the community group).

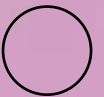
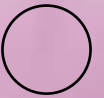
This section is written to inspire you to try things by showing you what can be done! We have only included a selection of examples - there are lots more and you will find others as you get into the action.

Later on in this book we shall look at techniques, processes and skills you will need to know about if you are to achieve what you want for your neighbourhood. By listing these, we are not assuming you don't have these skills - you may already know how to organise a committee or have a journalist in your group. If you have, you may not need much out of this section, so you could skip it and go to the next section in this book.

After the appendices, we have included contact details of a few key organisations you might find useful. This is always a difficult thing to do. Such details are often out of date as soon as they are published. There are some organisations which can act as your guide around certain issues and which retain up to date lists of organisations.

Don't forget this is not meant to be a book you read from cover to cover. Dip into sections when you want more information and then dip out again!!

Practical ways in which a
community
can play a part in achieving
greater **sustainability**





**PRACTICAL WAYS IN WHICH A COMMUNITY CAN PLAY A PART IN
ACHIEVING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY**

IMPROVING LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY - OPEN SPACES

As space in our towns and cities comes under increasing threat from 'development', encouraging the use of open space for the good of the community is a key issue. We forget that natural environments enhance our quality of life - they provide many different types of benefit. These include the chance to take a break away from it all, as well as giving us a sense of 'place'. And it's here that community input - local knowledge, practical skills and people power - can be immensely valuable. Many a neglected or uncared-for site has been transformed by tender loving care from a 'pool' of people, usually working on a voluntary basis.

But whilst community groups may have the vision - that glimpse into the future of what could be achieved - they often lack the financial resources or specific professional expertise required to transform ideas into reality. Tapping into sources of funding is an art in itself and can consume vast amounts of time and energy. Finding key partners - other groups and organisations that share the same vision - can help break through these barriers. Skills might include negotiating with landowners, the local authority and funding agencies.

WHAT IS OPEN SPACE?

The term 'Open Space' means a lot of different things to different people. It might be parks, the local 'rec', community gardens and city farms, allotments, the derelict site at the end of the road, even people's own back gardens. Or it can include common land, uncared-for space around housing developments, public buildings, roadsides and railway lines. It might also include sacred sites such as churchyards and cemeteries, as well as larger spaces such as woods and riversides.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Land and how we use it is a fundamental element of a sustainable community. Land once derelict is often difficult and costly to restore. Appropriately used land has many benefits. Parks and adventure playgrounds provide leisure facilities for local people, tidied up derelict land may increase the value of local property and some uses may stimulate the local economy. Keeping a balance of different types of areas is essential in creating healthy neighbourhoods.

'GREENING' THE CITY

Efforts to restore open green spaces and to create small ecological parks and urban nature sites have been very successful. The key to successful city greening is people working together in a variety of ways on different projects to tackle local issues. Community spirits are lifted when people realise they can, and do, make a difference, thus building confidence and the impetus to develop new skills.

Projects don't just have to be wildlife sites. A recent Government report on allotments suggested that local authorities should invest in allotments and turn them into community gardens. These could then be a resource for the whole community; places where children learn about growing food and adults have the opportunity to engage in 'basic therapeutic activities' like digging the soil. Community gardening helps us engage with other people whilst looking after our own backyards and wider environment.

STREET SCENES

We are not only concerned with open spaces. The streets, footpaths and other spaces where people move, work, and meet other people, are equally important. For example, one of the biggest problems affecting communities is the use of streets by both cars and pedestrians. Often the two do not mix and thousands of pedestrians, many of them young children, are killed each year. It is possible with careful design to shield people from cars and their fumes and to create pleasant places for people to live their lives. The look of a street is also important. The Prime Minister has used the term 'liveability' to describe environments that are free from litter and graffiti and are felt to be safe for people.

If we were to tackle these issues alone we would improve local environmental quality considerably. The trouble is we cannot tackle them in isolation from other issues such as the broader social and economic problems of a neighbourhood. All these issues are joined up so their solutions need to be joined up as well. There is no use in getting the council's street cleaning services improved if people still feel as though the street is not theirs and continue to drop litter.

A ROLE FOR EVERYONE

Creating a more sustainable environment involves:

- > Improving the quality of local streets and open spaces
- > Creating the opportunity for new employment
- > Providing social meeting spaces and safer places.

Many of the problems are caused by organisations from outside the community. Big companies may insist on their lorries taking 'rat runs' through built-up neighbourhoods, Network Rail may not properly fence off tracks or clean up track-side litter, and local chain stores may erect obtrusive or untidy shop fronts. Local people can have an impact even here. Keeping pressure on significant landowners is something many groups can get involved in. This might involve lobbying the council, companies, utilities or the rail authority to develop improved ways of managing their land that provide social, economic, as well as environmental value.

Local people, residents, and community groups can also help by:

- > Getting involved in campaigns to protect & enhance streets and existing open spaces
- > Securing safe access for all to streets and open spaces
- > Suburban homes with gardens - a great opportunity to grow food and encourage wildlife through 'greening' your own garden
- > Help spreading the word and raising awareness.

Possible actions for:

- > Tenants/residents groups - adopt and improve environmental problems in a street. In one neighbourhood in Leeds, residents laid turf across the street outside their houses so children could play without fear of cars
- > Schools - many have made a garden and wildlife area in the school grounds. Look on the Eco Schools website at www.eco-schools.org.uk, for ideas
- > Community environment groups - forming a 'Friends of the Local Park' group.

AN A TO Z OF ISSUES AND ACTIONS - LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

A

Adventure Playgrounds

Even land that is temporarily vacant awaiting development has a use to local people, particularly for communities in urban areas. Once the landowner has agreed, a popular idea is turning these sites into formal or informal playgrounds with donated materials, volunteers and local support from businesses and other groups in the community. Funding may be available too from local environmental improvement schemes, regeneration agencies and through the landfill tax. 'Playspace for All' is the message of the Handicapped Adventure Playground Association (Tel: 020 7736 4443) which can provide advice on designing features to stimulate and allow children to make discoveries for themselves.

Allotments

With renewed interest in these small strips of food-producing land dotted around the fringes of urban areas and alongside railway lines, there is also increased pressure to 'develop' these areas (also see FOOD section). Government plans for more house-building within cities is one such threat.

Community groups are campaigning hard to save allotment land under threat, including working to persuade councils to create more allotments where demand outstrips supply. Every local situation is different; there is no blueprint for success. But local knowledge and influence is a critical factor. Community groups also need to check that allotments and open space are not being lost when local authorities are revising local plans such as Unitary Development Plans. Amenity groups and environmental organisations should know what is going on locally.

Local food growing is taking on a new importance. It plays a significant part in boosting people's health - particularly in areas where there are few shops selling fresh vegetables and affordable food. There is a strong social element too - and allotment space can be shared so you don't have to commit yourself to something too big to handle. Allotments are an important addition to gardens and community gardens within the community.

Art

Community art projects provide an opportunity for self-expression, whether as an individual, or as part of a community. People involved in projects often speak of the sense of pride which they obtain from the end result, which fits a need identified locally, and which would not have happened without the input of the community. Art is a powerful tool for education, for creating new awareness, teaching new skills and bringing together a wide range of people who might never have had the opportunity to work together before.

Projects could include: nature trails with sculptures (using natural materials, metalwork, sundials); mosaics on walls, floors and playgrounds (using pieces of tile, stone, glass, etc); murals and collages in/at the entrance to school buildings; decorative paving and design in community and remembrance gardens and photo montages for display boards in community centres. (See Thames21 canal project, which can be found at www.thames21.org.uk). The only limits are your imagination. Funding might be available through local development and regeneration agencies, Arts Councils and the Lottery Board. The Voluntary Arts Network is an ideal starting place for help.

B

Biodiversity Local Action Plans

Biodiversity is essential for healthy environments and communities because it makes them more able to withstand, and be adaptable, to change. The presence of certain species such as otters can act as 'indicators' showing how healthy watercourses are, and mosses / lichens can show how polluted the air is.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPS) are part of local authority Nature Conservation Strategies, identifying actions for protecting, conserving and enhancing wildlife and their habitats locally. To be effective this work needs to involve local people. Local BAPS can be prepared at regional, county or district council level. They are an important means of applying national conservation targets locally. Local wildlife groups will know more about what is going on locally, and may need volunteers for surveys. English Nature, a statutory body, has launched a Biodiversity Grant Scheme aimed at reversing the decline of priority species and habitats. Grants of £250-5,000 per year for up to three years are on offer. More details on 01733 455000.

C

Churchyards

Cemeteries and graveyards in our towns and cities make valuable havens for local wildlife, if not fussily maintained and over-tidied up. Local surveys highlight the rich diversity of insects, birds and animals found in many of these sites. Old rural churchyards contribute to local distinctiveness too, the old trees, moss covered memorial stones, and wildflowers often being found nowhere else in the locality. Some cemeteries no longer used for burials are now managed as local nature reserves. Amenity and conservation groups help with the work in places such as Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington, London, as well as numerous other London cemeteries including Highgate. Even where cemeteries are still actively used, a greater appreciation of their importance to wildlife can create sympathetic landscapes. The London Wildlife Trust runs a Living Churchyards and Cemeteries Project to get this message across.

Common Land

Within rural areas, these historical areas of land provide the opportunity to keep, or revive, local traditions ('Lammas Lands' or 'Beating the Bounds') and management systems such as grazing meadows. Involvement by amenity, conservation, heritage and history groups can bring to life the ancient links between land and history. Getting schools involved is a great way for pupils to have a living history lesson.

Community or Wildlife Gardens

Community gardens are more than just gardens. They can be local food growing areas, training grounds for new or revived skills such as composting and open spaces for amenity and recreational purposes. Above all, a community garden is a social place, depending on local people for its maintenance.

BTCV and the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens have huge amounts of information for anyone wanting to set up a project. Community gardens can be run by all sorts of organisations - from Scouts Groups to local tenants. Groundwork can also give local contacts for any group interested in setting up a community garden.

Wrens Nest, Tipton Dudley

Wrens Nest at Tipton, Dudley: this community garden covers previously unwanted grounds and is part of the 'urban renaissance' of a troubled housing estate. The highly successful project grew out of one resident's vision, who formed a tenants association to get things moving and which has resulted in the community space, an orchard, a food-co-op and a close social network of local residents.

Luton, Bedfordshire

Luton, Bedfordshire: the creation of a community garden by the Bangladesh Youth League was planned jointly by young volunteers and the Borough Council's Park Department, because there was no public green space locally. The garden is regularly used by the people attending the youth centre. The siting of the picnic tables and planting of trees and climbers has made it a popular venue for picnics, as well as for wildlife. It is hoped that the sale of organic vegetables will provide funds for seeds and other needs, and be a source of pride for those who've had a hand in growing them.

Source: Shell Better Britain Campaign

Projects can be very small-scale. Starting at home by looking at backyard gardens or shared space on estates is one way. Housing associations and private house owners should be supportive; anything increasing local pride and respect is to be welcomed. More ambitious groups might want to start a small orchard or vegetable garden - these ideas are suitable for school grounds too.

Community gardens should be just that - gardens suitable for all the community. Wide paths, ramps and slopes rather than steps, and raised flower beds help people in wheelchairs, the elderly and those with mobility problems to take part. Sensory Gardens for blind and people with poor sight is another example - here the emphasis is on plants with different leaf textures and smells (herbs are ideal as are rustling grasses) rather than colour. The Wildlife Trusts have an 'Access for All' Project, funded by the National Lottery, focusing on projects and ideas that make places accessible to everyone and, in particular, improvement at wildlife centres.

Be creative in designing and building your garden. Look for items that can be re-used - discarded wood pallets can be made into compost bins, unwanted containers coated in left-over paint can be planted in, old car tyres and sinks are ideal too. Cast off rubber matting makes good paths and pieces of carpet keep the heat in DIY compost heaps.

Community uses of vacant Land and Buildings

There is a revival of interest in re-using vacant or dormant land through community projects and community enterprise schemes. Regeneration agencies or the local authority may have a community grants scheme for such work, or it may be fundable through groups eligible to receive landfill tax funding. Examples include street murals, 'pocket parks', city farms (although the costs of animal welfare may be high), urban ecology parks, adventure playgrounds, community gardens and buildings.

Whilst residents / tenants groups may only be able to tackle small sites, it is a significant way for people to gain power, assert some control and feel a sense of ownership in creating places shaped by the community rather than by the council or a bigger landowner. Getting it right involves consultation and discussions with everyone right from the beginning, not when the project is finished. Draft plans allow people to have their say, and the opportunity to volunteer their help. It can be a confidence booster and a good way to learn new skills. Projects such as refurbishing buildings for community use may bring different groups in the community together, for example, young people, older people and different faiths and cultures. BTCV has a well funded scheme giving grants to community groups.

Community Woodlands / Forests

Community forests and woodlands initiatives aim to transform run-down and marginal landscapes on the urban fringe (also see Woodlands). In time they'll help to restore derelict land, create wildlife habitats and improve public amenity through the development of a network of recreational facilities. Trees have an impact on people's quality of life and are an essential part of any environmental improvement scheme.

E

Economic Potential

A high quality local environment is valuable not only in terms of people's physical and mental well-being, it is also good for the economy. Firms will want to build their factories where there is good local environmental quality. People will want to buy or rent houses, boosting the value of property and people who pass through will be impressed and generally the area will get a good reputation. Local authorities and agencies that administer spending on regeneration will be only too aware of this and will act sympathetically if you propose a project that improves local environmental quality. For them it is a means to an end.

G

Gardens

For lots of people, these are the starting point for city 'greening'. A backyard garden can support an amazing number of different plant and animal species (biodiversity), especially if its owners are careful about managing it. This can be a great source of pleasure for people spending a lot of time at home, for example, older people. Planting front gardens improves the look of streets. Gardening can be a very social activity; it gets people talking. It can increase community safety by getting people into our streets, our local parks and places like community gardens. There is an increased sense of local pride and respect. The academic and writer Chris Baines, who recently appeared with Charlie Dimmock on an organic gardening television series, has described suburban gardens as linear city parks.

But not everyone is a natural gardener. People often need some help to transform unsightly grounds into something worthwhile. For example, in the London borough of Southwark, the Peckham Partnership Initiative not only provides tenants with new gardens, advice from the London Wildlife Garden Centre about how to manage them is a part of the package. The scheme has been an outstanding success.

And of course not everyone who wants a garden has access to one. Allotments may be one answer. But there are often long waiting lists for them. Allotments provide space for people to garden with others who might want to share information and tips on how best to grow food and care for the land. Organisations such as Groundwork and BTCV in some areas work locally to support community gardens. Tenants and residents groups may decide they want to investigate how local plots of spare land might be used for local gardening clubs / projects. Asking local councillors is one way of getting information and support. Approaching school heads and governors about using school grounds for gardening as part of the educational process is another option. The council, in partnership with local groups, may have put together leaflets on gardening to encourage wildlife.

In towns even the smallest patch of land can undergo a transformation. In the HP Source Project in Leeds, small back yards have been transformed using murals, mosaics and planters to transform small bin yards into colourful gardens and play areas.

Gardens for All

Local sustainability is not just about making sure people have gardens or access to open space, it is about making them accessible to everyone. Gardens and gardening activities have been described as 'great levellers'- there is something for everyone. One idea which deserves to be taken up, is a 'dating agency'. This brings together those people who have gardens and cannot for one reason or another look after them, with people who do not have a garden and would like to grow food for their family, play with their children or have somewhere quiet to sit.

Green Belt Land

See Housing, Regeneration and the Built Environment.

H

Hedges

People often don't realise just how valuable hedgerows can be. Many have a long history, originally being used to mark ancient land or property boundaries. Few are properly protected. Lots of different species of wildlife are dependent on hedges surviving because they link different habitats, they act as 'corridors' between trees, gardens and open land. Ponds and rivers do this too. Hedges are important for local biodiversity. So there is always a job for local groups, maybe working with the local councils' Tree Officer to look after, and plant more hedgerows. School grounds are ideal.

Horticultural Therapy

Horticultural therapy encourages people experiencing physical or mental health difficulties to get involved in gardening projects. Activities provide motivation, contact with other people and new skills within a place of peace and safety. Thrive, the horticulture therapy charity, runs training courses, workshops, supports research and gives advice. Local associations working to make services inclusive for people with disabilities are another source of help.

L

Local Distinctiveness - 'A Sense of Place'

A small charity, Common Ground, concentrates on helping people to celebrate what is good about their local surroundings. Many projects use art and design and there is an emphasis on using people's inspiration and projects that draw different people together. Ideas range from Parish Maps to community orchards. A new campaign in rural areas focuses on rivers and history.

The Local Heritage Initiative is a national grant scheme, funded by the Countryside Commission, Nationwide Building Society and the Heritage Lottery Fund, encouraging people to explore, celebrate and stand up for the small details of a place which make it special. Local groups with a formal constitution and a bank account can apply for grants to cover community-led projects focusing on details of local archaeology, nature, built heritage, customs and traditions, and industrial heritage. Standard grants are £3,000-£15,000, paid in arrears, to cover 60% of project costs. The remaining 40% may be made up from cash, in-kind donations, volunteer labour; or a mix of these. Additional grants are available from the Nationwide.

M

Murals

See Art

O

Orchards

These may seem unlikely projects for community action but Groundwork and Common Ground are reporting great enthusiasm for these locally.

“Consider the Community Orchard: a place run by and for local people, in city, in suburb or village. The focus is trees, blossoms, harvest - a place for festive gatherings, communal food growing, quiet contemplation, playing, wildlife watching, animal grazing, skill sharing, extending education, building responsibility, tree growing, nurturing biodiversity, keeping and extending local varieties. Here community action can play host to biodiversity and sustainability; the foundations for local agenda 21. Community orchards provide an enjoyable focus for steps towards sustainability by local communities themselves.”

Sue Clifford in D. Warburton's Book p235

Community Orchards are eligible for funding under the new Local Heritage Initiative (see Local Distinctiveness). The scheme offers enormous opportunities to communities who want to protect local orchards and who need encouragement to start, for example, a Community Orchard, an orchard map, a local variety nursery, or a community fruit press.

The Ebley Linear Community Orchard

Other ideas include encouraging local businesses and shops to plant fruit trees in grounds or car parks (this has happened at Stansted Airport) and combining schemes. The Ebley Linear Community Orchard, near Stroud, the country's first orchard planted in 1994 along a former railway line, now has a cycletrack. Local tree wardens can help in surveying local orchards or planting new ones, and City Farms could plant an orchard and sell the fruit and juice.

P

Parks and Open Space

Municipal parks offer a breathing space from busy city life, a green space to unwind, walk, talk, read or sit in the sun. And for those without gardens they are an important place to escape to and identify with. Parks can be anything from the formal, laid-out and landscaped spaces to the informal 'pocket' parks squeezed between residential areas. Depending on their size, location and history, parks can include a surprising number of features. Everything from deer and animal enclosures to paddling ponds, adventure playgrounds, wildlife areas, herb gardens, tree-lined walks, recreation areas, lakes and rose gardens. Parks provide a meeting place for people of all ages and stages of life; for parents with young children, for school children and teenagers; for sports people; and for the elderly. A good park offers a mix of facilities for play, sports, walking, contact with the natural world and opportunities for innovative community projects. And it should be a safe place for everyone to use.

Financial cutbacks by local authorities, coupled with vandalism, have made some parks into eyesores. One very practical issue involving anyone who lives locally is pressure to restore park keepers and to ensure that opening hours are not cut back. These threats can unite lots of different groups and provide opportunities to put forward suggestions for improvement. Local people may have lots of different visions. Ideas can be gathered from local surveys with the results being fed through to local decision-makers. The regeneration of Peoples Park in Halifax, Calderdale, can provide some useful lessons.

Funding may be available as part of a regeneration package for an area. Breathing new life into parks may mean increasing their use as a resource for community education and learning. Ideas include local food growing sites, demonstrating different types of composting schemes, planting to encourage wildlife and for trying out community art projects.

Pocket parks are small, natural, 'green' areas that are protected and managed by local people for conservation and informal recreation. Surprisingly, rural areas may particularly benefit from these - much farming land is out of bounds, and paths/rights of way are not suitable.

Traditionally, Parks Management falls under parks and gardens within a local authority but in Stirling it is the Education Department's role to oversee how play areas are developed and maintained. This reflects a shifting emphasis towards more child friendly and green initiatives. There is a commitment to consult with communities, including asking children for their views, who expressed a preference for play areas set within larger open spaces. Existing natural features have been used such as trees in the form of living willow dens and safety was considered by careful choice of plants and keeping dogs out of certain areas. The needs of young children and teenagers have also been catered for and all play facilities are made accessible to all - with gates broad enough for double buggies and wheelchairs.

Paths & Walkways

These need to be used otherwise they may be lost. Groups can adopt a footpath and ensure it doesn't get overgrown and that fly-tipping is removed immediately. Other activities can include guided walks, cycle ways, footpaths, and wildlife corridors.

The Durham LA21

The Durham LA21 process concluded that a sustainable future must demand a fully accessible rights of way network with access for all, including provision for disabled people. It would require working with parish councils and community groups to improve and publicise paths and routeways. Local people are best placed and motivated to decide on what should happen to rights of way.

Ponds, Streams and Rivers

These are landscape features that will entice wildlife to visit - possibilities include the restoration of old parish ponds, riverside trails for disabled people alongside rivers.

S

School Grounds

These are a practical, but often overlooked, resource for a wide range of subjects taught at school - science, biology, history, ecology and art. Research by Learning Through Landscapes shows that school grounds can have a profound influence on children's attitude and behaviour. Increasing the value of school grounds for wildlife and involving children and schools in learning about, and caring for local areas, is a worthwhile activity. It can be raised by Parent Teacher Associations and by local educational centres. More and more schools have developed gardens and the annual School Grounds Day provides a focus for action, but every day provides an opportunity to make a few more changes. Ideas include: making a wildlife or wildflower garden; going organic in school grounds and promoting 'out of school' interest clubs, for example Young Ornithologists Clubs.

Wildlife ponds and water gardens can be created in the school grounds as dedicated outdoor classrooms (with appropriate safety features). Schools can have allotments, lavender beds, a herb garden, trees with chimes, etc. Sensory gardens use different textures, colours, touch and surfaces, plus growing areas.

T

Trees

Trees and hedges in our streets help make towns and cities greener and pleasanter places to live. Old trees connect us to the past and young trees are a link forward into the future. Trees are worth celebrating, but they need renewing and looking after too.

Even though a recent report tells that by 2020 there will be more trees in England than in the time of William the Conqueror, the threats to trees are everywhere. According to a survey by Gardening Which, one-third of local authorities report having had street trees destroyed by workers building trenches for utilities such as cable TV. Damage can be extensive and all local authorities surveyed believed that industry guidelines for excavating near trees are not being observed. Results have highlighted the fact that Government-backed regulations, introduced in 1995 to protect the nations' trees, have failed.

For groups wishing to transform their local patch, councils often run free tree schemes, especially where after-planting care will be maintained. Planting local species helps biodiversity. Community groups can also help park rangers and council tree wardens by reporting vandalism and any problems they see. For trees under threat from development, a Tree Preservation Order may be able to be served.

"If I knew I was going to die tomorrow, I would plant a tree today"

Martin Luther King

Local tree wardens can give advice to groups on planting and caring for trees, and may support initiatives to create a local tree nursery on community gardens.



Urban Design

The design of urban spaces can influence whether people think their neighbourhood is a good place to live. The Urban Design Alliance has developed 'Place Check', a method of assessing the qualities of a place, showing what improvements are needed and focusing people on working together to achieve them.



Wildflowers

Ordinary people can help their local environment by creating a habitat that is fast disappearing elsewhere in the UK - wildflower meadows. Even small gardens can be planted up.

Wildlife Corridors

Roadsides, if not liberally dosed with pesticides, etc, can form important wildlife corridors and sanctuaries. A positive development - major roads are becoming some of the most interesting and best managed conservation areas. There are 4,500 acres of motorway verges in addition to all the other roads. Managed more sympathetically than in the past, planted with trees, wildflowers, etc. "They represent the most common contact that many people have with the countryside, as well as a very particular habitat for flora and fauna" (Highways Agency). Highways Agency - Careful planting - a new phenomena involves wildflowers being sown and established with particular attention to the insect life being attracted as a result of the planting.

GETTING AROUND - IMPROVING MOBILITY AND ACCESS

"When I see an adult on a bicycle, I have faith in the future of the human race"

H.G. Wells

GOING NOWHERE FAST

Transport is one of those perennial issues cropping up in nearly every local community survey, public consultation exercise, and in our daily conversations. The impact of traffic on people's quality of life - real or unseen - is a major concern in most areas. Road traffic is now the main source of urban air pollution and bad air quality creates health problems for vulnerable members of the community. The dominance of the car has led to a lack of investment in public transport. This carries an image (often false) of being uncoordinated, unsafe, and usually dirty. Declining use of public transport in rural areas has led to a withdrawal of services, further increasing the isolation of individuals and communities without cars.

Safety issues are of concern too. Aggressive driving is on the increase and this is another reason why fewer children now walk or cycle to school. Congested roads, noise and poor or non-existent facilities for cyclists and pedestrians are other 'bad image' makers. Nationally, the plans for road building have direct environmental costs in terms of pollution and loss of wildlife habitats.

GETTING AROUND

Mobility is fundamental to the quality of life of everyone within the community. Studies show that many people make at least one journey a day either by car or public transport. But with more cars on our roads, congestion occurs and local air and noise pollution rises. Road traffic is the fastest growing contributor to climate change. A recent study has shown that the UK has the worst transportation system in the EU.

According to the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions the amount of car travel per head of population has nearly doubled since 1970 (DETR 1998). By 1997 people were travelling, on average, over 6,500 miles per year by car. But not everyone has access to a car, and vital public transport systems, under-funded over the years, now offer only a patchy service outside peak hours in some areas. The UK is badly in need of an integrated and sustainable transport policy to reduce environmental impacts and provide a better quality of life for rural and urban areas. People living in rural areas without a car cannot easily access job and training opportunities (a particular problem with youth and regular employment).

CAR CULTURE

Within the UK, 82% of vehicle mileage is now done in cars. The car now influences many aspects of our lives and this dependency is nurtured by the advertising industry. For some users and some journeys a car is essential, but for many of us there are other options for some of our journeys.

Cars undoubtedly provide freedom for people who can afford to run them or choose to run them. But many people do not have that option. Developing saner and more sustainable transport solutions that are not perceived as second-class options demands national commitment, backed by local policies to reduce traffic and promote more integrated systems of public transport. Moves to reduce the need to travel are important too. Where travel is necessary, suitable alternatives to the car must be available, which are as cheap (or cheaper), as quick (or quicker), safe and as reliable as the private car.

Traffic congestion and pollution affects everyone. Increasing congestion on our roads is becoming a burden on the whole community. The average car speed in central London is just 10mph (DETR) and according to the CBI congestion and pollution are getting worse: traffic jams and delays now cost the UK economy over £15 billion a year.

TRANSPORT FOR ALL

Access to transport is essential for the health of local communities. For example, it enables access to employment opportunities, to shops, banking facilities and health services, fresh and affordable food, recreation and leisure. Transport planning has to be strategically linked to regeneration, employment, and anti-poverty initiatives.

Nottingham City Council - Mobility Management

Nottingham City Council has begun a two-year project, to address the travel problems people from disadvantaged communities may face when looking for employment. The Mobility Management project aims to address barriers to finding work such as inaccessible public transport or confusing public transport information. Practical measures may include provision of better information, tickets to interviews, monthly travel passes or cycle pools.

Urban Environment Today - April 2000

Public transport needs to be more accessible for disabled people. Lack of mobility is a major obstacle to independent living, and can affect health by reducing social links, as well as hampering educational and employment opportunities. The Disability Discrimination Act is creating minimum technical specifications for accessible taxis, buses and trains which operators must meet, but these will take time to be introduced. Local community groups can help keep the pressure on local operators to speed up the introduction of low platform buses and other measures.

TRANSPORT, POLLUTION AND HEALTH

Vehicle emissions are the UK's fastest growing contribution to global warming gases - the biggest threat to the future of the planet. Just as worrying are figures published by the Government (1998) suggesting that between 12,000-24,000 vulnerable people die prematurely as a result of air pollution caused by traffic.

The most disadvantaged groups in society often suffer most from poor air quality and noise because they tend to live closest to busy roads (Source: Sir Donald Acheson, 'Great Britain Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health', TSO November 1998). Road traffic growth is one of the main causes of increasing noise in our communities.

GETTING INTEGRATED

Getting a sustainable transport system in place requires more than just new investment and careful development planning; cultural and lifestyle changes will be necessary too - a big challenge. Results from the RAC Annual Survey of Driver's Attitudes (January 2000) show that the UK's 29 million drivers have little incentive to move to public transport which is perceived as unreliable, not integrated, costly and often inconvenient. Longer commuting times were also mentioned but traffic congestion can slow cars down too. The cost implications of making journeys to school were mentioned especially where several household members would have to buy tickets. The survey highlighted growing car dependency; the proportion of drivers who never use the bus had risen from 65% in 1988 to 81% and those who never used trains increased from 58% to 75%. Back in 1997 the RAC commented that 20% of all car journeys could be avoided if other means of transport were used more efficiently.

A ROLE FOR EVERYONE

What's needed? The issues are:

- Greater diversity and quality in public transport
- Clean, safe, integrated transport systems
- Accessible systems for all
- Reduced dominance of the car - a long-term aim.

The Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 provides local government with new powers to set targets for limiting traffic growth. Local authority transport plans need to satisfy people's travel needs in ways that reduce environmental impacts yet still provide maximum choice and safety. Groups can ask questions of their council: how are they tackling the preparation of local transport plans? What progress are they making with traffic reduction targets? What are the results?

Local people, tenants and residents groups, parent associations, community groups, all have some stake in improving the local environment for people. Get a group together and identify the problems in your immediate street and then your local neighbourhood. Pool ideas, share knowledge, involve local councillors to try to find out the local authority's views on traffic calming. There may be plans to install features - the campaigning organisation Living Streets urges that if they are not interested it is your job to convince them.

Whilst transport is a huge issue to tackle, local people and groups within the community can help by:

- > Working with the council on awareness campaigns connected to travel
- > Help support initiatives by schools to set up Safe Routes to School
- > Comment on council schemes. Different perspectives from a range of users are important
- > Raise awareness within the local community for provision of secure cycle parking facilities.

A TO Z OF ISSUES AND ACTIONS - POLLUTION

A

Air Pollution

Local authorities have new responsibilities for local air quality management and are under pressure to tackle poor air quality but pollution knows no boundaries. For example, vehicles emitting exhaust fumes may just be passing through an area. But with rates of childhood asthma on the rise and evidence that children living on heavily trafficked streets are more likely to develop chronic respiratory problems, any action by groups, however small, is to be welcomed. There is strength in numbers and a group joining forces with others, e.g. residents

and tenants groups, parent and toddler organisations and local environmental activists, can be a force to be reckoned with. Community groups may collaborate on awareness campaigns, share driving to school, support or set up Safe Routes to Schools initiatives.

Involvement in monitoring air pollution can be helpful. Whilst local authorities will be measuring local air quality using specialised equipment, there are other ways of monitoring. Biological indicators such as lichens and mosses are particularly sensitive to air pollution and may have a story to tell.

B

Bike Facilities

Provision of secure lock-up facilities at stations and other important points encourages cyclists. Beyond the provision of better cycling paths and signage, there are lots of opportunities at the local level to improve facilities. Some examples include: more secure parking areas in public and private space, more employers providing changing and showering facilities, and encouraging local cycle retailers to operate hire schemes. A bigger issue is the need for pressure on the privatised rail companies to improve their policies about taking bicycles on trains. Provision is now highly fragmented, problematical and declining.

Buses

Good access including provision for the disabled, shelter, security and timetable information are needed to encourage greater use of buses and trains. Key issues are access - allowing mobility-impaired people to use public transport just as freely as the rest of society, and bus priority schemes such as bus lanes to avoid congested roads.

Locally, your group could help keep up the pressure for the continued introduction of accessible low floor buses - eventually all buses have to be accessible to disabled people - but improving the situation quicker will really help some people's quality of life. Where integration isn't possible, mobility buses and other community transport schemes for people with special needs can be a lifeline.

C

Cars

Can't do without it, or can you? There are some bold options to encourage 'greener' driving and a reduction in car ownership. These include: car sharing clubs, Community Car Share Networks, ride-sharing schemes, Green commuting and - looking to the future, car-free housing developments and other car-free zones. These require sensitive planning to ensure some groups within the community, such as the disabled, are not excluded. Clearly, for many journeys there will be no practical alternative to the car - if you have one. But there is scope for almost all of us to reduce our car use for some journeys.

Car-Sharing Schemes

City Car Share Clubs and rural car sharing schemes provide an alternative to traditional car ownership whilst providing access to a car for essential journeys. Car Clubs allow people to pay for the car only whilst they are using it and free up the household 'mobility budget' for use on public transport, taxis, cycling, etc. In Europe car sharing has made a significant contribution to traffic reduction and energy efficiency. Research shows that each car club vehicle replaces between 4-6 private cars. City Car Clubs provide local authorities with an opportunity to develop practical transport partnerships with third parties, for example, local communities and with local employers.

The Leeds-based Community Car Share Network

A car is booked through a central office using the telephone or Internet. Cars can be hired 24 hours a day for a period of as little as one hour. Cars are located at local 'stations' within 10 minutes' walk and keys are kept at a nearby safe. Drivers pay a monthly fee and are billed for hours hired and miles driven.

Community Transport Schemes

Such schemes rarely have enough funding and often rely on voluntary help. Community transport services are particularly important in rural parts of the country where disability or lack of access to a car can increase a person's sense of isolation. Keeping them going and extending their services is a rewarding area of work for coalitions of health, voluntary and environmental groups.

Cycling

There is always scope locally for working on issues connected with safety and better provision for cyclists and pedestrians, who, with sensitive planning, and appropriate signs, can happily share the same traffic-free paths and local routes through parks and other open space. City streetscapes are often full of dangers: potholes, poor signs, lack of designated space, no secure facilities for bike parking and air pollution.

Activities for your group might include pressure to ensure the council sets local targets arising from the National Cycling Strategy and establishes, either working alone or in partnership with regeneration agencies and others, more dedicated cycle routes. Other facilities could include cycle lanes - areas primarily reserved for cyclists - and 'Advanced Stop Lines' (where an area is reserved for cyclists at traffic signals, allowing them to be seen, and particularly useful for cyclists turning right at junctions). Encouraging more children to cycle to school is another option. Local surveys show that more children would be willing to do this, if there was a safe route and secure bike storage.

Sustrans - A major boost to the UK's limited efforts to be cycle-friendly is the realisation of this small charity's vision. "Just imagine that it was made safe to cycle or walk, through both towns and the countryside, on routes designed to be friendly and attractive. Commuters, shoppers, children going to school, families and tourists - everyone would benefit. Congestion and pollution would be cut."

Sustrans (short for sustainable transport) is the force behind the National Cycle Route, a 9,000-mile network that will be complete by 2005. The first completed stage has 5,000 miles of cycle routes. Eventually the National Cycle Route will go through the middle of most towns and cities in the UK, serving homes, schools, shops and offices. Half the network will be entirely traffic free, built along old railway lines, canal towpaths, riversides and on derelict land; the other half will follow existing roads. These routes are open to cyclists and walkers, and in the majority of cases will be fine for pushchairs and wheelchairs as well. Town roads will be traffic calmed or incorporate cycle lanes, while quieter minor roads will be chosen for country sections.

When complete, the National Cycle Route aims to put 20 million people within a ten-minute cycle ride of their nearest route. This initiative - providing routes for people - will provide a leisure facility as well as some safer day-to-day routes and deserves to be supported at the local level. In an ideal world, these routes would link with public transport, e.g. rail stations, but at present, too many railway companies have 'unfriendly' policies towards cyclists, deterring greater use.

Sustrans was also responsible for the initial Safe Routes to School initiative - now of growing importance throughout the UK.

G

Green Transport Plans

Good examples of local authorities and Passenger Transport Executives working with businesses, schools and hospitals to promote Green Travel Plans are growing in number throughout the UK. These encourage motorists to leave their cars at home and find other ways to travel. Where these are working they do make a big difference.

Green transport plans are designed to help reduce car use, reduce air pollution, and encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport. The best plans come from processes where different groups within the community have had full involvement and have been able to contribute based on their experiences as specific users, e.g. for business travel, personal travel, visitors to council facilities, and council fleet transport. Making the plans available on a local authority Internet site encourages greater consultation too.

There are different types - Green Hospital Plans, School Travel Plans and Green Commuter Plans. Individual companies can act too by adopting staff travel policies, removing transport from the remuneration package, thereby encouraging alternatives.

H

Home Zones

This idea is about designing streets to give priority to the needs of people on foot and cyclists, rather than the car driver. Motorists are not banned but the overall aim is to reduce the impact of road traffic by the introduction of very low speeds, humps and traffic calming measures. The street surface is shared between all users and, in some areas, children's play facilities have been introduced. Car parking is restricted to areas where it doesn't interfere with pedestrians.

Support from residents is essential. Various pilot projects are underway. The Government is monitoring progress and is especially interested in schemes that manage to develop a strong sense of community ownership and where real improvements to residents' quality of life occur.

At present the Government is not providing any additional funding or changing any legislation but local authorities can make alterations under regeneration budgets. Where 20mph zones have been introduced (before the advent of Home Zones) there has been a 60% reduction in accidents, and a 67% reduction in accidents involving children. See www.homezonesnews.org.uk for details of the fourteen pilot schemes.

I

Information and Awareness Campaigns

The Government's transport strategy identified a need for better access to information and advice on getting around. There is a need to:

- > Encourage people to find alternatives to the car, wherever possible
- > Discourage unnecessary car use
- > Encourage the use of public transport by improving its effectiveness
- > Encourage more cycling and walking
- > Reduce the need to travel by promoting local facilities and access to services.

Awareness raising on the health benefits of cycling and walking is vital. The 'school run' has been described as creating a 'couch potato culture' with Britain's overweight children facing an unhealthy future. A physically active lifestyle, including walking, cycling or participating in sport, reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke and promotes good health (Source: Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation 1999). Cycling or walking briskly three or four times a week can reduce your chances of developing heart disease by 50%, adult diabetes by 50%, obesity by 50% and high blood pressure by 30%.

L

Local Transport Plans (LTPs)

These five year transport plans, being prepared by English local authorities outside London, are a key tool for delivering integrated transport locally. Councils have been given good practice guidance on preparing these to take sustainability into account. The Government is keen to encourage councils to include community transport schemes in their local transport plans.

P

Parking

This is always a contentious issue as it directly affects so many people. For example, selfish parking on pavements inconveniences walkers and is a real problem for some users, including parents with pushchairs and small children, wheelchair users and anyone affected by temporary or permanent mobility or visual problems. It also prevents proper cleaning especially when machines are used. Pavements should be for pedestrians.

Local campaigning opportunities include putting pressure on the council to enforce parking regulations; putting bans on pavement parking, and decreasing the availability of parking as a deterrent to car use. Council planning strategies should include logical parking policies that follow these ideas through.

Paths and Walkways

See GREENING OPEN SPACE section.

Pedestrians

Living Streets, formally the Pedestrians Association, has pioneered innovation solutions for the problems faced by people using footpaths and pavements.

Public Transport

75% of all journeys are under five miles long and 40% are under three miles. Imagine the difference if three-quarters of all journeys could be replaced by an effective and affordable integrated public transport system. Ideally, local planning should support aspirations to reduce reliance on the car. If people are to be tempted out of their cars, they must be able to reach an alternative means of transport quickly and it must run often. Is it high quality - clean, comfortable and accessible to all? How much does it cost? Does it link to other transport options?



Rail Travel

It is difficult for communities to make an impact upon such a huge service, but there are things that can be done. Local campaigns can, for example, help to improve services and the general appearance and maintenance of run-down stations including litter. The passenger Transport Executive is often the best place to go for help. There are also safety issues such as dangerous level crossings and broken fences along railway lines.

Road Safety

The emphasis here lies in cutting speed and increasing awareness of a variety of hazards (also see Traffic Calming, Home Zones, Safe Routes to Schools). Over 3000 people are killed and 40,000 maimed every year in traffic incidents. The DETR has launched Think! Road Safety, which includes an Internet site, a newsletter and a Think! Campaign planning guide. This is ideal for local authorities, community groups or companies wishing to organise their own campaigns and there is also a tool-kit of usable artwork, identity guidelines and road safety publicity material.

Re-design your streets! The Slower Speeds Initiative gives a handy 'shopping list' of the cost of various road safety measures and urges people to send in the list of measures their local community needs. For example, a traffic hump: £1,500 per hump; white lines for cycle lane: £1 per metre; zebra crossing: £8,000; speed camera: £8,900; raised junction: £10,000; Safe Routes to School scheme: £100,000; 20mph zone: £200,000.

S

Safe Routes to School

Over the last ten years the proportion of journeys to school made by car has nearly doubled from 16% to 29%. At 8.50am in the morning during term time, one in five cars on urban roads are taking children to school. A variety of car travel reduction measures are now being put into practice in an attempt to cut the impact from the 'school run'. As well as reducing levels of pollution and environmental damage, the health benefits for both adults and children of reducing short car journeys and replacing them with walking or cycling can be substantial.

ENCAMS' Merthyr Tydfil Sustainable Communities Project

In ENCAMS' Merthyr Tydfil Sustainable Communities Project, children in the village of Pantyscallog were encouraged to take part in a 'Walk to School Day' to try to reduce the problems of traffic around their school. A questionnaire was circulated to children and parents to find out how they travelled to school and whether they would be prepared to try walking.

Pupils at the school formed a working group to produce a Walk to School guidebook. Groups of parents and pupils investigated the safest routes to walk to school, noting any hazards and safe crossing points. Their findings were then used to produce seven route maps which were published in the finished guide book, to help children pick the safest route to school from anywhere in the village. Finally, every pupil was given a copy of the guide and invited to take part in the Walk to School Day, which successfully involved 60% of the children.

'Walk to School' campaigns are receiving increasing attention. Various information materials are available from Living Streets (formerly the Pedestrians Association), Transport 2000 and the Scottish Executive (see contacts section). Community groups can assist by helping to conduct surveys of how children get to school. These provide the vital basic information to help and encourage schools to plan for safer routes to school and make better use of shared transport options, e.g. mini-buses.

T

Traffic Calming Schemes

What is traffic calming? Literally, it means using physical measures to slow down traffic to a point where people can cope with it and are not dominated by it. The idea came from Europe, particularly Germany and Holland. Through traffic is discouraged whilst local traffic is made to travel at slow speeds through residential areas. Traffic calming helps restore streets to people and recaptures pedestrian power. It helps make our residential roads safer too. However, these measures are not universally popular and some communities have campaigned against them.

The theory behind traffic calming is that motorists gauge how fast they drive more by the look of a street than by speed limits, therefore wide stretches of clear straight roads encourage faster cars and vehicles. Measures include: changing road surfaces to slow down traffic, putting in road humps (sleeping policeman), and lower speed limits in residential and shopping areas. Another option on trial is the idea of 'home zones' around schools with 20mph speed limits, road closures and one-way systems. Some facilities are cheaper to implement but they are still effective.

Living Streets produce resource materials on identifying and running local campaigns on traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, streets for people, walking and health. Specific groups within the neighbourhood will have certain needs. For example, elderly people walk more than most other adults and fewer of them drive or own a car. Britain has an ageing population and so this aspect will continue to grow in importance. Planning policies need to reflect specific needs.

Traffic Reduction

Actions to change behaviour, however small, do count. Options include: people making fewer car-based journeys a week, working occasionally from home, making it possible for their child to walk or cycle to school, and exploiting new technology, using the Internet home shopping services. Schools can encourage safer routes to school, and make better use of shared transport options. Companies can adopt a staff transport policy removing transport from the remuneration package, encouraging sustainable travel options (green transport plans), and reducing the overall need to travel on business.



Walking & Pedestrian Issues

With 60% of car journeys under five miles, there is considerable scope for promoting walking as part of the solution to traffic congestion. Community views on planning and designing schemes encompassing safety, street layout, traffic calming, and health aspects shouldn't be overlooked.

The long-awaited National Walking Strategy avoids setting a national target for increasing the proportion of journeys made on foot. Instead it urges councils to set local targets for encouraging more people to make journeys on foot. Other issues include: setting standards for the condition of pavements, the importance of signing, good crossing facilities and reducing vehicle speeds and fear of crime.

Walking matters more to the poor more than to the rich. Some 60% of households in the lowest income bracket do not have a car. People from these households make about 60% of their journeys on foot. If you add the walk to bus stop and back made by people from low income, non-car owning households - 8 out of 10 journeys are made on foot. By contrast, people from high income, car-owning households make about 75% of their journeys by car and less than 20% on foot (Source: The Guardian 1/6/00).

Initiatives to improve and promote walking work best when transport operators, police forces and other interested groups work together and take into account people's real experiences and perceptions of the street environment.

Walking 'Buses'

See Safe Routes to Schools.

Workplace Transport Schemes

There is growing support for schemes that encourage businesses and community organisations to promote 'green commuting'. What is happening in your area?

ACTION NOW!

- > Support public transport by using it
- > Reduce unnecessary car use. Before you get in your car, ask yourself whether you could make the journey by public transport, by bike or on foot. Double up on car journeys rather than making separate trips - combine a trip to the shops with a visit to a friend. And keep the car well maintained - it'll save you money in the long run
- > Could you share your car journey to work? Does your employer have a 'green commuter' policy?
- > School car 'run' - take it in turns with other parents to collect children from schools
- > Support local shops and services/ Reduce the distance you have to travel by using local services.

CREATING A FLOURISHING LOCAL ECONOMY ADDING ECONOMIC VALUE LOCALLY

Improving local surroundings involves so much more than just environmental improvements. Without a strong economic base and flourishing local economy, people's needs may not be met, affecting their well-being. Poverty and social exclusion can increase. Besides the mainstream economy, social economy initiatives, which are socially motivated and financially viable, can also provide work and meet local needs.

Greater self-reliance makes economic sense where efforts can be multiplied. Spin-offs usually include social and environmental improvements.

Local economic development strategies should aim to provide rewarding and fulfilling work for local people (with particular emphasis on disadvantaged or excluded groups), meeting local needs and minimising environmental damage. This may entail less emphasis on inward investment, more attention to nurturing local businesses and treating Local Exchange Trading Schemes and community enterprises as core rather than fringe activities (Local Government Management Board & DETR 1997).

BUILDING ON LOCAL STRENGTHS AND PEOPLE POWER

Local people are the greatest experts on their own situation. Every community has its social entrepreneurs who are willing to make changes. Community Economic Development puts local people in charge of their ways of life and work and instils hope, pride and power. But it takes skill: community organising, research and planning, business and organisational development, finance and networking, tapping into local empowerment initiatives, organisations and networks.

“Through community self-organisation people in poverty can help to defeat its effects. Community self-organisation cannot change the economy, at least not overnight. But these actions assert the positive value of people’s lives and their communities and they can help provide hope.”

Poverty & Health, P.4

ACCESS TO FINANCE FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Communities have increasingly suffered from financial exclusion when the traditional banking system has refused personal and business customers access to mainstream services. The decline of local branch banking has added to the marginalising of communities. Ensuring that a range of financial and economic services are available to individuals, social entrepreneurs and small businesses at the neighbourhood level has become a key issue in tackling social exclusion and achieving urban renewal. Community finance initiatives that provide equality of access to credit & financial services as a catalyst for wider social, economic and community regeneration. Examples include: the network of Credit Unions and the development of Local Exchange and Trading Schemes (LETS).

POSITIVE ACTION - WHAT’S NEEDED?

Community economic development doesn’t just happen - it needs to be promoted.

Many of the schemes and projects mentioned in earlier sections have a contribution to make to local economic development. At the outset, those initiating a project need to ask - ‘is the project making a positive contribution to the local economy and will this benefit be sustained?’

There are many potential ways in which the social economy might be stimulated. Ideas include:

- > Identifying the potential for Community Centres to make use of their assets, rooms and other facilities for small business start up
- > Community groups might become involved in the development and management of street markets
- > Regeneration agencies might be encouraged to support the development of green businesses
- > Tenant and resident associations might develop and run Credit Unions, and Local Exchange Trading Schemes
- > Gardening groups might be encouraged to explore local food production, perhaps with support from local supermarkets.

AN A TO Z OF ISSUES AND ACTIONS - INFORMATION AWARENESS

C

Co-operatives

Producers and consumers of goods and services can be linked in a variety of community and co-operative associations. Successful examples include: food co-ops that help tackle social exclusion and problems of access to cheap nutritional food, and organic vegetable box schemes that have flourished due to entrepreneurial zeal and public concern over the safety of food. Many community-based recycling businesses are also co-operatives.

Credit Unions

A credit union is a money co-operative owned and run by its members. It provides a safe and friendly place to save as well as low-interest loans to members. It exists to service its members - not to make a profit - and any surplus is given back to members. It is another example of a self-help scheme that helps build people's self esteem.

Credit Unions are there to help people save - most credit union members join in order to save. Credit Unions give people access to credit - many people in society do not fall into banks' 'ideal customer' category and will therefore be refused credit if they apply to a bank for a loan so their only route is to approach finance companies which charge a fortune or loan sharks. Credit Unions encourage personal money management. By providing a local service, they also support local economies and help to develop local communities.

Credit Unions operate under agreed principles: these include non-discrimination in relation to race, gender, religion, disability and, through their services, people's economic and social well-being is improved.

D

Development / Amenity Trusts

Development Trusts are independent community-based organisations actively involved in the regeneration of particular areas. They may have different names such as amenity trusts, environment trust or a locally relevant name. Their approach is relatively new, although some of the oldest have been in existence for 20 years or more. They are actively involved in developing partnerships between the community, voluntary, private and public sectors. Many are companies limited by guarantee, with charitable status. Locally, such trusts promote and support local economic development in a variety of ways, for example, managing workspaces for small businesses, promoting tourism and running business advice and training schemes. They are also involved in environmental improvement work.

The Environment Trust in LB Tower Hamlets

It has completed over 200 environmental improvement schemes in the East End of London, converted workspace, set up community businesses and initiated energy saving and recycling projects. The Trust has now developed a range of income strategies to support its charitable work with schools and local communities. It completed its first 'Green Homes' scheme in 1991, an energy efficient development providing low cost homes for sale to council nominees, designed with the local community in Bethnal Green.

F

Funding

Funding for economic development can be sought from regeneration sources. The Single Regeneration Budget has been a traditional source for funding local economic development initiatives. Increasingly Local Strategic Partnerships will administer regeneration funding.

The Ecology Building Society lends on properties that provide resources and facilities to promote the life of small communities, homes for people running small businesses with an ecological bias such as repair and recycling, organic horticulture, craft workshops, small-scale workshops, derelict but sound houses which would otherwise have been abandoned and the renovation and construction of houses which incorporate special energy saving or energy efficient features.

L

Local Exchange and Trading Schemes (LETS)

There are over 300 LETS schemes in the UK with some 21,800 members trading goods and services using currencies such as 'bobbin's in Manchester or 'solents' in Southampton. In 1999, around £1.4 million of goods and services were traded in this way (University of Leicester research December 2000). They are a means of regenerating local economies, hit hard by poverty and unemployment, and accessing skills and resources. LETS help people to help themselves. They help improve quality of life.

LETS (Dorset)

Dorset has a thriving LETS network. Members use their skills to work for other members not for money but for credits. They can then spend these credits when another member has use for them. Even the Inland Revenue now recognises LETS as a legitimate business activity. Dave Rickard, Chair of Dorset LA21 Forum explains 'LETS enables local people to share their equipment and skills. As no money is involved, the value of the work undertaken stays within the community. What is more it is sustainable and environmentally friendly because it encourages us to have things repaired rather than buying new.'

As LETS moves into mainstream culture, it is reducing its former image of being dominated by the 'environmentally conscious middle class' swapping alternative health therapies. Many participants are on low incomes or unemployed; others use LETS as a social support network. The range of services is broad, everything from domestic help, such as babysitting, cleaning and gardening, to skills such as plumbing, building, language tuition and business services. They can also be a way of sharing or hiring equipment used infrequently. Local councils are showing increasing interest in incorporating LETS into community development strategies, economic development plans and Local Agenda 21. Bradford has been given EU money to develop LETS in the city.

R

Regeneration and Quality of Life

Sustainability means different things to different people and to the regeneration sector it means the length of time the improvements to local housing and the environment, the creation of new jobs and services last. A key national organisation in the regeneration field is the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit attached to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. At a local level, Local Strategic Partnerships are the key fundholders and it may be worth talking to them about community sustainability (make contact through your local authority).

Leicester City Challenge Programme

Leicester has a long and well-documented history of environmental initiatives. The 1992 City Challenge programme incorporated a number of environmental schemes (tree planting schemes, clean up of waterways, recycling, noise control) aiming to establish lasting regeneration. By 1995, sustainability had become a basic component of the Core Area Regeneration project. The programme involved increasing the level of activity in many innovative initiatives already underway. However, it was not the novelty factor that represented good practice but more the integrated view of sustainability. What represented good practice was not so much the novelty of the projects - the programme involved increasing the level of activity in many innovative initiatives already underway - but more the integrated view of sustainability which linked environmental management business advice to local firms with traditional environmental quality work (recycling, waste management, energy efficiency, accessibility) and with anti-exclusion measures targeted on local communities.

DTLR

S

Skills and Training

Training is 'one of the most important tools to develop human resources and facilitate the transition to a more sustainable world', according to Agenda 21. Beyond formal education at school, colleges and universities, many community enterprise initiatives combine employment with training. Examples include: furniture restoration, white goods, computer re-use and bike repair.

Additional basic skills can be provided for adults and promoted within the community, e.g. area literacy programmes.

Supporting Education and Training, especially for those most in need

Globalisation puts economies in competition with the rest of the world. Workforces will have to continually improve their skills to keep up. Knowledge is power, and it should be used to enable people to fulfil themselves in whatever capacity they choose. Globalisation will affect the scale of demand for skills within the community and, as a result, choices for some people will be constrained.

T

Teleworking

A term used to cover a wide range of newer, more flexible ways of working, enabled by telecommunications. With teleworking, it is location independent and the work place is not nearly so important as the work process. Teleworking extends the opportunities of employment

to people with mobility restrictions, such as the physically disabled, older people and people with care responsibilities for young children or elderly relatives.

Time Banks

Although a new idea in the UK, these schemes are based around people volunteering their time for things that make an improvement to local community life. They link people with the work that needs doing to make communities safer, more human and more effective. They work by a system of 'credits' that can be exchanged for services you may want.

Tourism

There is an increasing interest in sustainable tourism which aims to minimise the environmental impact of tourists. Sustainable tourism schemes might help to divert traffic away from 'honey-pot' sites, important if your village or town is choked with traffic in the summer.



Vegetable Box Schemes

Locally and organically grown vegetables are boxed and either collected or delivered to members of what in effect is a small club. Members can join and receive vegetables of their choice or whatever is available that week. Because the scheme is local, transport and other costs are reduced and not only do these initiatives provide small scale employment, they also provide good food to people who would not otherwise be able to pay supermarket organic prices. There might be a small café in your area that is run as a co-operative. Forum for the Future's Sustainable Local Economic Development case study project has unearthed a number of examples.



Workplace

As well as supporting the local economy, businesses play a major role in improving the training and skills of the local workforce. And they have a role in helping to create a more fair society, by providing opportunities for work, by making it easier for families to arrange suitable childcare by considering flexible working hours, providing on-site crèches, or offering childcare vouchers. The availability of childcare facilities (of which pre-school education is a part) increases a household's chance of finding paid work and opportunities for part-time work. Local businesses also have a responsibility to provide a risk and pollution free environment for their staff.

ACTION NOW!

Much of the activity described elsewhere in this handbook could lead to economic activity. For example kerbside recycling schemes may become financially self-supporting if not hugely

profitable. Similarly, vegetable growing and box schemes may provide jobs on a small scale and of course both of these examples will provide training opportunities for young people or those out of work.

Within rural communities which have during the past few years increasingly faced problems with BSE and Foot and Mouth Disease, it is essential that communities begin to explore new forms of income generation otherwise the trend of rural communities becoming dormitories for nearby towns will intensify. Regional Development Agencies must have an increasingly important role to play here, along with DEFRA itself.

POLLUTION

Pollution is caused by waste materials or substances ending up in the wrong place - air, water, land - where they cause environmental damage or risks to health. Pollution is a big environmental problem with effects that continue to cause problems far from the place where it originated. Tackling pollution is best achieved by finding its source and stopping it there. The 'Polluter Pays' principle, supported by environmental legislation, is the concept by which companies and operators who create pollution should bear the cost of dealing with, and cleaning up, the pollution. But making this work properly is hard to achieve.

The community has an important 'watchdog' role to play in alerting officials to pollution incidents and putting pressure on relevant authorities to take action against polluters. Pollution is no respecter of boundaries so neighbouring authorities and organisations also need to work together. Until recently, the lack of publicly available information about polluters has hampered campaigning groups. Access to information and freedom of information remains an important principle.

Communities can campaign against polluting factories and potentially toxic emissions. Toxic emissions and polluting factories are directly linked to threats to health and people's quality of life. It is not uncommon to find polluting industries located in 'disadvantaged neighbourhoods'.

A ROLE FOR EVERYONE

Minimising pollution is a key target for sustainable communities. It involves:

- > Reducing **air** pollution
- > Improving **water** quality
- > Reducing **noise** complaints
- > Better monitoring and reporting.

One starting point is finding out what the local authority is doing to monitor pollution. Is the Local Air Quality Strategy meaningful to local communities? What is the council doing to help publicise the issues? Community-based activity helps increase respect for the local environment and respect for the places where people live. Reducing **neighbourhood nuisance** increases everyone's quality of life.

Local community groups and networks can get involved by:

- > Investigating ways of working with the council and statutory authorities to improve things
- > 'Blowing the whistle' on local polluters
- > Raising the issues in local networks and newsletters
- > Organising community clean up schemes
- > Giving talks in local schools, youth groups and other organisations.

It is important to identify where the responsibility lies for aspects of pollution and the solutions. Before community groups decide to get involved, it would pay to find out if it is someone else's job!

Possible actions for:

- > Tenants/residents groups - litter and community 'clean ups'
- > Schools - monitoring projects to raise awareness
- > Environmental groups - campaigning against local polluters
- > Businesses - sponsorship or help for local anti-pollution initiatives
- > Local colleges and universities can provide the technical expertise and monitoring facilities which community based organisations will not otherwise have access to.

A TO Z OF ISSUES AND ACTIONS - POLLUTION

A

Air Pollution

Car exhausts are the fastest growing source of air pollution. Although new technologies are being introduced to clean up our cars and lorries, this will have little impact if the underlying cause - the huge increase in the number of vehicles on our roads - is not tackled. Policy measures promoting car reduction will only work if public transport is more efficient and accessible to all.

One in five people are at risk from polluted air. Vulnerable groups include the elderly, children, pregnant women and people suffering from breathing problems and heart disease.

There is a clear fit between sustainable development and the health of people and the environment: if steps are not taken to limit air pollution it will have an increasing impact on quality of life and, ultimately, life expectancy (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 1998).

Escaping inside isn't the answer either. Research by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) has found that the air inside our homes may be more polluted than the air outside. There are over 200 indoor chemicals in an average home, of which 80 were judged to have potential health effects. Where does it all come from? Wood panelling, fibreboard, insulation, plywood, paints and cleaning materials, synthetic fabrics and new carpets are responsible for a lot of the pollution. These contain glues and chemicals that give off toxic vapours. Heavily insulated homes with double-glazing and few open windows concentrate the problem. BRE says that only answer is a complete change of air in a room every two hours! Attention is now being given to the health hazards of building materials in some new housing developments and refurbishment schemes. There is a limited amount that community groups can do about air pollution within the home, but at least you can ensure the local community centre or school has paints and furnishings that are friendly to both people and the environment.

More significantly, community groups can contribute to (or confront) local authorities in the production of the Local Air Quality Strategy which should take into account the views of local residents and communities. The job of the local authority is to identify current levels of pollution and allow for the establishment of Air Quality Management Areas to deal with worst pollution hotspots.

B

Batteries

Some batteries contain hazardous substances such as nickel cadmium and mercury likely to cause pollution in landfill sites and other places where they are dumped. Local authorities and some stores now operate collection schemes for used batteries. Similar schemes could operate from community buildings. Use them and help publicise them too. Old car batteries shouldn't be dumped either, see Civic Amenity Sites.

C

Civic Amenity Sites

These rubbish collection sites, run by the local authority, may be referred to as 'The Dump'. Here there are recycling containers, skips for unwanted materials and safe disposal facilities for a range of products that can cause pollution if they are carelessly dumped or thrown away. Motor oil, car batteries, fluorescent lighting, chemical-based products and unwanted paint are some examples.

Find out where your local site is and encourage people in your group or community to use it. Club together with others to share a car journey to dispose of materials. If you really cannot get to a site, phone the council to see if they operate a collection scheme. Some services, e.g. local garages, accept used motor oil.

Contaminated Land and Toxics

If local residents believe land to be contaminated, perhaps because of old industries, it may be necessary to join forces to get either the industry or local authority to take action. Friends of the Earth might be a useful contact.

F

Food

See FOOD section for information on pesticides, see GREENING OPEN SPACE section for information about what your local authority is doing to maintain council grounds, parks, etc.

Fly-tipping

See WASTE and RECYCLING section.

H

Household Hazardous Waste (HHZ)

A sensible approach to waste involves reducing the use of potentially toxic substances - pesticides, fungicides, fence preservatives, household chemicals, anti-freeze, oil, batteries, etc. Proper disposal is vital to avoid pollution. Some authorities operate separate collection schemes at civic amenity sites, special drop-off points at shops and even door-to-door collections. Promote these locally to increase use of the sites and decrease rubbish dumped in your area.

I

Information and Awareness

You can never do enough to promote pollution awareness. Councils usually produce a range of information leaflets for the general public on noise, litter, waste and general pollution issues, as well as detailing facilities for disposing of unwanted materials at places like civic amenity sites. Targeted at schools, the Environment Agency produces a range of educational materials linked to the National Curriculum. ENCAMS, which runs the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign, has produced much material over the years designed to increase public awareness about local environmental quality.

Industrial Pollution

Worried about what pollution that nearby factory might be emitting locally but don't know how to find out? Friends of the Earth might provide the answer. Their Internet-based guide - Factory Watch - uses official pollution data from the Environment Agency to provide information about the pollution and health risks from over 400 chemicals, released to air, water and ground by over 1500 factories. The website enables people with Internet access to identify polluters emitting confirmed or suspected cancer-causing substances in their areas. The data can be retrieved by location, company or pollutant using home postal codes in a form that FOE claims is easier to use than Government sources.

The Environment Agency publishes the 'The Hall of Shame' - details about polluters found guilty of offences against the environment is available on their website. It also publishes other pollution information, including bathing water test results.

There is growing experience in community campaigns against toxic plants and waste incinerators - both issues unite many people within a locality.

L

Land Reclamation

New areas of land are being brought back into community use through the application of the landfill tax credit scheme. Initiatives include adventure playgrounds, restoration of community buildings and walks and nature trails.

Light Pollution

This is a new topic receiving growing attention. Badly placed lights on buildings or inappropriate street lighting can cause a real nuisance to nearby residents. A balance has to be found between ensuring good lighting for community safety reasons and deterring crime, and lighting that causes environmental and social problems. Some local transport authorities have begun to use new street lights which only project downwards.

Litter

Discarded food wrappings, cans and unwanted packaging litters many neighbourhoods. As well as creating an eyesore, this perennial problem reduces community pride and respect. It encourages laziness in other people too. Local authorities, community groups, youth groups, schools, businesses and individuals can get involved not only in surveys and community clean ups but also in addressing the underlying reasons by promoting the prevention of litter. Litter on beaches, particularly plastics, poses a threat to wildlife and is unsightly and often unhygienic. Visit the ENCAMS website at www.encams.org to find out more about 'Keep Britain Tidy'.

N

Neighbourhood Nuisance

Local residents are less inclined to tolerate noise, litter, graffiti, inappropriate car parking and other nuisances that can seriously affect the sense of whether a neighbourhood is a good place to live. And there are an increasing number of potential solutions.

Noise is generally regarded as unwanted sound. It is part of everyday life but some noise can make life intolerable. Some types of noise under certain circumstances can cause what's termed a 'statutory nuisance' - for example when the noise occurs for long periods and where it interferes with your general quality of life. The main sources of the problem are domestic noise, noise from entertainment venues and security alarms on cars and buildings. Unwanted noise causes stress, tiredness, muscle tension and headaches. Constant exposure may lead to poor health through raised blood pressure and damaged hearing, and mentally through increased stress and poor concentration.

Although traffic noise in urban areas is the fastest growing source of pollution, neighbourhood noise is actually the largest source of noise complaints received by Environmental Health Officers (EHOs). The Noise Act (1996) increased their powers to control night-time domestic noise. But 94% of local authorities have told the National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Pollution that they do not intend to implement the act. By December 1999, only 10 had done so. Some authorities operate Noisy Party patrols. What is your council doing to safeguard your right to peace and quiet?

Troubled by noise? If you know the person(s) causing it try to discuss it with them - they may be genuinely unaware there is a problem. Do not approach them if you feel it might put your safety at risk. If nothing happens, contact the Environmental Health section of your council and your complaint will be registered. If warnings fail and evidence gathered (through a tape recording) shows there is a real problem, the council will serve an Abatement Notice with fines with non-compliance. Mediation schemes may help to resolve problems in a more friendly way.

O

Oil

Clearly a problem when it is in the wrong place, i.e. a beach, which your family wants to enjoy.

P

Paint

Some types of left-over paint can be a pollution hazard if disposed improperly. So for paint and other items classed as household hazardous waste the best strategies are about buying carefully - just the amount needed for the task - and trying to ensure it all gets used up. You may not want any more paint but how about other people locally? A community centre might be glad to accept some of your unused material.

W

Waste

See WASTE & RECYCLING section

Water Pollution

See WATER section

ACTION NOW !

- > Why not start by visiting the Friends of the Earth website to find out if there is any factory pollution in your neighbourhood, www.foe.co.uk. There may be a local group near you that knows more about it
- > You could ask other residents if they are concerned about the fumes from vehicles
- > A nearby university might be interested in carrying out (as part of a student exercise) an analysis of soil to identify serious pollutants, such as dioxins.

FOOD

THE FOOD ON YOUR PLATE

Lack of money, inadequate shopping facilities and poor public transport mean that many people are denied healthy food choices. Poor diets lead to poor health, and people on low incomes suffer more diet-related diseases, cancer and strokes.

We all deserve access to good quality food that does not endanger our health or the environment in its production or transport. But as we know from recent food safety fears - BSE, GM foods, salmonella poisoning and pesticides - there are big question marks about how our food is actually grown and produced. Intensive agriculture, dependent upon massive amounts of chemicals and financial subsidies to keep its production levels up, is not sustainable in the long run as it breaks the natural cycles of life. Changing landscapes and the widespread use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers have implications for pollution, wildlife and the soil. Intensive farming also has a negative impact upon rural economies.

One of the environmental costs of our current food system is its scale, and the amount of energy needed to transport the food from the soil to table. This accounts for one-quarter of all vehicle miles travelled each year. Some local communities are finding ways to re-address this balance by reconnecting with local agriculture, buying locally grown produce, supporting farmers markets and creating local jobs through social enterprise, e.g. vegetable boxes, farmers markets, food co-operatives and community cafes.

ACCESS TO SAFE QUALITY FOOD

More than 2,000 products containing herbicides, fungicides and insecticides are approved for use in the UK. The most recent Government survey on pesticide residues found that one-third of fruit and vegetable sampled contained pesticides' residues, some above the safety limit. Other foods containing residues included baby food, chocolate, fish and even cakes and biscuits. (Friends Of the Earth July 2000).

Public distrust has led to a boom in the organic food movement and a renewed call for a return to more sustainable forms of agriculture, using fewer or no chemicals. The demand for organic food now outstrips supply - 70% has to be imported. Whilst farmers are converting to organic methods faster than ever, there is no national plan to assist them. Increased demand for organic is driving the price down. Many people are willing, and able, to pay more for organic food.

ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE GOOD FOOD

“People living in deprived neighbourhoods, where comparatively few people own cars, and people living in remoter areas, have the most difficulty in reaching those shops which sell a range of affordable foods to make up a healthy and balanced diet. These ‘food deserts’ can increase a sense of social exclusion and widen health inequality.”

The key issues include price, range of food available and its quality. A lack of fresh food in a person's diet will contribute to ill health. Convenience foods are not cheap when the 'hidden' costs have been added in, and many contain high amounts of fat and sugar. A network of food poverty projects is developing across the UK including food co-operatives, community cafes and voucher schemes.

A ROLE FOR EVERYONE

Creating healthier, more sustainable communities involves campaigning for better support (financial, in-kind, etc) for initiatives linking producers and consumers in a variety of community and co-operative associations.

A possible starting point might be questions such as - Does your group have any kind of food project? (eg. box scheme, food co-op, allotments). Is the group interested in doing more? What do you need to do this - information, finance, tools? If you do take on a food project, you may:

- > Create chances for people to acquire new skills
- > Encourage wildlife and local biodiversity
- > Promote physical health and well-being through regular exercise
- > Promote educational opportunities for children
- > Promote health and alleviate poverty by helping people to grow their own food.

Local people and groups within the community can help by:

- > Supporting more sustainable methods of food production
- > Shopping locally
- > Buying organic produce
- > Growing your own.

A TO Z OF ISSUES AND ACTIONS - FOOD

A

Allotments

Much more food could be grown locally if there were more allotments available to people wanting one. Numbers are falling as local councils sell off the land, often for development. Since allotments provide significant health and social benefits, any plans to further reduce them need to be challenged by a diverse range of community groups. And groups can always work together to press for the re-introduction of more allotments. The allotment revival is well underway. As with community gardens, involving a wider range of groups (not just traditional gardeners) and including youngsters can overcome problems with vandalism.

Becontree Organic Growers

One idea for the allotment site was a forest garden enabling people from the surrounding area to resource their own community gardens with locally grown stock. They also planted edible mazes of fruit bushes.

B**Buying Local Food**

Putting the scale back into food and encouraging community enterprise has stimulated activities involving local food delivery through organic vegetable box schemes, or through farmer's markets and farm shops. Reducing 'food miles' (the distance food travels from the producer to the consumer) cuts energy use and locally grown food is usually minimally packaged, cutting waste.

C**City Farms**

Inner city children benefit immensely from the contact with animals and an introduction to food production issues. There are at least 64 City Farms throughout the UK providing valuable educational resources on very limited budgets. Volunteer help is always welcome.

Community Cafés/Shops

Shops, warehouses and cafes have sprung up all over the country with the common aim of providing high quality food at affordable prices. Prices and packaging are kept to a minimum, and organic food is sold whenever available. There is an important social element to these places, both for customers and staff. Many are run co-operatively, with an equal sharing of the labour, decisions and responsibilities involved.

Co-operative Buying/Bulk Buying

Wholefood shops encourage bulk buying and co-operative buying. This can help alleviate poverty and fosters community spirit within a village or neighbourhood, or even a small scale sharing between neighbours. It provides an alternative to the commercialised food system that holds so much power over our buying habits. Again this kind of activity is suitable for many communities, especially where many families are living in poverty.

Community Gardens/Food Growing

During the Second World War, garden allotments grew large amounts of food and our towns and cities today could easily grow a lot more food inside and outside their boundaries. In Britain, 49 million people have access to a garden. But that leaves 9.5 million who don't. So community gardens provide back gardens for over 300,000 of these people, often in densely populated areas where the health benefits and tranquillity of gardening are most needed. They are also a vivid example of sustainability in practice; bringing unused or under-productive land into use, using local skills and reusing unwanted materials.

There are nearly 500 known community gardens. Many are situated on unused or vacant local authority land, paying peppercorn rents for short or temporary leases. National plans to use more brown-field sites (either previously built land or 'vacant' land in urban areas) for housing developments pose a threat. Community gardens have no statutory protection.

Community gardens are an important educational resource in disadvantaged areas, providing an outlet for groups who want to do something to improve their surroundings, with opportunities for skill sharing. They have been described as unofficial community centres, generating a new sense of community pride. Gardening for Health projects grow plants that link into healthy eating projects, or exotic vegetables create a deeper sense of community and friendships across different generations, cultures or social classes.

But food growing isn't restricted to community gardens and allotments; parks, schools, city farms, patches of derelict land, rooftop gardens and private homes/multi-family dwellings all have soil.

Examples of the range of opportunities include:

- > Leeds Allotments for the Disabled
- > Birmingham Sensory Garden
- > Evesham community orchard and parish ponds
- > Bolton food project, encouraging the use of traditional local vegetable varieties
- > Appletree Court, Salford. The base of a tower block transformed into an 'urban oasis'
- > Ford Open Prison, permaculture project
- > Belfast cross-community family garden yards from the Alliance/Ardoyne peace line.

E

Equipment Sharing/Tools

Garden tool sharing schemes, and the re-use of old unwanted tools, an example here is the Bradford garden tool library. Faith-based groups often run such schemes, donating unwanted tools, and organising a pool for tools used infrequently.

F

Farmers Markets and Shops

These enable consumers to buy direct from the producers. The produce is locally grown rather than food that has been transported thousands of miles. They are inevitably small and local schemes but are springing up all over the place. Soil Association can supply details. There is now a national association of farmers markets.

Revival of Farmers Markets - Bath and North East Somerset Council Award-winning farmer's market

The project aim was to create a vibrant, self-sustaining Farmer's Market in Bath based on sustainable development principles. Forty local producers are now involved in addition to consumer groups and the Women's Institute. The scheme is directly linked into LA21 work at the local level and engages with people's concerns over the methods of intensive food production and the harmful effects of long distance distribution. The greatest barrier was people's perception of a farmers market.

Food Co-ops

Community Food Co-operatives aim to provide quality food at affordable prices to those on low incomes. In addition to food provision, food co-ops share information, recipes and promote healthy eating.

Food Growing Projects

Local projects are springing up around the country to grow fruit and vegetables, usually organically. They always need volunteers to help turn derelict wasteland into productive gardens by clearing vegetation, building vegetable beds, planting new crops, developing a wildlife garden.

G**Gardens**

A windowsill or balcony can still be a garden! You might not grow on a large scale but if you co-operate with others you can grow beans while your neighbour grows onions. At the end of the season you can share your produce. Herb growing is more common in small spaces. If you have an average size garden, there is a real possibility that you could begin to produce quantities of fresh vegetables for yourself and your family. You will also save money too. Cooperation with fellow gardeners can also bring advantages. The joint purchase of seeds and other materials will reduce the cost of growing all that food. You can organise joint 'manure runs' where you hire a van and dig out manure from stables, sharing out the bags at the end. It can be great fun especially on a wet day!! There is the potential for making money by selling on your garden produce to the local vegetable box scheme mentioned earlier. You could plough some of this income (as well as potato peelings) into communal composters or shredders.

L**Local Food**

See Buying Locally, Farmers Markets.

O**Orchards**

See Greening and Improving Open Space

P**Permaculture**

This technique of growing combines traditional knowledge with modern techniques. It is a flexible, low cost approach to living, using nature as a model. And whether you live in the city or countryside, permaculture practices can be used by anyone, anywhere. Among many things, it can show you how to make your house more energy efficient; how to set up a productive organic garden, how to plant a woodland, and how to get involved in a community or business project.



Vacant Land

If you spot unused land in your neighbourhood, try to find out who owns it. Ask the council first. It may be possible to lease it for a community garden.

Vegetable boxes

See FOOD GROWING, COMMUNITY GARDENS.

USEFUL REPORTS/NEWSLETTERS/BOOKS

- > Permaculture Magazine - Ecological Solutions for Everyday Living (Permanent Publications)
- > Bath Farmers Market - a case study, written by the organisers. Available from Eco-logic Books, Bristol Tel 01225 484472. Two other books published at same time include an overview of American experiences and a review of market activities in the UK
- > Farmers Markets - 2 new briefings from Friends of the Earth
- > The Food Indicators Tool-kit by Alexis Vaughan, SAFE Alliance 1999. A tool-kit guiding the development of local food indicators. £10 for institutions, £5 for local groups and individuals.

ACTION NOW!

- > Buy loose food rather than packaged or individually wrapped
- > Buy larger quantities
- > Buy food in containers that can be recycled
- > Re-use suitable containers for food storage at home
- > Shop with a bag or basket, cut out all those plastic carrier bags (or find another use for them)
- > Use your garden to its fullest potential by growing a few vegetables, herbs, etc. You could even use a balcony or windowsill to grow vegetables.
- > A little information can go a long way, inform yourself and share ideas with other people
- > Participate in food production - even on a windowsill
- > Learn the origins of the food you buy, and try to buy food produced closest to your home
- > Try to deal directly with the local farmer, gardener, so eliminating the whole pack of merchants, processors, packagers, and advertisers who thrive at the expense of both producers and consumers
- > Support stores selling, and caterers using, locally produced food.

- > Reduce, or better still, eliminate your use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides in your own garden
- > Consider changing your eating habits, turning to organic food
- > If you are able to do so, grow organic produce yourself
- > Buy more natural products and wholefoods
- > Support farm shops, markets, organic box delivery schemes and local co-operatives.

All these actions are ones you could persuade your community group to take up.

KEY LINKAGES

Issues connected with food are closely linked with a myriad of other topics. Also see: Health, Transport, Energy, Local Economy, Purchasing & Consumption, Waste, Greening the Neighbourhood/local biodiversity - the variety of life.

From Groundwork Regeneration Communities Report (1999): Wrens Nest Estate, North of Dudley town centre, West Midlands

The Wrens Nest Estate suffered from problems of poor housing, crime, vandalism and a poor reputation. The council acted partly as a response from local tenants associations and leaders and got other stakeholders together to run a community visioning exercise, leading to a successful SRB bid. The council focused on the physical refurbishment of the houses and gardens, including schemes for local people to be trained and paid to do this work. Groundwork concentrated on the more collective environmental and landscaping issues such as the creation of a community orchard and new allotments. All this was linked to a schools programme in which children were taught how to grow and care for flowers, plants, fruit and vegetables as part of a long term investment in healthy eating and encouraging local food production.

ENERGY

GETTING ENERGY EFFICIENT

Every day in our homes and workplaces we depend upon sources of energy such as gas, electricity, coal and oil to provide light, heat and power. Flicking the switch for instant light or heat is easy to take for granted. But besides the cost to us - the bills or meter payments - there are the wider costs to society. For example, leaving lights on unnecessarily wastes energy - much of which comes from non-renewable sources such as fossil fuels. Burning fuel and generating electricity releases pollution and carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is known as a 'greenhouse gas', making a significant contribution to climate change, one of the perceived greatest threats to our future. Different weather patterns are just one symptom of this change. If industrialised nations don't take action now to cut emissions of certain gases, the legacy we leave for our children and grandchildren is not a good one.

Nuclear power may not be the solution either. Worldwide experience demonstrates that it plays no part in a sustainable future. It does not provide electricity 'too cheap to meter' and the legacy of radioactive waste provides a significant challenge.

Transport is one of the main consumers of energy. Our reliance on the car for even the shortest journey will have to be broken if national energy savings are to be made. And cutting down on vehicle journeys will also help reduce pollution, a big threat to our health.

The UK Government has pledged to cut CO2 emissions by 20% by 2010 although current plans to save energy and cut fossil fuel use fall far short of reaching that goal, according to the independent and well-respected Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (June 1999). A sustainable energy policy would promote energy efficiency and renewables and reduce fossil fuel use. Other suggested benefits include warmer homes, a less polluting transport system and many job opportunities.

But for many people on limited incomes, keeping their homes warm is a daily act of juggling priorities. Poorly insulated buildings leak heat. Badly built homes can be damp and prone to mildew and mould. These factors push up heating costs and often affect the occupants' health. Achieving affordable warmth for all households is a priority. It is fundamental to people's quality of life.

Energy efficiency is the key to a brighter future. The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 requires every local authority with housing responsibilities to prepare a report identifying the energy conservation measures considered to be practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvements in the energy efficiency of all housing in its area. It requires the authority to report on how those measures are being implemented.

Soon after the Act came into force, the Energy Saving Trust established HECAAction, a key initiative to ensure that the objectives of the Act can be implemented. Financial grant awards are available to Energy Conservation Authorities (is your local authority one of these?) to enable them to promote schemes. According to the organisers, many are using these to set up a fund for low or no-interest loans. Many of these schemes also involve local Credit Unions (See Local Economy section).

The long-term aim is to reduce carbon dioxide and other emissions from homes by 30%. National campaigns hope to inspire people to change their attitudes and habits to energy use.

A TO Z OF ISSUES AND ACTIONS - ENERGY

B

Bikes

Reduce car journeys, to minimise pollution and save energy. See TRANSPORT chapter.

Buildings

Making buildings more energy efficient is a key issue. Poorly designed or ill-managed buildings have a huge impact on energy usage. Study after study acknowledges just how much energy we waste through poorly insulated buildings. For example, about 35% of heat in the home is lost through the walls - that's more than goes through the roof or the windows and doors. Investment in energy efficiency creates jobs and better, healthier, housing. Building regulations have a key role to play in driving up standards; and these need to be made more effective for all types of building.

Whilst sustainable building techniques are on the increase, becoming energy efficient also means making your group's voice heard at the planning and design stages of new developments, and early on in any refurbishment plans. Some community groups may have enough influence or power to encourage planners and developers to include energy efficient measures in the specification of new buildings and in refurbishments. Groups that may be part of a community lobby include tenants groups and residents associations.

Opportunities for action abound in community buildings. Small actions, however insignificant they seem, do count. Simple energy conservation measures that have proved to be very effective include:

- > Monitoring fuel usage
- > Fitting more efficient boilers, heaters and low-energy lightbulbs
- > Installing tank, roof and wall insulation
- > Fitting draught proofing and double glazing.

C

Community Combined Heat and Power (CHP)

Residential CHP has the potential to deliver affordable warmth to local authority tenants and to reduce CO₂ emissions. The Government is aiming to increase the use of CHP, as it makes a vital contribution to the UK's climate change targets. A good example of a community-based project is at Newcastleton, where a plant using wood is being developed on the Scottish borders.

Community-based home insulation schemes

Community-based schemes have been around for many years and many have made a real impact on people's quality of life. Reduced fuel bills, warmer homes, and healthier people are potential end results. Conservation measures make a positive contribution to cutting CO₂ emissions too. And many schemes have a job creation and skills training aspect, creating that vital link between environmental protection and local economic/social development. Energy conservation is not a luxury. The first step for encouraging local activity is finding out what, if anything, is already happening. A starting point might be the local council or a coordinating voluntary agency. Questions to ask: Is there a local insulation scheme that assists households on low incomes? Who is eligible for the scheme? Is it over-subscribed? Is it likely to expand in future? Your group may then be in a position to help publicise any schemes, their positive outcomes and perhaps get involved.

D

Design and Demonstration Projects

These include energy efficient home/demonstration projects involving super-insulated 'ordinary' houses and the design of buildings to exploit passive solar gain (using the form and fabric of the building to capture solar radiation and so reduce the building's energy needs for artificial light).

E

Energy Efficiency Advice Centres

These offer free energy efficiency advice for local residents and small businesses to help reduce fuel bills. There are about 50 centres in the UK providing local free impartial advice. Services may include:

- > Free phone advice services
- > Free home energy check, often a questionnaire about your home, followed by a personalised report with energy saving recommendations, their costs and details of savings that could be made in your home
- > Drop-in centre, free post address
- > Talks and presentations
- > Energy awareness training for staff in organisations and small businesses
- > Information displays in local community buildings, libraries, etc.

Your local energy advice centre can give more information on energy efficiency, call Freephone 0800 585794. Energy Efficiency Advice Centres are required to give advice on the most cost-effective means of reducing energy consumption. Unfortunately, solar energy is not presently the most cost-effective short-term option.

Energy conservation schemes

Local community projects aim to promote energy saving measures by replacing equipment, switching to more efficient appliances and fitting draught-proofing, double glazing and other insulation materials. After the initial cost, the payback time can be quite short. There are also the wider environmental benefits of less pollution and resource savings.

Reading District Council

Reading District Council Energy Credit Union was launched to help low income families make their homes more energy efficient. The Credit Union buys energy saving materials such as loft insulation and draught proofing for selling on to members at discounted rates. The scheme (cheap credit at 1% a month) has helped families cut their costs, raised awareness and cut CO₂ emissions.

Energy Plans and Local Authority H.E.C.A. Strategies

As explained above, the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) places new duties on local authorities to take a lead in this area. The long-term aim is to reduce carbon dioxide and other emissions from homes by 30%. In developing their HECA strategies, local authorities have to consider the "whole life" energy consequences of housing, including energy generation and the amount of energy consumed by residents in getting to and from their homes. Action plans need to consider conservation measures to improve the energy efficiency of all local homes.

Strategies can form the basis for Local Energy Plans, with targets and action programmes to reduce non-renewable energy consumption in the area, as already adopted by some authorities who have signed up to the Climate Challenge. They should also embrace "affordable warmth" and fuel poverty strategies. (DETR & LGMB 1997)

Southampton outreach work with Age Concern and local housing associations

Some centres work to deliver cost-effective energy advice face-to-face in the home rather than through written advice. Leicester Energy Advice Centre launched a project involving 140 schools, based on an Energy Pack developed to fit the National Curriculum in four key stages. The aim was to raise awareness in schools; promote local mobile energy advice services.

Within your group, find out what the local council is doing and ways in which your group might get involved in developing Local Energy Plans. Local Agenda 21 and local sustainability partnerships might provide the ideal way in, or you could work through longer-established Neighbourhood Committees or Tenants Groups.

Remember that your local authority is a large user of energy so you might like to ask questions as to what it is doing to put 'its own house in order'. Start by writing to your local councillor and to relevant authority departments. If the answers received are insufficient, your group may be able to lobby for change or at least approach key people and council committees. Make positive suggestions too. Does the authority have a magazine that goes to all households? This would be an ideal opportunity to get the energy efficiency 'message' across. It would be helpful to include lists of local stores selling energy-efficient appliances or at least give some pointers as to where people can buy DIY insulation materials.

F

Fuel Poverty

Millions of people suffer from fuel poverty. Fuel poverty affects about one in five households in this country. This means there are approximately five million homes where people cannot afford to keep themselves adequately warm unless they deprive themselves of other essentials.

The UK has far more additional deaths during winter months than any other European country, including those with colder climates such as Norway and Sweden. Typically, the number of deaths rises by 30% (higher in Scotland), during the winter, compared with 10% in Norway and Sweden. The reason for the deaths in the UK is our huge stock of poorly heated, energy-

inefficient homes (Friends of the Earth Scotland Press Release, 18.3.99). Treating cold weather related illness costs the NHS £1 billion every year. In certain cases it may be possible for a GP to prescribe home insulation where the patient's medical condition would benefit. In any case it would be a good idea for concerned people in a community to organise a rota in winter to check on old people, particularly if they don't have relatives nearby. This is probably best coordinated by your local residents association or if there isn't one, a group brought together for this purpose.



Green power (purchasing electricity from utilities) 'Green Power'

New options are opening up to purchase 'green energy'. Until recently, no matter how concerned you were about your energy consumption and its impact on the environment, there was really little you could do short of reducing the amount you used. Now the Government is allowing competition in the domestic energy markets and at long last consumers have the option of choosing an electricity supplier supporting renewable energy generation or able to purchase 'green' electricity from a range of power retailers. Some suppliers of 'green' electricity are offering their product at premium prices, others are seeking to supply at the same price as conventional electricity supplies.

ACTION NOW!

- > Vote with your purse and encourage more companies to supply 'green energy'
- > Buy products and services that are energy efficient.

There are two types of scheme: Green tariffs which take the supply from 'green sources' & Eco Funds which does not supply green energy but invites customers to make a voluntary donation towards its development. Such schemes could be advertised through a residents association. There are now some community-owned wind turbines that produce sufficient energy for local people. There is the potential for some communities to begin to make a profit out of surplus energy, but there is a big initial outlay and it is a bit ambitious at present. However, watch this space.



Information and Awareness

Energy efficiency starts at home. Get information and take action, however small. It is a step in the right direction - and might save you money too.

For information about making changes at home, try libraries for leaflets, local conservation groups, local authority One Stop Information Centres (often found in the Town Hall or main council buildings), activities such as Local Community Shows, and, at the right time, promotional articles in newspapers. Organisations such as the Energy Savings Trust supply free information.



Information will help you to take action including switching off lights when not in use, turning down thermostats and heating controls to a comfortable level, switching to low energy lightbulbs, lagging pipes, checking you have sufficient loft insulation and choosing energy-efficient models when equipment like boilers need replacing.

L

Low energy lights

Low energy light bulbs last 10 times longer than ordinary bulbs and use 80% less electricity for the same amount of light, saving money and causing less greenhouse gas emissions.

Look out for promotional offers on low energy lightbulbs and other equipment. Low energy bulbs cost more initially but last longer and save £30-50 in electricity bills in their lifetime (8000 hours). Community groups might want to ask a representative from the local electricity company or Energy Advice Centre to attend one of your meetings, bringing along samples or to take part in local fairs and environment shows. Create interest in the products by having one or two items as prizes for a draw (if not lights, go for low energy appliances, energy efficient household goods or items such as solar battery chargers or wind-up radios.)

R

Renewable Energy

Whilst coal and gas aren't going to disappear in the short-term, we also need to look at other ways of generating the power we need. Renewable energy - power generated from the wind, sun and water - is shedding its "cranky" image and going mainstream. Energy generated from these sources is basically free from harmful emissions and is sustainable in so far as it does not rely on resources with a limited life span such as coal or oil. Sustainable energy policies need to increase energy efficiency and maximise the use of renewable energy technologies such as wind, water and solar power.

Solar roofs in Oxford, adventure playgrounds in Hackney and super insulated 'ordinary' houses all prove passive solar power works! Opportunities to incorporate these technologies won't occur every day but if your group were involved in refurbishing buildings, it would be worth finding out whether use could be made of them. There are a small number of community-owned wind turbines in the UK.

Homerton Grove Adventure Playground, Hackney

Homerton Grove Adventure playground's activity centre in Hackney is generating electricity for the national grid from the 54 solar panels on its roof.

T

Transport

As transport is one of the biggest energy users, strong measures are needed to encourage alternatives to the private car. (See TRANSPORT chapter). Where possible, bike, walk, and use public transport. Workplace initiatives might include: Reviewing a companies' car fleet and

policies on issues such as company cars; establishing work-based car sharing schemes; providing low-interest loans for public transport season tickets; lobbying public transport providers for better workplace services; and employers providing secure cycle facilities (and showers/lockers and changing rooms). ENCAMS is one national charity with a bicycle purchase loan scheme. Joining forces with others in persuading other organisations to adopt similar local travel awareness initiatives can stimulate new ideas.



Workplace Schemes

Making communities more sustainable means businesses have to play their part too. There are strong incentives for taking action in the workplace and in public institutions - it saves money. A photocopier left switched on overnight uses enough energy to make over 5000 A4 copies. A PC monitor left switched on overnight wastes enough energy to laser print 800 A4 pages. Lighting an empty office overnight wastes enough energy to heat water for 1,000 cups of coffee. Turning off lights is one of the most effective ways of saving money.

Businesses, particularly larger companies, can be good neighbours within a community by joining up with community groups to help promote local improvement activities. Sponsoring events, helping with publicity, providing or loaning equipment, and even seconding staff are ways of moving things forward. Utilities can offer free or discount low energy lightbulbs at events or as prizes.

ISSUES FOR YOUR GROUP

- > Are you already taking steps to save energy? What do they involve?
- > Are you interested in exploring further ways of saving energy?
- > Would you try, or have you any experiences of group initiatives to save energy?
- > Do you have the contacts - relevant organisations initiatives or suppliers of renewable energy schemes?

ACTION NOW!

Energy efficiency starts at home and in the local community centre.

Get energy efficient by:

- > Turning thermostats down
- > Mending draughty windows
- > Installing double-glazing (a DIY option in winter is to install cling-film or polythene sheets into windows, after ensuring room has adequate ventilation)
- > Installing low energy lighting
- > Buy efficient appliances with smarter designs, e.g. features like energy savings buttons.

HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

ACHIEVING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOR ALL

There are close links between people's health, the quality of their local surroundings and the social and economic circumstances in which they live. Action at the local level helps to create better conditions and increased awareness about health. Healthy communities need healthy people.

Environmental health hazards such as air and water pollution, noise, a poor diet and an inadequately-heated home all contribute to making people ill. But not all the hazards are obvious, for example, up to 24,000 vulnerable people are thought to die prematurely each year because of exposure to air pollution, much of which is due to road traffic. Poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and lack of education all have negative impacts on health. And feeling isolated, insecure and fearful of crime can dramatically reduce a person's quality of life.

"Health is a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being, without distinction of race, religion, political beliefs, or economic and social conditions."

World Health Organisation (WHO, 1948)

POVERTY MAKES PEOPLE SICK

"A specific anti-poverty strategy is one of the basic conditions for ensuring sustainable development"

Agenda 21, Chapter 3

"It may be plain common sense to most of us that living on meagre wages or the dole, in run-down, damp and crowded homes, unable to afford decent food or adequate heating, must be bad for health. Add to that the worry of trying to provide balanced meals and find money for extras like holidays or birthday presents and the effects on physical and mental health should be obvious to anyone."

Public Health Trust, April 1995

Poverty has no place in a sustainable society. There is an urgent need for national policies and practical projects to combat poverty. The term 'social exclusion' is seen as a useful phrase because it implies that people are being excluded by society as a whole - that their poverty is not their fault but is due to social structures and relationships.

Poverty hits different groups of people differently. Women, however resourceful, suffer and as principal carers in our society, the issue of women's health is important. Poverty, rather than the quality of the NHS, still determines the health of far too many children in the UK according to children's charity, Barnados. And other specific groups have certain needs that often get overlooked. These include ethnic minorities with language and cultural differences, and treatment for refugees and asylum seekers.

Local community action does its best to help chip away at the poverty undermining our communities - urban and rural. It helps keep the pressure on agencies responsible for tackling the issues and it builds real meaning into anti-poverty strategies.

A ROLE FOR EVERYONE

Creating healthier communities involves:

- > Addressing poverty and economic inequality issues
- > Increasing access to affordable, quality food and housing
- > Creating a socially healthy physical environment
- > Seeing health as an important part of regeneration work
- > Placing a value on good support networks whether these are people's family and friends, community-based organisations or professional agencies
- > Increasing awareness about the issues.

A starting point is finding out what your local authority is doing and whether it has produced its Local Health Action Plan. This sets out local priorities for action and identifies who might be involved. Organisations and agencies working together will generally have the most impact in trying to solve health and environment issues. For example, local authorities and health authorities can help to promote fun ways of learning about healthy living and highlight local initiatives. Health Improvement Programmes working with Local Transport Plans offer a good opportunity to rethink ways of promoting a healthier environment through traffic reduction and improving people's access to services using public transport or more walking and cycling.

Local people, residents, and community groups can help by:

- > Supporting and getting involved in local food growing schemes
- > Campaigning for good quality sports and recreational facilities, everything from adventure playgrounds to cycle tracks to local leisure centres
- > Learning about first aid and resuscitation training.

Possible actions include:

- > Partnerships - running a local 'healthy living' fair and information displays
- > Tenants/residents groups - pollution spotting and reporting
- > Specific agencies - healthy living and cooking demonstrations/open days

- > Community groups - running voluntary transport schemes helping people get to hospitals, community centres, etc
- > Community cafes or food co-ops promoting access to nutritional food
- > Schools - 'Walk to School' campaigns and healthy eating initiatives.

A TO Z OF ISSUES AND ACTIONS - HEALTH

A

Access for All

Easy access to adequate health care services, including services that help prevent illness, plays an important part in creating a healthy society. Access isn't just about being able to get around easily, it covers lots of things including being able to get hold of the information and appropriate help when required.

Making things easy and convenient for people is important. For example, local authority plans or strategies that place an emphasis on healthier eating won't work well if people cannot buy the ingredients locally or cheaply. Encouraging people to become fitter by taking up sport is a great idea but success will be limited if there are no adequate leisure facilities nearby, or no affordable transport to get there.

The Disability Discrimination Act has to be fully implemented by 2004. Whilst alterations to buildings will need to allow wheelchair users and others to get around freely, many smaller improvements actually help everyone to use buildings easily and safely. Examples include: low door handles, clear signs, lifts and furnishings that do not release toxic substances.

Promoting better use of existing facilities requires information to be available in the right place at the right time. Publicity material needs to be distributed through appropriate local outlets and may need to be translated into a variety of languages. Health promotion events and meetings within the community may need interpreters or signers for deaf people.

Increasing access to information involves using community networks, public buildings, libraries, community newspapers and even the Internet to get the message out. Local 'champions' - people that others best identify with (e.g. people from the same group, etc) - often do the best job.

Accidents and Safety Issues

Increasing the number of people trained in first aid and resuscitation skills is a worthwhile venture for any community organisation, public authority or workplace. Providing information for dealing with emergencies increases a person's sense of self-worth, power and responsibility to others. It can save lives. It is about active citizenship.

C**Children's Health**

Children today live in an environment that is vastly different from that of a few generations ago. Economic development, increasing urbanisation and industrialisation have added to "traditional" environmental hazards, i.e. the problems associated with environmental pollution. Asthma is now one of the commonest, and rising, causes of illness, affecting at least one child in ten. Air pollution from traffic, cold and damp housing, environmental pollutants and smoking in the home are all thought to contribute to attacks. Accidents are the main cause of death and injury in children. The unborn child is particularly vulnerable to chemical exposures.

D**Drug dependency and substance misuse self-help schemes (alcohol, drugs, tobacco and other substances)**

Drug addiction is an illness, not a moral failing, and facilities to help are more crucial than withholding treatment. Merseyside Drugs Prevention Initiative is one of 12 projects set up by the Home Office, which has community development at the core of its strategy.

Luton Health Action Zone

Health Action Zones such as one in Luton enable the development of workplace policies that deal with substance misuse including alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. There is encouragement for people to overcome health problems.

F**Food**

Food is an immediate issue to be tackled. With pressure to eat healthily, this is hard if local stores do not sell reasonably priced fresh food. A Healthy Living Project may investigate what can be done locally to increase self-reliance. For example, it could set up a community food co-operative or operate a community café to help ease the situation.

The Blackthorne Medical Centre in Maidstone

A good model is The Blackthorne Medical Centre in Maidstone, Kent, where, in addition to providing complementary and homeopathic medicines, GPs are prescribing a day's work in their organic vegetable plot or bread making for their café. Ann Lynch, the practice outreach co-ordinator, explains, 'when the local psychiatric hospital closed down, the NHS offered the walled garden of the hospital for people with long-term mental health problems. The centre decided to use it for an organic vegetable garden, and an old pre-fab building became the café. Patients can now be prescribed a day working in the garden or a day working in the café, baking bread to making lunches for other community members. The idea has proved to be a tremendous success. It has created a real sense of community and people are now crossing town to visit and buy bread.'

Resurgence Magazine 193

Practical work involves issues dealing with access to nutritious food; advice on healthy eating on a low income; and local food growing projects. There are also possibilities to encourage healthy eating policies in schools and workplaces.

Bloom 98 Uplands Allotment - PHC Report

In Plymouth, access to healthy food was restricted in some areas with few or no shops selling affordable fresh products, and growing local produce was found to play a significant part in boosting people's health.

Food Co-ops; Community cafés

See FOOD section

H

Health Action Zones

These are specific places, designated by the Government in 'deprived areas' (high population densities, and /or highest ethnic minority populations), where efforts are underway, involving lots of different parties all working together (local authorities, service providers, private sector and voluntary organisations) to find sustainable solutions. Concentrating resources in this way is all about increasing the ability of local people to take action for themselves, allowing whole neighbourhoods to be changed for the better. Minority groups include elderly people and younger disadvantaged people. The idea is to tackle the causes of ill health - not just to treat the symptoms. Projects include Healthy Living Centres, aimed at improving the health and quality of life of local people. Practical issues include: Walk to School campaigns; access to low cost healthy food; GPs offering exercise at local leisure/sports centres and health promotion work in workplaces that covers drug and substance abuse.

Health Promotion

In an ideal world, this is about improving the health of whole communities not just the health of individuals. Health promotion is about empowering communities to have more control over their health and is therefore most effective when activities are designed to reflect the real needs of a community.

Active for Life

'Active for Life' is a Health Education Authority campaign encouraging adults to become active more often. Activities may involve free Open Days at leisure centres and swimming pools, and some councils run open 'taster' sessions or health fairs to introduce people to the opportunities available. Local community groups can participate by running information stalls - everything from cycle training to the local allotment society promoting its food growing.

You can help to publicise local awareness campaigns - Healthy Heart, Cutting Stress, Cancer Awareness weeks - and support campaigns for smoke-free zones in workplaces, shops, restaurants and public buildings.

Healthy Cities

Your local authority may belong to the international Healthy Cities movement, e.g. Glasgow. Healthy Cities promote partnerships that combine issues of global sustainability and local quality of life, especially highlighting the crucial link between health and environmental issues.

Healthy Living Centres

This UK-wide initiative, funded through the Government's New Opportunities Fund, offers opportunities to generate improvements in people's health in areas of greatest need. There is an emphasis on dialogue with people in the community. Projects aim to address both physical and mental health as self-esteem and confidence are vital elements for healthy people and healthy communities.

Bridging the Gap Project: Healthy Food, Physical Activity and Safe Keeping.

The Ladywood Healthy Living Centre Partnership was awarded over £900,000 by the New Opportunities Fund during the summer of 2002 to develop its Bridging the Gap Project. The aim of the project is to 'bridge the gap' between the statutory and voluntary sector to reduce health inequalities in the Ladywood area of Birmingham.

The project is engaging with the local community to promote healthy living and will have a significant impact on local people's basic health requirements by promoting healthy food, encouraging physical activity and increasing safety. It has been developed through extensive community consultation and is now managed by the Board of Management (strategic and policy direction), Project Team (operational management) and action groups (developing appraising and delivering projects).

Horticulture - Gardening as Therapy

See GREENING OPEN SPACE/ FOOD section

Housing

See HOUSING & BUILT ENVIRONMENT section; See ENERGY section for fuel poverty



Information and awareness campaigns

Taking personal responsibility for our actions is an important challenge. But to do this, individuals and community groups alike need easily available, accurate and unbiased information.

Health education is about helping people to learn about health and making healthier choices in their everyday lives. Distributing leaflets in public libraries, local authority buildings, community centres, doctors' surgeries, etc, is essential.

Making communities more sustainable means thinking, quite literally, cradle-to-grave. The Kings Fund in London is supporting research into better provision for the terminally ill, for example, looking at how patients are treated, and support services providing psychological help and practical assistance. There is growing concern that death is not handled well in hospitals, and staff are unable to meet the spiritual needs of patients and families. Volunteer befriending schemes are part of a thriving sustainable community.

Local communities are getting together and being pro-active to avoid unnecessary deaths through campaigns for more resuscitation/CPR training and defibrillators (Health file). Siting these, with trained users, at public and community buildings, rail stations and airports helps prevent unnecessary deaths.

M

Mental Health and Self Esteem

People in mental distress do not have the capability to cope adequately with day-to-day life or to realise their longer-term plans. They are therefore unable to participate fully in society. Despite the fact that one in 12 of us will, at some time in our lives suffer from prejudice, ingrained attitudes exist towards people suffering mental health problems. Work with local agencies - and mental health foras - to alleviate the problems which feed a mentality of despair, and try to build the self-confidence, self-esteem and self-reliance which are the bedrock of good health.

Poor housing suffered by some ethnic groups, refugees and vulnerable members of the community can add to stress and a poor quality of life, catapulting people in mental decline.

Practical ideas include: user guide on rights and services for people with mental health problems, pilot schemes to improve well-being of young people in schools, information and support schemes, initiatives supporting vulnerable ethnic groups.

N

Noise

See POLLUTION section

P

Pollution

Good air quality is a necessity for both good health and for the quality of the environment. Air pollution levels have grown rapidly in the past decade in line with the growth of traffic. This presents health problems, particularly for vulnerable members of the community - children and the elderly - as well as sufferers from asthma and other respiratory problems.

Public Health

Protecting public health is a key target for making communities more sustainable. The work of local authority Environmental Health Officers revolves around local quality of life and the impacts on public health. Health promotion work needs to highlight the close links between environment and health, e.g. transport use and air quality.

Many health threats arising from exposure to pollutants are to a large extent preventable, although there remain unanswered questions about how much causes damage. Some groups within the communities will be more vulnerable, for example, children, and individuals suffering from lung complaints and breathing difficulties, pregnant women and the elderly. Public policy therefore needs to be based on the 'precautionary principle'.

T

Transport and Health

Road traffic affects our safety, our health and the quality of our lives. Polluted air causes illness and a national survey of people's attitude to noise reveals that they become far more aggressive, depressed, tired and frightened when exposed to noisy traffic. Alternatives to our dependence on the motor car - walking and cycling - have important health benefits. See TRANSPORT section.

W

Water

See POLLUTION section

Women's Health

Women often bear the brunt of poverty, because they usually have the responsibility of managing the income if it is a low one. And they may put the rest of the family's needs above their own.

Workplace Health Hazards

The importance of safe and harmonious surroundings is highlighted by the fact that Britain loses more than 80 million working days each year through stress-related illnesses, at a cost of £13 billion. It is also known that around 18% of all deaths are work-related. Mental distress caused by stress and ill health arising from pollution are other hazards.

ACTION NOW!

- > Set up health education classes in the local community centre
- > Persuade the local schools to stop selling unhealthy sweets, crisps and soft drinks to children
- > Ask the local GP if there are specific illnesses that affect people in your community and find out if they would be interested in working with you to prevent them
- > Find out if there are more than the average number of accidents in the home or on the streets - at least if you know you can start to do something about it
- > Encourage walking clubs and negotiate cheap community group rates at your local gym.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND REDUCING CRIME

MAKING PLACES SAFER TO LIVE AND WORK

Levels of crime are said to be a good indicator of the condition of society. But whilst fear of crime may not be directly related to actual crime figures, how safe people feel affects their quality of life by restricting access to services or recreational facilities. Parks and public open spaces can be 'off-limits' for some groups in the community, for example, women, who may, at times, feel too vulnerable.

Increased crime often reflects economic difficulties and other inter-linked problems inherent in today's society. These include social deprivation, unemployment, alienation, substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, etc) and harassment. So making places 'safer' to live and work has to be tackled with initiatives that promote local economic and social regeneration. It's about involving people and developing measures that promote safety, security, equality and a sense of well-being - making people feel comfortable so they want to stay where they live. Neighbourhoods working together to improve things can rekindle that strong sense of community spirit.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The idea of looking at community safety is a much broader approach than just focusing on crime detection and deterrence by the police. It addresses fear of crime and the particular crime threats faced by women, vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities. It considers causes of crime as well as preventative measures, and, critically, it seeks to involve local authorities, voluntary and community groups, commercial organisations and the police. Under the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, local councils and the police now have a duty to carry out a local audit of crime problems and to prepare a community safety strategy.

The strategies will vary from area to area, depending on local conditions and available resources. They are likely to include:

- > Improving existing initiatives, e.g. by extending them
- > New management initiatives
- > Including community safety issues within other programmes
- > The use of government grants and SRB schemes for specific community safety and crime prevention projects
- > Voluntary and community sector initiatives only partly dependent on government funding. Examples include environmental improvements and designing out crime.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

One reason given for the increasing crime rate (and decreasing sustainability?) is a loss of respect and lack of community pride. Rebuilding this trust is a central aspect of work at the local level. It isn't something that will change overnight. It requires leadership.

Disorder issues, such as anti-social behaviour, include vandalism, criminal damage, alcohol and crime, young people and crime, drug abuse, and links to be made if they are to be addressed include health (e.g. drug abuse teams) and housing initiatives.

RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

This relies on action within the community, with a view to developing a safer place to live & improving security, community safety and crime prevention.

COOLING DOWN CRIME

There are many ways in which we can 'cool down' crime. Communities can initiate crime reductions initiatives, which include working with the police, local businesses and the wider local community. Traditional practical ways for communities to tackle domestic burglaries are through neighbourhood watch. Many would suggest, however, that without tackling the underlying causes, i.e. poverty, inequality and drug taking, you end up only moving the problem to another part of the neighbourhood.

Peckham Labour Party

The real issue is not the condition of inner-city social housing or the local school but crime (particularly violent crime). The bulk of people in Peckham do not steal, mug or carry knives but many live in fear of those who do. Calls for more pro-active policing and tougher penalties for those convicted of crime and disorder may trouble the conscience of middle-class journalists, but have mass support from the principal victims of crime: the working class and ethnic minorities.

Mike Gibson, Camberwell & Peckham Labour Party,
Quoted in The Guardian, Letters Page 4.12.00

FAIRNESS, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Freedom from intimidation and fear is fundamental to the quality of people's lives, it is the expectation of reasonable safety - irrespective of age, race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or economic circumstance.

Throughout all their actions, community groups should demonstrate a respect for others - by allowing people to air their views without affecting the rights of others, showing care and compassion to others, championing the cause of the 'underdog', and welcoming cultural and other forms of diversity.

A ROLE FOR EVERYONE

Reducing crime and disorder are not simply matters for the police to deal with. Councils and other agencies need your help. Dealing effectively with crime and disorder requires partnership between all sections of the community. Anyone living or working in a particular place can help do their bit towards cutting crime. Making neighbourhoods safer places to live helps everyone.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 established the Metropolitan Police Service and councils as the responsible authorities for tackling crime and disorder reduction. So a starting point is finding out whether the local authority has produced a Crime and Disorder Strategy. Is it comprehensive?

Local people, residents and community groups can help by:

- > Encouraging behaviour that fosters 'neighbourliness' and a reasonable perception of safety, and being a good neighbour
- > Getting involved in local partnerships seeking solutions to crime hotspots
- > Contributing to community safety and 'designing out crime' initiatives.

Possible actions for tenants, residents and community groups involve working with local police to devise strategies for minimising crime.

A TO Z OF ISSUES AND ACTIONS - COMMUNITY SAFETY

B

Bullying

Beat the Bully schemes, with residents groups in partnership with local police can be effective. These avoid children taking matters into their own hands. Bullying creates misery and isolation in the lives of many children. It is best dealt with by getting together with other parents who, by demonstrating a joint approach, can bring about a solution.

C

Community Safety Campaigns

The intention here is to alleviate high crime and nuisance levels on or around affected estates so that residents in the locality feel safe and secure. This results in a confident and safe community.

Local neighbourhood centres can give advice on protecting property, offer free property marking and host local crime prevention surgeries. Residents can organise themselves into a rota to walk around local parks at night ensuring a greater sense of safety.

D

Designing out Crime

People's fear of crime has been partly linked with a legacy of poor design. The built environment has blind corners, confined spaces, dark passages, poor signposting and is often badly maintained. Careful design and layout reduces the opportunities for crime - it 'designs out' the potential for crime - and helps towards a crime-free environment.

This involves attention to buildings, street and residential layouts, public space, landscaping and planting, traffic restriction and calming measures to reduce traffic speed. Universities often have departments with skills in urban design. They may be interested in talking to community groups.

E

Environmental Improvement Schemes

Reducing the fear of crime and enhancing safety on housing estates, in both town centres and rural areas, involves measures which design out crime and provide better lighting and initiatives. CCTV (closed circuit TV) surveillance both acts as a deterrent and an aid to tracking offenders when crime has occurred.

H

Housing and Community Safety

Estate-based safety measures include installing security lighting, porter & concierge schemes, as well as measures designing out crime. Work in conjunction with Neighbourhood Watch and community groups can be complemented by engaging young people in sports and recreational activities or providing them with their own spaces, like youth clubs.

I

Information and awareness campaigns: Underpins Community Safety campaigns

There are several examples of indicators used by local authorities and police to measure crime or the fear of crime. These include the numbers of people who are victims of crime or afraid of crime, the percentage who feel safe to go out at night, and the extent to which people feel it is

safe to let their children make their own way to school. Community groups can make use of these figures and augment them with their own surveys of local opinion and statistics.

Victim support schemes can be organised on a community basis, perhaps run by a local tenants or residents association.

N

Neighbourhood Wardens

Dealing with anti-social behaviour, vandalism, community safety and racial harassment, as well as reporting broken street lights and pavements and supporting vulnerable residents and victims of crime are all the task of a Neighbourhood Warden. The Government defines Neighbourhood Wardens as “a person who provides an official or semi-official presence in a residential area, whose primary aim is to improve the quality of life, and who is appointed and managed by a properly established scheme.”

Why wardens? They provide another layer of support and have been found to make a real difference to residents' quality of life in disadvantaged communities. They can promote community safety, assist with environmental improvements, and mediate/negotiate in minor incidents of anti-social behaviour. They are not a substitute for police officers, however, they are a valuable complement to them. People have someone they can go to with their complaints, concerns, and suggestions for improving their area. Neighbourhood Warden schemes are now being developed by local authorities and the staff should hopefully see the advantages of working closely with community groups.

Neighbourhood Watch

Everyone who joins a Neighbourhood Watch scheme plays an important part in making their neighbourhood a safer, more friendly and pleasant place to live in. Neighbours uniting and acting together means that dozens of eyes and ears are ready to pick up on anything happening in the neighbourhood that could cause worry or concern. It's about:

- > Bringing people closer together
- > Building a stronger community spirit
- > Helping to reduce crime
- > Lessening people's fears about crime
- > Strengthening links with the police
- > Developing closer relationships with local councils
- > Improving the local environment
- > Creating a better quality of life.

Neighbourhood Watch is for everyone - any community or neighbourhood - however large or small - can set up a scheme. It can be just a few houses in a street, or a few households, the residents in a square, or a whole estate. Each scheme can be different - you don't even have to use the title 'Neighbourhood Watch' or put a sticker in your window.

P

Parks

Keeping these public spaces safe for all users is something that can involve many groups. Informal surveys and questions posed to users like young people, children, parents, dog-walkers, sports enthusiasts and local residents can often solve particular problems. Collecting up ideas and forwarding them to the council and other responsible agencies makes a valuable contribution. It shows people care about what happens locally. Graffiti, vandalism, and inappropriate use can be overcome by involving groups like young people who are often overlooked in local decision-making. Some parks have regular meetings for anyone interested in their improvement. Others are campaigning to bring back the park-keeper.

Public Space

This is addressed in several parts of this publication and engages with the Prime Minister's 'Liveability Agenda'. This means creating a sense of pride & respect, cutting vandalism, the state of streets, including litter and graffiti, and the fear of crime. If these issues are not dealt with, people's quality of life is reduced. The best way to address these is for local residents to act together.

S

Safe Routes to Schools & Public Transport

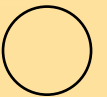
Creating safe pedestrian routes and safer public transport is a focus for some community safety strategies. For people without access to a car, safe transport may be the difference between taking part in community activity and staying in. Getting more children to walk to school has important health benefits, as well as cutting local congestion from all those car trips.

Y

Youth Crime Action Plans

Changing the negative image associated with young people in the community. They should be viewed as contributors to a vibrant community and potential customers. This is not likely to be successful unless young people themselves are involved in the solution. Attention must also be given to meeting places and facilities designed to meet young people's needs, so helping to eradicate anti-social behaviour. This is an issue for residents and tenants associations.

Techniques,
processes
and **skills**





**TECHNIQUES, PROCESSES
AND SKILLS**

SO YOU WANT TO JOIN A GROUP TACKLING ISSUES WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

Quite right too, a neighbourhood can never be sustainable without people coming together in groups to carry out either practical tasks or work on policy issues. Such groups reduce the isolation that many people suffer and help to confirm that they are part of a community.

Maybe you are concerned about something in your neighbourhood that you want to do something about by either joining an existing group or, if there isn't one, starting a group yourself? Maybe you have been fired up by the suggestions in the previous section? This section will help you whichever way you chose.

SO HOW DO YOU GET INVOLVED?

If you want to join an existing group there are several things you need to know:

There are many different kinds of groups, so you need to choose carefully, not only about what you want to do, but also how you want to do it. Not all groups take on issues related to increasing the sustainability of communities, but many are involved in making their neighbourhood a better place to live.

> **Action Groups**

Usually independent of other organisations, self-elected, can either be formal or more likely informal and can be active for weeks or several years. They are formed to address a specific issue or problem and their actions can take a number of forms, including media campaigns and direct action such as blocking roads

> **Representative Groups**

These come in many different forms, including tenants associations, residents and community associations; all representing the interests of people living in defined neighbourhoods. They have formal constitutions, provide services, manage community centres and tackle a range of issues, sometimes by forming subgroups for a specific purpose

> **Social or Activity Groups**

The main purpose of such groups might be to allow people to get together with others, or to carry out a specific activity. They are usually informal and will welcome you with open arms. Sometimes these groups are not related to a particular neighbourhood and bring people together across a whole town or village

> **Street Groups**

Sometimes formed when there is a royal wedding or new millennium. They can also be formed if there is some threat or an improvement scheme that might affect residents in the same street. They are very informal and often short lived. You probably won't know about them unless you live in the street concerned.

As well as these types of community groups there are many voluntary organisations looking after the interests of particular groups in society. There are few groups that are concerned with the full range of issues related to sustainable communities, most focus on a particular aspect of social, environmental or economic life. Some operate nationally with local branches (e.g. British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Friends of the Earth) while others might only operate in your area. Local Agenda 21 has led to the creation of environment fora, often organised by your local authority.

HOW DO YOU JOIN ONE OF THESE GROUPS?

If you want to join one of the more formal groups, you will need to become a member, but for the less formal, just turn up on the day they meet and introduce yourself.

WHERE DO YOU FIND THEM?

Many community groups are difficult to locate, they often don't have the resources to publicise themselves and operate sometimes without many people knowing they exist.

There are a number of things you can do to find information about groups:

- > Ask at your local Town Hall. They might have information at the enquiry desk. If you telephone, you might need to talk to someone in the Leisure or Recreation Department, Youth and Community or Environment and Planning Departments
- > Find your local Council for Voluntary Service in the telephone directory, they should have a list of local groups
- > Contact some of the national organisations listed later in this handbook
- > Ask at your local library, shops, and church and generally around the neighbourhood.

WHAT THEN?

- > You will need to know where and when they meet, what time they finish and what's on the agenda
- > You will need to decide how to describe your interest or concern, how much time you have to devote to the groups activity, and what it is that you can offer and what you want from them
- > You might want to take some paper for note taking and a friend for support!

Don't worry if you have never been to a meeting before, others in the group may have started the same way as you. Most meetings are informal, good fun and you will make lots of new friends.

SO YOU WANT TO FORM A GROUP TACKLING ISSUES WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

If only there were more people like you...

A neighbourhood can never be sustainable without people coming together, in groups, often doing very practical things for the community. Such groups reduce the isolation that many people suffer and help to confirm that they are part of a community.

Maybe you are concerned about something in your locality that you want to do something about by joining an existing group? If there isn't a group which could take up your concern or interest, (and it might be wise to check, otherwise if there is, they might feel put out if you start another one) what do you do?

- > Firstly, try to get someone else interested - a friend or neighbour - it's always best if there are two of you!
- > Next, look for help. If your council employs community workers, ask if they could advise you or help you with printing a leaflet or some other task
- > You might need a leaflet or poster to attract other people; but there are other ways...
A door-to-door survey can turn up people who might share your interest. Asking one or two neighbours can snowball if they ask their friends. Put a notice in the local shop or free newspaper, or ask your local Council for Voluntary Service to mention your activity in their next newsletter. Talk to a reporter on the local paper and make sure they mention your contact details (think carefully whether you want the public to have your home address or phone number)
- > You need somewhere to meet - try someone's house (with a large enough room and plenty of biscuits!) and move meeting venues around so everyone gets a turn. Respect the wishes of group members that do not want to meet in their homes. You may find free rooms to meet in at your local community centre or pub
- > Try to pick a night when you know a few people can make it for certain (and one that doesn't clash with a favourite TV programme!). Let everyone know well in advance, but remind them the day before
- > On the night of your first meeting, get everybody to introduce themselves and then suggest that the group decides a number of key issues.

A 10 POINT CHECKLIST

First, and most important - What is it you are concerned about? What do you want to do? How will you operate (as a campaigning group on policy or very practical issues, or as a self-help group or in some other capacity)? Will you need to raise funds and do you need a structure with a chair, secretary and treasurer? You will need to agree these issues as a group (and this does mean agree even if this means a long meeting because if you don't you will find people voting with their feet).

Second, you are going to need a name. Try to make it short and 'snappy', maybe using the initials of your full group's name, but something people will remember.

Third, you will probably need someone to see the meeting goes to plan, whether you call them the chair is up to you. This is one of the first things to be decided (otherwise you will be there all night!). Try not to pick someone who does most of the talking as his or her job is to keep the meeting moving and to make sure that everyone has their say.

Fourth, you need to agree a plan of action and who is going to do what. This cannot be rushed and may take more than one meeting.

Fifth, some of this action may involve getting more views or support from other residents. To do this you will need to communicate with other residents in the neighbourhood (the groups who don't get very far often neglect this important job). To communicate more effectively you might need to produce a newsletter. This is where it helps to have someone in the group who has access to a computer and a photocopier. You might need to buy the paper and pay for photocopies. If funds are short ask people in one street to pass the newsletter onto their neighbours.

Sixth, you might decide you want to carry out a survey to find out what people think about your concerns, or to get more support. The survey might be door-to-door, in which case you will need people who enjoy being outside, knocking on doors (and are not frightened of dogs).

Seventh, you might feel the need for more publicity. This often means talking to the media (start with the local paper) and making sure they get the facts and your contact details correct.

Eighth, at some stage you might need (with this weight of evidence and media interest behind you) to enter into discussion with the local council or other bodies. You will need to get advice about how they operate. You might also need someone who is good at negotiating and can stand up for themselves in a big meeting.

Ninth, you will want someone to take notes of your meeting, recording what has been decided. If you don't you may forget important decisions by the next meeting, or get into disputes about who said what.

Tenth, you may also need someone good at organising events such as public meetings, consultation exercises and jumble sales.

FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

- > COMMUNITY PROFILES
- > AUDITS
- > VILLAGE APPRAISALS
- > NEIGHBOURHOOD SURVEYS
- > PARISH MAPS.

These are all ways of finding out more about the community where you live. If you want to know what your community needs to make it more sustainable and what it might be possible to do, then you will have to gather information. In gathering that information, you will meet and talk to many people both in the community and outside. This is often a good way to start to get people involved in tackling an issue with you. There are several things you will need to decide before you start:

- > Who is going to do it with you? If you need to gather the personal views of your community, you will need to decide whether it is important to be done by someone known in the local area or not
- > If you want to gather technical information you might need the help of a university or college
- > If you need information about local services, you might need the help of someone from inside the local authority to guide you where to go
- > Are you looking for 'hard' or 'soft' information or a mixture? Hard information is fact and figures, whereas soft information is the views and opinions of people.

WHAT MIGHT YOU NEED TO KNOW?

It all depends on what you want to tackle, but the information you might find useful includes:

- > Facts about the neighbourhood such as how many people, their ages, unemployment rates, the type of land use and location of open spaces, the industries, schools, churches, youth clubs and places where people meet
- > The services provided for the community by the council and other agencies.

Perhaps the most important information is to find out what people think about their neighbourhood. This could include the problems they face as individuals and as a community, what they would like to improve, what they see as the strengths of the community, and who are the key people who might bring about change for the better. Find out how they feel about local services and how they would like to participate in local affairs. There are also probably lots of detailed questions you will need to ask about a particular bus service or patch of derelict ground but only you can decide what you need.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET THE INFORMATION?

You probably have a lot of information and views yourself and can ask your friends and neighbours, but there are limits to how useful this might be. Door knocking is a tried and tested technique although some people find it hard to knock on a stranger's door so how about taking someone with you to give you courage. You could carry out a more formal survey with survey forms which you fill in whenever you meet someone.

ENCAMS - Neighbourhood Environmental Action Teams (NEAT)

ENCAMS, the organisation that runs the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign, works in partnership with many local authorities through the 'People & Places' Programme. Through this, some councils run a scheme called Neighbourhood Environmental Action Teams (NEAT) to help groups to measure factors that affect the appearance of their local environment, and carry out a survey of the community to find out what people think about their environment. NEAT then supports local groups to carry out environmental improvements and clean ups. Ask your council (try the Street Cleansing Department first), if it is part of the People & Places partnership, and if it runs the NEAT scheme.

If you are finding out about specific services such as childcare (talk to people outside a nursery) or bus services (try a bus stop!) it is much easier. But you might need to balance the local views with those of the service providers.

Other places to find out about what people in your neighbourhood think are local shops and pubs and don't forget you can always hand round a questionnaire.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE INFORMATION?

It's most important that you record it and here it would be useful to use a computer if you have access to one. You then need to analyse your findings. You need to work out if there is a problem or if something could work better. You must agree what your target should be. You then need to decide if it is possible for your group to do something about the situation locally or if you need to persuade others to change their policy or practice.

Having decided, you need to work out what actions you need to achieve your target.

GETTING TOGETHER WITH OTHERS - HOW & WHERE TO MEET PEOPLE

If you are going to take positive action to make your community more sustainable, you will need to work with others. Where and how do you meet them? Some people naturally get to know a lot of people within their community but this often happens without much thought and it is rarely planned. You will need to be much more systematic about getting together with others and particularly those people who share your concerns and interests. You may have a general feeling that your community should be more sustainable but not know the particular issue(s) that should be addressed. If this is the case you will need to do a survey, which is in itself a good way to meet people. You may be concerned to tackle an issue about which you know others are also concerned. In this case it will not be difficult to gather a group around you (see section on how to form a group).

If, however, you feel you need to alert other people to an issue, you may need to use other techniques (see section on publicity).

Some useful tips on finding other people with whom you can work:

1. Write to the local newspaper and wait for the responses
2. Talk to your local councillors about getting involved
3. Write short articles for community newsletters
4. Knock on the doors of your neighbours to test the feeling
5. Raise the issue with local residents associations
6. Stand outside schools, post offices, shops, etc, and chat to people as they enter, (bear in mind that not everyone will want to talk to you, and if you choose to approach people outside a school, make sure the Head Teacher is aware of what you intend to do).

COMMUNICATION AND PRESENTATION OF ARTICLES IN THE PRESS, PRODUCTION OF NEWSLETTERS & LOCAL RADIO**You will not reach other people if you do not communicate!**

Communication is clearly important for several reasons:

- > If you want to work with others you need to find out what they think and you need to tell others what you are doing
- > You may need to involve the whole community in some way so it is good for them to hear about what you are doing from different sources
- > On some issues you may need to discuss with, inform, persuade, or confront other people and organisations outside your community
- > If you have made significant achievements, you may want to tell others so they can learn from your experience.

Communication sounds easy and it can be, but you need to choose the most appropriate form for different circumstances. A handwritten note will be OK if you are reminding members of a small group about an evening meeting. If you want to reach all 3,000 households in your community to give them some important information, or to ask for their backing, you probably need to produce a newsletter. To mount a vigorous campaign to influence the local authority or another agency, you may need the help of the media, newspapers or even television. To advertise some event or public meeting, you might ask local shops, libraries and schools to display a poster.

For every form of communication you will need to do the following:

- > It may sound obvious but you need to decide what you want to achieve. Are you trying to inform, influence or seek the support of your audience?
- > You must also be clear about who your audience is. There are different ways of writing for different audiences (see presentation section below) and different ways of reaching them
- > You must work out the main things you want to say. The important message must be kept short and it must be clear what you want people to do. If you are presenting a report to an organisation, you can always attach supporting information, evidence or arguments to this main message
- > Who is going to deliver the message? (no, not the postman!) Is it best coming from your own group, an alliance of local residents groups, channelled through and with the support of your local councillors or MP, or from an outside organisation such as a university or enterprise agency?
- > How is it to be presented? There are numerous forms of letters, leaflets, posters, reports, and, in the last resort, petitions. You can always call a public meeting but beware if they are well-attended you may not be in total control and will need back up for them not to get out of hand. If you want to be really professional you can always call a press conference (for this you might want to designate one of your group a press officer). Or if you want to go hi-tech, create your own website (the new free Internet servers offer this facility if you have access to the technology)
- > If you do not get a satisfactory response, do you need to follow up the initial communication? If you do, you will need to decide when and how?

PRESENTATION

An important part of communication! The way you present yourself says much about your organisation and what you want to say. If you want to communicate with young or old people, different social or ethnic groups, you need to think carefully about the language you use and whether you adopt a formal or informal style. It might even be worth a small sample test on some members of your target audience - it's always good to get other people's views.

To make sure a newsletter doesn't get thrown away, how about using cartoons, interesting graphics (easily accessed through most computer programmes) and even photographs?

If you want a council department to take note of what you say, you will need an identity and name for your group. This would mean you could produce notepaper with your name and address at the top (again it is easy to design and run off the copies you need on a computer. If you haven't access to one, contact your local Council for Voluntary Service who may be able to help).

Examples: Letterheaded paper
 Newsletter
 Press release & media contacts
 Speaking in public
 A VIP visits your project.

SETTING UP A GROUP OR ORGANISATION

How to set up different kinds of organisation for different purposes.

If you intend to work with a few of your friends or neighbours in an informal way for a short period you can operate without any rules or procedures. If you intend to involve the wider community you will need some way for them to gain access to your group and that might mean a constitution with elections. You will certainly need a constitution if you are to raise and spend money. You will also need a treasurer.

The work of some groups can become complex, particularly if they are so involved in the regeneration of their neighbourhood that they form themselves into either a development trust or an enterprise company. Some groups take on charitable status while others form themselves into a community association and take on responsibility for a community centre.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO FORM DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS

Constituted bodies - you need a document which shows how people can join it through elections at an annual general meeting, how a meeting works and voting works, how the officers of chair, secretary and treasurer are elected and how the income and expenditure is accounted for (for a sample constitution see appendix).

To set up a bank account - you need a bank mandate form from a high street bank. The opening of an account has to be agreed at a meeting of the group and the form of words on the mandate included in the minutes.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

You will probably need some money, and the amount will depend on what you want to do! Your group may need money to publish a newsletter, materials for tidying up a piece of land, paying for the hire of a room or putting an advert into the newspaper. Raffles and jumble sales are good ways of raising small amounts but for bigger projects you may need to apply for a grant or donation.

Which comes first: Do you decide what you need funding for, or write the bid and then look for potential funders? Or is it the other way round? The reality is that it is probably a mixture of the two.

If you want a local firm to donate money (or resources such as the use of a JCB for a day), it may be useful to find someone who works for the firm or put an appeal in the local paper.

Achieving money through grants is much more complicated! There are many sources of funding for the activities you want to do. They include money from Europe, the UK governments, and National Assemblies and Parliaments, Regional Development Agencies in England, Lottery, New Opportunities Fund, Grant-making Trusts, private sector companies, local authorities and other award schemes.

They each have at least one grant programme, most have a number of programmes designed for specific purposes. Many allocate to a particular type of organisation and they all have detailed criteria which you must read carefully before you begin to put together an application.

Some give small grants which are appropriate if you want to buy gardening equipment, for example, others can give hundreds of thousands of pounds for major regeneration projects. Such grants usually go to local development trusts or enterprise companies which are often companies in their own right. Often this sort of grant needs matching funding coming from another source although in many cases you can count your own involvement as 'benefit in kind'.

There is no reason why at some stage if you are determined enough with an active membership, you should not look for such a grant.

It often takes a long time to get the money you need so you need to think and plan well in advance. Charitable trusts, for example, have set dates in the year when they consider applications and you may not receive a grant until a year after applying. Be careful that you don't start the work until you know you have the grant, several grant givers have strict rules on this.

Six Steps to applying for funding

1. Decide on your project and work out how much you might need. Count everything otherwise you will end up short of money. You might need help at this stage and it would be worth asking at the Town Hall if you can be put in touch with a group that has already applied for such a grant.
2. Consider several funding sources, read their criteria and see which one best fits your project. Don't be frightened at this stage to talk to the funding body to check if you are on the right lines and that your project fits with their aims.
3. Complete the forms (if there are any - if not write a letter setting out what you want to achieve and how much you want). Make sure you answer the questions fully, giving them the information they want. Make sure that you emphasise the unique qualities of your project and how it is different from others.

4. Attach material that supports the application. This is not always possible but it is usually advisable as you can bring a dry application form to life with photographs and well drawn plans. You may need to provide the funder with information about the finances of the group. It may be necessary to convince them that you can manage their money.
5. Make sure that they can get in touch with you for more information and be patient. Contact them from time to time to bring them up to date with any relevant developments, but do not pester them as this could be counter productive.
6. If they say yes to your application (well done!) stand back and consider any conditions and what this means for the group. If you decide to go ahead sign the necessary forms and keep copies. You may need advice at this stage if you have to employ staff or enter into legal agreements.

FITTING IN WITH EXISTING POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND STRUCTURES

This is most important

If your activity brings you into contact with local authorities you will need to know about the changes introduced by central government designed to make them more efficient and responsive to the needs of communities.

1. Best Value

This is aimed at ensuring services are (i) responsive to the needs of individuals and communities and not there for the convenience of service providers, (ii) efficient and of high quality and (iii) more 'joined-up', strategic and forward looking.

Local authorities are expected to deliver the four C's. These are:

- > Challenge - Whether its policies and services are still relevant to the public or whether others should take priority
- > Consult - With local residents and stakeholders on the form, quality and cost-effectiveness of services to meet the public's needs
- > Compare - Performance with the best, both within and outside local government across a range of indicators
- > Compete - To show that services have been designed through a competitive process.

You might find it useful to look at Best Value Performance Plans for your local authority.

To ensure local authorities comply with best value targets, there is a best value inspectorate based at the Audit Commission. The web site for this inspectorate is:
www.bestvalueinspections.gov.uk

The Commission itself is designed to measure the performance of public services which affect your community, so they could be a useful organisation to you. They can be contacted at this web site: www.audit-commission.gov.uk

2. Community Strategies

Local authorities are now required to prepare a community strategy to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and its inhabitants, and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

Local authorities have the duty for preparing community strategies but they must work across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. Each strategy must have four elements:

- > a long term vision for the area, focusing upon outcomes ('area' and 'community' mean the whole local authority area)
- > an action plan with short term priorities and activities which will contribute to long term outcomes
- > a shared commitment to implement the action plan and proposals for doing so, arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, for periodically reviewing the community strategy and for reporting progress to local people.

It is clearly important that community groups and voluntary sector organisations are closely involved in the preparation of community strategies although each local authority will probably approach this in a different way.

It might be useful to have a look at the Government's guidance to local authorities on preparing community strategies. This can be found on the following website:
www.local-regions.dtlr.gov.uk/pcs/guidance/index.htm

The Local Government Association have produced a guide called 'Get in on the Act: Local Government Act 2000 Explained'

CDF have produced a guide called 'The new Community Strategies: How to Involve Local People'.

3. Local Agenda 21

After the Rio World Summit in 1992, LA21 was very successful in putting sustainable development on the agenda. Many local authorities appointed LA21 officers and some worked

with community groups. It is probably fair to say that there was always an environmental bias to their work but nevertheless LA21 made a huge contribution.

Tony Blair asked all local authorities to produce an LA21 plan and more than 90% have done just that. Of course they vary in all sorts of ways but you might find it useful to have a look at the plan for your area.

Recently it was decided by government to 'mainstream' LA21 and local sustainability. This means integrating the principles and practice of local sustainable development into all policies and services. Many of the features of government described in this section, such as community planning, have sustainable development at their heart. This might be an important peg for you to hang some of the concerns and aspirations for your community.

4. Local Strategic Partnership

Perhaps the most important of these features is the Local Strategic Partnership. An LSP is a single body that:

- > Brings together at a local level the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together
- > Is a non-statutory organisation
- > Operates at a level which enables strategic decisions to be taken and is close enough to individual neighbourhoods to allow actions to be determined at community level
- > Should be aligned with local authority boundaries.

Set up initially in the most disadvantaged local authorities, they will be created in other local authorities. They have responsibility for:

- > Producing the Community Strategy and keeping track of its progress
- > Bringing together local plans, partnerships and initiatives
- > Providing a forum through which local authorities, police, health services and central government agencies can work together to more effectively meet local needs and priorities
- > Implementing neighbourhood renewal strategies to secure more jobs, better education, improved health, reduced crime and better housing.

Exactly the elements which go to make a more sustainable community!

LSP must work hard to ensure representation from the community, voluntary organisations and business. It will not be easy, however, for them to reach and represent the needs of under-represented groups in society and the few representatives from the community and voluntary sectors will have a difficult job.

However, they are very important because even though in many areas partnerships already exist, they are designed to work at a strategic level and administer key elements of government provision such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Community Chests. Community Chests, for example, provide £50 million of small grants to enable community groups to carry out local projects.

The Local Government Association have produced a guide called 'Effective Local Strategic Partnerships: LGA advice note for working with the community and voluntary sectors' May 2001 See www.lga.gov.blg/compact/csa/pdf or ring 020 7664 3131.

CDF and Urban Forum (2001) have produced 'The LSP Guide: A handy guide to getting involved for voluntary and community groups'.

These are just a few of the key structures and initiatives which you may find useful. It is easy to become confused about how they all fit together - some council officers will share this confusion - however it is most important that you do not get deflected away from your main aim of achieving a better quality of life for your community. Sometimes it is not always easy to keep going with the same drive.

HOW TO MAINTAIN ENTHUSIASM AND INVOLVEMENT

Groups come and go all the time, so do people. This means that there is a constant flow of new ideas, energy and enthusiasm. But it also means that experience is lost and sometimes groups become so small there are not enough people to carry out all the jobs. People leave for all sorts of reasons - the meeting times are inconvenient, some people wouldn't let others talk, there might be disagreements within the group and all the work may fall on to two or three people.

The times and venue of meetings are important and can exclude some people so it's important to check that times and venues are convenient for as many people as possible.

Disagreements occur all the time, often they are a healthy sign that people really care about the issues. Sometimes, the disagreements get out of hand and prevent the group from operating effectively. Personality clashes are the cause for many of these problems, although people do disagree about courses of action and occasionally there are misunderstandings. Sometimes if someone is hogging the discussion then a disagreement may be very healthy and it may result in the person leaving or changing the way they behave. Most of the time it is important to bring disputes out into the open as it is the only way in which they can be settled. Often it is important to look below the surface for the underlying cause of the disagreement. There may be a variety of reasons why people say the things they do and why they feel the way they do. Sometimes it is possible for the group to deal with the issue, sometimes it can't. If there is a problem with one person it may be necessary for the group to bring them into line although this is never easy. If this doesn't work then the group should tell the person to leave if they haven't already dropped out.

New members are very important and must be nurtured! They cannot be left in the corner to pick up as much of the discussion as they can. The purpose and workings of the group must be carefully explained and questions answered fully.

Appendices



- 1** - Model constitution
- 2** - Model agenda
- 3** - Model minutes
- 4** - Letterheaded paper
- 5** - Newsletter
- 6** - Press release



APPENDICES

1 - MODEL CONSTITUTION

Name of group > Calthorpe Residents Association

Date when this constitution was agreed > 1st September 1999
(attach minutes of the meeting when this constitution was approved)
A bank account must also be opened and the date recorded

The purpose of the group will be to work for the improvement of the quality of life in Calthorpe

The affairs of the Residents Association will be managed by a management committee of twelve people

Officers - The following officers will be elected to serve for one year Chairperson, Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer

Annual General Meeting

Each year an annual general meeting will be held at which the officers will be elected by secret ballot. The AGM will be widely advertised one month before it is held and nominations for the officers posts will be invited. If there is only one nomination for each post the officers (if they agree) will be elected automatically. If there is more than one nomination an election must be held. Voting slips must be prepared and completed and counted by the outgoing chair and secretary.

At the start of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous AGM, the outgoing officers must present an annual report including financial accounts.

Any changes to this constitution must be made at the AGM, or, if urgent changes are required, at an extraordinary general meeting. Intention to make changes should be advertised one month in advance.

Monthly Meetings

The management committee of the association must meet monthly at which a quorum will be eight people. Co-options will be allowable up to a maximum of six. At each meeting accounts will be presented and discussed.

Dissolution

The association can dissolve itself at any time but must do so at an extraordinary general meeting, after the usual period of notification. The disposal of the assets of the association may be agreed at this meeting after proper debate.

2 - MODEL AGENDA

Monthly meeting of the Calthorpe Residents Association

Tuesday June 6th 2000

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the previous meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Correspondence
5. Financial report
6. Housing needs of the area
7. Doorstep recycling scheme
8. Autumn Fair
9. Any other business
10. Date of next meeting

Some items, such as 1 - 5 and 9 and 10 should always be on the agenda. Items such as 6, 7, 8, are the ones that take up most of the meeting. It would be very boring if all the items on the agenda were the same at each meeting so a little creativity is called for.

A useful tip, which would keep people interested and coming to meetings, is to ask people what they would like to discuss at the next meeting. It is very simple and it can ensure that the secretary is not seen to be the person who controls what is discussed.

For some groups and some meetings it would be a good idea to send out copies of the agenda to remind people about the date of the meeting and to make them think about the items to be discussed. There is nothing wrong, however, in the agenda being given out at the beginning of the meeting. Even now not everybody has access to a computer and it is quite easy to work from an agenda written on a large sheet of paper at the front of a meeting.

3 - MODEL MINUTES OF A MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of the Calthorpe Residents Association held on the 8th Oct 2002

Present:

Joe Smith, Zoe West, David Heath, Becky Sharp, John Coddington, Ray Wilson, Andy Wilson

Apologies:

Marcus Stewart

Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record.

Matters Arising:

- > It was reported that the Chief Housing Officer had agreed to meet with the association to discuss its concern on housing need

- > The school field will be available for the fair in August.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence to report since the last meeting.

Financial report:

The treasurer presented a report that showed we had spent £42.50 on the production of the most recent newsletter and received £30.45 from the jumble sale. The current balance was £332.64.

Housing needs of the area:

David Heath suggested that we need to carry out a survey of the area to find out what concerns people about housing. It was agreed to set up a small subgroup to work out what we were going to ask people and who was going to go around with the questionnaire. David will convene a separate meeting to make these decisions. The results of the survey could be discussed at the next meeting of the association before we meet with the Housing Officer the following week.

Doorstep Recycling Scheme:

Becky reported that the three people involved had prepared a business plan and had started talks with the council's Recycling Officer. It was agreed that the residents association should lend its support and act as a partner in any funding bids.

Autumn Fair:

Joe reported that the arrangements for the fair were in hand and that he would have more to say at the next meeting. It was agreed that the programme should not be too full, as it was a good opportunity for people to meet their neighbours.

Any Other business:

It had been reported that a set of car keys had been found outside the hall after the last meeting by the caretaker. If they had not been claimed by the end of the month, the next newsletter would mention them.

Date of next meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on the 7th Nov 2002.

4 - MODEL LETTERHEADED PAPER

Calthorpe Residents Association
The Community Centre
1 West Cliff
Swansea
TS2 6BQ

Please contact:

Phone:

E mail:

5 - MODEL PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE.....PRESS RELEASE.....PRESS RELEASE.....PRESS RELEASE....

For immediate release

Grass Routes

An old railway site to the west of Calthorpe is to be transformed into a place where local residents can take a walk in pleasant surroundings and young people can develop horticultural skills.

Four-and-a-half acres of land, derelict for several years now, have been brought from Railtrack by Calthorpe District Council for the sum of £50,000 and are to be the site of a project which will also provide jobs for thirty long-term unemployed local residents.

The initiative, which starts this September, will provide a 2.3 acre horticultural training and development site, an economic development information and advice centre, and a depot for the kerbside recycling scheme.

Grants totalling £500,000 have been received from English Partnerships, Entrust and the European Regional Development Fund. The scheme will be managed by a partnership involving the local authority, Regional Development Agency and the Calthorpe Residents Association.

The partnership agreement will be formally launched by the Government Minister for the region, the local MP, Leader of the Council and representatives of English Partnerships, Entrust, and the Residents Association.

The Chair of Calthorpe Residents Association says

'This scheme will both provide local jobs and improve the local environment. It is a just reward for all the hard work carried out on your behalf by the Calthorpe Residents Association'

Further information from: Joe Smith , Press Officer, Calthorpe Residents Association 93954746726289**ENDS**

ROLE OF OFFICERS

The Chair

Everyone who chairs a meeting does it in a different way, but there are several things which every chair should do to make meetings both effective and enjoyable for everyone.

- > call the meeting to order
- > ask for apologies for absence
- > welcome and involve new members
- > see to it that the agenda is followed and that issues are raised at the right time
- > cut off discussion when it has gone on long enough
- > encourage everyone who wants to contribute to play a part in the meeting
- > summarise the decisions agreed and the action to be taken at the end of each item
- > ask for items under the heading of any other business
- > make sure a date is agreed for the next meeting and declare the meeting closed.

In carrying out this role the chair should make sure he/she does not dominate the meeting nor allow it to get out of hand. It is not easy to get the right balance and it takes much practice. Sometimes the chair needs support to carry out this role.

The Secretary

The secretary's job is more clear cut but will involve more work, particularly outside of the meetings. The main work of the secretary includes:

- > preparing and distributing the agenda, perhaps with reminders for the meeting
- > taking minutes at the meeting and writing them up for presentation at the next meeting
- > writing letters on behalf of the group
- > keeping copies of all correspondence
- > advising the chair on constitutional matters, particularly on the procedure of meetings and elections.

It may fall to the secretary to handle the communication between the group and the wider community. This may mean responsibility for the production and distribution of a newsletter, although this task could, and should, be shared with others.

Both the secretary and the chair need to work closely although if they sew things up before meetings too much, other members of the group may feel that there is little point in them turning up!

The Treasurer

Handling money is a responsible job and it is easy to give people grounds for suspicion, particularly when they are looking for it. It is important that the group is seen to be credible,

especially if it is seeking funding. While it is not necessary for the treasurer to be the head of a finance house, it may be useful for the person with responsibility for the accounts to have a head for figures (and a calculator). The main duties are:

- > sign cheques (along with one other nominated member of the group)
- > keep accounts for what has been spent
- > have the accounts audited by outsiders once a year (before the AGM) if a large amount of money is going through the books
- > prepare financial reports and present them to meetings and the AGM
- > communicate with the bank on a regular basis to ensure that the account is always in credit.

Sample cash analysis forms and income and expenditure forms are attached.

WHERE TO GET OTHER KINDS OF HELP

For Councils of Voluntary Service (CVS) ask the local authority. CVS may not be able to help directly but they may know organisations that can. They are good at guiding you around local voluntary sector resources. There is usually one CVS for each local authority.

Local authorities are more difficult to find your way around. If the central reception cannot help, ask for the Corporate Policy Unit, Regeneration Unit, or Local Agenda 21 team.

Local Strategic Partnerships are increasingly important in providing support for communities who wish to become involved in making their neighbourhood a better place to live.

At a regional level you may get some assistance from either the Government Office or Regional Development Agency.

CONCLUSION

It is unlikely that we shall ever achieve a truly sustainable community anywhere - and if we do it is not going to happen overnight. So don't worry if you don't get results over a weekend!

Whatever you do will help in some way however small. If you combine with others your efforts will be far more significant and enjoyable.

Don't forget your experience of your own community should give you the confidence to bring about the sort of sustainable development you would like to see.

We hope this book helps in some small way, but don't forget there are many people out there who can help in all sorts of ways.

This Handbook is the result of six years of working on the ENCAMS' Sustainable Communities Programme, funded by the Community Fund.

Contact
details

where to get **help**





**CONTACT DETAILS -
WHERE TO GET HELP**

CONTACT DETAILS- WHERE TO GET HELP

There are many different ways of finding further information, such as:

- > Local organisations providing information and advice - these include Councils of Voluntary Service, local environmental groups and many voluntary sector bodies
- > National organisations which provide volunteer labour locally, such as BTCV and conservation volunteers
- > National organisations which provide information and advice about the bigger picture. These include Friends of the Earth, New Economics Foundation and the National Council for Voluntary Service
- > Academic institutions. There are colleges close to most communities and these can provide both information and advice and also student placements
- > Some local authorities can be a very useful resource for community groups, as they collect much information about local communities and can provide practical help as well.

The following contacts table is a comprehensive list of useful organisations that can help communities and/or local authorities and voluntary organisations. Read the description of the organisation before you make contact to ensure that their work is relevant to your activities.

Company Name	Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL)
Description	ABCUL is the main trade association for credit unions in England, Scotland, and Wales. As well as providing support to existing credit unions, ABCUL also supports the setting up of new ones.
Contact Details	Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL) Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester M60 0AS Tel: 0161 832 3694 Fax: 0161 832 3706 www.abcul.org
Company Name	Audit Commission
Description	The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Audit Commission has produced a booklet on quality of life indicators. It looks at what quality of life means, lists quality of life indicators and suggests how they can be measured.
Contact Details	Audit Commission 1 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PN Tel: 020 7828 1212 www.audit-commission.gov.uk
Company Name	Building Research Establishment (BRE)
Description	BRE runs various projects covering sustainable buildings and environmentally responsible practices amongst others. BRE provides an online information exchange.
Contact Details	BRE Garston, Watford WD25 9XX Tel: 01923 664000 Email: enquiries@bre.co.uk www.bre.co.uk
Company Name	British Trust of Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)
Description	The largest organisation in the UK promoting practical conservation work by volunteers. Your local BTCV office has a wealth of information enabling you to join community projects and improve the landscape right on your doorstep.
Contact Details	BTCV 36 St Mary's Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 0EU Tel: 01491 821600 Fax: 01491 839646 www.btcv.org.uk

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<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Carplus</p> <p>Carplus (formerly the Community Car Share Network) is the UK's network for car clubs. It runs an information service and website and, through its RideSmart programme, provides development support to car-sharing projects in England.</p> <p>Carplus UK The Studio, 32 The Calls, Leeds LS2 7EW Tel: 0113 234 9299 Fax: 0113 242 3687 www.carshareclubs.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)</p> <p>CPAG promotes action for the relief, directly or indirectly, of poverty among children and families with children. We work to ensure that those on low incomes get their full entitlement to welfare benefits.</p> <p>Child Poverty Action Group 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF Tel: 020 7837 7979 www.cpag.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Civic Trust</p> <p>The Civic Trust promotes progressive improvements in the quality of urban life for communities throughout the United Kingdom. It works to enhance the quality of life in Britain's cities, towns and villages: the places where people live, work, shop and relax.</p> <p>The Civic Trust 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AW Tel: 020 7930 0914 Fax: 020 7321 0180 www.civictrust.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Common Ground</p> <p>Common Ground concentrates on helping people to celebrate what is good about their local surroundings. Many projects use art and design and there is an emphasis on using people's inspiration and projects that draw different people together. Ideas range from Parish Maps to community orchards.</p> <p>Common Ground Gold Hill House, 21 High Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JE Tel: 01747 850820 Fax: 01747 850821 www.commonground.org.uk</p>

Company Name	Communities Against Toxics (CATs)
Description	CATs “provide communities with information that will enable them to better protect public health and the environment from dangerous, polluting, industrial processes and waste disposal facilities”. CATs links some 130 community groups in the UK.
Contact Details	Communities Against Toxics PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 3TX Tel: 0151 339 5473 www.communities-against-toxics.org.uk
Company Name	Community Composting Network (CCN)
Description	The CCN is a fast growing network comprising over 125 members across the UK involved in community composting. Members include community composting projects, local authorities and other supporting organisations.
Contact Details	Community Composting Network 67 Alexandra Road, Sheffield S2 3EE Tel: 0114 258 0483 www.othas.org.uk/ccn/
Company Name	Community Development Foundation (CDF)
Description	CDF believe communities are strengthened when local people participate in determining the conditions affecting their lives. CDF works to foster this belief by supporting community initiatives, promoting good practice, and informing policy making at local and national level. Their work covers community development and regeneration and they form a useful contact for local authorities and other agencies.
Contact Details	Community Development Foundation (CDF) 60 Highbury Grove, London N5 2AG Tel: 020 7226 5375 www.cdf.org.uk
Company Name	Community Health Exchange (CHEX)
Description	CHEX's principal purpose is to provide a resource to communities, which promotes and supports community development approaches in challenging health inequalities.
Contact Details	Community Health Exchange Baltic Chambers, 30 Wellington Street, Glasgow, Lanarkshire G2 6HJ Tel: 0141 248 1990 Fax: 0141 248 4938 www.scdc.org.uk/chex/

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<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Community Links</p> <p>Community Links is an independent social action centre in East London and a Training Unit in Sheffield, with an extensive network of community projects. It works on community projects and each year produces the Ideas annual.</p> <p>Community Links 105 Barking Road, London E16 4HQ Tel: 020 7473 2270 www.communitylinks.co.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Community Matters</p> <p>Community Matters (the National Federation of Community Organisations) works to expand the support offered to community organisations and represents their interests locally and nationally. It provides advice and training, partly through a community consultancy service.</p> <p>Community Matters 12-20 Baron Street, London, N1 9LL Tel: 020 7837 7887 www.communitymatters.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Community Sector Coalition (CSC)</p> <p>CSC represents 26 national membership organisations that are active within the community sector. It aims to promote a community development perspective based on the experiences of its members, and to influence national policy on a wide range of issues and themes.</p> <p>CSC Winchester House, 11 Cranmer Road, London, SW9 6EJ Tel: 020 7735 1075 Fax: 020 7735 0840 www.bassac.org.uk Email: info@bassac.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Community Service Volunteers (CSV)</p> <p>CSV is a UK charity dedicated to giving everyone the chance to play an active part in their community through volunteering, training, education and the media.</p> <p>CSV Head Office 237 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NJ Tel: 020 7278 6601 www.csv.org.uk</p>

<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Crime Concern</p> <p>Crime Concern is a national crime reduction organisation and registered charity. Crime Concern offers a range of advice, training and practical support through its seven regional offices.</p> <p>Crime Concern Beaver House, 147-150 Victoria Road, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 3UY Tel: 01793 863 500 www.crimeconcern.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Department for Education and Skills (DfES)</p> <p>DfES is the Government department responsible for education, including lifelong learning.</p> <p>Department for Education and Skills Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT Tel: 0870 000 2288 www.dfes.gov.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs(DEFRA)</p> <p>DEFRA is the Government department that aims to protect and improve the environment, and to integrate the environment with other policies across Government.</p> <p>Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR Tel: 020 7238 6000 Fax: 020 7238 6591 www.defra.gov.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Department for Transport (DfT)</p> <p>The new Government Department for Transport was created in 2002 to focus solely on transport issues.</p> <p>Department for Transport Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR Tel: 020 7944 8300 www.dft.gov.uk</p>

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<p>Company Name</p>	<p>Development Trusts Association (DTA)</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>The Development Trusts Association is a community-based regeneration network. It is an independent membership organisation. The DTA's fundamental purpose is: "To achieve a successful development trust in every community that wants one".</p>
<p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Development Trusts Association 2/8 Scrutton Street, London EC2A 4RT Tel: 0845 458 8336 Fax: 0845 458 8337 www.dta.org.uk Email: info@dta.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p>	<p>Don't Choke Britain (DCB)</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>Let Britain Breathe - Don't Choke Britain is campaigning to encourage people to make the links between their travel habits, the environment and their quality of life.</p>
<p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Don't Choke Britain c/o NEXUS, Cuthbert House, All Saints, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 2DA Tel: 01704 821291 www.dcb.org.uk/</p>
<p>Company Name</p>	<p>Empty Homes Agency</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>The Empty Homes Agency is an independent housing charity.</p> <p>It exists to highlight the disgrace of empty, wasted and under-used homes and property throughout England. The Empty Homes Agency devises solutions and disseminates good practice on how to tackle the empties.</p>
<p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Empty Homes Agency 195-197 Victoria Street, London SW1E 5NE Tel: 020 7828 6288 Fax: 020 7828 7006 www.emptyhomes.com Email: info@emptyhomes.com</p>
<p>Company Name</p>	<p>Energy Conservation & Solar Centre (ECSC)</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>ECSC is an education charity working with communities on energy projects. It is also a display centre for equipment.</p>
<p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Energy Conservation and Solar Centre Unit 325/6, 30 Great Guildford Street, London SE1 0HS Tel: 0207 207 9052 www.ecsc.org.uk/ecsc.html</p>

Company Name	Energy Savings Trust
Description	The Energy Savings Trust provides information on alternative fuels, renewable energy and the 'Powershift' grant scheme. Its purpose is to signpost the most energy efficient measures, provide independent advice and highlight savings to be made by using energy more efficiently.
Contact Details	The Energy Saving Trust 21 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BP Tel: 020 7222 0101 Fax: 020 7654 2444 www.est.org.uk
Company Name	English Nature
Description	English Nature is the government agency that champions the conservation of wildlife and natural features throughout England.
Contact Details	English Nature Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA Tel: 01733 455000 www.english-nature.org.uk
Company Name	Environment Agency
Description	The Environment Agency is the leading public body for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales. The Environment Agency works to make sure that air, land and water are looked after by everyone in today's society, to ensure that tomorrow's generations inherit a cleaner, healthier world.
Contact Details	Environment Agency (Head Office) Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury Bristol BS12 4UD Tel: 01454 624400 Fax: 01454 624034 www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Company Name	The Environment & Energy Helpline
Description	The Environment and Energy Helpline is a free advice service for UK-based organisations. It can help your organisation to save money by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > reducing waste and energy use > cutting water and effluent costs > controlling transport costs > improving environmental performance
Contact Details	The Environment & Energy Helpline: 0800 585 794 www.energy-efficiency.gov.uk

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<p>Company Name</p>	<p>Environmental Law Foundation (ELF)</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>The Environmental Law Foundation is the national UK charity linking communities and individuals to legal and technical expertise to prevent damage to the environment and to improve the quality for all. Through its network of members, ELF provides people with information and advice on how the law can help resolve environmental problems such as pollution, development and health.</p>
<p>Contact Details</p>	<p>ELF Suite 309, 16 Baldwins Gardens, Hatton Square, London EC1N 7RJ Tel: 020 7404 1030 Fax: 020 7404 1032 www.elflaw.org</p>
<p>Company Name</p>	<p>Environmental Transport Association (ETA)</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>ETA campaign for a sound and sustainable transport system and offer the environmental alternative to the other motoring organisations. They offer a wide range of services including breakdown and travel insurance. They also run the 'Car Free Day' campaign. See website for details.</p>
<p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Environmental Transport Association 68 High Street, Weybridge, KT13 8RS Tel: 01932 828 882 www.eta.co.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p>	<p>Foundation for Local Food Initiatives (FLFI)</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>FLFI act as an information resource for the local food sector. The FLFI lead 'FLAIR' - the Food and Local Agriculture Information Resource - a partnership project.</p>
<p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Foundation for Local Food Initiatives PO Box 1234, Bristol BS99 2PG Tel: 0845 458 9525 www.localfood.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p>	<p>Friends of the Earth (FOE)</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>FOE has a unique and active network of local groups. Their Real Food Campaign challenges the current system of producing food and calls for one that revitalizes rural communities, supports and enhances biodiversity and produces food safe for consumption. The Real Food Campaign focuses on pesticide reduction, genetically engineered crops and factory farming, as well as supporting local food campaigns.</p>
<p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Friends of the Earth 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ Tel: 020 7490 1555 Fax: 020 7490 0881 www.foe.co.uk</p>

Company Name	Friends of the Earth Scotland
Description	The Scottish section of FoE has been running for more than 21 years. Friends of the Earth Scotland campaigns for a decent environment for everyone.
Contact Details	Friends of the Earth Scotland Bonnington Mill, 72 Newhaven Road, Edinburgh, Midlothian EH6 5QG Tel: 0131 554 9977 Fax: 0131 554 8656 www.foe-scotland.org.uk/
Company Name	Global Action Plan
Description	Global Action Plan is an independent charity that provides practical solutions to environmental and social problems. Global Action Plan runs school, community and business programmes.
Contact Details	Global Action Plan 8 Fulwood Place, London WC1V 6HG Tel: (020) 7405 5633 Fax: (020) 7831 6244 www.globalactionplan.org.uk Email: all@gapuk.demon.co.uk
Company Name	Groundwork National Office
Description	Groundwork is a federation of trusts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, each working with their partners in poor areas to improve the quality of the local environment, the lives of local people and the success of local businesses.
Contact Details	The national office will put you in touch with your nearest Groundwork Trust. Groundwork National Office 85-87 Cornwall Street, Birmingham B3 3BY Tel: 0121 236 8565 Fax: 0121 236 7356 www.groundwork.org.uk
Company Name	Health for All Network (HFAN)
Description	HFAN supports and links a wide range of community projects. It enables those working within the key principles of community participation to meet and share experiences.
Contact Details	HFAN PO Box 101, Liverpool L69 5BE Tel: 0151 231 4283 Email: ukhfan@livjm.ac.uk

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<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA)</p> <p>HDRA is Europe's largest organic membership organisation. It is dedicated to researching and promoting organic gardening, farming and food.</p> <p>Ryton Organic Gardens Coventry, Warwickshire, United Kingdom CV8 3LG Tel: 024 7630 3517 Fax: 024 7663 9229 www.hdra.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Home Office</p> <p>The Home Office is the Government department responsible for internal affairs in England and Wales. The purpose of the Home Office is to work with individuals and communities to build a safe, just and tolerant society enhancing opportunities for all.</p> <p>The Home Office Customer Information Service, 7th Floor, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT Tel: 0870 0001585 www.homeoffice.gov.uk Email: public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Industrial Common Ownership Movement (ICOM)</p> <p>ICOM offers good examples of co-operatives and provides an invaluable service for those wishing to set up a co-operative or not for profit organisation and those who wish to start trading activity.</p> <p>Co-op Union incorporating ICOM Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester M60 0AS Tel: 0161 246 2900 Fax: 0161 831 7684 www.euro-social-economy.org.uk/icom.htm</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Learning through Landscapes (LTL)</p> <p>LTL help schools improve and use their grounds through education for sustainable development.</p> <p>Learning through Landscapes 3rd Floor, Southside Offices, The Law Courts, Winchester SO23 9DL. Tel: 01962 846258 Email: charity@tcp.co.uk</p>

Company Name	LETSLINK UK (Local Exchange Trading Schemes)
Description	LETSLINK UK are revitalising communities throughout Britain. As grassroots initiatives they are open to everyone - people of all ages, skills and abilities; local clubs and associations; voluntary groups, charities, community initiatives; co-ops, small businesses and local services - helping everyone to give and take, connect to new resources, and find a genuine community identity.
Contact Details	LETSLINK UK 12 Southcote Road, London N19 5BJ Tel: 0207 607 7852 www.letslinkuk.org
Company Name	Living Streets
Description	The Living Streets initiative is a clear and urgent challenge to the authorities who, for decades, have allowed traffic priorities to overwhelm our local streets and public places, and failed to keep them clean and safe. Living Streets was formally the Pedestrians Association.
Contact Details	Living Streets 31-33 Bondway, Vauxhall, London SW8 1SJ Tel: 020 7820 1010 Fax: 020 7820 8208 www.pedestrians.org.uk
Company Name	Local Government Association (LGA)
Description	The LGA represents all local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA also represents police authorities, through the Association of Police Authorities (APA); fire authorities and passenger transport authorities.
Contact Details	Local Government Association Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ Tel: 020 7664 3000 Fax: 020 7664 3030 www.lga.gov.uk
Company Name	Local Heritage Initiative (LHI)
Description	LHI is a 10 year national funding scheme designed to help local groups investigate, explain and care for their local landscape, landmarks, traditions and culture and, in doing so, help build up a national picture of aspects of local heritage.
Contact Details	Local Heritage Initiative Countryside Agency, John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham GL50 3RA Tel: 0870 9000 401 www.lji.org.uk Email: lhi@countryside.gov.uk

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Company Name	Low Pay Unit
Description	The Low Pay Unit was set up in 1974 to campaign for economic and social justice. During its 25 year history, the Unit has campaigned to end low pay and poverty and to make sure that these issues are not neglected or forgotten by the government of the day and other key decision makers.
Contact Details	Low Pay Unit 10 Dukes Road, London WC1H 9AD Tel: 020 7387 2910 Fax: 020 7387 2250 www.lowpayunit.org.uk
Company Name	National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB)
Description	The Citizens Advice Bureau Service offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice.
Contact Details	National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, Myddelton House 115-123 Pentonville Road, London N1 9LZ Tel: 020 7833 2181 www.nacab.org.uk
Company Name	National Association of Farmers Markets (NAFM)
Description	NAFM National Association of Farmers Markets - new body exists to promote Farmers' Markets and assist in the formation of new ones.
Contact Details	National Association of Farmers Markets South Vaults, Green Park Station, Green Park Road, Bath, Avon BA11JB Tel: 01225 787914 Fax: 01225 460840 www.farmersmarkets.net
Company Name	National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
Description	NCVO is the umbrella body for the voluntary sector in England, with sister councils in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. NCVO is a highly effective lobbying organisation and represents the views of its members and the wider voluntary sector to government, the Charity Commission, the EU and other bodies.
Contact Details	National Council for Voluntary Organisations Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL Tel: 020 7713 6161 Fax: 020 7713 6300 www.ncvo-vol.org.uk Email: ncvo@ncvo-vol.org.uk

Company Name	National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
Description	As well as running a network of City Farms, they are expert at setting up and running all aspects of community gardens, including co-operative structures.
Contact Details	National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens The Green House, Hereford Street, Bedminster, Bristol, Avon BS3 4NA Tel: 0117 923 1800 Fax: 0117 923 1900 www.farmgarden.org.uk
Company Name	National Neighbourhood Watch Association (NNWA)
Description	The NNWA is the national charity that supports, promotes and represents Neighbourhood Watch in the UK.
Contact Details	National Neighbourhood Watch Association Schomberg House, 80-82 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HF Tel: 0207 772 3348 Fax: 0207 772 3460 www.neighbourhoodwatch.net
Company Name	National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners (NSALG)
Description	NSALG maintains the British heritage by providing a united voice and action to protect and preserve a traditional way of life.
Contact Details	The National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners O`Dell House, Hunters Road, Weldon North Industrial Estate, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 5JE Tel: 01536 266576 www.nsalg.demon.co.uk
Company Name	National Society for Clean Air (NSCA) & Environmental Protection
Description	NSCA's objectives are to promote clean air and environmental protection through the reduction of air, water and land pollution, noise and other contaminants, while having due regard for all aspects of the environment.
Contact Details	National Society for Clean Air & Environmental Protection 44 Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 9QA Tel: 01273 878770 Fax: 01273 606626 www.nasca.org.uk

Company Name	Neighbourhood Energy Action (NEA)
Description	NEA develops and promotes energy efficiency services to tackle the heating and insulation problems of low-income households. Working in partnership with central and local government; with fuel utilities, housing providers and health services; and with consumer organisations, NEA aims to eradicate fuel poverty and campaigns for greater investment in energy efficiency to help those who are poor or vulnerable.
Contact Details	Neighbourhood Energy Action 352 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BP Tel: 020 7713 7396 www.nea.org.uk
Company Name	Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF)
Description	NIF is a national charity specialising in community participation, training and development. Working with local authorities, housing associations, voluntary agencies and community groups, NIF offers an independent, quality service to improve the well-being of communities.
Contact Details	The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation The Poplars, Lightmoor, Telford, Shropshire TF4 3QN Tel: 0870 7700 339 www.nif.co.uk
Company Name	New Economics Foundation (NEF)
Description	The work of NEF focuses on regenerating communities by creating a more self-reliant economic base that can revitalise local democracy and the social networks that sustain communities.
Contact Details	New Economics Foundation Cinnamon House, 6-8 Cole Street, London SE1 4YH Tel: 0207 089 2800 Fax: 0207 407 6473 www.neweconomics.org
Company Name	Northern Ireland Assembly
Description	The Assembly is the prime source of authority for all devolved responsibilities in Northern Ireland and has full legislative and executive authority. The assembly will be able to help with any queries relating to legislation specific to Northern Ireland.
Contact Details	Northern Ireland Assembly Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX Tel: 028 90521333 www.ni-assembly.gov.uk

Company Name	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
Description	The ODPM is the Government department responsible for regional and local government (including the regional Government Offices), housing, planning and regeneration along with the social exclusion unit and neighbourhood renewal.
Contact Details	www.odpm.gov.uk
Company Name	Renewable Energy Investment Club (REIC)
Description	The Renewable Energy Investment Club provides a mechanism for linking people wishing to invest in sustainable energy initiatives with renewable energy developers.
Contact Details	Renewable Energy Investment Club Unit 1, Dyfi Eco Park Machynlleth, Powys SY20 8AX Tel : 01654 705000 Fax : 01654 703000 www.reic.co.uk
Company Name	Safe Neighbourhoods Unit (SNU)
Description	The SNU is a non-for profit organisation offering a wide range of services to local authorities, housing associations, tenants co-operatives and tenants' and residents' groups.
Contact Details	SNU 16 Winchester Walk, Bankside, London SE1 9AG Tel: 020 7403 6050 www.snu.co.uk
Company Name	The Scottish Executive
Description	The Scottish Executive, in particular the Environment and Transport department, can offer advice on relevant legislation to community groups in Scotland.
Contact Details	The Office of the First Minister St. Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG Various Addresses in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Tel: 0845 7741741 www.scotland.gov.uk

<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Shell Better Britain Campaign (SBBC) Or Sustainable Communities Ltd</p> <p>SBBC supports community action for the environment. The agenda has widened to include community action on all sorts of issues including: Community Involvement; Community-Based Economic Regeneration; Community Transport; Pollution; Energy; Waste; Wildlife and Open Spaces. SBBC produces a magazine 'Interactive' and posts useful case studies on its website.</p> <p>SBBC King Edward House, 135a New Street, Birmingham B2 4QJ Tel: 0121 248 5900 Fax: 0121 248 5901 www.sbbc.co.uk Email: info@sbbc.co.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Shelter</p> <p>Shelter campaigns for decent homes that everyone can afford. It provides advice and assistance to people in housing need.</p> <p>Shelter 88 Old Street, London EC1V 9HU Tel: 020 7505 4699 www.shelter.org.uk Email: info@shelter.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Slower Speeds Initiative</p> <p>The Slower Speeds Initiative campaigns for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > lower and better enforced speed limits > higher profile for speed reduction initiatives > development of speed control technology > changes in the law to allow conviction of speeding drivers who kill <p>Slower Speeds Initiative PO Box 19, Hereford HR1 1XJ Tel: 01432 277857 www.slower-speeds.org.uk/</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>The Soil Association</p> <p>The Soil Association validates organic growers and provides useful information for the organic growing movement.</p> <p>The Soil Association Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6BY Tel: 0117 929 0661 Fax: 0117 925 2504 www.soilassociation.org</p>

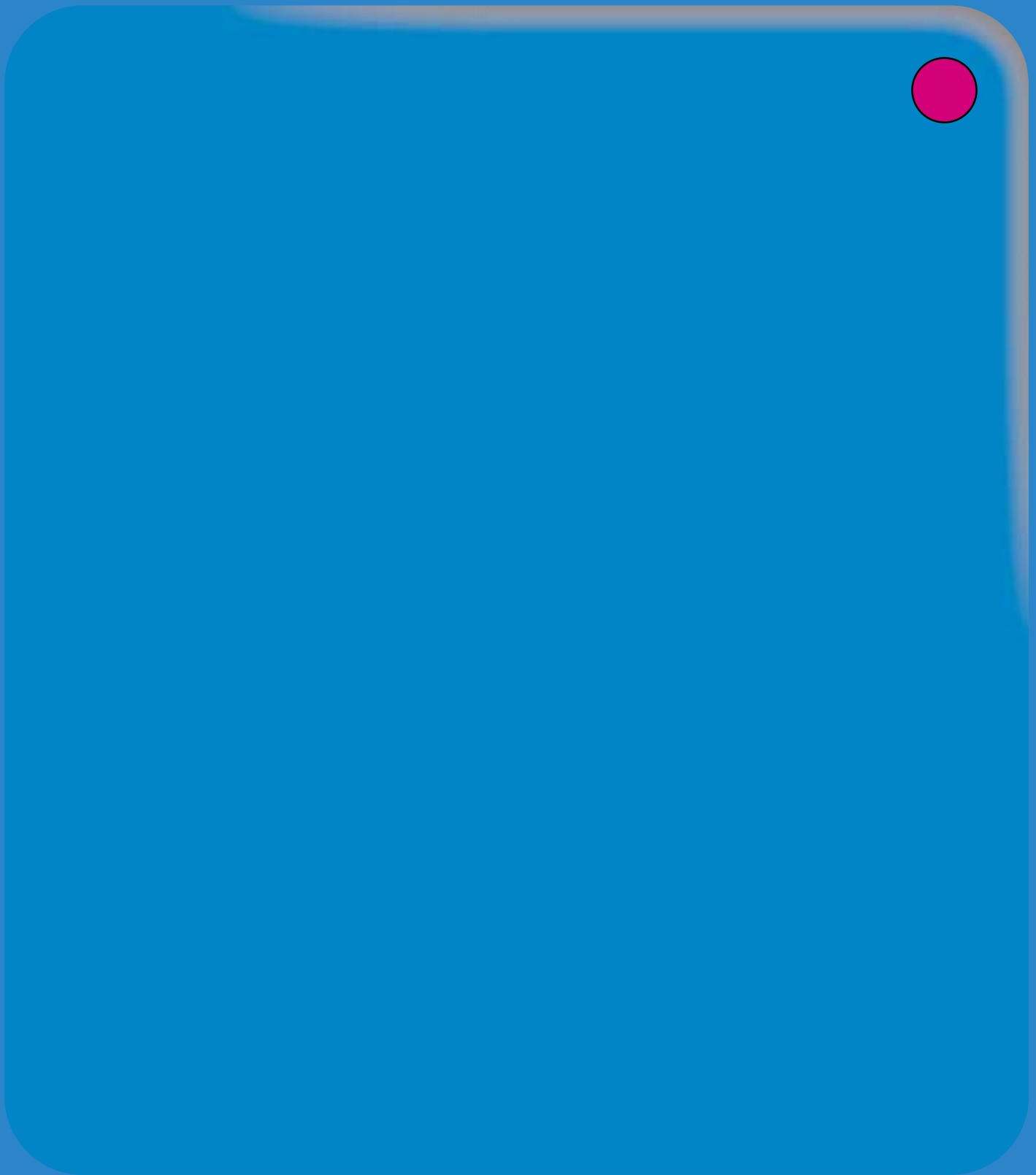
Company Name	Solar Century
Description	Solar Century promotes solar energy use in all sorts of buildings.
Contact Details	Solar Century 91-94 Lower Marsh, Waterloo, London SE1 7AB Tel: 0207 803 0100 www.solarcentury.co.uk
Company Name	Standing Conference for Community Development (SCCD)
Description	SCCD links community development organisations across the UK to share expertise and work on policy issues.
Contact Details	SCCD Floor 4 Furnival House, 48 Furnival Gate, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S1 4QP Tel: 0114 270 1718 Fax: 0114 276 7496 www.comm-dev.co.uk
Company Name	SUSTAIN
Description	Sustain is the alliance for better food and farming and provides information on food related initiatives. It was formed by merging The National Food Alliance and the Sustainable Agriculture Food and Environment (SAFE) Alliance, both of which had been established for over 10 years.
Contact Details	SUSTAIN 94, White Lion Street, London N1 9PF Tel: 0207 837 1228 Fax: 0207 837 1141 www.sustainweb.org/index.asp
Company Name	Sustrans
Description	Sustrans - the sustainable transport charity - designs and builds routes for cyclists, walkers and people with disabilities. This includes a 9,000 mile national cycle network for the UK which will link schools, shops, houses, and workplaces with each other and the countryside.
Contact Details	Sustrans 35 King Street, Bristol BS1 4DZ NCR Information Line 0117 929 0888 www.sustrans.org.uk

<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)</p> <p>TPAS works to develop the involvement of tenants in managing their housing, runs training and events, and provides advice and consultancy. Membership is open to any tenants group or association.</p> <p>TPAS 5th Floor, Trafford House, Chester Road, Manchester M32 0RS Tel: 0161 868 3500 Fax: 0161 877 6256 www.tpas.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Thrive</p> <p>Thrive is the national horticultural charity that exists to enable disadvantaged, disabled and older people to participate fully in the social and economic life of the community. Thrive supports a network of specialist projects that run programmes of horticultural activity for training and employment, therapy and health.</p> <p>Thrive The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill, Reading RG7 2AT Tel: 0118 988 5688 www.thrive.org.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Time Banks UK</p> <p>Time Banks UK brings together the time banks from across the UK. A time bank is a way for people to come together and help each other. Participants 'deposit' their time in the bank by giving practical help and support to others and are able to 'withdraw' their time when they need something done themselves.</p> <p>Time Banks UK PO Box 139, Gloucester GL1 4YP Tel: 0870 702 7428 www.timebanks.co.uk Email: info@timebanks.co.uk</p>
<p>Company Name</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Contact Details</p>	<p>Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)</p> <p>TCPA campaigns for the reform of the UK planning system to make it more responsive to people's needs and aspirations and to promote sustainable development.</p> <p>TCPA 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS Tel: 020 7930 8903 www.tcpa.org.uk</p>

Company Name	Transport 2000
Description	Transport 2000 (T2000) is a national body campaigning for environmentally sustainable transport, and policies that put the pedestrian, public transport and vulnerable road users first. T2000 promotes Green Commuter Plans, including work with hospitals and other service providers to include transport provision in new developments.
Contact Details	Transport 2000 The Impact Centre, 12-18 Hoxton Street, London N1 6NG 0743 Tel: 0207 613 0743 www.real/world.org.uk/transport2000.html
Company Name	Travelwise
Description	Travelwise offers a one-stop shop for all travel awareness needs and questions. Their website features news and campaigns in the UK and Europe, advice for schools and businesses, and a directory of travel awareness professionals.
Contact Details	National Travelwise Lancashire County Council, Environment Directorate, Guild House, Cross Street, Preston, Lancashire PR1 8RD Tel: 01772 263649 www.travelwise.org.uk/
Company Name	UK Public Health Association (UKPHA)
Description	UKPHA is an independent voluntary association, bringing together individuals and organisations from all sectors, who share a commitment to promoting the public's health. It is a membership based organisation that aims to promote the development of healthy public policy at all levels of government and across all sectors, and to support those working in public health either professionally or in a voluntary capacity.
Contact Details	UK Public Health Association 7th Floor, Holborn Gate, 330 High Holborn, London WC1V 7BA Tel: 0870 010 1932 Fax: 0161 274 3447 www.ukpha.org.uk Email: info@ukpha.org.uk
Company Name	Urban Design Alliance (UDAL)
Description	The UDAL was formed in 1997 by seven professional and specialist organisations working to create quality towns and cities. The central goal of UDAL is to raise awareness of urban design, and the fundamental role it plays in creating sustainable, safe and desirable urban areas.
Contact Details	c/o Urban Design Group 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1 6DG Tel: 020 7251 5529 Email: info@udal.org.uk

Company Name	Urban Forum
Description	Urban Forum is an umbrella body for community and voluntary groups with interests in urban and regional policy, especially regeneration. It was set up in 1994 as the national voluntary organisation through which local and central government could relate to the community and voluntary sectors on such issues.
Contact Details	Urban Forum 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ Tel: 0207 253 4816 www.urbanforum.org.uk
Company Name	Urban Wildlife Partnership (UWP)
Description	UWP links and supports the growing number of urban wildlife groups of all types that work to create a better future for wildlife in towns and cities.
Contact Details	Urban Wildlife Partnership The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1WT Tel: 01636 677711 Fax: 01636 670001
Company Name	Voluntary Arts Network (VAN)
Description	VAN is the UK development agency for the voluntary arts. Its mission is 'to promote participation in the arts'. The voluntary arts are those arts and crafts that people undertake for self-improvement, social networking and leisure, but not primarily for payment.
Contact Details	Voluntary Arts Network PO Box 200, Cardiff CF5 1YH Tel: 029 2039 5395 www.voluntaryarts.org
Company Name	Welsh Assembly
Description	Within its powers, the Welsh Assembly develops and implements policies which reflect the particular needs of the people of Wales. Decisions about these issues are made by elected politicians for Wales. The Welsh Assembly may be able to offer advice to those groups or authorities working in Wales through its information and education service.
Contact Details	Public Information and Education services National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1NA Tel: 029 20 825111 www.wales.gov.uk Email: assembly.info@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Company Name	Wildlife Trusts
Description	The Wildlife Trusts' partnership is the UK's leading conservation charity exclusively dedicated to wildlife. Our network of 47 local Wildlife Trusts and our junior branch, Wildlife Watch, work together to protect wildlife in towns and the countryside.
Contact Details	The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 1WT Tel: 0870 036 7711 Fax: 0870 036 0101 www.wildlifetrusts.org Email: info@wildlife-trusts.cix.co.uk
Company Name	Women's Environmental Network
Description	Women's Environmental Network (WEN) encourages and helps the establishment of locally grown organic food through farmers' markets, organic box and growing schemes. WEN run workshops and produce guidelines for establishing and buying community-based food.
Contact Details	Women's Environmental Network PO Box 30626, London E1 1TZ Tel: 020 7481 9004 Fax: 020 7481 9144 www.wen.org.uk/
Company Name	Youth Clubs UK
Description	Youth Clubs UK has a Peer Environmental Education Programme (PEEP) which encourages youth groups to establish specific programmes.
Contact Details	Youth Clubs UK Kirby House, 20-24 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS Tel: 020 7242 4045 www.youthclubs.org.uk





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