
REPORT

PRACTICAL ACTION TO BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

THE GOOD LIFE INITIATIVE IN NEW EARSWICK

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This report details findings from a hands-on attempt to build a local community's capacity to adapt to on-going economic, environmental and social changes.

An action-research project investigated the effect of different interventions to facilitate civic engagement with the aim of motivating a transition towards a more resilient and environmentally sustainable community in a low-income neighbourhood on the outskirts of York.

This report finds that:

- making links between sustainability issues and the underlying interests of community groups was important for achieving engagement with a cross-section of people;
- attempts to build new community groupings solely around energy saving and sustainability initiatives proved difficult to kick-start;
- identifying 'hooks' relevant to local people's interests was important for encouraging residents' shared actions and proved pivotal to our successes;
- sustained engagement is vital prior to a phased reduction of outside assistance to embed change in communities and ensure behaviour change legacies;
- improvements in social capital appear to be a significant aspect of increasing community resilience; and
- supportive governance is required to ensure the infrastructure and policies that promote local resilience and fairness across communities.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At a national level there has been increasing interest in trying to support community level initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and encourage more sustainable living practices through behaviour change as part of national efforts to address climate change (Hive, 2005; Defra, 2008; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011b).

This can also be considered important in the context of supporting greater community resilience which involves improving the capacity of neighbourhoods to recover from crises (typically environmental, such as flooding) or respond and adapt to ongoing changes (economic, environmental and social) (Adger, 2003; Tompkins et al., 2010).

Background

During 2010 the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) (centre at the University of York) was involved in a 'Green Neighbourhoods' initiative undertaken in York, which sought to work with communities in parts of the city identified as having green attitudes but relatively high carbon emissions as part of the 10:10 initiative to reduce carbon emissions by 10 per cent in 2010. This achieved positive results with an 11.5 per cent reduction in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent for participants, and encouragement from participants that team working was beneficial to achieving behaviour change.

Following on from this, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust agreed to fund a collaborative project with the SEI (with the input of the York Transition group) to undertake an 18-month action research project in the York suburb of New Earswick. The aim of this was to try and build on the learning from SEI's previous behaviour change work to similarly support residents of this relatively low-income community with sustainable living but in a different context, recognising the lower levels of interest and engagement on this agenda than in the areas of York where the Green Neighbourhoods work had previously been done.

New Earswick is a low-income community that comprises predominantly social housing owned by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust. It is located on the outskirts of York in Northern England. The housing was originally developed as a model village for workers by Joseph Rowntree, and its diverse facilities are still largely maintained by the Housing Trust. There have been changes in its demographics (including an increase in older people) over recent years resulting in some tensions between groups. There has also been a perceived reduction in the willingness of people to take on community responsibilities. Residents are mainly people with low disposable income, typically reluctant to make lifestyle changes, who from previous studies have been shown to be unconvinced about the benefits and need for pro-environmental behaviour changes (Haq *et al.*, 2013).

The SEI approach was to develop the 'Good Life' initiative, which aimed to stimulate community building in relation to sustainability issues, considering improved use of resources, increased knowledge leading to lower carbon emissions and greater community connections encouraging shared action.

Specific objectives for the project originally included:

- to achieve a measurable reduction in household carbon emissions;
- to raise public awareness of low-carbon lifestyles;
- to foster community cohesion through joint actions;
- to support connections between community action and JRHT work on sustainability;
- to enhance local skills for self-sufficiency and build local resilience.

The research investigated:

- the effect of different approaches in facilitating civic engagement and motivating a transition towards a resilient and environmentally sustainable community;
- the implications of these findings for promoting pro-environmental behaviour change and local community development;
- the implications for national policy.

This report highlights the activities of the project and assesses their impacts on the community in relation to the project's aims. The findings are then related to the theoretical and policy contexts associated with resilience in order to analyse the potential and challenges of implementing actions to stimulate improvements in the ability of communities to adapt to changing economic, social and environmental conditions.

Key findings

The project proved challenging in our target community, as was to be expected from their environmental awareness profile (Experian, 2008). Initial attempts to stimulate groups of residents to focus on activities related to our objectives proved difficult, with declining rather than growing numbers of participants. The focus on household carbon emissions did not resonate well with the community. These setbacks led to the project focussing less directly on emissions reduction and more on the other project objectives. The team re-focussed on addressing issues and activities of interest to the community and building on these to link to broader topics of sustainable living. The project also focussed more on connecting with larger groups of residents through existing gatekeeper organisations, most successfully the

local secondary school. As interest grew, people who were more engaged were encouraged to participate in community building and sustainability actions complementary (but not directly related) to their initial interests. The project legacy included an improvement in the community's social networks associated with an improved skills-base and knowledge of local resources (both institutional and environmental). Our activities also stimulated the formation of a local sustainability group who will hopefully take forward some of the work focussed on food growing, harvesting and sharing in particular. Our engagement with the local school resulted in improved institutional environmental awareness and embedded the idea that local communities can make a difference among the pupils we worked with in the project.

As one GLI participant noted:

“I always felt that the message was a good community-minded theme but I was also aware that New Earswick residents do not readily come forth and join in. Happily I was proved wrong in the end because at the last event there were many and varied members of the community joining together as one.”

Lessons for communities

- Developing and sharing visions of problems in neighbourhoods and generating resident identified solutions can be a useful process for engaging with a broad cross-section of the community.
- Identifying particular locally relevant 'hooks' (in this case nature and green spaces) to attract a cross-section of people to come together proved pivotal to success and appears key to building community links.
- Community based working requires being flexible, adaptive and responsive in the delivery of activities to build on local interests.
- Linking to the interests of existing community groups and building on their existing social networks can provide a useful pathway for engaging a wider cross-section of people on sustainability issues.
- Identifying how to communicate effectively across the community is critically important to success.

Lessons for social landlords or other agencies supporting community initiatives

- When trying to stimulate pro-environmental behaviour change in any community it is critical to identify existing interests (perhaps most easily linked to problems) to instil a sense of ownership from the residents in any proposed changes or actions.
- Sustained engagement appears vital in terms of building trusting relationships and embedding ideas.
- Improvements in social capital appear to be a key aspect of increasing community resilience.

Lessons for policy-makers

- The Good Life supports other evidence that factors contributing to resilience relate to common social heritage. These are not things policy-makers can easily influence and can benefit from intermediaries acting as brokers of change.
- There needs to be a planned (and preferably phased) reduction or exit of any outside assistance, funding or support to manage community

expectations, which also seeks to promote a legacy with the community to embed change.

- There will still be an ongoing role for supportive governance (by local and national bodies) to ensure the wider context of infrastructure and policies to support local resilience across communities.

1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT FOR THE GOOD LIFE INITIATIVE

The Good Life Initiative (GLI) formed part of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) research programme on Climate Change and Social Justice (CC&SJ). This programme investigated which people and places are likely to be most affected by climate change; how vulnerability, poverty and disadvantage might interrelate; and the responses needed.

One programme aim was to support social innovation to develop more resilient communities that can respond to the challenges of climate change, especially in more disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Origins of the Good Life

The GLI was developed from the insights gained in a number of behavioural change projects undertaken by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) team. These projects had developed and utilised social marketing techniques within different target groups at a variety of scales, starting with individualised travel plans to promote more environmentally sustainable transport choices (Haq *et al.*, 2004; Haq *et al.*, 2008). This evolved into group interactions designed to encourage communities to reduce their carbon footprints through the 'York Green Neighbourhood Challenge' (Haq and Owen, 2011b).

The Green Neighbourhood Challenge worked with six community teams in York to reduce their carbon footprint by 10 per cent in 2010 over an eight-month period (as part of the 10:10 programme). The participants consisted of three neighbourhood teams, two primary school teams and one

church team. A total of 89 people signed up to undertake this pilot project. Each team had a mentor who, with the assistance of expert speakers, provided information and practical advice on green actions, such as energy reduction, recycling and composting. The teams met monthly, with some also holding a range of awareness raising activities in their local area.

The Green Neighbourhood Challenge successfully achieved a statistically significant self-reported 11.5 per cent reduction in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (a measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their global-warming potential) over an eight-month period. Some 80 per cent of participants felt they had benefited from taking part in the project, with almost 60 per cent feeling that working as a team was more effective in delivering change than individual approaches.

The key factors identified as contributing to this success included:

- having a clear target for participants to focus on;
- encouraging pledges for action;
- fostering change via existing community groups (though some new resident groups were recruited too);
- providing expert advice and maintaining continuous support;
- opportunities for sharing experiences within and between groups;
- fostering an improved sense of community;
- having dedicated facilitators to encourage teamwork;
- providing progress updates throughout the project;
- encouraging continuation post-project.

The Good Life Initiative project aims

Considering these factors and the successful outcomes of the Green Neighbourhood Challenge, the original aims of the Good Life Initiative were developed taking account of the goals of the JRF CC&SJ programme.

The project was conceived as a practical intervention in the particular low-income community of New Earswick, a suburb of York. Specifically, the initiative aimed to stimulate community resilience by encouraging the neighbourhood's residents to achieve a healthier, more sustainable, more knowledgeable and more sociable life. The project concept and scope was developed in collaboration with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, who wanted to support the development of sustainability in New Earswick – a community primarily consisting of social housing managed by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust.

The project researchers recognised that while affluent households tend to have high expenditure and consequently high carbon emissions, it is low-income households who will potentially be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The Green Neighbourhood Challenge had focussed on achieving emissions reductions and sustainable living practices for residents with higher carbon footprints but ostensibly green attitudes, while the GLI was designed to concentrate on supporting resilience in a low-income community. However, despite their vulnerability, previous work has also demonstrated that the residents of New Earswick were likely to be mainly comprised of people with low incomes, who typically remain unconvinced about the benefits and need for pro-environmental behaviour changes (Haq *et al.*, 2013).

The indications from the Green Neighbourhoods feedback were that the focus purely on carbon footprints was losing traction in terms of motivating

behaviour change. This was particularly the case in the poor economic climate post credit-crunch. With this context and the different nature of the community in mind, the GLI took a broader approach and sought to promote the best use of community resources more holistically, rather than focussing primarily on pro-environmental behaviour as a motivator. The project was conceived as encouraging a community to maximise their use of local opportunities, resources and skills. This approach resonated with the objectives of the York in Transition (YiT) movement, who helped develop the proposal.

The project's aim of strengthening community resilience focussed on helping to ensure a neighbourhood of low-income households could:

- save money by using energy more effectively;
- develop local skills (e.g. local food production, knowledge of sustainable transport, recycling and reuse);
- build or strengthen new and existing social support networks.

Specific objectives for the project originally included:

- to achieve a measurable reduction in household carbon emissions;
- to raise public awareness of low-carbon lifestyles;
- to foster community cohesion through joint actions;
- to support connections between community action and JRHT work on sustainability;
- to enhance local skills for self-sufficiency and build local resilience.

The initial aim was of key importance to JRHT, who acted as a stakeholder in the project alongside JRF and were interested in supporting a reduction in carbon emissions in their social housing through a combination of JRHT action and resident action in line with JRHT's sustainability plan.

Original approach to the project

The project was conceived as a joint initiative between behavioural change researchers from the SEI and members of the YiT movement. The Transition Network's role (of which YiT was part) is to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organise around a post fossil-fuel-focussed world, creating initiatives that rebuild resilience and reduce CO₂ emissions.¹ This synergy made the YiT an obvious partner in delivering the GLI.

The original intention was to recruit teams of local residents through connections to existing community groups and by working with trusted local residents who would act as promoters for the project and provide a 'hook' to encourage individuals to participate (this links to theories of social change described in *The Tipping Point* (Gladwell, 2000), discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6). This echoed the Green Neighbourhoods approach.

The learning gained from the project was intended to identify new and effective approaches for practical community engagement in relation to building resilience that would have wider national policy relevance at a variety of governance scales.

The initiative's aim was to actively influence positive changes for New Earswick residents while also contributing toward the overarching goals of the JRF programme (by identifying pathways to improve resilience in this relatively economically deprived community) and supporting JRHT practice development. This proved a challenging mix of objectives and led to an evolution of the GLI actions as the research unfolded, something explored more fully later.

The project was conceived as encouraging a community to maximise their use of local opportunities, resources and skills.

Making the most of what you have got: boosting community resilience

One challenging objective of the Good Life was building community resilience. Concepts of resilience originate from ecology, but when applied to communities they relate to the ability of people living together, in a particular location, to cope with economic, social and environmental problems. Ideally this would move beyond merely coping, towards communities actually becoming stronger and more adaptable over time as they absorb and adjust to the problems they are faced with: by building new skills; strengthening and enhancing social connections; and developing new physical resources. This way of thinking about communities and resilience – their inherent strengths, flexibility and material assets – implies that a resilient community might also have the capability of being a more sociable and sustainable place to live for the residents.

The primary challenge addressed in the GLL was not how to assess from these theoretical concepts the current status of the community (though this informed our appraisal approaches), rather it was investigating whether support and stimulus could begin to encourage these community strengths; how and what kinds of interventions might be most beneficial to help people become more adaptable and flexible to the various pressures they face. This theoretical framing of community resilience (expanded upon in Chapter 4) not only gave the project an intellectual starting framework, it also practically helped guide the actions undertaken with the residents.

A resilient community might also have the capability of being a more sociable and sustainable place to live for the residents.

New Earswick: location and neighbourhood characteristics

Our study area has its origins as a garden village conceived by philanthropist Joseph Rowntree ‘to alleviate the conditions of the working classes by provision of improved dwellings’ (Alley, 2009). He planned the model village as a self-governing community, with its own Folk Hall, Village Council and school, with initial buildings completed in 1902.

Today, the village of New Earswick forms a suburb of the city of York. Currently, it has approximately 1,150 households and an estimated population of 2,700 (Crawford *et al.*, 2003). The village housing mixture demonstrates both systematic and periodic growth. Over half of the houses are redbrick, semi-detached or terraced, many built in cul-de-sac formations with substantial gardens and fruit trees. Other accommodation includes flats, bungalows and two-, three- and four-bedroom houses. The village also has a range of amenities resulting from its model village heritage, including primary and secondary schools, shops and community facilities, with a swimming pool, sports club and a large amount of accessible green space.

While New Earswick was originally developed by Rowntree to offer low-cost rental housing for working families, the JRHT is committed to creating a mixed-income community and the neighbourhood now offers a range of tenure options, including full ownership, shared ownership and rented accommodation. There is also a range of accommodation catering for different needs, including those of older people and adults with physical or learning difficulties. Although now a mixed-tenure area, the majority of the homes are still social-housing-owned and maintained by the JRHT.

A small new development in the village (Elm Tree Mews) demonstrates the JRHT’s vision for high-quality, affordable and sustainable buildings as the future model for housing (as also demonstrated at a major new JRHT scheme at Derwenthorpe, also in York). The Elm Tree homes have been

built to be flexible, with high levels of security and high standards of energy efficiency.

Figure 1: Location of New Earswick on the outskirts of York



Source: Crown Copyright/database 2013. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service

The nature of the existing housing stock, with its development over different periods, poses challenges in achieving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions. JRHT is conducting maintenance works including retrofitting energy efficiency measures to respond to this challenge. However, the historical quality of the buildings and design led to a large area of the village being declared a conservation area in 1991. This influences the improvements and alterations that are permissible (Alley, 2009), particularly in relation to the options available for energy efficiency improvement initiatives.

Existing issues in the community

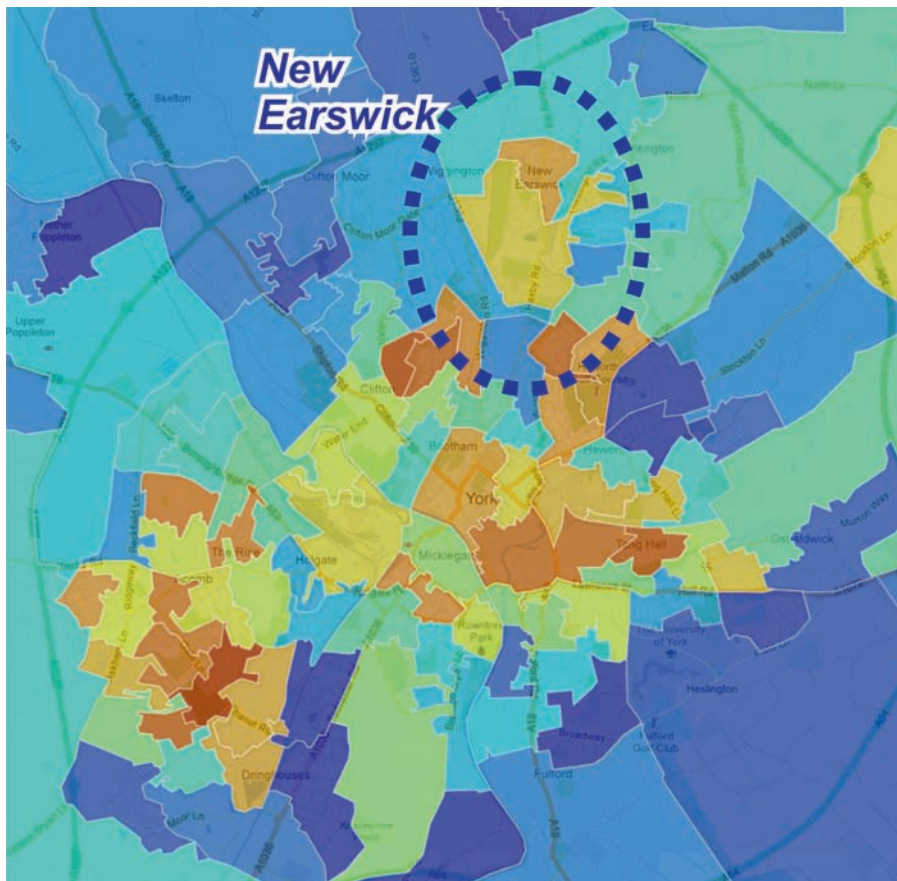
Characteristics of the community affecting resilience

Overall, New Earswick can be characterised as being relatively strong on built assets in terms of the basic quality of the design and layout of the village, with these aspects being greatly appreciated by residents. The extensive

green spaces and access to open countryside also mean that the community can enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits that these have been shown to support (Shackell and Walter, 2012; Penny, 2009).

The village has relatively high levels of deprivation in relation to its neighbours (according to the latest deprivation indices), with New Earswick largely falling into the most deprived quintile (20 per cent) for the City of York local authority. Relative to adjacent communities, the older sections of New Earswick (which include the majority of the social housing) are considerably more deprived than their neighbours.

Figure 2: 2008 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores for York in 2010



Note: Orange indicates relatively higher deprivation – blue relative affluence

Source: Crown Copyright/database 2013. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service

In addition, early scoping fieldwork prior to undertaking the main project activities identified a number of other key issues for the residents of the village (Futerra, 2011). Divisions were identified between the more elderly residents of the community and younger people; and also between longer-term householders and ‘incomers’ to the more recent development of Hartrigg Oaks retirement village. The discussions identified a sense that people are less motivated to run village events than they used to be. One person used the word ‘lethargy’, another ‘fractured’ to describe community life. It was felt that many people are disengaged from community life preferring to watch TV, play with gadgets, or seek entertainment in York or elsewhere. This is not untypical of other communities’ trajectories (Robertson *et al.*, 2008), reflecting a wider shift away from local volunteering to individualised and consumer-based societies (John, 2012).

Action research approach

Significant community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort.

– Wilding, 2011

The GLI methodology followed the model of Participatory Action Research (PAR), whereby facilitators support communities as they take ownership of their own agendas. Research should be 'with people, not on them', and the values of diversity and inclusion should be at the heart of the approach: the assumption is that social justice outcomes are more likely if the full diversity of community voices can be heard and respected.

This was reflected in the range of methods and approaches used in the community engagement, which aimed to ensure that there were entry points for involvement from a wide cross-section of residents. The intention was that having attended one GLI event, involvement in other activities would follow. The key was getting people 'hooked' into participating by making the messages and activities of the project engage and resonate with the community. This proved challenging, and led to an adaptive project ethos in attempting to ensure its relevance to the people of New Earswick.

2 GOOD LIFE INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES AND EVOLUTION

The GLI built upon methodological insights on how to promote pro-environmental behaviour change. These ranged from individually developed personalised behaviour-change plans (Haq *et al.*, 2008; Haq *et al.*, 2004) towards group-focussed targeted social marketing approaches for community action (Haq and Owen, 2011a).

These experiences had indicated that personalised interventions could result in pro-environmental benefits (in terms of lower greenhouse gas emissions), but that the group approach provided wider co-benefits in terms of participants' wellbeing and social cohesion.

The Green Neighbourhood Challenge indicated the potential for expansion beyond single environmental issues in targeted or self-forming groups, looking instead at broadening the engagement to a wider cross-section of a community or neighbourhood and involving them in building sustainability in both an environmental and cultural sense.




Phase 1 of the Good Life Initiative

With this ethos and an initial understanding of potential engagement approaches (identified by a communications agency through a small scoping study) the GLI began with a community event.

The aim of the launch event was to introduce the project and encourage people to participate, as well as allowing bottom-up decision-making through residents voting for the types of activities they would like to see being held over the next year. To further identify bottom-up ideas for areas related to Good Life aims to target, the team initially undertook two focus groups in the village.

Activities were linked to three branded areas (related to interests identified in the scoping study): Home, the Living Environment and the broader category of Wellbeing.

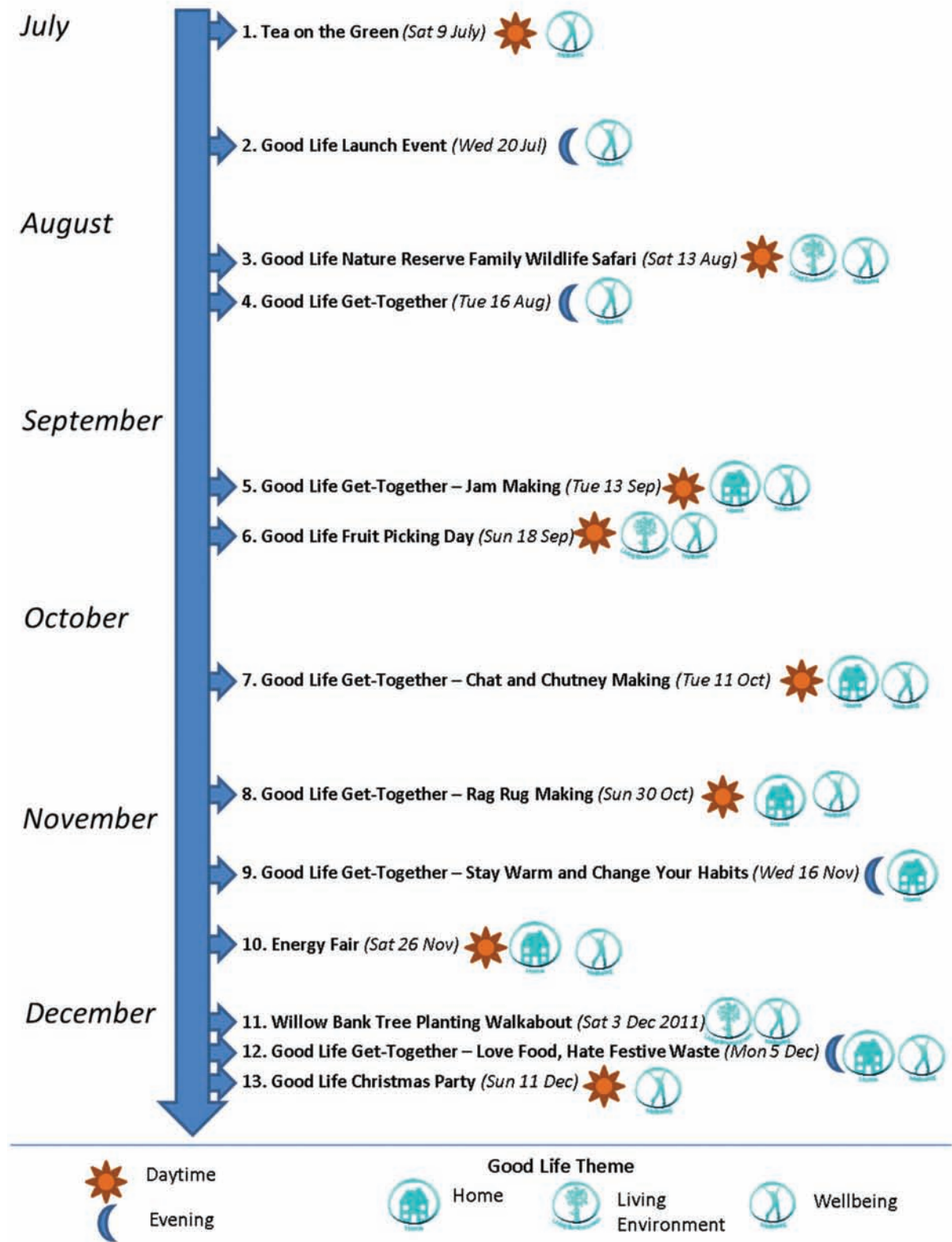
Table 1: Phase 1 themes

Theme	Focus	Activities	Objective
	Energy	Work with residents to look at energy-saving measures that they could take in the home, ranging from behaviour changes to infrastructure improvements.	Reduce household energy consumption and fuel bills for residents.
	Food	Educate residents on the potential for reducing food costs through improved cooking skills and knowledge, including fruit collecting and vegetable growing.	Reduce expenditure on food and increase awareness of food miles and environmental costs.
	Shopping	Identify ways of reducing consumption through recycling and up-cycling products.	Reduce household expenditure on material goods and improve consumption practices.
	Transport	Work with residents on the transport issues in the village – identifying the options of switching to more sustainable travel choices.	Identify ways of reducing travel costs for residents and improving the carbon footprint of the community.
	Waste	Transfer new skills on how to reduce, reuse and recycle materials and goods to residents.	Reduce the waste generated by the community while saving residents money on unnecessary purchases.
	Green spaces	Work with the community to identify ways of improving and utilising the green infrastructure of the village more beneficially.	Improve the village's green spaces and their utilisation to benefit residents.
	Health	Work with residents on activities to improve levels of activity and social connections.	Improve individuals' physical and mental health and consequent wellbeing.
	Community	Identify and undertake with residents activities around the GL themes that would build community identity and social cohesion.	Increase the leadership and common vision of the community to boost resilience.
	Skills and Knowledge	Transfer knowledge, expertise and skills between residents (and outside experts) around the GL theme areas.	Increase the capacity of residents to undertake actions, and also increase the knowledge base of the community.

The objectives for Wellbeing were overarching and related to activities held under the other themes. For example, 'Home–Food' activities involved bringing groups together for learning events such as fruit jam-making. This 'Food'-focussed event also met 'Community' and 'Skills and Knowledge' objectives under the Wellbeing theme.

The original intention in Phase 1 of the Good Life Initiative was to develop activities with self-forming groups of residents around the three branded areas. Participation would then be increased through word of mouth recommendations, and at the launch event attempts were made to sign people up for themed groups. In addition, the project team knocked on doors to try and encourage participation and communicate the project ethos.

Timeline of Phase 1 Good Life Initiative events 2011



Highlights of Phase 1

Energy themed activities

The activities kicked off at the initial pre-launch and launch events, with human-powered energy stations in action to stimulate residents' thinking about how much energy is needed to power domestic appliances. These 'hands-on' activities proved popular and communicated the issues to a wide range of age groups.

In-depth energy-focused events later in the programme undertook personal energy use footprint assessments. This was complemented with advice on behaviour changes that residents could take to save energy and keep warm. Although turnout was relatively modest for these events the information provided seemed well received.



Green space themed activities

The natural environment activities were among the most popular in terms of numbers and cross-section of participants. The activities were intended to improve residents' appreciation of the local environment through sharing knowledge between community members and/or from outside experts. The GLI team involved the local Big Lottery funded Open Air Laboratories (www.opal.org) community scientists and other local naturalists to deliver bug hunts, nature trails and wildlife walks.

The activities related to fruit picking proved particularly popular with residents. These were intended to highlight the opportunities for fruit collection in the 'garden village' with the potential to save money and food miles as a result.

The GLI also supported the formation of a community-led activity relating to improving the natural environment in the village. This included the possibility of planting new woodland on the edge of the village in an area known as Willow Bank in celebration of the Queen's golden jubilee. The team facilitated planning meetings where the community discussed potential sources of funding and options on locations.



Good Life get-togethers

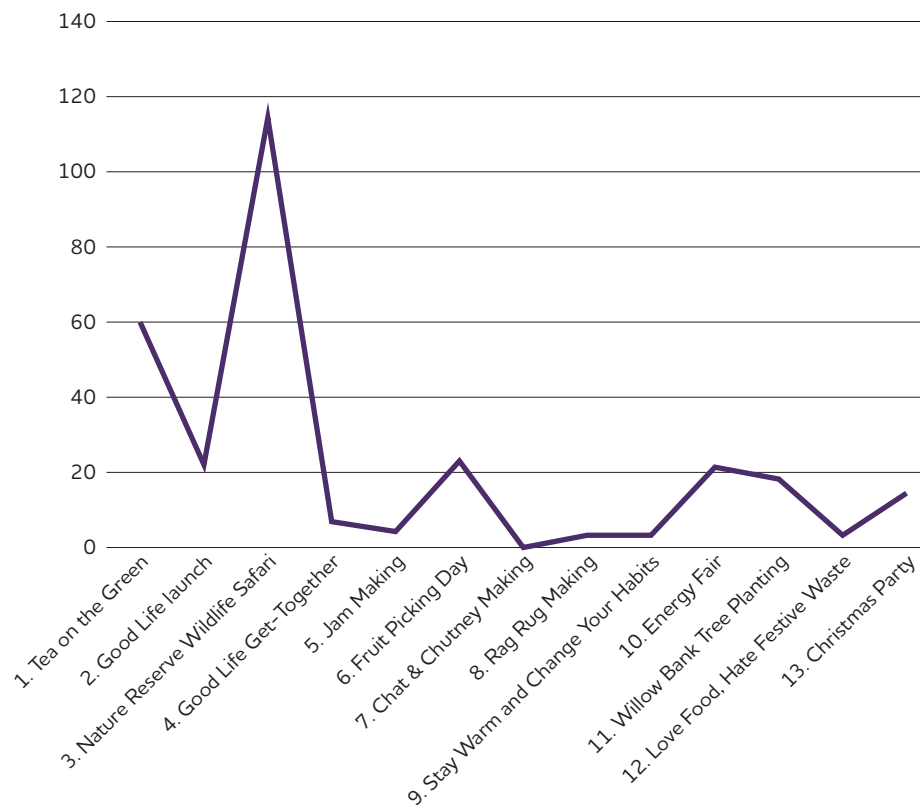
These meetings were intended to encourage the formation of community groups relating to the aims and objectives of the Good Life themes. Activities included making jam and chutney, which linked to the 'Home-Food' objectives, while other activities linked to 'Living Environment-Waste' and 'Home-Shopping', including creative ways to reduce waste at Christmas. The meetings were also an opportunity for local residents to meet-up and form new social connections thereby improving general Wellbeing.

Phase 1 challenges

Unfortunately, the number of participants at these events generally declined rather than increased over time. The original intention of identifying teams of residents to work on particular challenges related to the thematic areas of 'living the Good Life' was abandoned due to poor uptake (events 2 and 4). Existing groups were unwilling to take on these new thematic challenges and new groups seemed unwilling to form.

The levels of participation at each event can be seen in Figure 3. Overall, we recorded 249 participants at events (excluding the launch, which 60 people attended) in Phase 1. However, almost half of this number (117) came from just one event, a nature walk, with the other events having much lower numbers – an average participation of 21, typically older, people (excluding the launch).

Figure 3: Participation numbers in Phase 1 of the Good Life Initiative



Participants in Phase 1 were encouraged to undertake a baseline behaviour and consumption survey to monitor the project impact. However, this proved unpopular and fewer than 10 were returned, resulting in changes to our evaluation approach.

As Phase 1 evolved (and was adapted in Phase 2), we tried a variety of approaches to boost recruitment by putting significant effort into promoting the project and its objectives. This effort included regular articles and invitations in the local community paper (delivered to every household); posters and flyers for all events in key locations (e.g. doctor's surgeries etc.); project display boards in the local library; a website and a Twitter feed. In addition, we increasingly found personal one-on-one meetings a useful way of recruiting key people who could bring others on board. We also made connections to important existing groups (e.g. the Parish Council) and increasingly communicated directly with the villagers through our regular on-the-ground presence.

Phase 2 – a change of approach

In response to the relatively low ongoing engagement of the community and a failure to establish group actions on the Good Life themes, the decision was taken at the beginning of 2012 to re-focus the GLI actions around three core strands. These were identified in relation to the areas of success from Phase 1 but also involved engaging people through different gatekeeper organisations via which the Good Life message could be re-interpreted and delivered. The underlying rationale was an attempt to build upon a small existing group of regular participants formed in Phase 1 while spreading the agenda and objectives of the project to a wider cross-section of residents. The core strands identified were:

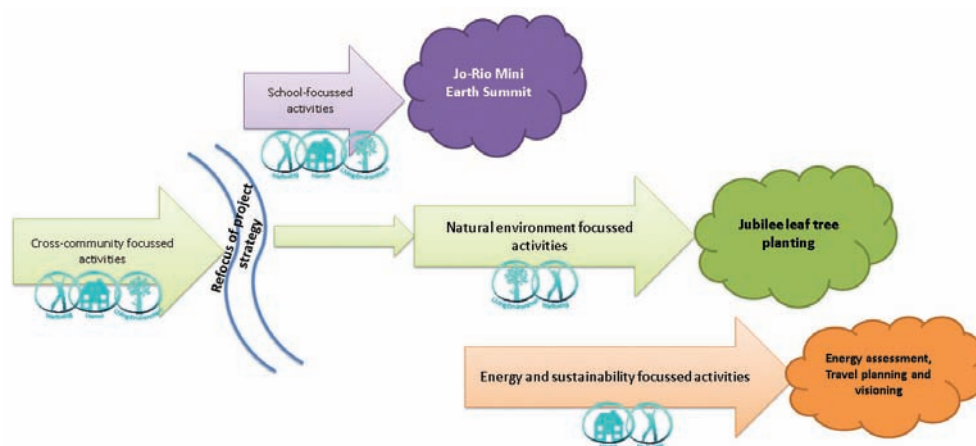
- 1 an education- and outreach-focussed activity linked to the local high school;
- 2 facilitating community-led natural environment related activities;
- 3 energy assessments, behaviour change activities and community visioning linked to JRHT emission targets and sustainability approaches.

The education activity involved linking to the local secondary school, The Joseph Rowntree School, through supporting teaching around sustainability and citizenship. The GLI engaged with this curriculum initially through the development of a number of lesson plans and teaching materials that were introduced to pupils at school assemblies by SEI researchers. This engagement was then deepened by recruiting a cohort of pupils to work on a sustainability themed public event and widened to involve the whole school (and their peers, families and wider community) in the development and organisation of the 'Jo-Rio Mini Earth Summit'. This event, linked to the international Rio Summit of 2012, encouraged the connection between thinking globally and acting locally. This first strand of Phase 2 included elements of all the Good Life themes, but was designed to particularly focus on building skills and leadership (Wellbeing theme objectives) while leading to improved environmental knowledge and behaviour in the home and school (Home theme objectives).

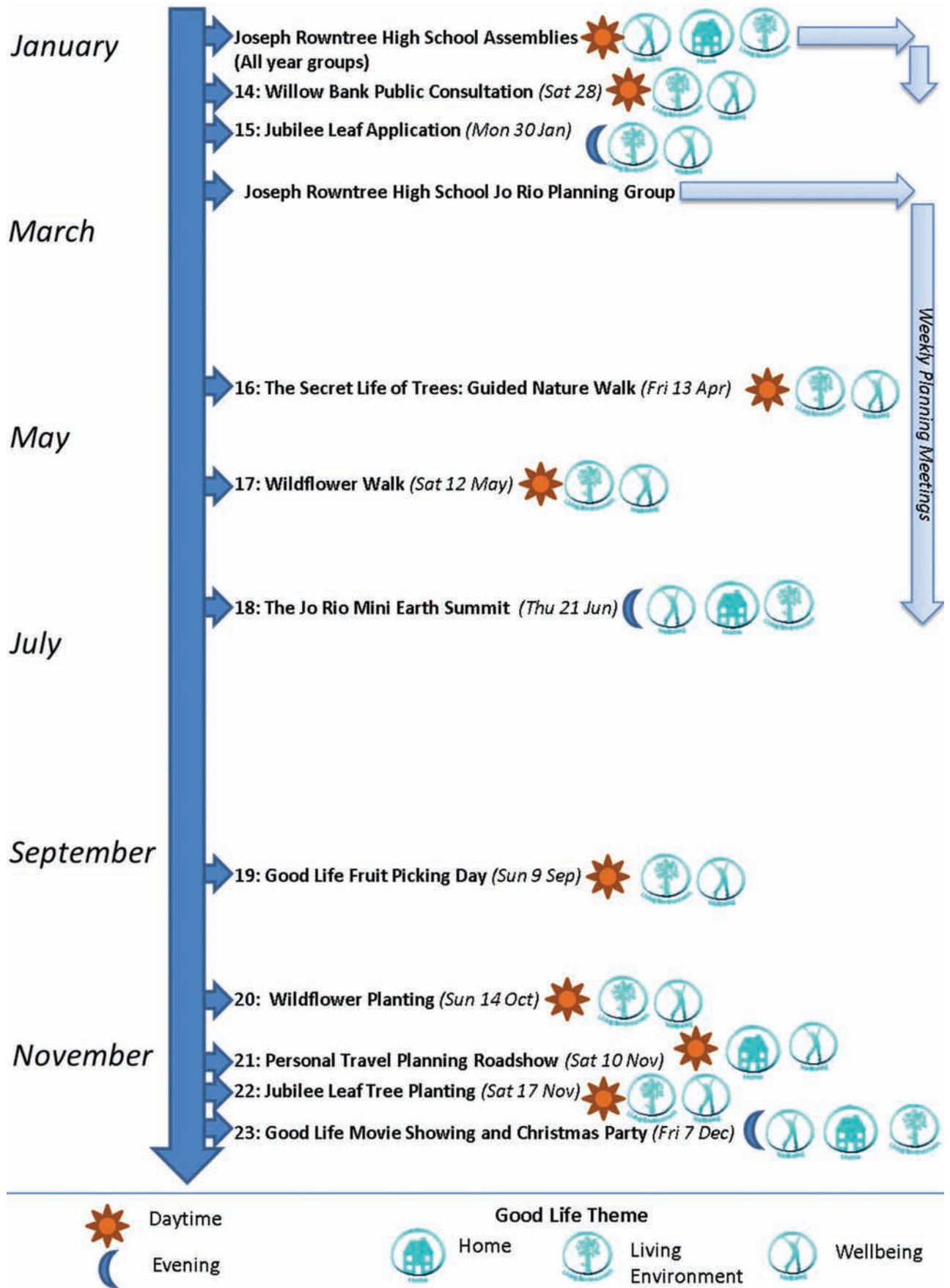
The community-led work concentrated on the natural environment. The GLI team had already co-ordinated an initiative to plant new woodland and wildflowers in the village (event 11) that had been well attended and captured residents' imagination. It was decided to continue this activity and link it to other events focussed on the natural environment, creating a bridge from Phase 1 (events 3 and 6). This strand was intended to continue building the skills and knowledge of residents, strengthen community leadership related to the Wellbeing theme, and directly improve the green spaces of the Living Environment.

The energy and sustainability related activities created a connection between the ongoing improvement programme being undertaken by the JRHT in the social housing of New Earswick and the ethos of the GLI to encourage a shift in personal and collective behaviour to more sustainable patterns. Resident engagement on energy complemented work by the GLI team modelling carbon emissions scenarios based on changes to New Earswick housing (reported in detail on the SEI website).

Evolution of Good Life Initiative activities



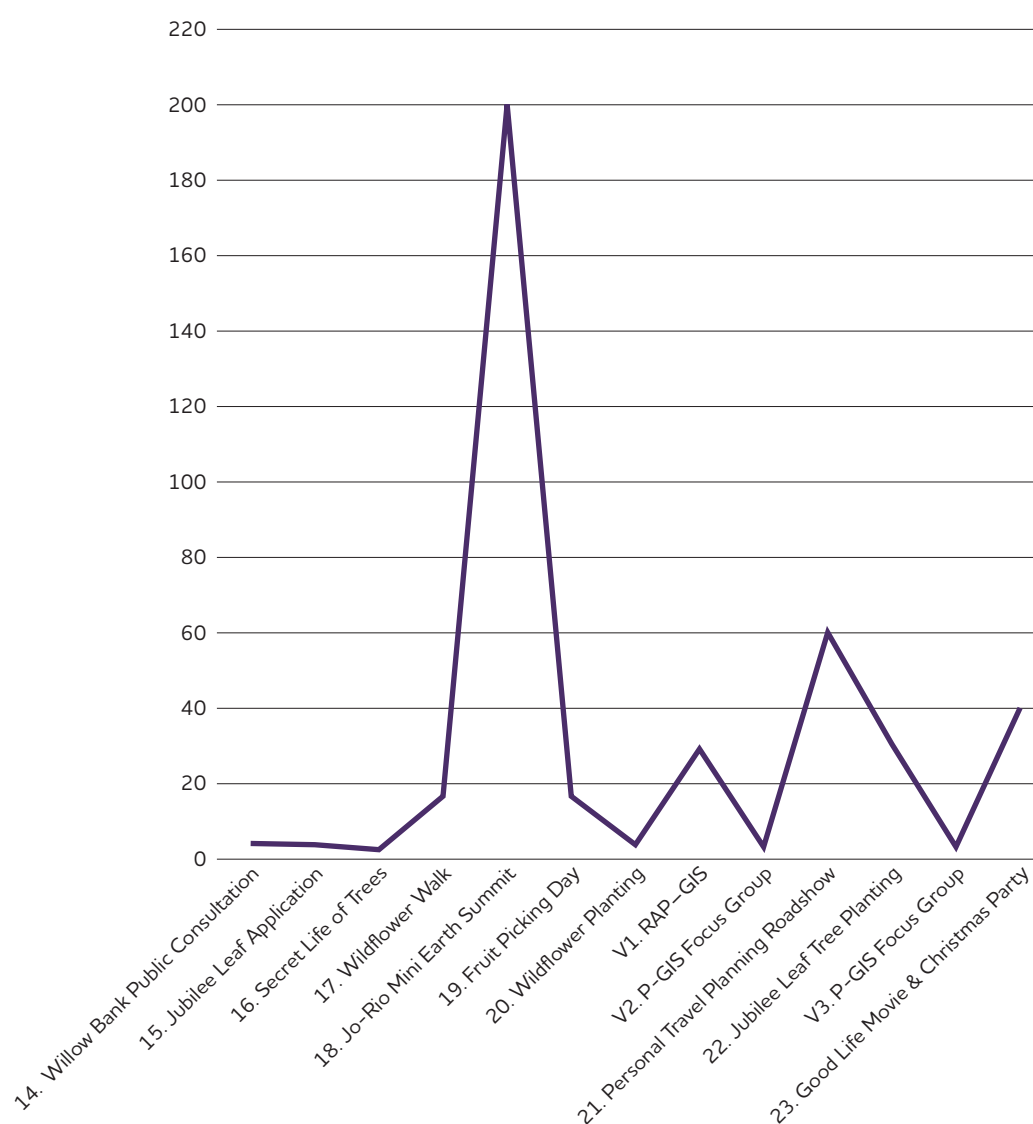
Timeline of Phase 2 Good Life Initiative events 2012



Phase 2 participation levels

The participation numbers shown in Figure 4 indicate that the revised, more targeted approach was successful in terms of motivating significant numbers of people to engage with the Good Life agenda. In total 431 people took part, with an average participation of 33 people per event. This was an increase of 60 per cent from Phase 1 and included a wider age range of people (helped by the school and outdoor focus) and increased repeat participation. This improvement supported the re-focussing strategy and the decision to concentrate on delivering the GLI through specific constituencies – particularly the school, pupils and parents, together with the wider local community via the natural environment activities.

Figure 4: Participation numbers in Phase 2 of the Good Life Initiative



Highlights of Phase 2

Jo-Rio Mini Earth Summit

The Good Life team, supported by a parent-helper with expertise in design and communication, worked with students at The Joseph Rowntree School for six months on communicating sustainability and improving their pro-environmental behaviour.

Activities commenced with assemblies in January 2012 and culminated in the 'Jo-Rio Earth Summit' on 21 June, linked to the UN Rio+20 held in Brazil. This was an event for the whole school and the wider community, promoted to residents in New Earswick, Huntington, Haxby and York.

All year groups received assemblies about environmental sustainability; follow-up lessons in Citizenship and Geography were given to year 9 students using material generated by GLI researchers.

A team of around 20 students from years 7–9 formed an organising committee and met weekly with GLI researchers to plan and promote the Jo-Rio event. The organising committee became the face of the summit, discussed the ambitions for the event with the leader of the City Council (James Alexander) and also featured in the local press and University of York news. The organising committee had the opportunity to interact directly with the Summit (in association with SEI's presence in Rio) and delivered two video messages: Voices of the Future on their environmental concerns, which was relayed to the Nobel Laureate Symposium, and their call for action and aspirations for change, which was shown to delegates at the international conference.² They also interacted with the Voices of Youth (VOY) delegation, representing young people's organisations in Rio, via a Skype call organised by SEI. The pupils found this process particularly rewarding as they began to see links between their community and the global society, as well as the possibility that they could make a difference.



Participants at the Nobel Laureate Symposium included

- **Tarja Halonen**, former President of Finland, Co-Chair of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability.
- **Gro Harlem Brundtland**, former Prime Minister of Norway and member of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability.
- **Yuan-Tseh Lee**, Nobel Laureate (Chemistry), President of the International Council for Science (ICSU).
- **Johan Rockström**, Director of the Stockholm Resilience Centre.
- **Janos Pasztor**, Executive Secretary of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability.
- **Severn Cullis-Suzuki**, youth representative at the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio.
- **Maurice Strong**, Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992 Rio Earth Summit).

A week prior to the Summit, the school organised a day of activities to prepare all students in years 7–9, including staging a musical based around the theme of waste, learning speechwriting skills, and receiving training in film-making and bicycle repair. The Leader of the City of York Council visited, was introduced to the Jo-Rio committee and toured the school to see some of the building's energy efficiency measures.

The event on 21 June enjoyed the highest Good Life event turnout, and included a significant number of New Earswick residents in attendance alongside people from neighbouring communities.

Highlights included:

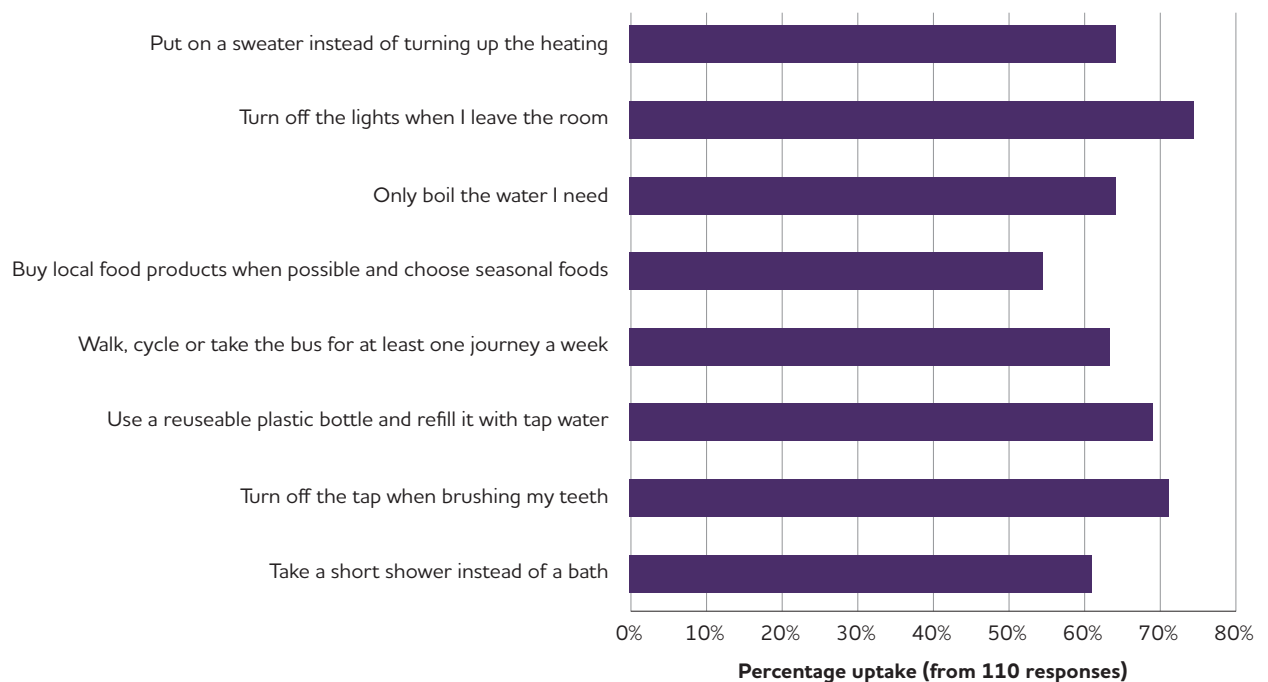
- An opening address by the Lord Mayor.
- A talk by a university professor on why the UN Conference was important for the local community.



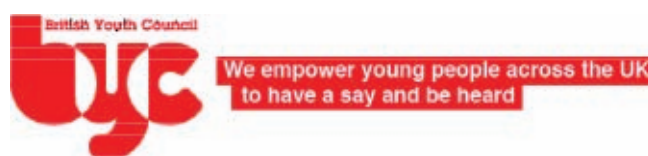
- A question and answer panel made up of the local MP, a City of York councillor, university academics and a Green Party spokesman; the questions were generated by the organising committee of students from years 7–9.
- The presentation of the Big Speech video made by the Jo-Rio committee.
- A commitment from the school to carry on the sustainability legacy of the GLI by launching an ‘Eco-Council’ to ensure the message of ‘reduce, reuse and recycle’ was not lost.
- A significant number of environment-themed stands including Solarwall (who brought along their energy bus), Sustrans, City Car Club, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, York Rotters (composting group), Edible York, Transition Groups, JRHT and the JRF Residents Liaison Officer.
- Participants being encouraged to make individual behaviour-change pledges to save energy and resources (see Figure 5); over one-hundred people signed up at the Jo-Rio event.
- Local businesses selling ethical or recycled products at the event.



Figure 5: Breakdown of individual behaviour change pledges



As a result of the Jo-Rio Earth Summit, the students were awarded a prestigious Youth on Board Award (youth-led category) by the British Youth Council. They have also since formed an ‘Eco-Council’ and are seeking Eco-School (www.keepbritaintidy.org/ecoschools/) accreditation, thereby ensuring the GL project legacy in terms of the actions and behaviour of the students and staff.



Jubilee leaf tree planting

The tree planting activity built upon the interest shown in natural environment events, which were among the most popular activities in the first six months. The GLI fostered the tree planting activity by co-ordinating a number of community members, including a local parish council member interested in the prospect of developing a new woodland area in the village.

Prior to the planting activity, Willow Bank was a field of open grassland bordering the River Foss, used by residents as a recreation and walking route – especially for exercising dogs. The planting was planned by the community group in consultation with local residents neighbouring the area and the JRHT estates team, whose role was to manage the site and ensure its appropriateness from both parties' perspectives. This involved mapping the site and identifying suitable locations for wildflowers and trees.



The planting started with introducing wildflowers along the riverbank to assist in improving the diversity of plants and insects. The local parish council facilitated purchasing a variety of moisture-loving plug plants with the provision of a small grant. A group from the organising committee and a Good Life team member then undertook the planting.

The main tree planting followed, supported by a large cross-section of local residents including families with children and older people. The planting was attended by the Lord Mayor of the city, who planted an acorn from the Royal Estate in commemoration of the jubilee. A number of local wildlife groups also participated, including the Woodland Trust.

The high turnout of people who had not attended previous Good Life events was one of the highlights of Phase 2. This increased level of local community engagement supported the hypothesis that the strongest 'hook' for encouraging participation in activities in New Earswick was around thematic areas linked to the natural environment.

Personal travel behaviour

As one element of the Phase 2 energy activities, the GLI joined forces with a City of York Council programme (Intelligent Travel, www.itravel.york.info) promoting sustainable travel options. The Intelligent Travel (IT) team ran stands with information (promoting bus routes, cycling and walking) and incentives (free cycling hi-vis vests, cycle clips etc.) near to the swimming pool and local shops. There was a high level of interest from villagers, particularly at the weekend event, which included a walkabout by the AtoBee Mascot. The IT team also attended the Christmas Party to further promote the scheme.



Community visioning exercise

In the later stages of the project, JRHT became interested in the GLI contributing to its ongoing work of improving the village – particularly the

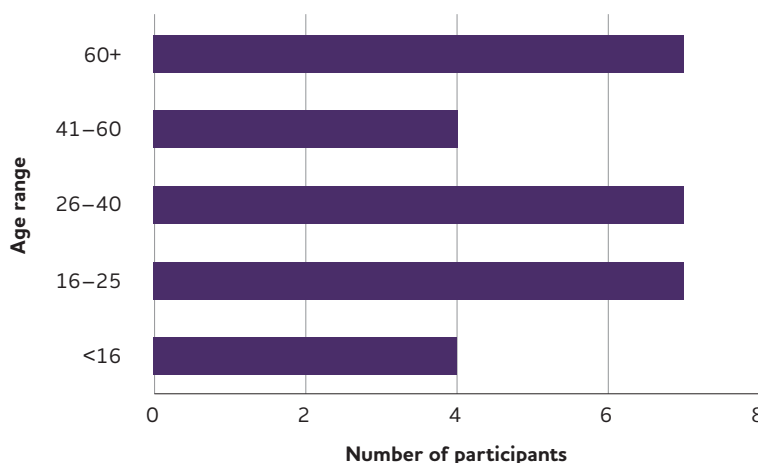
social housing. This interest was connected to two JRHT initiatives; firstly, an ongoing energy saving improvements retro-fit programme for existing properties (which linked to the Good Life emission modelling); and secondly, planned major changes to the JRHT-managed residential care home, Red Lodge, situated in the centre of the village, with possible repercussions for other infrastructure. Responding to this need from JRHT for consultation, the GLI team ran a number of participatory mapping activities to generate an improved understanding of the perceptions of and desires for the village held by residents. This also contributed to the GLI aspiration of building a shared community vision contributing to the generation of greater social cohesion.



The initial activity focussed on getting a wide cross-section of the community's views and used a rapid survey method, the Rapid Appraisal Participatory Geographic Information System or RAP-GIS (Cinderby, 2010).³ People were asked to identify an existing space or building they would improve to make it better or more sustainable for the community, and similarly a new building or space they would like that would address these challenges. The resulting map highlights the locations identified together with some representative comments. These questions were selected as they related to the GLI objective of community building, but also allowed for issues related to energy (consumption in local community buildings and options for community energy schemes), transport, shopping facilities and the use/quality of outdoor spaces to be discussed, which linked to the objectives of both the Home and Living Environment themes.

The on-street consultation was undertaken from lunchtime to late afternoon on a Friday in October, near the local primary school and shopping arcade to ensure a cross-section of participants including younger people, parents and shoppers. The age profile of participants is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Age profile of participants in the on-street mapping exercise in New Earswick



Ideas for improvement included refurbishing children's play areas and community amenities such as the Folk Hall, and redeveloping the Red Lodge area and swimming pool facility to make them more sustainable (in terms of energy use) and accessible (opening times etc.). The existing green spaces were also highlighted, maintaining the indications that referencing the natural environment was a key 'hook' for engagement in the village.

Respondents singled out the nature reserve for improvement in terms of its accessibility and availability for use by the community.

Other ideas for improvements included more shared outdoor activity areas to improve community interaction alongside fitness and health. There were also requests for improved transport infrastructure, including better bus shelters, parking near the shops to encourage local consumption, and cycle lanes.

The mapping work was undertaken in focus groups (Cinderby *et al.*, 2008) with two relevant stakeholder groups – the New Earswick Parish Council and the newly formed New Earswick Sharing Together (NEST) group. The findings re-enforced those obtained from the general community, with participants stressing the need to maintain the green spaces. Infrastructure improvements were mentioned with under-utilised buildings highlighted, including utilising the primary school as a year-round resource and improving amenities to encourage local shopping.

The findings were fed back to the community at the Christmas Party and options put up for consultation. Attendees were allowed to vote for their favourite scheme or highlight one that they would not support with a ‘red card’ (although none were played). The results highlight residents’ desire for a more sustainable village (environmentally) with better use made of existing built and green infrastructure and new opportunities for communal endeavours, including recycling and vegetable growing (again highlighting the natural environment as a key concern).

Table 2: Outcome of community vote on preferred sustainability schemes for New Earswick

Scheme	Change	Number of votes
Folk Hall	Make it more sustainable (solar panels and better double glazed windows).	7
Old pet shop	Allow micro-businesses to use the space.	5
Better transport links	Improve cycle lanes.	5
Allotments	More spaces for community vegetable-growing.	5
Better communal recycling facilities	More communal recycling bins.	5
Old library building	Turn it into a creative arts centre.	4
Nature reserve	Make it a better resource for everyone – improved accessibility and opening times.	4

These results have been fed back to JRHT, NEST and the Parish Council.

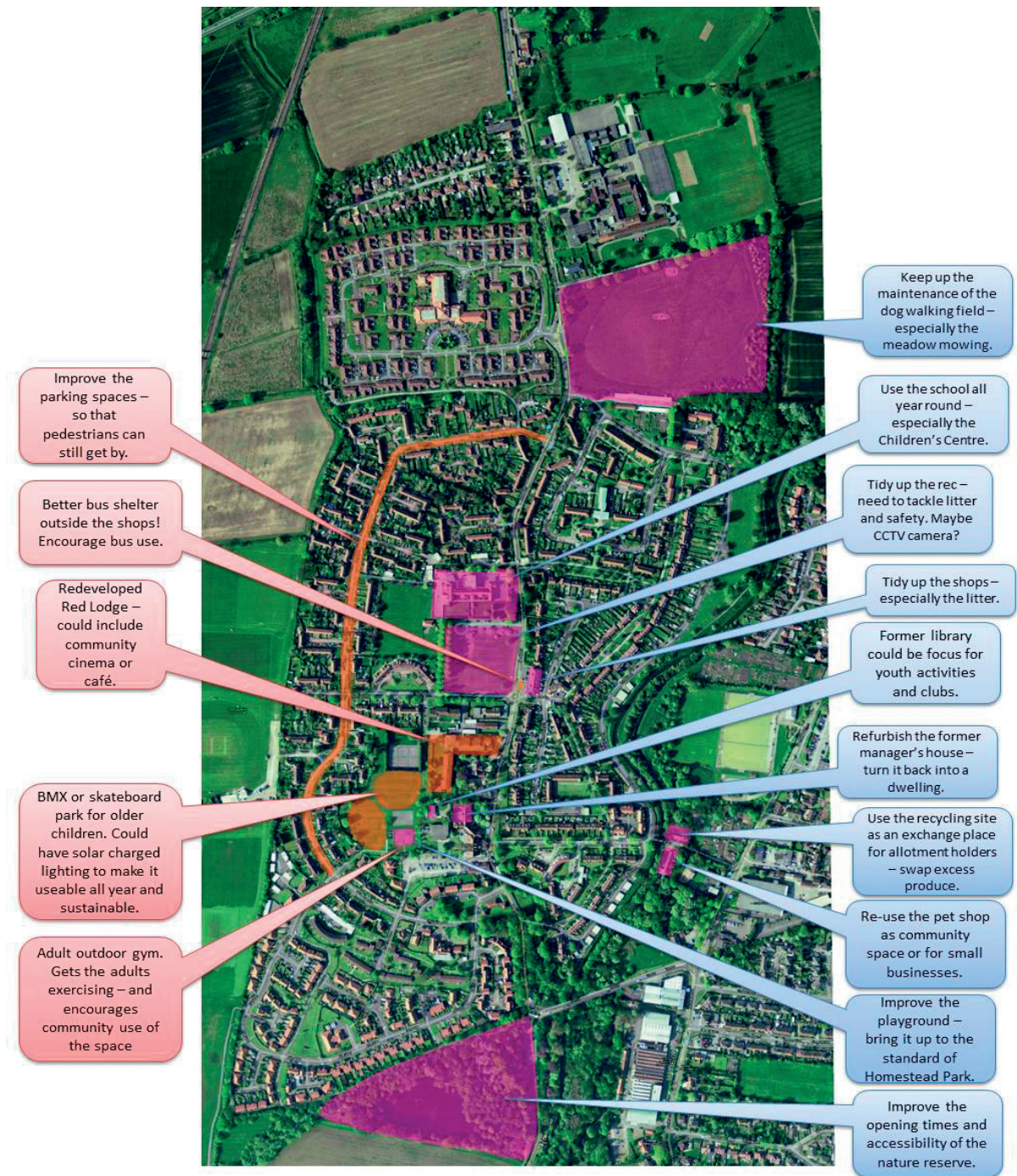
New Earswick Sharing Together (NEST)

One of the challenges of the GLI was embedding the project ethos and its goals into the community. During the latter stages of the project a new community group, NEST, formed around the ideals of the Transition movement (Hopkins, 2008). The group was supported by a neighbouring community’s sharing group and is intending to focus on the collection, processing and swapping of local crops and produce. This will include maintaining the fruit picking activities started by the GLI. The project supported the group through:

- organising and promoting the fruit picking – and securing equipment so that this activity can be maintained;
- mapping the location of fruit trees in the village as a future resource;

- undertaking a mapping visioning exercise;
- generating raffle funds at the Christmas Party.

Figure 7: Results from the on-street RAP-GIS survey; improvements in purple, new facilities in orange



Modelling evaluation of the potential for JRHT to meet its greenhouse gas targets for New Earswick

In order to support JRHT’s ongoing work with residents on emissions reductions, the GLI team undertook analysis of the potential emissions savings possible through improvements to the built infrastructure in New Earswick using a number of complementary methods to ensure robust results. This was done in partnership with JRHT, who supplied a variety of

datasets on the housing stock, energy performance and planned future upgrades. The assessment also included the development of emissions scenarios using the Resource Energy Analysis Programme (REAP) planning tool.⁴ REAP uses national and regional datasets disaggregated to local authority area based on family expenditure data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).⁵ We developed scenarios of emissions resulting from different changes to the buildings, with the additional benefits that might result from reductions in energy demand linked to residents changing their energy use behaviours. The scenarios looked at different retro-fitting options compared with a baseline of the existing house stock conditions (in 2007). The assessment assumed that no additional houses were built or demolished and that therefore population and household occupancy rates remained the same across the scenarios:

- **Direct emissions:** here refers to emissions from households' consumption of gas (for heating or cooking).
- **Indirect emissions:** here refers to emissions from electricity use (from cooking, lighting and running appliances).
- The assessment did not consider emissions associated with the production of goods and services (so called embodied emissions) used by residents in New Earswick as JRHT has no influence over these.

The scenarios indicate that carbon emissions reductions are feasible under the JRHT (July 2013) planned improvements programme. This 'planned' scenario results in approximately a 19 per cent reduction in direct emissions by 2020 compared with 2007 levels (before any improvements were undertaken). This is in line with the Trust's plan for a 20 per cent reduction in housing stock emissions by 2020. However, when indirect emissions are taken into account, the overall per capita emissions reduction achievable is much less (3 per cent). Therefore, in order to maximise potential reductions the scenarios indicate that additional measures will be needed to reduce electricity consumption.

Table 3: Carbon emissions per capita under three different scenarios (emissions in tonnes CO₂ equivalent per person)

Scenario	Emission type	Planned (per capita emissions)	Planned and behaviour change (per capita emissions)	Planned and behaviour change + smart meters
2007	Direct	1.67	1.67	1.67
	Indirect	1.68	1.68	1.68
2020	Direct	1.36	1.29	1.15
	Indirect	1.89	1.80	1.59
Change in emissions per capita	Direct	-19%	-23%	-31%
	Indirect	+12%	+7%	-6%

Note: Negative number equals reduction in emissions; positive number equals increase in emissions

An extension of the 'planned' scenario envisages a behaviour change campaign along with the installation of smart meters in JRHT homes, enabling residents to track and potentially reduce their energy use over time. Community-based campaigns can lead to emissions reductions of between 8 and 10 per cent (Department of Energy and Climate Change, 2012), as opposed to individual-based measures which typically result in a reduction of

only 3 per cent. The analysis here assumes a 10 per cent reduction could be achieved. Different approaches could be employed, such as social-marketing to target those households which may be more receptive to making changes to their lifestyle and behaviour (Haq *et al.*, 2013). Further reductions could be possible through installing smart meters (monitors that report electricity consumption to consumers and their energy provider) alongside in-house display feedback to support demand reduction.

Table 4: Carbon emissions per annum for New Earswick under six different scenarios (emissions in tonnes CO₂ equivalent per annum)

Scenario	Planned (total emissions)	Planned and behaviour change (total emissions)	Planned and behaviour change + smart meters (total emissions)
2007	9440	9440	9440
2020	9138	8687	7703
Change in total emissions	3%	-8%	-18%

For the time-period 2007–20, there could be a total emissions reduction for New Earswick of approximately 8 per cent, which under the ‘planned and behaviour change’ (with the addition of smart meters) scenario could reach 18 per cent.

From the GLL energy related theme it was evident that residents had an expectation that JRHT should be a ‘co-agent’ in efforts to reduce emissions via its role in maintaining and improving the housing stock. Residents also indicated a role for themselves and a willingness to try to cut down on their emissions, primarily through simple energy efficiency measures (such as draught proofing). The feedback to residents delivered from smart meters may also serve as an additional stimulus for individuals to cut down on their energy use. Further research is required to determine whether introducing such novel technology can deeply embed individual energy reduction behaviour change, or whether it only engenders an initial burst of enthusiasm rather than sustained outcomes. Further work is planned by JRF and JRHT at its Derwenthorpe development to explore this.

The scenarios include a number of assumptions in the datasets used to derive these findings. A fundamental assumed underlying trend (based on historic data) is one of increasing household energy consumption for heating and domestic appliances; however, changes implemented by JRHT are aimed at annulling this. More details of the scenario development, underlying assumptions and evaluation can be found in a downloadable Appendix at <http://www.york.ac.uk/sei/projects/current-projects/the-good-life/>

Conclusions

The development of the Good Life programme between Phases 1 and 2 highlights the fact that any community focussed activity should be responsive, addressing changing needs and desires or reacting to participants’ feedback. This ethos of co-production of activities (Scottish Community Development Centre, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2010) was central to the project evolution and delivery.

While the key messages and objectives did not change between phases, re-focussing on strategic partners and links to other processes (especially

working with the school) led to a significant improvement in the number of people engaging with the GLI (with participation increasing by 70 per cent if the launch event is excluded). Critically, the commitment to repeat participation also increased. Finding key partnerships and identifying particular areas of interest that resonated with a cross-section of residents, such as the tree planting activity of the Living Environment theme, were key challenges in connecting with people about broader issues of sustainable development.

Linking further actions to areas of interest that had already captured engagement enabled discussions on additional sustainable development themes. Participants in the natural environment activities were subsequently willing to undertake community visioning activities and attend personal transport planning events, while Jo-Rio summit attendees engaged with household consumption through personal behaviour pledges. This broadening of engagement indicates how community development could lead, if implemented sensitively and responsively, through incremental steps to more significant involvement and interest in pro-environmental behaviour changes alongside improvements in community networks, knowledge and social capital.

The next chapter builds on this analysis to further understand the impact of the Good Life Initiative and its potential legacy.

Linking further actions to areas of interest that had already captured engagement enabled discussions on additional sustainable development themes.

3 ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF THE GOOD LIFE ON PARTICIPANTS

In order to assess the outcomes of the GLI, monitoring and evaluation was undertaken during and after completion of the activities in 2013. This chapter describes this assessment approach and the changes resulting from the Good Life Initiative.

Monitoring and evaluation approach

The monitoring of change achieved through the GLI was challenging due to the evolutionary nature of the project. Initially, the intention had been to evaluate people's energy and consumption behaviour using 'before and after' surveys. Community interest in issues directly related to these aims proved weak, with insufficient uptake of these surveys for them to be used to assess impact. The challenge was therefore to identify alternative evaluation approaches that could be applied retrospectively in order to identify changes resulting from the project's activities across the themes of interest.

It was decided to assess the impact of the GLI via three complementary approaches. First, the coarse quantitative numbers of attendance or pledges made were assessed to look at relative successes of engagement. Second, Social Network Mapping (SNM) was used to identify changes in the social connections present in the community pre- and post-GLI. Finally, participants were asked to reflect, through 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) stories, on why they became involved in the project, what changes they think resulted from the Initiative and whether they think there is a legacy to the Good Life. This narrative approach was chosen to capture the broader outcomes achieved by individuals associated with the project.

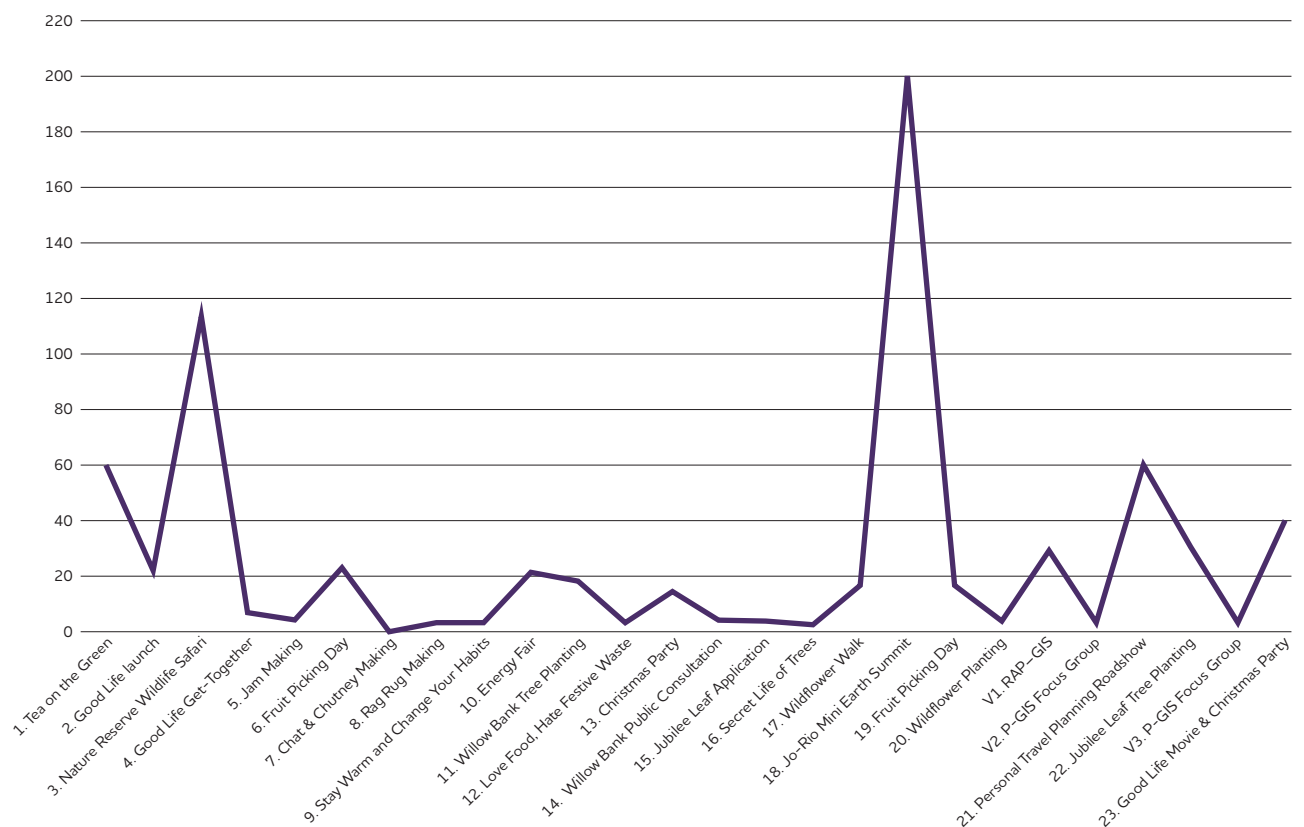
Participants in the evaluation needed only to have attended one event – this was to ensure that any shortfalls in the project and process were also evaluated alongside positive messages. For time and resource reasons we did

not attempt to survey the non-participants. The survey was sent to everyone (67 people) who had agreed to share their contact details. Data collection on networks and MSC stories was undertaken through postal surveys followed up with reminder emails and phone messages. Supporting material (including participant lists and event descriptions) was used to stimulate responses.

Post-project evaluation

Overall, there were 680 participants across the course of the 18 months of Good Life events. This suggests a substantial proportion of the New Earswick population were involved, although the total includes people from outside the village and repeat participants whose numbers grew as the project progressed. We estimate that repeat participants (who attended at least two events) numbered in excess of 150 people. Figure 8 gives only one crude metric of success and clearly does not indicate outcomes in terms of impacts on behaviour, knowledge or social connections. While we only have the names of participants for certain events, this does indicate an increasing level of continuity in engagement (that is, having come to an event, people were likely to attend subsequent ones).

Figure 8: Participation numbers across the entire Good Life programme

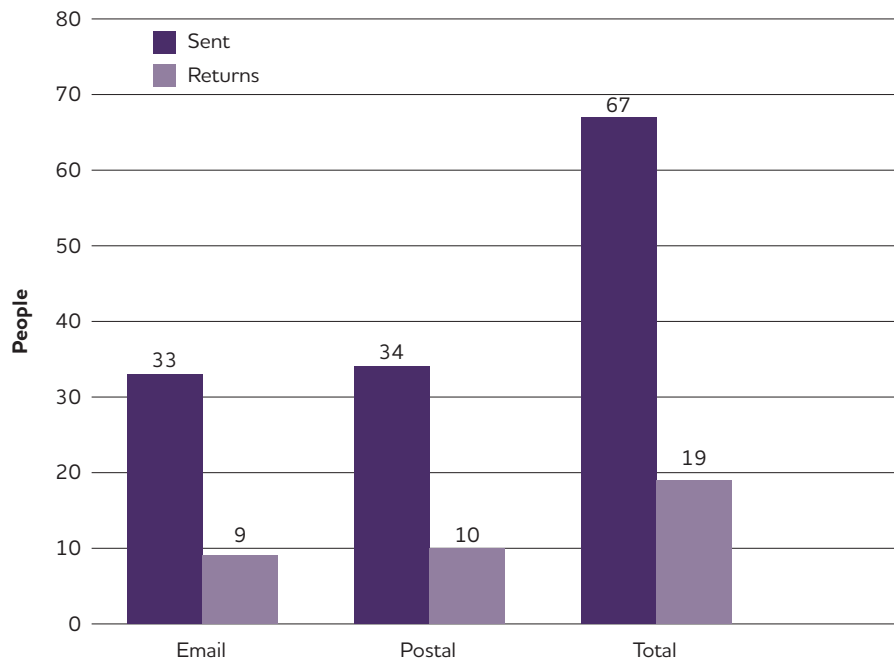


Quantitative assessment of participation during GLI

Overall, there were 19 responses from the 67 contacts for the evaluation. Some returns included only one of the two survey elements (stories or networks), resulting in the different totals for analysis. This response rate is reasonably high considering the time investment required to respond to this type of survey, and represents a 28 per cent return rate. This includes

comments from people who were not particularly supportive of the GLI (in terms of their feedback and number of events attended), but perhaps indicates that direct engagement with the community did at least capture their attention.

Figure 9: Numbers of people responding to the Good Life Initiative evaluation (Social Network Mapping and Most Significant Change)



Social Network Mapping (SNM)

Mapping people's social networks allows us to visualise, describe and quantify the impact of a project in terms of connecting people in a semi-quantitative manner. Network mapping relies on undertaking a census of the people or organisations (nodes) to identify their inter-relationships (Scott, 1988; Hanneman and Riddle, 2005). Mapping focusses primarily on the relationships between people rather than on individuals' attributes.

To identify the influence of the GLI, we collected data from participants on:

- people they were connected to socially before the project;
- people they improved their social connections with through GLI events;
- people they met and formed new bonds with through the GLI.

Changes in connectivity

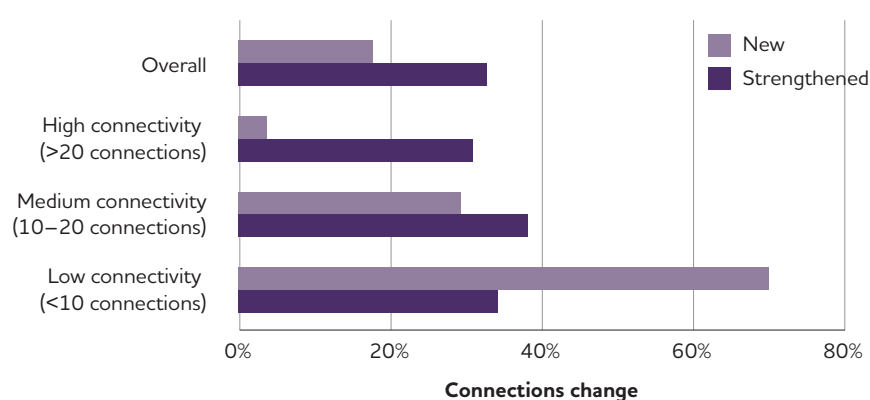
The results of this initial analysis of changes in relationships made through GLI activities can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5 and Figure 10 show the changes in connections made by people participating in the GLI as a percentage of existing connections. This indicates that overall the GLI interventions were beneficial in terms of strengthening existing connections (with an average 32 per cent increase in strengthened existing connections compared with pre-GLI) with rather fewer new connections made (15 per cent on average).

Table 5: Changes in number of social connections resulting from participating in the Good Life characterised by how connected participants were pre-project

	Number of responses	Number of pre-GLI connections	Number of strengthened connections	Number of new connections
Low connectivity (<10 connections)	6	21	7	15
Medium connectivity (10–20 connections)	6	84	32	24
High connectivity (>20 connections)	4	137	43	4
Overall	16	242	82	43

Figure 10: Percentage changes in social connections resulting from participating in the Good Life characterised by how connected participants were pre-project



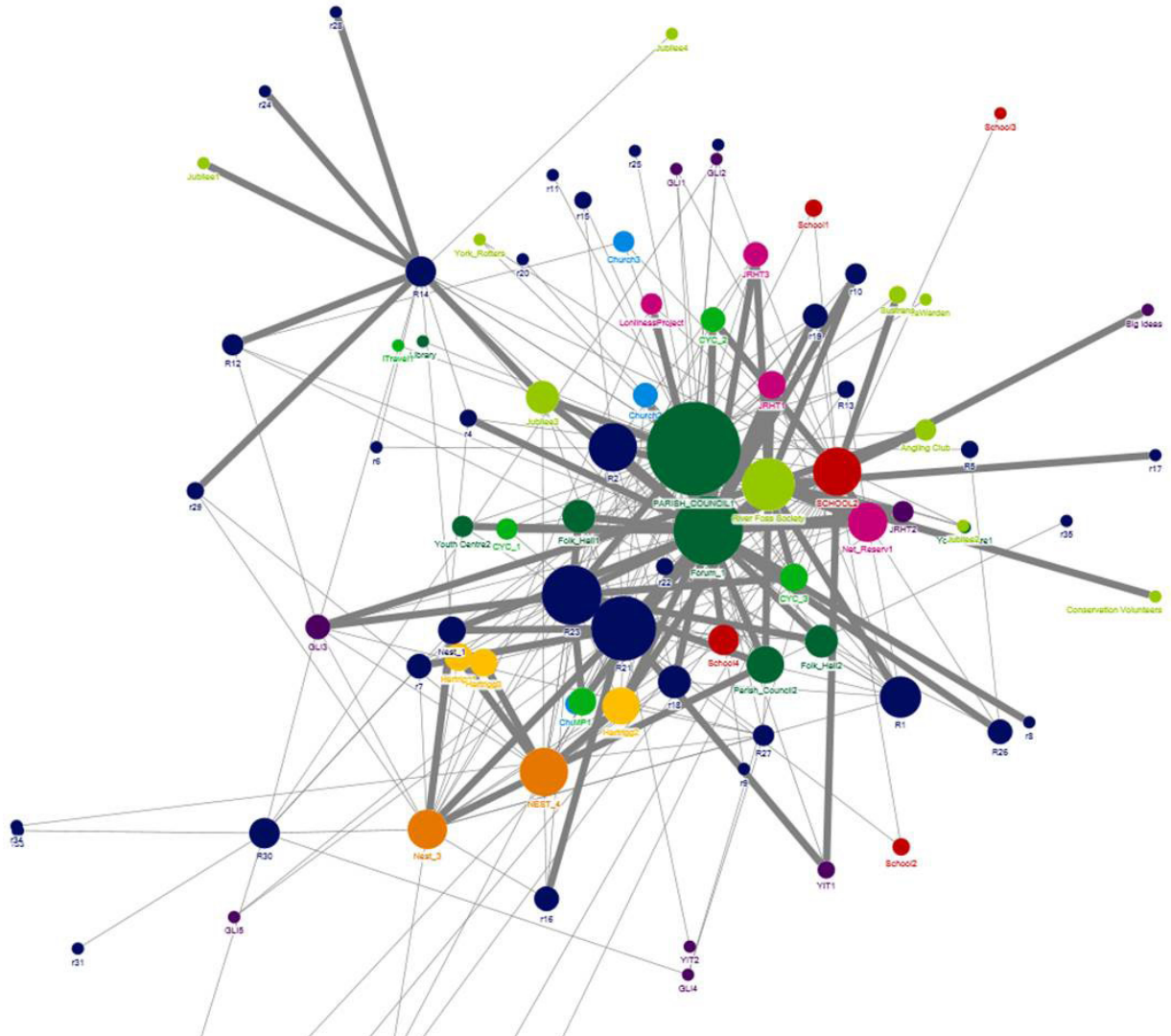
However, when assessed from the starting point of how connected people were within the community before the introduction of the GLI as a stimulus, this pattern changes. In assessing the results it must be stressed that only connections between people participating in the project activities are captured – other relationships that participants had were not investigated. For people who were already well connected within the community, the change was primarily to strengthen existing relationships rather than develop new ones. For people with a low number of existing connections this pattern is reversed, with a large increase in their number of connections (47 per cent increase), indicating that these people made new links in the community through the GLI. The community links made as a whole suggest that participants were better connected, and therefore potentially available to support activities and other residents in the local neighbourhood, following their involvement.

We are able to represent visually the changes in interactions between participants resulting from the activities undertaken by the GLI team.

Figure 11 shows a few key people being the lynchpins of the community pre-GLI. These were the people involved in most activities and who represented the community to outside agencies. Most prominent are members of the Parish Council and representatives of local amenities such as the nature reserve and school. A number of local residents also had good social connections (within the community) pre-GLI, illustrated by their relative dot size. However, the network also shows a high number of people with low connections, including outlier residents who knew only limited numbers of people – or a single person – in the neighbourhood (in terms of the people who participated in the project).

were relatively isolated in terms of connectedness to other project members prior to the GLI.

Figure 13: The post-GLI social network highlighting pre-project connections strengthened through participation



Finally, Figure 14 highlights the new connections formed among participants by the project, and clearly illustrates that the GLI was successful in creating new community linkages, widening people's networks and, by association, the pool of skills and knowledge upon which they can draw. The building of new relationships between formerly isolated people is also illustrated when reference is made to the pre-project network.

The building of social connections was one of the objectives of GL activities related to the Wellbeing theme. This aspect was assessed in detail as it is increasingly being recognised as a key component of individual wellbeing (The New Economics Foundation, 2011; Summers *et al.*, 2012) and also of overall community resilience (Scottish Community Development Centre, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2010; Goodson *et al.*, 2012), as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Figure 14: Visualisation highlighting the new connections formed by the GLI between participants; individuals weighted by how connected they are within the network



Most Significant Change (MSC) stories

This approach relies on participants telling stories about any changes that they have experienced through activities. The stories allow people to make sense of changes they have experienced in their own terms and language. The narratives focus on particular interventions, but allow them to be put in the context of the array of factors influencing outcomes (McClintock, 2004).

MSC has been found to be particularly suitable for projects that are reasonably complex, focussed on social change and participatory in ethos, but which are struggling with conventional monitoring systems (Davies and Dart, 2005). The approach also offers the opportunity to engage more deeply with the impact that a project has had on participants.

This approach was used to obtain views from participants in the general activities, with a further specific focus on the high school where detailed work had been carried out.

The narratives were evaluated against the benefits to individual participants, and the GLI impact against the various community strengths and weaknesses that the project was attempting to influence.

Sixteen stories were returned from the GL adult participants, and twelve completed questionnaires returned from the pupils. Four students wrote more extensive replies than they had been asked for and a fifth wrote a short essay about her experience, which was featured in the school's newsletter.

Assessment of changes from participants of the Good Life Initiative

The Good Life MSC evaluation included the following questions:

- How did you first become involved with Good Life and what is your current involvement?
- From your point of view, describe a story that epitomises the most significant change that has resulted from your Good Life activities?
- Why is this change the most significant one for you?
- What does the Good Life Initiative mean to you, and do you recognise the 'brand'?

Assessment of changes from children involved in the Jo-Rio Mini Earth Summit at The Joseph Rowntree School

Alongside the assessment of change among the adults involved in the Good Life Initiative, a complementary activity looking at the impacts perceived by the schoolchildren involved in organising the Mini Earth Summit was also undertaken. The Good Life asked the group for feedback on their experience through four questions:

- Why did you get involved in the Jo-Rio Mini Earth Summit?
- What did you think was great about it?
- What did you want to achieve by taking part?
- What message would you like to send to the world?

Emerging themes from GLI change stories

Question 1: How did you first become involved with Good Life?

The spread of initial engagements with the Good Life Initiative, as shown in Figure 15, demonstrates that no single method was outstandingly successful in capturing people's attention. The New Earswick Newsletter (Bulletin) proved to be the most consistent. The Good Life made sure that the publication contained a narrative about the project in every issue, with reports and photographs, and listings promoting forthcoming events. We also asked residents to do their own 'reviews'. A number of people mentioned to us that they had read about particular events 'in the Bulletin':

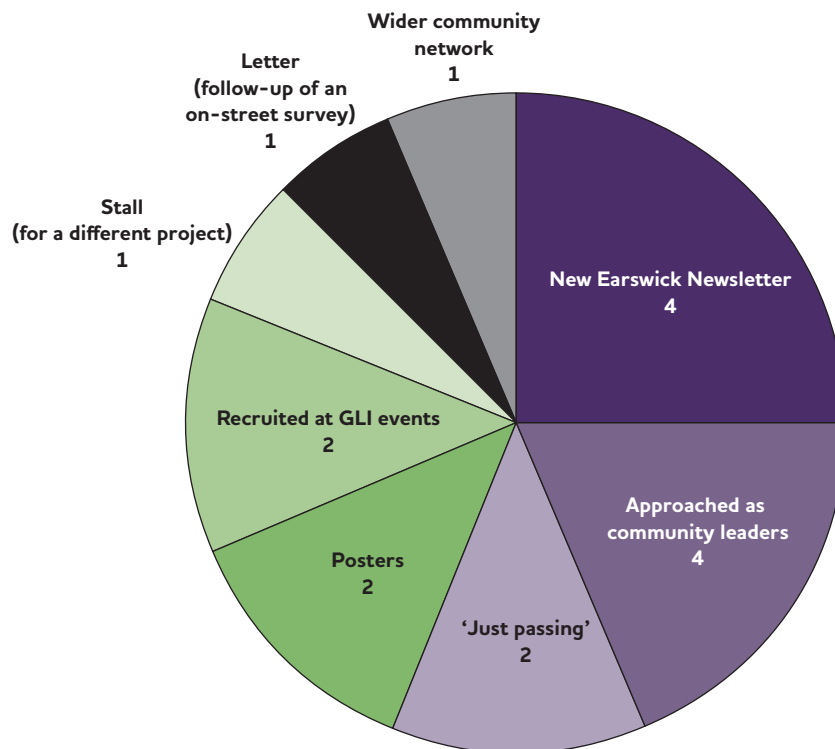
"I saw plenty of information but didn't get involved until the tree planting was advertised in the New Earswick Newsletter."

Posters and flyers for every Good Life event had a limited effect:

"It wasn't for some altruistic, goody-goody reason. I was just bored and saw a notice in the Folk Hall and thought, 'That could

be interesting' ... I read the notice further and decided to get involved."

Figure 15: Initial recruitment approaches for GL participants



Two people happened upon the events for other, random reasons and continued to attend subsequent Good Life events. This suggests that once people attended an event they found it useful and enjoyable (and reiterates that a key issue was getting people 'through the door' in the first place).

A further three people, as key community representatives (on the Parish Council and Residents' Forum), were approached by the Good Life team and felt a responsibility to participate on behalf of the village (supporting the often-repeated assertion that the 'same people' in New Earswick are involved in everything):

"As a member of the Parish Council I felt I should be involved in anything to bring the village together."

It is revealing that, although people entered into the project through different routes and for different reasons, once they did engage, most turned out to three or more events and some became our 'regulars'.

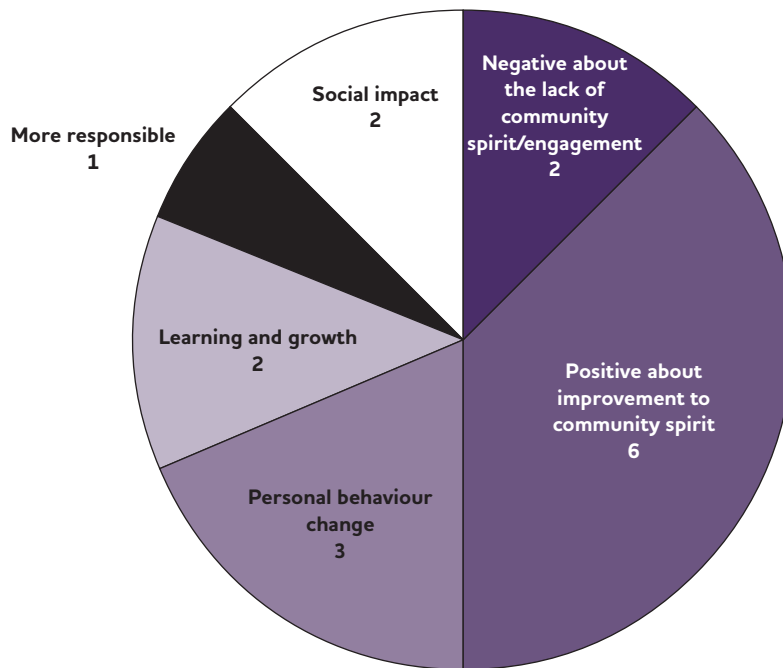
Question 2: Describe a story that epitomises the most significant change that has resulted from your Good Life activities

The majority of the responses focussed on the village and its sense of community (or otherwise), but some also reflected individual outcomes. Not all of the stories described a change.

Several of the responses described, to varying degrees, a negative and frustrated view of their own community; they wanted it to change and may even have joined the GLI in an attempt to help facilitate that change. They

did not blame the Good Life for the lack of perceived change; it was seen as a reflection of the inertia in the village and the social demographic.

Figure 16: Participant-identified most significant change for their community resulting from the GLI



“The most significant thing for me has been the apathy of New Earswick residents. Even a free party didn’t get people out and involved ...”

However, many more were positive about the change in the village as a result of the GLI and saw the coming together of residents at the events as the start of a tentative revival of the sense of community in New Earswick:

“I noticed that, in spite of the small numbers, the community spirit was coming through. Perhaps one year is not enough to stir spirits?”

“I think the tree planting has to stand out as the most enjoyable and outstanding event of community achievement ... to see the amount of people who turned up and worked tirelessly together was just as amazing as was the finished result.”

For three others, the most significant change was that they, as individuals, addressed and changed their own behaviour. Behavioural change was one of the original Good Life aims, and the particular focus of the first six months of activities:

“For me personally, it’s recycling – I’m so much more aware of this now. I just used to take it for granted before. At Christmas, especially, I got really worked up about how much packaging

everything produced. And food waste, too. I already compost food waste, but I try to do much more now to use it up ... and I don't buy as much now."

Two other respondents cited the social aspect as the most significant for them, though neither felt they got the maximum out of the project because of different pressures on their personal time:

"Feeling more at ease when meeting New Earswick people. I arrived here from London three years ago ... I didn't get sufficiently into the programme to learn and remember names of people newly met. I do wish I had."

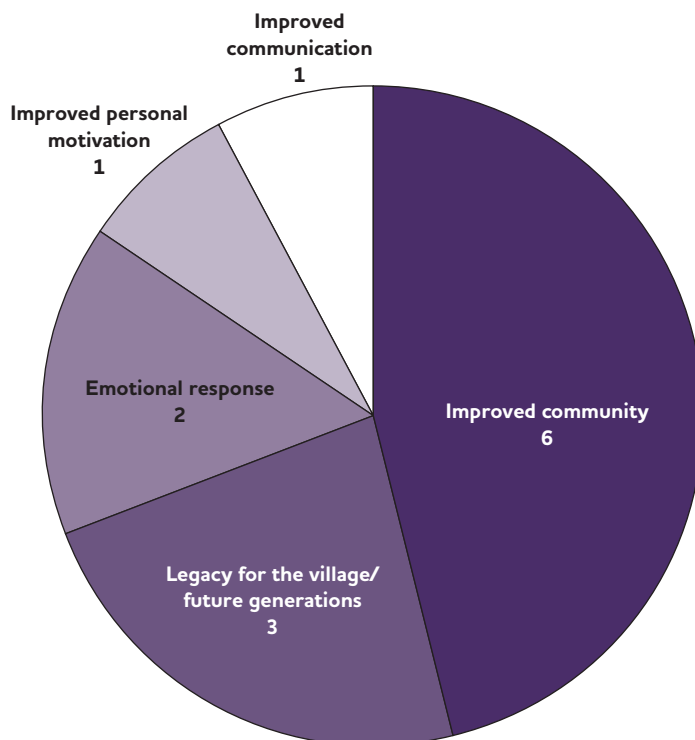
Two others pointed to the opportunities for learning and personal growth that the project had offered as being the most significant:

"For me, the most significant change was just how successfully messages can be adopted by young people and how quickly their energy can be harnessed ..."

Question 3: Why is this change the most significant one for you?

This question offered the opportunity to expand on the answers given in Question 2, and in total there were 13 responses. For some, it gave the opportunity to reflect on their enjoyment of the events, their personal feelings, creating a legacy for the village (tree planting), and the sense of having tried to address the community spirit issue.

Figure 17: Participant-identified most significant personal change resulting from the GLI



The sense of wanting to bolster and improve the sense of community was a prevailing theme. While no one used the term 'resilience', our evidence indicates that the social capital of a community is key. People in New Earswick would like to see this strengthened, with a recognition that working co-operatively for a collective future is necessary at a local level in order to tackle global problems:

“The welfare of a community breathes and survives on the attitudes of its residents. What people have learned over the past year must be significant and influential.”

“I’m recognising the impact of my actions on others and realise that I should behave in a correct, community-spirited way. Thank you for teaching me that, Good Life Project!”

Connected with community spirit is the satisfaction of having been involved in an environmental legacy for the village:

“The tree planting is a legacy, something that you can tell friends and family, and your children and grandchildren can tell people and their families, ‘We had a small part in that’.”

“My son enjoyed showing visiting grandparents the trees he helped to plant.”

Others made reference to a more emotional response and overall sense of concern:

“I just want to be aware of the planet for the kids’ sake. All the stuff that goes on around the world, it’s frightening ... Something must be happening with the climate and we’ve all got to do our bit.”

From a teacher’s point of view, the Good Life Initiative demonstrated the extra-curricular learning opportunities in the wider world and, especially, the value of communication:

“Schools can become very obsessed by exam success and it takes projects like this to show just how important communication is in today’s world. There should be an exam certificate for that!”

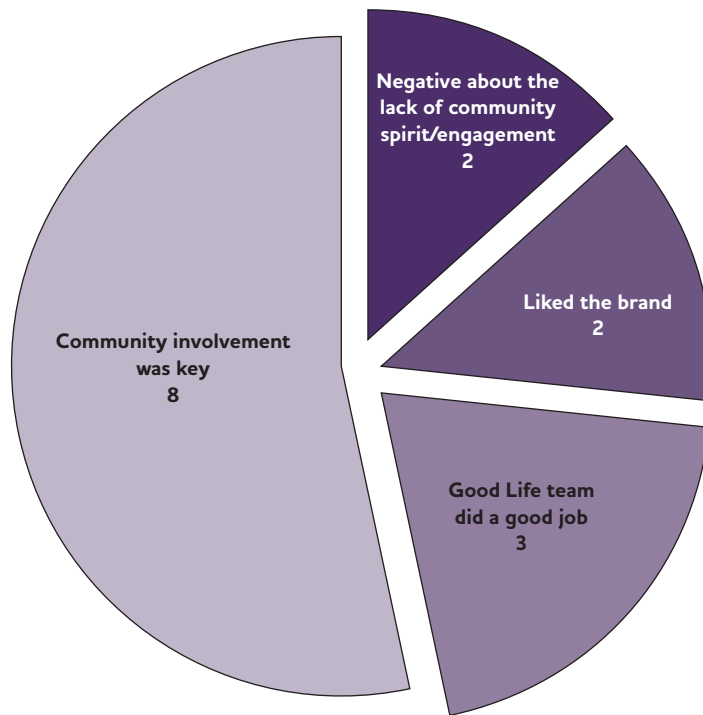
Question 4: What does the Good Life Initiative mean to you, and do you recognise the ‘brand’?

Not all respondents addressed the question about the Good Life ‘brand’, and those that did held conflicting opinions about the necessity of such marketing. Several respondents left this question blank. Two people reiterated their statements from Question 3.

On branding, responses varied. Many said they recognised it, though not everyone approved of the concept. However, even those who rejected it had got something out of the project:

"I had mixed feelings about the brand. Good co-operative sustainable community is what I took it to be. 'Good Life' could be to have fun, a car, long-haul holiday – no one else matters and to hell with the environment."

Figure 18: Participant assessment of the 'Good Life' brand



Some were more enthusiastic, and one respondent – a teacher – wanted even more branding:

"I think the name is excellent ... the badges [with the Good Life logo] are still on the go with the young people at the school."

A number of respondents complimented the work of the Good Life team and the ethos of the project:

"It's shown me that generally people can be very selfish but there are relatively easy ways to become members of the community and behave in a community-minded way. And those ways can be fun, too."

"I did think the Good Life was a brilliant project. I was so disappointed that there weren't more younger people there or people who aren't working – but I think that's today's society, not the project. People can't be bothered. I don't think the Good Life team could have done any more ..."

Overall, it was the community aspect that most respondents found the most meaningful:

“The Good Life Initiative is brilliant. I am very interested in bringing the community together, providing the information and means to create co-operative communities and to create and maintain a sustainable environment.”

Good Life adult participants

A clear theme emerges from these stories and repeats throughout: recent community involvement in New Earswick has traditionally been very poor, and there were hopes that the GLI would improve this. Most of the stories suggest that the project succeeded in stimulating an improvement in community spirit, albeit in a small way. It also informed people’s attitudes and in some cases positively impacted on personal behaviour. This indicates that the GL approach was capable of meeting the objectives it set itself, particularly in raising public awareness of low-carbon lifestyles and assisting the community in fostering cohesion through joint action.

Jo-Rio Earth Summit participants’ change assessment

Motivation

Most of the students stated that they got involved with the Jo-Rio Summit because they wanted to ‘make a difference’. Some were more specific – ‘I want to help other people’, ‘I want to make my future a better place’ – but all shared the same concern for the sustainability of the planet and wanted to exert some sort of control over their generation’s destiny. The message they wanted to send out to the world, encapsulated in their speeches, is a call to stop waste, protect animals and the natural environment, raise awareness of climate change, and stamp out hunger, poverty, injustice and war.

Case study story: my experience working on the Jo-Rio Earth Summit committee

I have thoroughly enjoyed helping to organise the Earth Summit! I’ve loved developing skills like communication, letter writing, research, press-release writing and teamwork, I’ve loved working with a group of amazing students and staff and helpers, I’ve loved learning about what we are doing, and then making that difference; the feeling I’ve made such a big change globally as I have locally is such a great one, and knowing how it can be so easily achieved is great too! I’ve utterly loved taking part in the speech and all the global link-ups!

I think that we all got on really well as a team – yes, there were points when Logistics were taking up too many computers, we needed the library and our 45-minute time slot was being eaten up at an astonishing rate. Yes, there were times when technology got the better of us, the date was closing in and, quite frankly, we all wanted to tear each other’s hair out. But there were also times when all I could feel in that small, warm classroom beside my ham sandwich and smoothie, was a feeling of pure passion, dedication and teamwork. There have been times when I saw small things coming together: a press release being sent out, a global movement on our side, a stall confirming attendance, and felt an over-whelming swell of pride for being part of such a scheme. I’ve seen sheer hard work, and the perks of that. There have been times where I’ve annoyed everyone by jumping up and down with excitement, there have been times where I’ve had to be disappointed, an invited guest turning it down or not replying, and there have been times where I’ve come out of the ICT room, running slightly, so as not to miss

registration, when I'm filled up with a feeling of excitement and joy. Joy that we're doing something and I'm part of it.

The summit itself was the (green, naturally) icing on the cake. Having a finished product, feeling important walking around with a clipboard (then rushing around like a frenzied Apprentice candidate when I lost it), feeling proud wearing the Jo-Rio logo, having complete strangers come up to me and tell me how much they'd enjoyed it. Making a difference. Showing people that the majority of young people are good.

I will miss staying up late on my laptop, contacting people all night. I will miss having my entire week revolve around Wednesday lunchtime. I will miss wearing the Good Life badge. But what I will miss most of all are the meetings. And the people. I'll miss the people like mad. Even though the Eco-Council is going ahead and I, for one, am brimming with ideas, I will miss finding out, little by little, week by week, how the summit's going. I will miss Kate, Steve, Howard and Ned. But this has been an unforgettable experience and that feeling of pride, joy, hope and teamwork will stay with me forever. I will look at the picture of the Jo-Rios and will smile.

– Molly Horner, 2012

Achievements

Four main outcomes from the Jo-Rio activity emerged through the children's narratives:

- Students felt empowered because they had been part of something that had the power to influence many people and their messages had been heard by world leaders:

“It's great because it's part of something massive ...”; “I enjoyed interviewing politicians because it was interesting and a great opportunity ...”; “Jo-Rio has meant I can have an impact on the world ...”

- Students learned new skills because they were all part of the organising team and were treated as equals by the adults. They were given important roles and responsibilities and were taught 'real life' skills such as writing press releases and project managing. They found this stimulating, exciting and rewarding:

“I loved working on the Logistics team – it was very fun and I had some imaginative ideas, some of which wouldn't work but sounded great and some of which were practical and worked on the day ...”; “It showed me skills that you can't really acquire in many places, such as responsibility, teamwork, co-ordination and working under deadlines ...”

- Students noticed personal improvements, particularly in terms of confidence and communication:

“I found being in the group helped my English and punctuation, and definitely my confidence ...”; “I loved the way Jo-Rio has been really connected; I didn’t feel like a lone wolf ...”

- The students acquired a new sense of community through working together, often with students from other year groups, or with students, teachers and other adults they hadn’t previously known:

“Most of the time, in lessons, you are working with people that have no passion or drive for the project ... since Jo-Rios are a team of passionate and co-ordinated people I felt that everything worked.”

Jo-Rio participants

The school’s participation ensured a number of direct and indirect benefits, as highlighted through some of the stories. Directly, the level of environmental understanding was improved via teaching and assemblies for year 9 pupils, including a full day of environment-related events for the whole year group in preparation for the Mini Earth Summit. The school already enjoyed a high-quality infrastructure as a result of attempts to make it a sustainable facility (biomass boiler, water recycling etc.); however, one benefit of Good Life involvement was a promotion of pro-environmental behaviour among the pupils and staff to complement this. The improvement is demonstrated via better promotion of sustainability on the school website (<http://www.josephrowntreeschool.co.uk>) and their engagement in the Eco-Schools programme. The direct benefits for the organising committee relate to improved confidence and enhanced skills. The connections made between the project team, the Jo-Rio committee and global leaders on environment highlighted to the participants that, even in a school in Yorkshire, they were affected by – but could also get involved in – debates on sustainability. The other direct outcome relates to the greater sense of community highlighted in the Jo-Rio stories.

The Jo-Rio event also led to indirect benefits. The Jo-Rio committee passed on their improved environmental information to family and relatives, as evidenced by feedback given at the Mini Earth Summit by parents. It is hoped that this improved knowledge will result in legacy pro-environmental behaviour among the whole year group, as well as the wider community being influenced by the sustainability messages taken home by their children.

This school-based approach proved to be one of the highlights of the GLI and indicates pathways for successful community engagement in the future.

Conclusions

The Good Life Initiative set out with five original objectives:

- to achieve a measurable reduction in household carbon emissions;
- to raise public awareness of low-carbon lifestyles;
- to foster community cohesion through joint actions;
- to support connections between community action and JRHT work on sustainability;
- to enhance local skills for self-sufficiency and build local resilience.

In relation to the first objective, we are unable to demonstrate any measurable change in household emissions resulting from the project. This lack of evidence relates to our failure to capture 'before and after' surveys of households' energy and consumption behaviour. This deficit relates to the relative lack of interest in these issues, and particularly to the reluctance of participants in Phase 1 to complete and return detailed personal surveys. The only evidence of impact in these areas comes in the form of the pledges undertaken at the Jo-Rio Earth Summit and Christmas Party. These show that participants were willing to commit to reducing household consumption through behaviour changes. We have been largely unsuccessful in attempts to assess whether these pledges were being adhered to (via an email survey), except in a small number of cases (five) where respondents indicated they had made energy saving lifestyle changes.

The project evaluation provides evidence of success in raising awareness about low-carbon lifestyles. Events with energy related activities were attended by approximately 357 people (including the launch event, Jo-Rio Mini Earth Summit, energy fair and personal travel planning roadshow). The MSC stories support this raised awareness with reference to improved home energy saving habits and increased recycling. The Jo-Rio evaluation and outcomes indicate increased knowledge on sustainability issues, including low-carbon lifestyles among the committee, pupils and school in general. This outcome was a real highlight in terms of the legacy of influencing behaviour into the future.

The project had a number of successes in creating improved connections within the community, and between the JRHT and residents. The participatory mapping provided a useful tool for communicating community preferences on sustainable development directly relevant to the needs of the JRHT. The tree planting activity allowed for a shared action between residents and JRHT staff to improve the environmental sustainability of the village. This activity enjoyed high levels of support and generated significant goodwill that could be built upon to develop other initiatives (perhaps related to some of the ideas highlighted on the participatory maps).

The evaluation suggests that perhaps the most successful outcomes of the GLI relate to improvements in people's social networks, which could support wider community cohesion and resilience. Our evaluation indicates small but hopefully significant improvements in the number of people integrated with others in the community around the GLI theme of sustainability. This improvement appears significant in widening participation beyond those who typically feel obliged to represent the community. Furthermore, these new representatives have enhanced skills linked to the 'making the most of what you've got' ethos of the project, which includes a focus on using the village's natural resources, considering waste and improving recycling, and a knowledge of grant and funding processes (stemming from the tree and wildflower planting). This broadening of participation and the skills-base is best indicated by the development of NEST, which is taking on and expanding some of the food (growing, harvesting and sharing) and nature activities initiated by the GL team.

By starting to broaden participation beyond the 'usual-suspects' to a wider range of enabled and empowered people (with new skills) who are better connected (to each other but also to the JRHT and other relevant local environment and sustainability organisations), the GLI appears to have successfully enhanced the resilience of the village community by increasing their capacity to respond and adapt to future challenges.

4 THEORIES OF BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The Good Life Initiative was framed within the broad theoretical concept of enhancing community resilience. This chapter highlights how the project activities were informed by this concept and what the outcomes have to say in terms of potential approaches to strengthening it.

Definitions

What do we mean by 'community' in the context of community resilience?

Environmental and risk events associated with climate change, such as flooding and heatwaves, occur with a spatial dimension: they are located in a particular place and may be exacerbated by the built or natural context in which they occur (Lindley *et al.*, 2011). Equally, the potential for people to make changes to address the consequences of climate change, for example through energy efficiency measures, is influenced by the quality of the buildings they inhabit. Services and service provision (retail, health care and education), while increasingly flexible, are still influenced by locational factors. These demographic and infrastructure components have a spatial reality.

In our project context, 'community' has therefore been defined as 'the residents of a particular geographic location', but also includes the social networks that may influence their knowledge and ability to adapt to changes related to global warming. This, then, encompasses both a territorial and relational dimension to community, both of which are pertinent to resilience theory.

Other calls for re-framing definitions of 'community' typically stress the increasingly virtual and physically dispersed nature of social networks and groups. However, within the context of the type of community resilience the GLI aimed to support, this virtual world could be included in the range

of skills and knowledge accessible to residents living in a particular place. This is compatible with recent recommendations for community definitions (Jones *et al.*, 2010), recognising that social networks are increasingly important to people living in particular locations and can widen community support.

What do we mean by community resilience?

The concept of resilience originated in ecology but has now broadened to include human socio-economic institutions and relationships (Adger, 2000). No single agreed definition of community resilience exists, with different academic disciplines and institutional lenses resulting in a variety of interrelated – often complementary – framings of the concept (Plodinec, 2009).

According to a recent literature review (Magis, 2007), resilience has been generally defined as the ‘capability of individuals or systems (such as families, groups, and communities) to cope successfully in the face of significant adversity and risk’ (Lyons *et al.*, 1998). The UK Government’s definition broadens from this risk characterisation into ‘the capacity of an individual, community or system to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable level of function, structure, and identity’ (Cabinet Office, 2011). More positive concepts of resilience include ‘the existence, development and engagement of community resources to thrive in a dynamic environment characterised by change, uncertainty, unpredictability and surprise’ (Magis, 2007), or ‘[taking] intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of ... citizens and institutions to respond to, and influence, the course of social and economic change’ (Centre for Community Enterprise, 2000).

Resilience has also been seen as a key part of other kinds of community activity, for example the Transition Towns (TT) movement and the Greening Campaign (Cabinet Office, 2011). This is reflected in the Transition literature, where ‘making a community more resilient, if viewed as the opportunity for an economic and social renaissance, for a new culture of enterprise and re-skilling, should lead to a healthier and happier community while reducing its vulnerability to risk and uncertainty’ (Hopkins [co-founder of the TT movement], 2008).

Communities are subject to constant adjustments from internal (demographic, skills) and external (environmental, economic, technological, governmental) drivers of change. A community’s resilience will determine its ability to successfully mobilise and respond to these drivers, and is therefore integrally related to community and social sustainability. These latter, more positive and holistic definitions have greater resonance with the current policy drive for increased localism through the so-called ‘Big Society’ agenda (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011a) than with purely risk- and emergency response-focussed framings (Cabinet Office, 2011).

This framing around resilience moves the theoretical underpinning of the interventions undertaken by the GLI forward from those previously tried in community development programmes of the 1970s and 90s (Craig *et al.*, 2008). In terms of the GLI and the activities the project team undertook, we internally defined the type of resilience we were hoping to promote as ‘the ability of the community (individuals, families and social groups) to cope, respond and adapt to future environmental, economic and social stresses’ (Adger, 2003; Tompkins *et al.*, 2010).

Social networks are increasingly important to people living in particular locations and can widen community support.

Interventions to build resilience

Having placed the GLI in the context of resilience, the next step is to identify pathways for interventions in neighbourhoods to build capacity for flexibility in relation to socio-economic and environmental change. One conceptual model for identifying such pathways is in relation to the stock of assets or resources upon which a community can draw routinely, but also in times of particular crisis.

The capitals approach

The capacity of a neighbourhood for resilience can be assessed and derived from the range of assets upon which the community living in that location can draw for adaptive processes. The concept – originating from rural development thinking in the 1990s (Scoones, 2009) – of what resources are needed to ensure livelihoods are sustainable characterises assets in terms of different capitals. The capitals form part of a framework that helps inform understanding of how, given a particular context (environment, policy setting, politics, history and socio-economic conditions), a combination of resources ('capitals') results in the ability of people to follow different livelihood strategies, and what the outcomes are (in terms of sustainability). This framework includes the institutional processes which mediate individuals' and communities' abilities to undertake different strategies (Scoones, 1998).

The capitals identified (Poortinga, 2012; Forum for the Future, 2011; Magis, 2007) which have relevance to identifying options to improve community resilience and sustainability in the face of climate change impacts are:

- human capital (e.g. skills and education);
- social capital (e.g. social networks);
- built (or manufactured) capital (e.g. access to amenities);
- natural capital (e.g. access to green space);
- economic capital (e.g. income, savings or government grants).

Healthy neighbourhoods have a balance of all of these assets, whereas more deprived communities are often lacking in at least one dimension (and often more), impacting individuals' health and community wellbeing (The New Economics Foundation, 2011) and overall resilience (Poortinga, 2012).

The social connections that exist within communities have been found to be particularly relevant in mitigating some of the negative impacts of shortfalls in other capitals (Mitchell *et al.*, 2009; Jones *et al.*, 2010). One approach to addressing this important social dimension has been to complement the five capitals with five constituents of a community, namely social, physical/financial, human, political and cultural (Magis, 2007):

- social infrastructure (such as associations, clubs and churches to provide community space in which to gather, learn and collaborate);
- physical infrastructures (e.g. roads, utilities, schools, as well as the financial resources for community purposes);
- human infrastructure (collective knowledge, skills and abilities to anticipate and respond to change);
- political infrastructure (e.g. community members involved in problem resolution and accomplishment of community objectives);
- cultural infrastructure (festivals, heritage events, preservation and invention of town traditions).

The capacity of a neighbourhood for resilience can be assessed and derived from the range of assets upon which the community living in that location can draw for adaptive processes.

An alternative framing has seen social capital sub-divided to recognise the diversity of elements that are relevant to assessing the 'health' of human relationships within a community or neighbourhood. Statistical analysis has identified that these aspects are only weakly related and consequently should be considered independently (Wilding, 2011; Poortinga, 2012):

- Bonding capital: the close ties between people in similar situations, such as family and close friends. It builds trust, reciprocity, and a shared sense of belonging and identity.
- Bridging capital: the looser ties to a wider mixture of other (different) people, such as loose friendships or colleagues (or people we meet virtually). It builds broader, more flexible identities and enables innovations to be shared across networks.
- Linking capital: the ability of groups to access networks of power and resources beyond their immediate community, ensuring that people with different levels of power and status meet and learn from one another.

Theoretical approaches to building community resilience

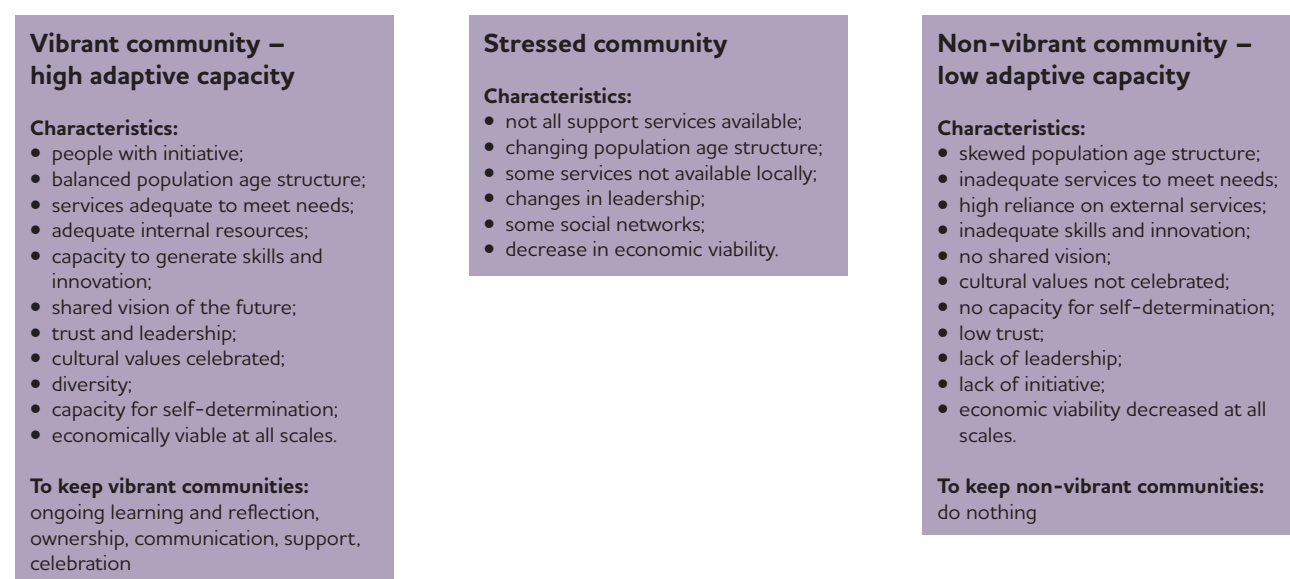
Resiliency is like a muscle ... that must be developed in advance and consistently exercised [to] be both strong enough to withstand severe challenges and flexible enough to handle a wide range of unpredictable forces.

– <http://www.globalresiliency.net>

Resilience building needs to begin by making 'best use of the many assets for well-being and social and economic development that already exist in communities' (Bartley, 2006) – echoing the GL ethos of 'making the most of what you've got'.

Different states of community resilience have been described and visualised (see Figures 19 and 20). These visualisations show how changes to community capital (linked to the five constituents of community) can lead to transitions between different states of functioning which have consequent implications for future resilience.

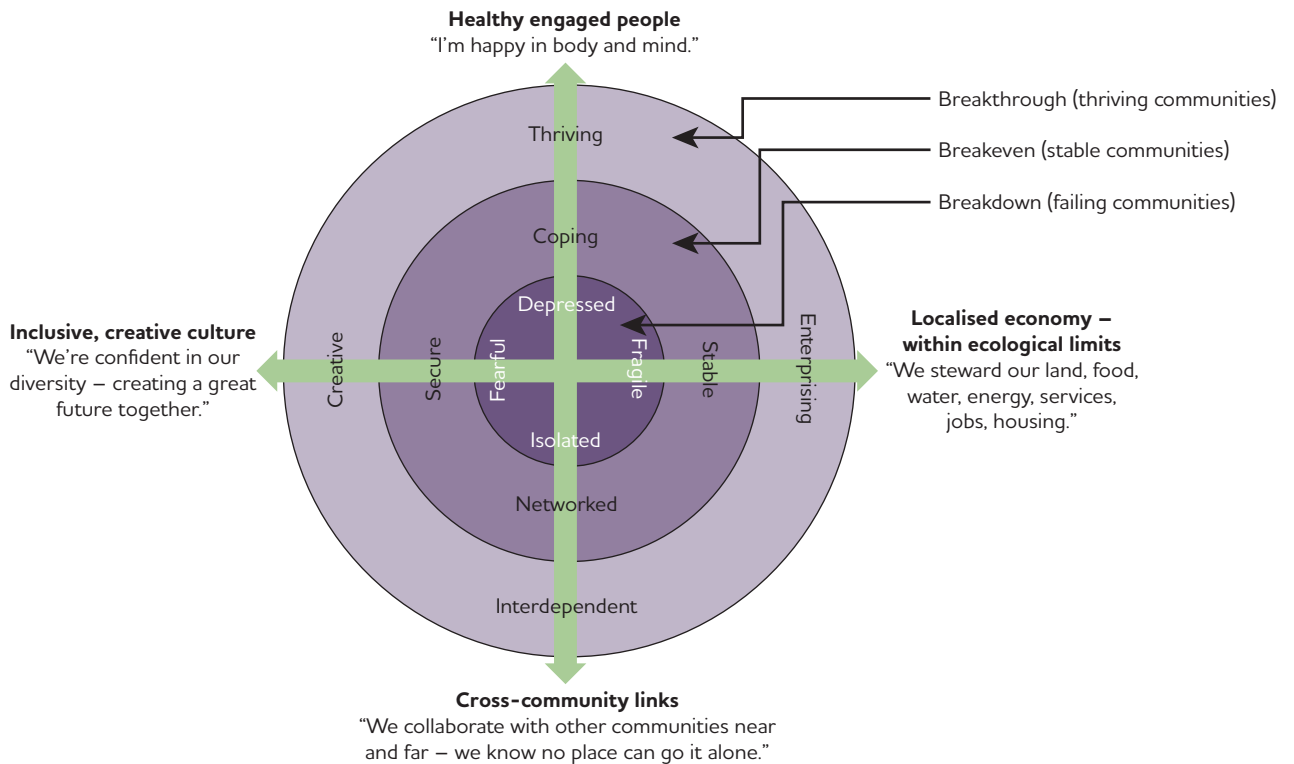
Figure 19: Characteristics of different community resilience states



Source: Paul Ryan/interfacenrm.com

This framing stresses the different aspects of a community's capacity based on its inherent skill set and demographic profile, and in the context of the economic conditions and supporting services within which the community sits.

Figure 20: Compass visualisation of different axes of community resilience linking resilience of assets and varying community states



Source: Wilding, 2011

Wilding converts Ryan's linear model into a multi-dimensional compass, with different states leading to a transition between thriving or failing communities. Usefully, similar aspects of what characterises a successful 'breakthrough' community have been identified by both framings, giving some consistency and guidance for identifying from the theoretical framings those aspects of community that need to be strengthened to build resilience.

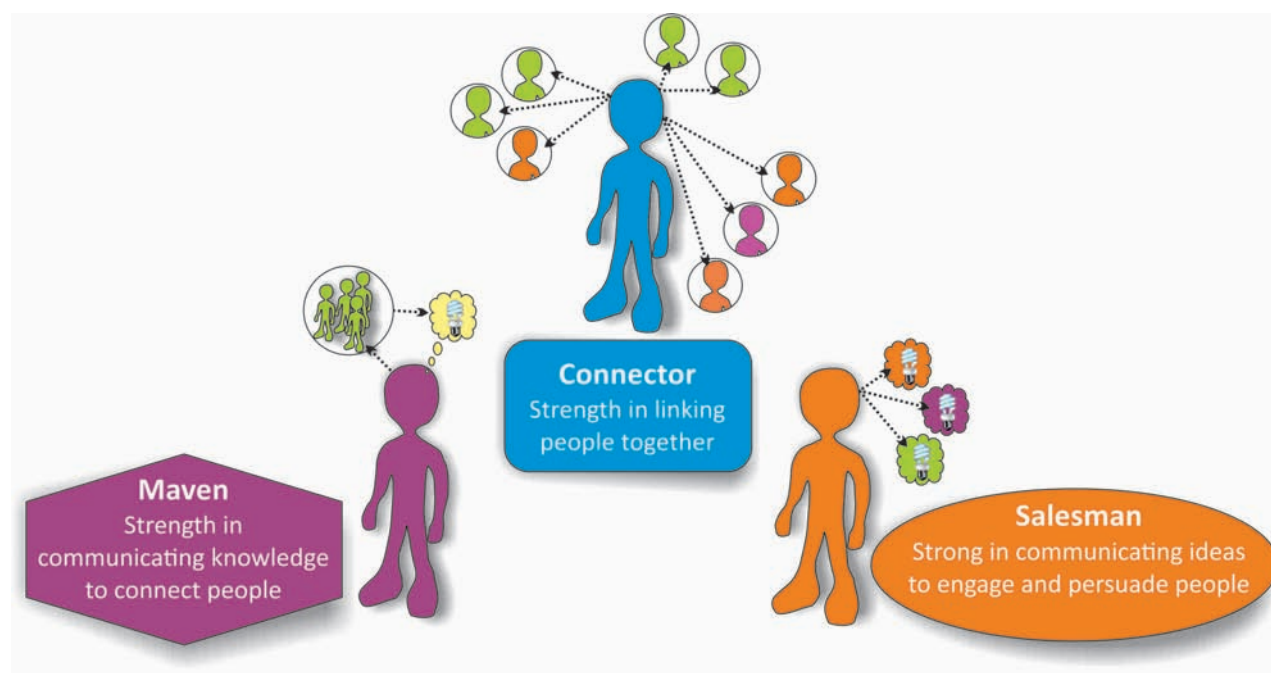
How to stimulate change in communities?

The findings from the 'Tipping Point' theory (Gladwell, 2000) indicate that to begin 'epidemics' of change (where significant alterations in behaviour and belief occur in a relatively short time among a particular population), agencies need to concentrate on reaching only a few key people described as 'connectors' (people who know lots of other people – including in their local neighbourhood), 'mavens' (who are interested in specific topics and receptive to new information that they are keen to share) and 'salesmen' (who are able to influence and persuade people).

Taking this as a theoretical starting point, practitioners need to reflect on the purpose of their local community engagement. If the intention is to increase social interaction, to strengthen and develop networks with the overall goal of improving community resilience, then the types of activity undertaken within the Good Life Initiative indicate potential approaches that can lead to these outcomes. However, the most effective pathways to

building these networks could be assisted by attempting to identify the key local 'gatekeepers' in a community and recognising the different functions they perform (i.e. as 'connectors', 'salesmen' or 'knowledge brokers'). For example, working with local 'salesmen' and 'connectors' could significantly reduce the timescale for strengthening social capital, while introducing new information on sustainability into a community might best be achieved by identifying trusted local experts who could then share this new knowledge.

Figure 21: Definitions of the role different people make within social networks according to 'Tipping Point' theories



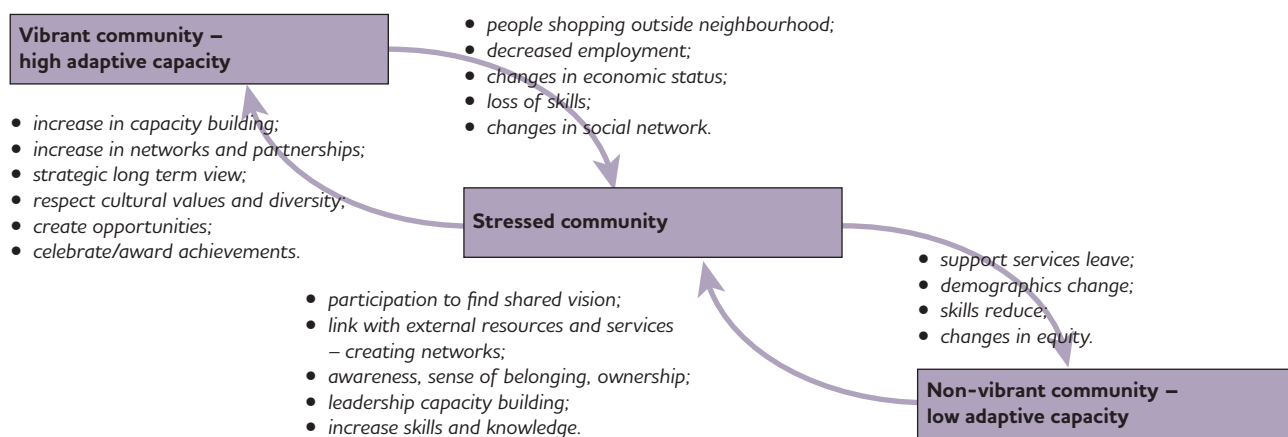
Source: Gladwell, 2000

This 'Tipping Point' characterisation has resonance with many current behaviour change recommendations, which note that 'messengers', that is those who communicate with us about behaviour, influence how receptive we are to changing our actions (Dolan *et al.*, 2012). In the 'Tipping Point' framing, the most effective approach would be to pitch an option for change to someone who operates as a 'salesman' – a trusted local voice who has both relevant knowledge and skills in persuading people. 'Mavens', or local experts, might also be able to re-interpret information provided by outside agencies to make it salient (i.e. relevant, memorable and meaningful) for local people.

How did all this theory work on the ground?

The challenge that the GLI faced was attempting to identify who to work with and how best to interact with people in New Earswick – which community levers to apply and what the response in terms of strengthening neighbourhood assets in order to increase local capacity for action would be. Figure 22 gives some insight into pathways for change pertinent to identifying actions in different social contexts.

Figure 22: Characterisation of different community resilience states and what interventions can motivate change to different states



Source: Walker et al., 2006

As we move upwards from a declining to vibrant community state, the ability of people to cope with and bounce back from shocks increases. Cohesive, supportive, opportunity-rich environments appear to nurture resilience (Mitchell et al., 2009), and the aim in fostering community resilience should be to promote activities that encourage a shift towards a more thriving situation. Resilience theory indicates that a stimulus is required to motivate transition between states, and the GLI provided such intervention in a supportive and directed manner in order to encourage a positive transition to a more resilient and environmentally sustainable community.

In terms of its resilience, New Earswick could be characterised as a ‘stressed community’ due to relative deprivation in comparison with its geographic neighbours, and a changing population and age structure – two things linked to a consequent weakening of local social networks. The effects of the recent global financial crisis and subsequent recession have also challenged the economic vibrancy of the community. Before the GLI, the outlook for the village seemed to be negative, tending towards a ‘non-vibrant’ state.

While the community mapping findings (reported on in Chapter 3) indicated some commonly held views on the village, these visions for the future were not being shared or developed pre-Good Life. Levels of initiative for self-determination were not increasing and the key nodes identified from the social network analysis were mainly older retired residents, which was a concern for the future. On a number of issues there had been a breakdown of trust between residents and the JRHT; however, this was conversely coupled to an increasing reliance on the Housing Trust for services and support. In terms of Wilding’s compass model (Figure 20), the village was increasingly weak on cross-community links and an inclusive culture.

Community resilience and the Good Life

The key to the GLI was experimenting with approaches in this relatively deprived community, which nonetheless had significant material assets and consequent opportunities, to identify which activities were the most successful in nurturing resilience and encouraging a shift towards greater environmental sustainability. The activities undertaken within the project were aimed at enabling and encouraging a transition back from an increasingly non-vibrant state with a low adaptive capacity (Walker et al., 2009).

Table 7: Good Life activities relationship to community capitals and social relationships

Community capital addressed	Linked Good Life objective (see Phase 1 table of objectives)	Related GL actions	Sample activities	Dimension of social capital
Social infrastructure	Improve individuals' physical and mental health and consequent wellbeing. Increase the leadership and common vision of the community to boost resilience.	Development of new spaces and opportunities for community interaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting Good Life get-togethers. • Co-ordinating Jo-Rio Mini Earth Summit. • Facilitating jubilee leaf committee. • Support for NEST. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonding • Bridging • Linking
Physical infrastructure	Improve the green spaces and their utilisation in the village to benefit residents.	Improving New Earswick's physical environment and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinating the jubilee leaf tree and wildflower planting. • Facilitating fruit picking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonding • Bridging
Human infrastructure	Increase the capacity of residents to undertake actions and also increase the knowledge base of the community. To reduce household energy consumption and fuel bills for residents. To reduce expenditure on food and increase awareness of food miles and environmental costs. Identify ways of reducing travel costs for residents and improving the carbon footprint of the community. To reduce household expenditure on material goods and improve consumption practices.	Transfer knowledge, expertise and skills between residents (and outside experts) around the GL theme areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting Energy Doctor events and shopping and consumption based activities. • Co-ordinating Jo-Rio education based activities and Mini Earth Summit. • Facilitating individual travel planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonding • Bridging • Linking
Cultural infrastructure	Improve individuals' physical and mental health and consequent wellbeing. Increase the leadership and common vision of the community to boost resilience.	Undertake festivals and events in the community to develop a shared heritage and strengthen community ties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising community building activities such as tea on the green, the Christmas Party, the Jo-Rio Mini Earth Summit. • Producing the Good Life Movie. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonding • Bridging • Linking
Political infrastructure	Increase the leadership and common vision of the community to boost resilience. Increase the capacity of residents to undertake actions and also increase the knowledge base of the community.	Increase the range of community members involved in problem resolution and accomplishment of community objectives.	Undertaking actions to develop shared visions for the village – such as the jubilee leaf committee and community mapping. Building increased social connections and links to local environmental and council organisations. Encouraging the formation of NEST.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging • Linking

The increasing emphasis, as the project evolved, on the expanding personal relationships focussed the GLL on improving the social and human capital of the village, with activities geared towards building, bridging and linking

(Poortinga, 2012). The characterisation of activities is presented in Table 7 in terms of the particular community capital they addressed and the social dimensions they were aimed at strengthening.

Phase 1 had concentrated on trying to bring people together around the theme of 'making the most of what you've got' with the aim of improving the skills and knowledge of local residents, thereby leading to a more sustainable community. Activities concentrated on bridging relationships in the community, widening the levels of participation and encouraging civic engagement.

Learning from these initial activities, Phase 2 evolved to target particular themes that had resonated with local people and to work with key community groups; activities each had specific strengths in terms of the social capital developed. The Jo-Rio educational activities encouraged participation across the community (bridging) and introduced pupils, teachers and residents to local and international sustainable development organisations (linking). The energy and travel-themed activities primarily focussed on strengthening the community's links to the JRHT and local council. The most successful events in terms of addressing community capital were the tree and wildflower planting, which engendered a wide cross-section of participation from a diverse range of social backgrounds and also helped to link residents to the Housing Trust staff, local conservation groups and local councillors. The 'hook' of the natural environment proved to be a useful context around which to encourage an increase in local action.

Despite this focus on the social dimension, built capital – the houses and infrastructure – which could be critical in terms of climate change resilience and are important for economic prosperity, was also investigated. The visioning exercises and long-term interaction with residents identified community assets (both buildings and other infrastructure such as play parks) that could be improved to increase the community's built capital stocks and enable new spaces for community interactions. The assessment of potential future emissions from the refurbished housing indicated what state these assets could achieve in the near future (within 10 years). The scenarios indicated that retro-fitting activities should deliver significant carbon savings, but that promoting broader energy saving behaviour changes among residents would also make a useful contribution.

The activities of the GLI were designed to build connections between residents, some of whom had rarely interacted with one another. This included creating opportunities for the community to make or improve links to other organisations. In terms of improving resilience, the activities indicated that community based actions to improve bridging and linking connections could be particularly beneficial, widening the body of people engaged in local activities and strengthening their knowledge of outside individuals, networks and resources that could be drawn upon to deliver local improvements or relied on for support in times of trouble.

The activities of the GLI were designed to build connections between residents, some of whom had rarely interacted with one another.

Social Network Mapping to identify community roles

The findings from the Social Network Mapping (presented in Chapter 3) indicated that there were clearly identifiable 'connectors' who were well integrated with other members of the community and relevant organisations. The Good Life Initiative took the approach from its outset of linking to organisations that were likely to include these types of people, including the Parish Council, church and community groups.

The difficulty once these initial connections were made was identifying within these organisations who, if anyone, had an aptitude for and interest in being a knowledge broker or community 'salesman', assimilating messages

on pro-environmental behaviour change, re-interpreting them in ways relevant for local people and delivering them in an appealing manner. These people could provide the leadership and skills to generate a shared vision and take other members of the community with them along a more sustainable or resilient path.

The identification of which of our participants had these skills was only possible after longer-term engagement by the project team with particular local organisations and individuals. For example, key people with knowledge and connections, and also a passion for the natural environment, were identified to support the tree and flower planting and encourage the involvement of other residents. This implies that while 'Tipping Point' concepts are relevant to building resilience and encouraging pro-environmental behaviour, their application currently requires a significant time investment in communities to be successful. The school-based activities more readily identified how useful 'Tipping Point' approaches could be in delivering sustainable behaviour messages. The Jo-Rio organising committee had a variety of strengths and skills that had already been recognised by the co-ordinating teacher. This prior knowledge of individuals' strengths meant that the 'mavens' or 'salesmen' in the group were effectively identified. The GLI project team operated primarily as 'connectors' for the group, helping to link them to outside organisations in order to increase their knowledge or understanding.

These examples illustrate how these 'Tipping Point' concepts are potentially useful in categorising community representatives and recognising that different individuals will have different skill sets that are relevant at different stages of behaviour-change processes. The practical gap is the need to develop an easily applied typology that identifies, in a variety of settings, who might fit the 'salesman' and 'maven' roles in order to make this approach more rapidly applicable for effectively delivering behaviour change.

Conclusions

While these theoretical approaches to the best ways of bringing about behaviour change require more practical testing in relation to building resilience before firm conclusions on their potential efficacy and applicability can be drawn, the GLI did provide some indications of how they could be applied.

The activities of the Good Life were designed to build connections between residents, some of whom had rarely interacted with one another. This included creating opportunities for the community to make or improve links, in terms of skills and knowledge or networks and opportunities, with each other and organisations relevant to the resilience of the village. These factors will be reflected upon further in the final key project findings discussed in Chapter 6.

5 THE POLICY CONTEXT SURROUNDING THE GOOD LIFE INITIATIVE

No community or project operates in isolation from the governance approaches and policy contexts under which it falls. This section briefly discusses a number of current UK policy strategies and initiatives in relation to their synergies with the Good Life approach, and the ways in which this type of community focussed initiative could help deliver policy goals.

Behaviour change

The activities of the GLI around personal energy saving measures, including those related to personal transport, link to calls from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011b) to use information effectively to influence pro-environmental behaviour. The Department recognises that people are influenced by their peers' actions, and also by who is delivering messages about new options. Recent academic studies, including work on socially just climate adaptation (Dolan *et al.*, 2012; Brisley *et al.*, 2012), highlight that novel information needs to be delivered by trusted messengers in accessible forms relevant to the intended audience. The Good Life indicates that empowering and supporting community champions (most successfully achieved through the Jubilee Leaf activity) may be the most fruitful approach for achieving these long-term changes in community behaviour, with trusted community voices embedding knowledge locally (linking back to theories of spreading change outlined in Chapter 4).

This recommendation should be balanced against criticisms of the continued focus on individual change and calls for the development of

environments that encourage sustainability through a mix of government-led initiatives and targeted service delivery (Shove, 2010). This links to arguments that individual- and community-led moves to resilience sidestep the responsibilities of government (and other agencies) to direct change, ignoring issues of power, injustice and inequality (Welsh, 2013).

The Good Life indicates that both of these views have potential merit, and that what is actually required is a balanced partnership. Over reliance on outside agencies does not instil resilience in communities. The GLI promoted greater self-determination for the New Earswick community, albeit in the context of support from the JRHT.

Individual- and community-led moves to resilience sidestep the responsibilities of government (and other agencies) to direct change.

The Transition Towns movement

The GLI specifically tried to move the residents of a local community towards a new, more sustainable state, rather than maintaining and preserving the current conditions. This objective of providing a supportive environment to enable regime-shift links the GLI most closely with the Transition movement.

Resilience is central to the concepts promoted in the Transition Towns movement's literature (Hopkins, 2008). The movement's self-sufficiency agenda relies on diversity in skills and resources at the local level combined with creativity in identifying community driven solutions. These solutions should have 'tight feedback loops' so that the positive effects of local decisions are rapidly enjoyed rather than being delayed or diluted through bureaucracy.

The Transition movement highlights the need for resilience indicators to measure the development of local self-sufficiency, including increasing the capacity and use of local food production (Chamberlin, 2009). This resonates with some of the more successful events developed in the GLI.

Our project activities indicated pathways for outside agencies to engage with communities to develop this increased local self-sufficiency. The issue identified by the project is that, in implementing a transition agenda in a deprived community with significant social housing, pathways for improvement identified from the bottom up cannot be achieved autonomously unless the social landlord is willing to engage with and empower residents. This could cause tensions within the community, as well as between the residents and the landlord. New ways of partnership between communities and landlords will need to be trialled in these contexts, potentially involving shifts in the power-balance relationship in terms of the management of housing and identification of priorities. However, there will still need to be a significant governance role for social landlords to ensure the benefits of local participation do not lead to increased inequality and injustice (Davoudi *et al.*, 2012).

'Localism' and the 'Big Society'

This need for governance of resilience building processes to ensure social justice has implications for the 'Localism' legislation (Communities and Local Government, 2011a) and associated 'Big Society' agenda. Localism is aimed at transferring decision-making powers, enabling communities to make decisions affecting them for themselves. Alongside the cut-backs in state provision, it has been argued that this approach does indeed indicate a new direction in UK policy, rather than a re-working of previous goals (Taylor-Gooby and Stoker, 2011).

Under Localism legislation, communities are asked to draw up their own 'neighbourhood development plan' (including new buildings and housing) and present this to the relevant local authority. In order to undertake such planning effectively, communities will need skills and attributes linked to resilience including:

- strong internal community leadership;
- a shared vision – inclusively identified through participation;
- a strategic long-term view;
- links to external services via community and virtual networks, knowledge and skills.

Lessons from the GLI provide some insight into the potential pathways, particularly in less affluent areas, for building the leadership and skills-sharing across social networks necessary to undertake these developments. This will be critical if the Localism agenda is to have any chance of making a difference in all UK neighbourhoods, rather than just those that already have strong social and economic capital.

The findings from the GLI indicate how difficult the Localism agenda could be to implement widely. The GLI was flexible in delivering its objectives, modifying its approach and activities in sympathy with local interests and skills. The indications from the project are that encouraging a community to engage with another agency's processes without this flexible approach will not necessarily lead to inclusive participation, but could instead result in increased inequality among residents. The majority of people may not wish to engage, either through personal choice or else because of lifestyle/time constraints. Well-connected people with leadership skills or relevant knowledge will have an advantage and, either deliberately or inadvertently, come to 'represent' their communities. This will not necessarily lead to improved local inclusion in decision-making, particularly in more deprived or diverse communities with a range of local viewpoints but with differential abilities to articulate those views.

These issues link to concerns of injustice in relation to climate change adaptation connected to the unequal abilities of communities to engage in the process (Brisley *et al.*, 2012). The Good Life indicated that effective (and probably sustained) support for communities in order to encourage participation is a necessary adjunct to the policy context of enabling local decision-making if the 'Big Society' is to have real meaning for local residents. This goes against the current Localism approach, which emphasises the retreat of government responsibility.

The findings from the GLI indicate how difficult the Localism agenda could be to implement widely.

Conclusions

The Good Life indicated that there is potential to enable effective bottom-up participation within the context of a supportive governance framework; however this is likely to require continued support (from government or other responsible agencies, such as housing associations) particularly in more deprived communities. Such support needs to be carefully delivered to enhance local skills, including leadership, and foster resilience. This flexible delivery is required to ensure that the activities resonate with local needs, knowledge and skills. This flexibility could be particularly hard to ensure in the context of a retreat of government agencies and the consequent increased burdens on other supporting organisations such as charities, social landlords and housing associations.

6 GOOD LIFE INITIATIVE LEGACY AND LESSONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The majority of academic and practitioner community resilience literature, and indeed UK policy, addresses how to increase capacity in advance of, or post-, natural disasters, most commonly in the wake of flooding events (Wilding, 2011). The novelty of the GLI approach to community resilience was that it focussed on developing adaptive capacity to the broad challenges associated with climate change outside such a crisis context.

Such pre-emptive adaptive resilience could also prove beneficial for recovering from these other types of 'disasters', making the project's findings relevant to a variety of contexts, policies and settings.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the GLI showed that attempting to build community resilience can be characterised as a complex ('wicked') undertaking that is always 'messy' on-the-ground. To build resilience within a neighbourhood requires supporting and enhancing local leadership to encourage and enable people to take collective charge of developing community assets for the future, while also creatively addressing inevitable conflicts of direction and approach. The Good Life activities supported the notion that 'it is social relationships that are most effective in maintaining resilience in the face of adversity' (Bartley, 2006). The GLI built upon insights from other programmes that stress how the most successful communities are those which take a 'joined up' view of developing a wide and diverse range of community assets (Carnegie UK Trust, 2009). Increasing

and diversifying the skills base of the community also proved a critical development.

Legacies from the Good Life Initiative

Initiatives encouraged by the Good Life team left a number of legacies in New Earswick. The school has begun to follow up on the pledges and its commitment to set up an 'Eco-Council' run by the pupils. At the time of writing they were also commencing an eco-audit and action plan in order to try to gain Eco-School status. They have also developed connections to the local retirement community on the back of the Jo-Rio event, and were investigating a shared waste-recycling scheme between the school and village.

The New Earswick Sharing Together group has continued to evolve and is recruiting new members. The group is concentrating on local food growing and wildflower planting. They have continued to strengthen the social connections that the GLI fostered and have made links to other complementary JRHT initiatives, thereby helping to deliver a lasting legacy for project-spawned ideas.

The connections made between some residents, conservation agencies and the Housing Trust estates team (developed in the jubilee leaf tree planting) were evolving into reviewing the use of buildings identified in the visioning exercise. A former retail unit owned by the Housing Trust was being considered in terms of alternative community uses. The links between volunteer groups and the residents built through the GLI have given the community a support network sufficient to provide this initiative with the required impetus for possible success.

There were also a number of physical legacies left by the project. Fruit picking equipment has been funded and sourced to enable this activity to continue and expand in the future. Copies of the community mapping improvement suggestions, with their visions for the future, have been left with community groups and delivered to JRHT. Most visibly, the natural environment and biodiversity of the village has been enhanced through the planting of trees and wildflowers along the riverbank for the wider community to enjoy into the future.

These ongoing legacies indicate that the improvements in social capital (particularly in terms of bridging and linking networks) engendered by the project may have helped to kick-start a transition to a more resilient state for the village of New Earswick. Our hope is that they are on the path to becoming a more vibrant and thriving community.

Lessons from the study

The project indicated a number of lessons for communities, practitioners, social landlords and policy-makers. These provide guidance on strengthening community resilience and delivering pro-environmental behaviour changes.

Lessons for communities

- Mapping neighbourhood problems and developing visions of residents' solutions proved a useful engagement approach.
 - By better understanding people's experiences, concerns and local knowledge, activities for promoting community action can be built around common interests and shared problems.

- Starting from this point of shared understanding should mean actions for change are more likely to engage people and embed activities in the community.
- Identifying ‘hooks’ relevant to local people’s interests was important for encouraging residents’ shared actions and proved pivotal to our successes. This appears to be a key element for building new community social network links, thereby contributing to resilience.
 - Identifying interest ‘hooks’ provides opportunities for motivating community engagement that do not start from a responsive–reactive agenda in relation to an opportunity (positive or negative) imposed by an outside agency (e.g. housing plans, transport changes, etc.).
 - In the GLI project, activities related to the natural environment were particularly successful. Other JRF initiatives on ‘Loneliness’ also proved resonant with the community.
 - Once people were ‘hooked’ by one Good Life event it was possible to expand their involvement into other areas, helping to build improved social connections.
- Making links between sustainability issues and the existing interests of community groups, and connecting to their social networks, provides pathways for engaging with a cross-section of people on these topics.
 - The Good Life was particularly successful in linking with the school, enabling the GL team to engage with a wider cross-section of the community.
 - Working with schools in a more concerted way could provide benefits for communities and pupils in terms of improving knowledge, enhancing skills and achieving longer-term change.
 - The school relied on a significant commitment from the project team to maintain activity over a considerable timescale, which may be difficult for unsupported community members to sustain.
- Be flexible, adaptive and responsive in the delivery of activities.
 - The GLI evolved significantly over its duration based on feedback and ongoing reviews of achievements, significantly improving our effectiveness.
 - Rigidly sticking to one approach may exclude participants or lead to declining interest over time.
- Identifying how to communicate effectively across the community is important to successes.
 - The GLI used a mixture of approaches including promotional posters, websites, social media and a paper newsletter. The paper newsletter proved the most consistently successful means of attracting engagement.
 - Using a range of contact methods was important in terms of attracting a diverse group of people; a single approach may not be successful or inclusive.

Identifying ‘hooks’ relevant to local people’s interests was important for encouraging residents’ shared actions.

Lessons for social landlords or other agencies supporting community initiatives

- Identifying and working with trusted community voices to develop and deliver messages about behaviour change could be an effective approach for achieving long-lasting improvements.
 - Introducing new ideas to communities without making these connections may not embed an understanding of the need for or benefits of change.
 - Linking to a mixture of motivations for promoting change was important for the GLI in terms of engaging with a wider cross-section of residents than would have been achieved with a single approach.

- Personal pledges for pro-environmental behaviour proved popular, although it can be time consuming to effectively track whether these result in sustained action.
- Long-term engagement was vital for building trusting relationships and embedding key sustainability messages.
 - The GLI represented 18 months of engagement; however, we recognise that this obviously entailed significant support, both financially and time-wise, from both JRF and JRHT in order to effectively facilitate bottom-up development.
 - We tried to ensure that key changes had been taken up by community champions or groups to ensure that activities had a legacy.
- Clear strategies for how changes are going to be achieved and who is responsible for delivery need to be agreed during initial stages, otherwise there is a risk of communities becoming disillusioned.
 - The JRHT proved a supportive partner for the GLI. Our activities helped to communicate community interests and aspirations to this social landlord.
 - The community may now have an expanded leadership and skills base to help deliver their own changes, but this will continue to require support from the Housing Trust to be successful.
- Improving social capital appears to be a key element of increasing community resilience.
 - Alongside infrastructure changes and information campaigns, social capital needs to be strengthened to enable effective engagement with communities.
 - The capacity for local leadership needs to be strengthened through an enabling environment.

Identifying and working with trusted community voices to develop and deliver messages about behaviour change could be an effective approach for achieving long-lasting improvements.

Lessons for policy-makers

- The Good Life supported evidence (Mitchell *et al.*, 2009) that factors contributing to resilience relate to common social heritage. These are not things that policy-makers can easily influence.
 - In New Earswick the local infrastructure (green spaces) gave certain shared advantages, but recent influxes of new residents made engaging people with group activities challenging.
- Phased reduction of outside assistance is needed to embed change in communities and ensure behaviour-change legacies.
 - The community indicated (by their change stories) they would have liked the support of the Good Life to continue. The team, however, supported a transition to participants including NEST, the Parish Council and high school.
 - Such planned transitions are needed to ensure that community resilience is actually embedded, and that people are left with the necessary network connections, knowledge and leadership skills to achieve their own goals (possibly linked to policy objectives) rather than requiring continuing outside support.
- There is an ongoing role for supportive governance (by local and national bodies) to oversee the wider context of infrastructure and policies that promote local resilience, and to ensure fairness across communities. In the current legislative context of increased 'Localism', the Good Life indicated that engaging communities with this development agenda would require considerable support.
 - The project highlights how the introduction of new ideas needs to be made locally relevant, requiring considerable care and time to embed them within communities.

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- Altering the way a community manages its environment requires more than technical change; it involves transforming social relationships, strengthening institutions and thereby influencing local power balances.
 - Building the necessary social capital, knowledge, leadership skills and support networks to allow communities to effectively engage with policies (such as Localism) needs to happen before introducing initiatives. Only by providing opportunities to develop these resilient attributes can increased local responsibility hope to be successful across a broad range of communities – including those, such as New Earswick, which are less affluent.
 - Without sufficient depth of social capital there is a risk of exacerbating community divisions. The introduction of new ideas, powers and responsibilities risks increasing inequality (particularly in more diverse or deprived communities where social capital may be low) by only empowering or engaging with a small cross-section of residents who have relevant skills, knowledge and political or social connections.

Final conclusions

The community in New Earswick (including the high school) would have appreciated a continuation of the Good Life Initiative's support. However, effective resilience needs to be embedded in a community rather than be dependent on outside agencies. The legacy groups and ongoing activities in the village indicate that the team stimulated some lasting change. Initiatives, including those undertaken by communities themselves, need to become self-sustaining, or at least have an end goal, if they are to effectively support sustainable development and pro-environmental behaviour change, and contribute to building improved community resilience.

Overall, the GLI indicated that there is the potential for communities to effectively participate in or – ideally – lead bottom-up pro-environmental change, but that this has to be within the context of a supportive governance framework (from government or other responsible agencies, including housing associations). This support needs to be carefully delivered to generate greater local knowledge linked to a diversification of leadership skills to encourage improvements in local resilience. Improvements in community social capital, while being one of the hardest outcomes to achieve, may ultimately provide the greatest benefit and lead to local championing of pro-environmental change.

The final word should go to one of our participants from the village, who summed up the project thus:

“I always felt that the message was a good community-minded theme, but I was also aware that New Earswick residents do not readily come forth and join in. Happily, I was proved wrong in the end because at the last event there were many and varied members of the community joining together as one.”

NOTES

- 1 See <http://www.transitionnetwork.org>
- 2 These videos can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/users/ThGoodLifeInitiative>
- 3 For practical advice on these approaches see <http://www.prezi.com/dlboxemhdhkrz/pgis-tutorials/>; <http://www.communitymaps.org.uk>; and http://www.tweedforum.org/research/Borderlands_Community_Mapping_Guide_.pdf
- 4 See <http://www.sei-international.org/reap>
- 5 See <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-spending/>

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