

**Involvement in community gardens -  
sustaining the benefits**

**Andrew J Hinchley**

**PhD**

**Department of Landscape**

**September 2006**

**Volume 2**

## **Chapter 7**

### **Factors influencing involvement**

The levels of involvement explored in the previous chapter offer an insight into the range of relationships an individual could have with a community garden. The longitudinal nature of observation in the field and retrospective accounts within interviews illustrated that levels of involvement were far from static however and individuals could move between levels over the course of a project.

Given the importance of particular levels of involvement for undertaking tasks crucial to the development and management of a community garden, these changes have important implications for the long-term success of a project. The project descriptions in Chapter 5 described the changes that projects had experienced over time and it is the aim of this chapter to explore the factors that contributed to such changes.

The factors that influenced an individual's level of involvement were revealed through both interviews and observation to be complex. Highly individual combinations of factors were expressed that could vary over time as well as between individuals. Within this complexity it was possible to identify a number of themes within which the factors are structured and explored in more detail. Four key themes were identified:

- Relationships with the space
- Relationships with other people
- Personal values and interests
- Practical ability

Early considerations of the factors influencing involvement was split between motivations (factors encouraging involvement) and barriers (factors preventing involvement). This model was found inappropriate for satisfactory consideration of the issues however as it overlooked factors that enabled involvement but did not necessarily constitute motivations. In addition, the similarity of many of the themes, found to have a role in both encouraging and discouraging involvement, prompted the more holistic examination presented below.

It was initially anticipated that identifying barriers would be a particularly challenging aspect of the research, reliant on identifying non-participants and determining their reasons for non-involvement. As my time in the field developed however, it became apparent that the most considered discussion about barriers were coming from participants themselves, many of whom had changed their level of involvement in the course of the project, for a range of different reasons. Non-participants meanwhile, tended to provide a limited range of responses, usually focussed on a general lack of time or motivation. Because the projects were far more peripheral in their lives, it was much harder to elicit considerations of why they were not involved, and responses on the matter tended to be brief.

## 7.1 Relationships with the space

The focus of involvement on change in a neighbourhood setting created a context for community gardens in which relationships with the space were a prominent issue when considering the factors influencing involvement. It is these factors which align most closely with the popular conceptions of 'place attachment' as an emotional bond to a specific place, and provide an important starting point when exploring the influence of such feelings on levels of involvement over time.

### 7.1.1 Association with the space

Throughout the cases studied, some form of connection to the space appeared to be necessary for the development of a motivation to support the creation or management of a community garden.

#### *Residential proximity*

The most common form that this connection could be identified in was residential proximity. In most cases, the majority of group members lived within 200m of the project site and a similar relationship could be identified among subscribers.

This proximity provided a situation in which the garden would either be regularly experienced, or where changes to the function of the space would have direct effects on personal space. Consequently, proximity offered increased potential for strong reactions to negative characteristics and personal benefit from visual and physical improvements (see sections 7.1.2 and 7.1.3).

Proximity to a space could provide a degree of care and concern for its quality, motivated by the effects it could have of how positive the experience of living in the area could be.

*Oh general interest in the area, as a resident I like to see the place looking tidy.*

Patrick, group member, Kent Road (response to prompt on motivations for involvement)

Such concern for the neighbourhood more generally suggest a sense of attachment to place at a wider level, where the area surrounding the home is considered important to achieving a sense of personal well-being about the place in which a person lives.

Residential proximity also provided a sense of justification for some of those involved, the project being perceived as 'for' a particular geographical community, within which they placed themselves.

*...because it's so local you think well I'm an eligible participant, I live in this immediate area you know, whereas some of the other projects that I've been aware of, you feel less of a kind of sense of responsibility.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road

A similar feeling was held by a member of the Carfield Farm group, who had recently found out about another local project, shown an interest, but was explaining why he didn't think he would get more involved:

*...I don't think.../it's also that that's slightly less local [laughing] which sounds stupid but it's further away. And I think most of the people that are sort of involved heavily in it are sort of more round the park end of Meersbrook, because it's their local project like this is our local project, you know.*

Daniel, group member, Carfield Farm

These feelings were reflected in responses during photo-elicitation interviews, where spaces that were more distant from home would be described as "someone else's" space. While these references were not expressed as a negative quality (indeed most community spaces regardless of distance were perceived extremely positively), they do reflect the

importance of an association with a space to enable involvement. In this sense the residential context of the spaces appears to create a sense of 'territoriality' as belonging to a particular geographical community which may restrict involvement beyond this area. Although examples of involvement without close residential proximity were evident, in these cases the closeness of home was replaced by other forms of association that provided such justification, whether through regular use, social connections or communities of interest.

It appeared that the need for strong associations with a space, and particularly those of residential proximity were strongest for those playing a leading role in a project. All the leading figures that could be identified within the project lived within two hundred meters of their project, most considerably closer.

*...Brenda [the leading figure] would come up and she'd be round the beds, you know, and spend time on there. But she had a vested interest...the house was straight opposite.*

Alan, former group member, Alexandra Road

The implications of a vested interest created by the closeness of association with the space was one that was freely admitted by another leading figure

- I. *...you've said that it was unsightly, so to improve the look of the area, but were there any other reasons for getting into it?*
- R. *Erm, I suppose yeah the vested interest of you know, my kids at that point they weren't sort of old enough to be playing out but I knew that they would be and it's actually you know, quite good for burning off energy and getting fresh air is them running up and down the hill there.*

Kate, leading figure, Kent Road

While this quote also relates to aspirations held for the space (see section 7.1.3), it directly relates the opportunity for use brought about by such close proximity to the motivations for initiating the project and being involved.

The importance of this closeness in justifying a leading role could be further observed in discussion about a spin-off project that had been suggested on a piece of ground across the road from the bottom of the community garden.

For the Kate, who lived at the top end of the garden, this land was perceived quite differently from the existing project site, despite only a small additional distance.

*I mean there is talk within the group of possibly extending the project down to sort of an adjacent site just across the road at the bottom, erm, but I think...I sort of feel that that's not really MY remit particularly because you know, it's...the ownership for that project would be for the people living down that part of Kent Road...*

Kate, leading figure, Kent Road

This comment suggests that the motivations for leading a project are largely restricted to spaces with which a strong relationship is felt, in this case due to residential proximity. There is also an implication that a feeling of entitlement is important in initiating change and that by perceiving the second space outside her immediate part of the neighbourhood, the entitlement to initiate change is less evident.

Conversely, one neighbour of the Alexandra Road garden suggested that such close proximity to the space actually discouraged him from taking on a leading role in the re-establishment of a group.

*I mean, say me personally, if I was to push things along a little bit, people would just assume that I've got my own agenda. And it'd be true. If I was pushing things, it would be because I had my own agenda. Or say my neighbour on the other side, of the peace garden, she did, it would be because she had her own personal agenda, because our properties actually touch this land.*

Tom, local resident (participant at public meeting), Alexandra Road

Although other reasons are giving for not getting involved, there is clearly some concern regarding the perception of others should he take an active role in reviving the group.

As well as contributing towards motivations to become involved (or at least offering a sense of entitlement to do so) living close to a space also provided connections to the space over the course of the project. The use or sight of a space as part of daily routine provided a strong connection to the space which enabled those involved to experience changes that were taking place.

*I really like the fact that I walk up and down it most days. I see it. I see it developing, and it's just a totally different area to what it was when we moved in.*

Sophie, group member, Kent Road

The experience of change on the site could be a powerful motivating factor among those who were involved in the project as is explored in more detail in section 7.1.3.

Distance could sometimes be imposed at some stage during involvement, at which point the will and enthusiasm to stay involved could still present due to social connections and emotional ties, but the greater distance to travel creates a practical barrier to achieving this.

Over the course of the research period, a number of group members from different projects moved house. In some instances this move was local, to another part of Heeley, while in others it was much further. In all instances the level of involvement observed was severely reduced, and in many cases ceased entirely.

Likewise, among existing group members, moving from the area was one of the most common reasons individuals could foresee for stopping their involvement.

- I. Did you picture yourself staying involved through that maintenance phase?*
- R. Er yes. Assuming that I continue to live there, which is another factor obviously. If I didn't live in that immediate area then I wouldn't see myself as a – but no, I suppose if I did, but I mean it'd be harder to motivate yourself really. It'd be easier just to sort of let it go if you didn't live and you didn't see it.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road

This quote stresses the value of regular experience of the space in sustaining the motivation to remain involved with a project

At Alexandra Road, comments from those involved in the original project suggested the same phenomenon occurred, but on a more extreme level.



- I. *Right. I get the impression that a lot of people that were involved in the first place have since moved.*
- R. *Yes. They've moved away yes, 'cos well I say Jack was involved and he's died, the lady from across Myrtle Road, she's moved away, Brenda has moved away, and, there's another two people in those houses across there, they've moved on.*

Paul, former volunteer, Alexandra Road

This example highlights the threat to a projects longevity that can be posed by an out-migration of group members. It was interesting to note that a number of the existing group members expressed an aspiration to move from the area, usually to a more rural location, which was related to some of the very values that encouraged them to get involved in the project, such as an appreciation of nature (see section 7.2).

#### *Wider neighbourhood connections*

Although residential proximity provided an association for the majority of those involved, not all group members were such close residents and both core and peripheral members were at times attracted from further away. These individuals also tended to have a relationship with the site, but in a different form, which could vary between sites. At Kent Road, the prominent location of the space as a route through the neighbourhood, not least to the neighbouring primary school, increased the area within which people could feel a relationship with the site.

*Well Kent Road is a place we've been aware of obviously in taking the children to school [...] and even though of course we don't... you know we don't live like at the bottom of it and have to go to the top to get to the school, but we've been aware of it, erm... seeing it, erm... cross... you know using the crossing to get over the road and that kind of stuff.*

Dominic, group member, Kent Road, not a  
resident of adjacent streets

The routine of waiting at the top of the space to collect children was a good example of the associations with a space that could be developed through use rather than direct proximity. Those involved through use and experience

of the space in daily routine did not tend to live further than 500m of the space, but were distinct from those in closest proximity as not living on the roads immediately nearby.

*Because where we live it's a bit more removed from Argyle Road itself. Where kind of core people live, and use it.*

Dominic, group member, Kent Road

Despite this sense of removal, the regular use, and in most cases some social connections, could create a sense of identification with the area around the project that was missing among those who cited distance as a reason for not being involved.

*...even though I'm saying we don't QUITE identify with the Meersbrook side of it in terms of where we live, I mean it's a blurred boundary, we feel part of that community as well as up here, up the hill*

Dominic, group member, Kent Road

Other levels of involvement could also be encouraged by a spaces position within the wider neighbourhood, and the value of Kent Roads relationships with the school was also referred to as a potential source of volunteers.

*And I know the kids, the school kids, have been involved with the mosaics and the planting seeds obviously, so I think it's the obvious connection given that a lot of the kids walk up the hill to go to the school and that whole ownership thing – that's what they're trying to cultivate, and quite rightly. And also, because the kids don't live in that immediate area, the kids might (batter) their parents to, and you know, that has happened, that there's been erm, kids that perhaps don't live in Argyle or Valley or Rushdale, you know, those immediate kind of streets where people feel that they've got a direct ownership of that area that perhaps the kids that go to the school that do live further round, pressure their parents to attend the sessions. Because I have met people that perhaps don't live on the immediate streets.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road

Although this association was seen by members as an effective way of encouraging wider involvement, in practise (through the regular observation of activities) the cases where this occurred were rare, and contributing limited physical support to the overall efforts of the group.

### *Relationships with the site context*

At Carfield Farm, while the majority of group members were nearby residents of the site, the visual association evident among residents local to the other more visible spaces was lacking among discussions regarding involvement. This reflected the isolated location of the site and the lack of either a through route or any clear visual relationship with the adjacent streets. Particularly notable in this case was the lack of visual recognition among those who were not core members during photo-elicitation interviews (be they subscribers or non-members).

Instead, the connection with the site was described in terms of its relationship with the surrounding allotments. Many of the core group members of this project had their own personal plot on the allotment site and where this was discussed, it was often the case that attachment appeared far stronger towards these personal plots, than to the community garden. Participant-led photo-elicitation among two group members produced a number of images of personal plots (as well as an image of the communal allotment shed), but only one image of the Carfield Farm site, and while discussion about the community space usually required a degree of prompting, narratives demonstrating strong attachment flowed easily where personal plots were concerned. The plots would be used more regularly than the Carfield Farm site and plot holders tended to see their plots as semi-private spaces, which seemed to enable a much stronger connection, with emotional bonds far more explicit in their narratives.

*This is my allotment, so...a very special place...to me... just a real refuge and a, you know...source of joy really.*

Harriet, group member, Carfield Farm  
(explanation of photo taken of own allotment)

This strength of attachment among allotment holders did appear to extend beyond their personal plots however, and a sense of attachment to the whole allotment site was often evident. For some this was place specific - related to views from their house or the personal experience of walking through the site

for enjoyment for example - while for others the attachment seemed to be more abstract, based on personally held beliefs about the role of allotments, and the protection of green-space. In both cases, attachment to the allotments was an important motivational factor for involvement in the project.

*...THIS bit [Carfield Farm] feels more like my responsibility, or more connected to me because of my allotment site [...] this is my allotment site that I'm very attached to, and that's part of it. So there's more sense of sort of ownership and responsibility and connection I think.*

Harriet, group member, response to prompt on reasons for being involved in Carfield Farm rather than another project

Even some group members who did not have their own plots, referred to their aspiration for one in the future as a motivation for getting involved in the Carfield Farm site,

*Well like I say the fact it was part of the allotments and you know, in the long term we'd like to have an allotment, but we couldn't take that on at the moment. So I have little sort of feelings of a sort of stake in... in the allotments...*

Holly, group member, Carfield Farm, response to prompt about motivations for getting involved in the project

This quote sums up a feeling reflected in many of the interviews, that group members have a wider interest in the allotment site, and that getting involved in the preservation of the Carfield Farm site was product of this "stake". It may be that this strong connection to the site's context, if not always the site itself, is one of the reasons the group has sustained itself so successfully. Certainly among plot holders, there was a culture of long-term management and commitment to their plots, a trait which appears to have been transferred to the Carfield Farm project, supporting its chance of longevity.

A further implication of a relationship based on association with the wider allotments was that a number of group members lived considerably further from the project than was found at other sites. These individuals held personal allotments on the site, and following their involvement in the campaign to protect the site from development, continued their involvement in the project. In one case it was clear that the motivation for being involved

in the group was influenced by a keen interest in the ecological conservation, one of the main aims of the group. In this instance involvement with the group continued throughout the research period, and the formal position within the group was actually increased to a position of 'chairman' on the committee in response to the existing chair moving away. In another case the motivation for being a group member was a strong association with the management of the allotments, including membership of an existing 'allotment protection' society. This organisation focussed its attentions on the running of the allotment site more generally (providing supplies for plot holders for example), but created a relationship with the initial efforts of the Carfield Farm project to protect the site. Concern at the threat of development was not the only motivation however, and involvement continued after the successful protection of the site. A focus on the consequences for the wider allotment site remained prominent however, reflected in his concerns with the "direction" of the project.

*R. Yeah, a joint effort in erm... having... having an opportunity through the management committee to steer... keep to the direction, keep to the aims that we've set out.*

*I. Right.*

*R. Erm... and that's sometimes quite important, because sometimes...as a group you can go off course sometimes.*

*I. Yeah.*

*R. Steering them... steering with the original aims is... is a major function.*

George, group member, Carfield Farm

In further observation it was evident that one of the major concerns of George was to protect the security of the allotment site. This led to a number of confrontations during meetings where other group members suggested opening the site to the street to improve access. This was strongly resisted by George (among other allotment holders) as a threat to the security of the site more generally, and in conflict with aims of the 'protection society' to install secure perimeter fencing. This position suggested a vested interest that although not the only motivation evident, provided the focus of much narrative during the interview. In this instance the projected longevity of

involvement was less certain, and the physical separation from home appeared to present a more evident limitation to sustained involvement.

*...you start a thing, at least I do anyway, I start a thing and I try to stay involved with it. Not necessarily forever, you know, the management group's grown and developing and it might be that, you know, my part of it... my part IN it may not be needed there all of the time, there may be more to do with the local community in the area...*

George, group member, Carfield Farm, discussing thoughts about future involvement

George explicitly defines himself as outside the 'local community' and relates this position to a perceived lack of relevance in the long term, which would seem consistent with the vested interest in the how the garden developed (rather than its management) that was expressed. This participant subsequently stepped down from a role on the committee, and shortly after ceased physical involvement due to other commitments. In light of these comments it may be that the strength of other commitments (which earlier in the project may have been worked around) became more influential as the relative motivations towards the project diminished.

#### *Involvement without a relationship with the space*

The main exception to the need for an existing relationship with the space was among event attendees and participants in a particular activity (such as mosaic work). In these instances, people would sometimes travel further distances to take part, motivated by personal interest in the event or activity, but would not tend to develop any further involvement. Furthermore, volunteers on-site would sometimes be present solely via a social relationship, such as visiting friends or relatives who attended single work events with existing group members. Again, this form of involvement was not related to any lasting association with the project, but did provide additional physical support (and occasionally financial support in the case of events) on an intermittent basis.

## 7.1.2 Circumstance of the space

A further characteristic those involved in the initiation of a project shared was a reaction to a particular circumstance attributed to the space. Among the projects studied this was manifest either as a threat to the space or the negative condition of the space.

### *Threat*

Both the Alexandra Road and Carfield Farm projects were explicitly driven by a collective response to a perceived threat to the site in the form of housing development.

*I. What were your motivations to get involved then when you started going?*

*R. Well I suppose originally it was anything to stop it being used for housing you know, and we all rallied together and did something.*

Anna, former member of Alexandra Road group

Due to the methodological barriers to exploring the motivations at Alexandra Road in any depth (the lack of former-members available and more retrospective nature of accounts), the experiences at Carfield Farm will be used to explore this factor in more detail.

All group members interviewed at Carfield Farm began their 'grand tour' narrative by referring explicitly to the threat of development that prompted the group's creation and many return to this subject repeatedly throughout the interview (usually without prompting).

*Well the...I think the best... best thing to do is probably start with a history of the group, because I mean the group only existed because the site was under threat.*

Jason, group member since project conception, Carfield Farm, initial response to 'grand tour' prompt

While many members reflected on other factors that had encouraged their involvement, the presence of threat remained a potent backdrop to other motivations, and was instrumental in both the establishment of the project (emerging directly from campaigns to protect the land) and the involvement of those who were involved at this point. For those involved at the start of the project, the descriptions are most vivid, recounting the details of the threat becoming known and the response of themselves and other people.

*I was involved - I mean it started with sort of rumblings in the neighbourhood that they were going to take this piece of land over to build on, which immediately raised my hackles, because, I had also heard – and it was only rumour again – but the fact that they wanted to put twenty houses on the site, and that there wouldn't be enough parking there. And because my allotment has road access – it's the second allotment on the lane at the top of the road here...*

Frances, leading figure, Carfield Farm,  
part of initial description of project

For those who joined (or became more active in) the group later, descriptions of threat tend to be less detailed and less direct.

*The group was formed just before I moved here and they.../so their aim was to stop building work being carried out on the farm site...*

Daniel, group member, Carfield Farm,  
part of initial description of project

In this instance the threat was expressed in much less personal terms, reflecting the more limited association with the space (Daniel was not an allotment holder). Differences in the way the threat could be described offer an effective illustration of the differences in association with the space and the effect this could have on feelings about the project and motivations for involvement. Four main relationships with the threat could be identified.

In some cases, the threat was ascribed specifically to the site, referring to a value they already held, or the loss of wildlife they know to be present (it is worth noting that this type of threat was only described clearly by two group members of the ten interviewed).



In other cases the threat of the development itself was described, with respect to the envisaged negative effects on the neighbourhood in which they lived.

*Joy. ...[we] just didn't want to see it being developed into a housing.../also sort of, from the point of view of the whole community sort of, twenty extra houses and sort of, the number of people and kinds and everything that that would bring in, into an area where the schools were really sort of top heavy. Erm, couldn't see it as being sort of anything that would be overall beneficial to the community.*

*Owen. More through traffic.*

*Joy. You know, the whole thing was just sort of like a negative idea to put housing there, you know, so...that was a, to protect the allotments, and to protect that bit of land, and to protect the housing, sort of the three things all.../and then of course we realised that, to stop it*

*Joy (leading figure) and Owen (group member), founding members of the group, discussion of project during photo-elicitation interview*

The latter comment in this quote illustrates the fact that many individuals conceived the threat on a number of different levels, which when combined provided a strong motivation to react.

For those living further from the site, the threat to the neighbourhood was acknowledged, but the personal feelings of threat were ascribed to the allotment site more generally.

*R. So people were a bit concerned about the amount of traffic but then with 20 houses on the end of a dead end isn't gonna make it any easier.*

*I Yeah*

*R BUT, the allotment holders were worried as well because we knew that this was allotment land and once they start selling off bits of allotment land they'd be looking elsewhere on the site to sell other bits because it's a... /it's a very... VERY nice site, it's a big site as well. And I mean I'm sure the council could get a hell of a lot of money for the land there, for build.../especially for housing.*

*Jason, group member, Carfield Farm,  
part of initial description of project*

In this instance Jason places himself within a collective group defined by use of the allotment site ("allotment holders"). Importantly, the majority of group members were also plot holders on the site, and although many were local

residents for whom the neighbourhood concerns could be valid, the threat to the wider allotment site instead emerged as the most commonly expressed concern among the group.

*The status of the Carfield Farm site wasn't known... known to be within the curtilage of the statutory allotments. But the intrusion by the builders to... to take two allotments... / to want to use two allotments to facilitate car parking for those houses erm, that was the, as I say, the thin end of the wedge.*

George, group member, Carfield Farm,  
part of narrative on origins of project,

*I can't remember how I became aware, maybe it was a flyer through the door - there was a possibility of, erm, the land being sold and used for housing. Erm, more for I think the integrity of the plot, the site as a whole, and the use of the wildlife, I didn't want that to happen, so I wanted to support the principles of doing something different with the land.*

Harriet, group member, Carfield Farm,  
part of initial description of project

In this latter quote, despite living in direct proximity of the space (overlooking the allotments), any specific concern regarding housing on the space was understated against the wider relevance of the site for the allotments (on which she had held a plot for ten years). In these cases the project site acted as a representation of the allotment site, and was protected as a representation of a wider cause. In some cases this is combined with more specific feelings regarding the project site itself, but in others it appears that the location or form of the site was immaterial at this stage.

The final type of threat is a more distant reference, describing more theoretical or principle-based motivations. These descriptions do not mention the object at risk specifically, but refer to supporting the cause more generally, either as an anti-developer stand or on political principle at the way the planning process was undertaken.

- 1. Okay. So in the beginning you were involved because you didn't want the houses to be built.*

*R. [correcting] I didn't want the land passing over by a back door route, and because it affects people...you know, and they were – somebody thinks they can get away with doing something 'cos they're bigger and blowzier, that's an objectionable thing isn't it.*

Alicia, group member, Carfield Farm

These differences in perception have important implications for the type, and strength, of feelings held towards the space. Direct place attachment - those describing their concern at the loss of the site for its intrinsic value - was limited. It was far more common for descriptions of threat to be focused on negative feelings towards the proposed use of the site (housing development), or general protectionism towards the allotments as a whole, rather than positive feelings towards the Carfield Farm site specifically. Such a response is unsurprising, given the physical context of the site. With no visual connection for most people (unless living directly next to the space), and no easy access, the site would only be experienced by those exploring the allotments, providing little opportunity for the development of emotional ties. Rather than affective attachment then, early involvement and the conception of the project seems to have been attributable more to feelings of place identity. The proposed development was either incongruent to how local people perceived their neighbourhood, or on a less place specific level, conflicted with their personal values of development on green space.

Interestingly, some of the motivation for involvement in the project seems to have arisen due to perceived threat to personal allotment sites, with development on one part of the allotment considered a possible precursor to further development across the plots.

*I didn't want the development, I didn't think it was appropriate, and I certainly didn't want them to whip my allotment, so that was my first bit of involvement really.*

Frances, leading figure, Carfield Farm,  
part of initial description of project

In these cases it appears that strong attachment and dependence (given that alternative sites would require greater travelling) on one space, resulted in action and involvement in the protection of another.

Given that early feelings about the project were defined more by the context of the site, rather than the site itself, it is particularly interesting that the project and group have developed as strongly as they have. It could be expected that without some form of direct attachment to the site, once the threat has subsided, participation would fall. While the group has seen some losses, these have been due to movement out of the area, rather than declining interest in the project. This has a number of possible implications. It could also be that those involved still perceive the threat to be present, and that this instead is motivating sustained participation. There is some evidence to suggest that the latter does remain a motivating factor among some group members.

*I suppose really it's set up to be fairly indefinite because...if the project stops then it's just open then to be built on.*

Daniel, group member, response to prompt about  
the future of the project

*I mean if they just stopped working on it because that bit of the battles won, probably the issue would crop up again. And actually it's quite an enjoyable thing to do.*

Alicia, group member, response to prompt about  
motivations for staying involved

As the second quote alludes to, in addition to the continuation of threat as a motivation, other factors could be identified that were contributing to their sustained involvement, in this instance as feeling of enjoyment. Supporting the notion that other factors became more prominent among the influences on involvement over time, it was evident that the relative importance of the threat to those who became members later in the course of the project appeared significantly lower. Although reactions to the development proposals had usually prompted involvement at the lower level of supporter or subscriber initially, other factors were instrumental in their decision to increase involvement to the level of group member, such as social relationships (see section 7.3) or changes in personal circumstances (see section 7.4.3).

*A response to the conditions of the space*

At both Kent Road and Denmark Road, the existing condition of the space was a focus of early efforts to encourage involvement. Although at Denmark Road amount of involvement achieved was minimal, members of the Kent Road group commonly referred to this condition when discussing their reasons for becoming involved. The majority of these comments referred to the visual appearance of the site, referencing litter, weeds and a general dissatisfaction with the visual quality of the space.

*We've been living here for nearly nine years, and ever since we came and lived here it was just a real eyesore, erm it was all overgrown, loads of litter erm, the council used to come once a year and they just used to trim it and then puff it with erm weedkillers and it ended up looking probably even worse.*

Kate, leading figure, Kent Road,  
part of initial project description

*And I think that's the main reason people got involved, because it was an eyesore.*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

In comparison to the role of threat in encouraging involvement, a response to the negative condition of the space was far more explicitly associated with the space itself (rather than being attributed to indirect effects). The scale at which the negative conditions were experienced at could vary however, from the site specific (conditions affecting use for example), to the more general (the impact of the appearance on the wider neighbourhood). One group member referred to a specific physical condition, in the form of slippery paths.

*I was concerned about the skidding problems that we had in winter, but, er, all of us wanted a bit of, you know, sort of, redevelopment in the way of flowers and bushes and stuff. It was in quite a dishevelled state, a lot of overgrown bushes and weeds and so on.*

Patrick, group member, Kent Road

The particular concern of the paths was not mentioned widely among those interviewed and although mentioned in early documentation outlining the

aims of the group, was never successfully addressed. Part of the reason for this was the scale of the task (see section 7.1.3), but it also appeared that the specificity of the issue made it less effective in encouraging support and involvement than the more general issue of the site's appearance.

The negative visual qualities of the space were emphasised by its prominent location, which in contrast to a more secluded site, meant that the space was experienced by a large number of people (providing the association element necessary for involvement). The extent of the impact that the appearance of the space had on involved individuals varied depending on the type of association however. For those who lived close to the site, and particularly those who used it regularly as a route to school or the bus stop, the negative experience would have been frequent. For a number of group members however, association was less direct and negative feelings towards the condition of the space were not necessarily combined with such regularity of experience. This suggests that while the negative condition provided a focus for activity, it did not always require a strong personal impact to encourage involvement. The improvement of a space was found to be an activity towards which people found it easy to feel supportive, and when combined with other factors (such as personal values and social relationships), the role of negative conditions could at times play a less direct role in the decision to become involved.

Although at Alexandra Road the main circumstance prompting involvement was threat (see sections 5.3 and 7.1.2), the condition of the space was also a concern for those who lived particularly close to the site.

- I. *So it was mainly to prevent the houses then in the first case, that you got involved.*
- R. *Yes, and to have something that, rather than just a grassed area, which if it had been left just as grass, after the animals had grazed it it would have just - well as it did, become a dumping ground. And look unsightly.*

Anna, Alexandra Road, former volunteer

*[Faint, illegible handwritten text]*

While the protection of green space in the neighbourhood appeared to be the prime concern among original members, the need to prevent the space from becoming “unsightly” (emphasised by its location among housing), was also seen as important and a motivations for involvement.

At Carfield Farm, the condition of the space was conceived differently due to the secluded location which precluded visual connections with the surrounding residential environment. The overgrown nature of the space in this case was perceived as a positive quality of the space to be protected (largely for its value to wildlife), and the less visible nature of the site reduced negative perceptions by surrounding residents. Despite these values, the need to provide a ‘community resource’ to support the group’s arguments for protection meant that improvements to the condition of the space (in terms of access and facilities) still became the main focus of the group's activities. The pressure to achieve these changes could be considered less strong than among more visible spaces, where improvement of the space was a primary aim rather than a means to an end. Over time it became clear that the improvement of the space attained a more prominent role in the efforts and motivations of the group as goals and aspirations were established (see section 7.1.3).

### 7.1.3 Aspirations for change

While 'association' and 'condition' provided reasons for action, it was the establishment of clear aspirations that provided the focus for structured activity and the formation of a group who would lead the project.

#### *Motivations based on aspiration*

Once an aspiration for changes to a space had been conceived in response to its circumstances, and shared with other people (through the use of public meetings, event displays, posters and flyers for example), relationships with the space could be seen to change. Rather than simply being seen as the source or focus of a problem to be overcome, the spaces became perceived in terms of the opportunities they offered for the creation of a community space.

*I had my eye on this plot for quite a while [smiling] and started to think well actually this could be a really nice community garden.*

Kate, leading figure, Kent Road

Although direct observation of the initiation of a project was not possible within the scope of the research, these changes were identified in the contrasts between descriptions of a space before and after project conception. While descriptions of the spaces prior to becoming the focus of a project were dominated by physical characteristics (usually negative) or were limited due to a lack of direct experience (in the case of Carfield Farm), descriptions of the project were more evocative. They combined descriptions of the changes that had been achieved (see section 7.1.3) with a strong sense of aspiration for what the space could become.

By providing an 'envisioned' space that could be created by members of the community, the sites achieved a distinctive identity that was based not on their existing qualities but on this vision. In this sense a particular form of attachment to place was developed, which rather than being related to



positive experience of a space (as sometimes implied necessary within related literature) was related to the *prospect* of positive experience and the change that could be achieved. This form of 'aspirational attachment' is seldom considered when exploring factors influencing place attachment (see section 7.1).

Personal aspirations for a project could vary in their detail and form, but in order to create a group focussed enough to achieve the creation of a community garden, the establishment of basic shared aspirations was important. These general aspirations could be identified in a number of ways, ranging from formal aims and objectives within a constitution drawn up when a group was established to pursue the aims (in the case of Carfield Farm) to more informal discussions noted in the minutes or notes of early meetings (in most other cases).

The focus of these group aims would vary depending on the context of the space and the circumstance that prompted action. In the case of a threat, the initial stimulus for creating a community garden was to increase the perceived value of the space to the community to strengthen arguments against its destruction. The promotion of community action and use of the space was therefore conceived primarily as a response to the threat rather than an end in itself. This is reflected explicitly in the case of Carfield Farm's constituted aims which include:

- c) *To allow only sufficient limited community access to site as is necessary to establish an alternative usage to housing*

*Friends of Heeley and Meersbrook Allotments Constitution, 2002*

In the case of responses to negative conditions the stimulus was more direct, with the creation of a more positive space being the primary aim, rather than a secondary tool. The distinction between these two scenarios has important implications for motivations. Where the creation of a garden was conceived as a means to an end, motivations for the actual creation of a space had the potential to be weaker, relative to the less-than-enthusiastic nature of the aspiration illustrated above. In practice however this did not appear to be the

case and although inspired by the prospect of the threat, most members of the group soon developed a strong interest in the space that could be created, and the opportunities it held.

The establishment of aims, and the subsequent design of a community garden space that would meet these aims, created a series of tasks and activities that were required to achieve these ambitions. It would be these tasks (see section 6.1) that would provide the focus for involvement with the group through the course of the garden's creation.

Some groups seemed to avoid clearly prescribed goals and deadlines for fear that such rigidity in a project could deter potential casual volunteers from taking part. After describing the informal nature of group meetings and the lack of clear decision-making that took place, one member of the Kent Road group tried to rationalise this behaviour;

*But I don't know whether that's only our perception of you know, what the participants would want out of it, that if you, maybe if you frighten people off by being too prescriptive about timescales about 'oh this has got to be done' and 'make sure these are done or planted before the end of the..', I don't know. You know, because they're volunteers you cant sort of the, if people only want to come for half an hour or whatever, you've gotta you know, you can't [...] you've got to go with what people want to do.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road

The informal nature of meetings may also have been influenced by a lack of skills or confidence among members to take clear decisions on progress (which appeared to be the case during some meetings), but the result of a lack of clear aims appeared to be a lessening of focus among group members. This lack of focus could be seen to contribute to the gradual lack of momentum that the project suffered. As meetings became less frequent, those attending workdays would rarely be aware of the tasks to be undertaken until they arrived on the site, and therefore relied on direction from Trust staff who would direct work. Although jobs that needed doing, and further works that had been thought of would be discussed informally at workdays, the ad hoc nature of these conversations precluded a clear shared idea of the work required to complete the initial shared goal. In the event,

much of the work to complete the lower part of the site was initiated by the facilitating leading figure, with a limited amount of involvement relative to earlier stages of the project.

Clear deadlines and focussed aims may have deterred some people, through a fear of commitment towards a voluntary activity (section 7.4.2), but could also be seen to have a positive effect on activity levels of those already involved. Within the context of activity on site, rather than discouraging involvement, it would appear that deadlines and firm guidance actually encouraged activity among some participants, giving them a greater sense of purpose and a renewed motivation.

Activity levels among the Carfield Farm group rose considerably during the period when the herb beds were being created, in an attempt to complete the work in time for a community planting event. While the event itself attracted only a few non-members (mainly family and friends), the incentive it provided the group before hand encouraged additional workdays, individual effort in between sessions and a number of additional meetings.

At workdays, a certain amount of structure and purpose was also seen as a good thing, particularly among those with limited confidence in the activities being undertaken.

*R. ...I'm quite happy to help, you know, if I think, if I feel as though I'm doing something, and it's worthwhile, you know, all to the good but if I'm just stood there like a spare part, I don't like that.*

*I. Right. So when things are going on do you kind of find things to do...?*

*R. If there's a planting day, something like that, yeah I generally asked Thom or Bill or Dave, the two lads that... basically I've chatted to when we've been working. I'd say right, what would you like doing now, and I will just get on with it, you know, be it wheelbarrowing or...[tails off]*

Tina, Kent Road, Group member,  
discussing roles within the project

The lack of such focus in the case of attempts to revive involvement at Alexandra Road were described explicitly as a factor that prevented further involvement among one local resident.

R. *I think if people, if there was some proper project on it, more people would get involved. It's just when it's a bit haphazard and...*

I. *What do you mean by proper project?*

R. *Well, if there was a meeting and people got together and said well you know, we'll creosote all this fence and, if maybe individuals had jobs like, well we'll take all this side down here and weed it, and erm, you know, erm, somebody collect litter and whatever. I think people don't feel motivated - I know I didn't, feel motivated.*

Anna, former volunteer who attended meeting to  
revive the group, Alexandra Road

### *The achievement of aspirations*

Initial incentives for a community garden project were rarely associated with direct positive experiences of a space but the creation of a community garden enabled the development of such experiences. Prior to the projects, such feelings had been restricted by either inaccessibility, a lack of reasons to use it or the negative condition of the space. By addressing all three of these constraints, a community garden project provided opportunities for use that enabled the development of positive attachments.

While visual improvement of the space could encourage positive feelings among the involved and non-involved alike, it was the opportunities for use of the space that appeared to have the strongest relationship with both attachment and involvement. The activities of a project, which were mostly site-based with the exception of meetings and specialist activities (such as mosaic workshops), provided a reason for people to spend time in the space rather than simply passing by or through it. For some the positive experience simply of being in the space was valued.

*You know, how good it is to be out there and how you can have a green space like that in the middle of Sheffield and feel you know, that you're in the middle of some sort of oasis!*

Frances, Carfield Farm, group member

While it was hard to establish how these feelings related to motivations to continue involvement, it appeared that the positive experience of being in the space acted to encourage attendance at workdays by ensuring it was perceived as a positive and enjoyable experience. The relative effect of this form of attachment in the longer term appears limited however, when considered against other factors. Particularly relevant is the fact that activity among group members and volunteers tended to be notably higher during the early stages of a project when the spaces was still either largely inaccessible or unappealing in character. This suggests that the 'aspirational attachment' proposed previously may provide a stronger motivating force than attachment to the actual outcomes, but also highlights the importance of experiencing change.

Taking part in an activity that resulted in visible change to a site was described in a particularly positive way among those who had had a physical involvement with the project. The satisfaction that was created by achieving perceptible change was described by some as one of the factors that encouraged them to continue take part:

*...it were just the fact of going out and helping people, i.e. doing work and looking at how nice it was when it was finished.*

Tina, group member, Kent Road (response to prompt on motivations for involvement)

In some cases satisfaction could be inspired by general maintenance tasks, such as picking litter or mowing the grass:

*...I had access to a nice petrol lawn mower to borrow when I wanted, so I cut the grass all the time. And I did it and it looked lovely when I used to cut the grass, it looked lovely. And I made sure it was kept like that. And then you'd drive down and you know [mimics looking to one side with satisfied face], there's something very satisfying about grass cutting [smiling]*

Alan, former group member, Alexandra Road

It was more common however for satisfaction to be attributed to the achievement of a particular task, such as the creation of a garden feature or the process of planting.

- I. *Yeah, so what kind of things have you been involved in doing?*
- R. *The planting... the planting, the paths -he S shaped path. Dave and myself did quite a lot of that, putting the boundaries in the top half. And I enjoyed that because it was a physical thing and you stood back at the end of the session, yes, you could see where you'd been.*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

One particular narrative from an individual who had taken part in one of the mosaic projects on Kent Road, expressed the potential for strong feelings of attachment through the personal involvement in the creation of a specific feature for the space.

- I. *How do you feel when you see it [a mosaic bollard she helped to create] now?*
- R. *I... I feel great... I mean I was... I will make detours to go passed it.*
- I. *Do you?*
- R. *You know, and give it a little rub, you know! And the one at the bottom in fact, right down the bottom, so it's got a bald head now because it's been chipped away, which, you know... so I keep a close eye on that one (laughs). I feel very, you know... very kind of possessive and making sure that it's okay and stuff like that.*
- I. *What would you do if you saw that it got damaged more?*
- R. *I think I'd want to go and repair it, you know. Yes, yeah, I'd want to repair it.*

Naomi, volunteer at mosaic sessions, Kent Road

It is notable that she uses the phrase "I'd want to repair it", suggesting the desire to take such an action, but perhaps acknowledging the fact that this would not necessarily materialise into physical action. Indeed, in the two years following the conversation, the mosaic bollard in question remained in need of repair, and the damage continued to worsen. Naomi was about to move house when the interview took place, and did not take part in any future work activities on the site. This raises important questions regarding the presupposed relationship between attachment to a space (or a particular feature within that space) and the level of involvement in the maintenance of that space that can be expected to result.

## *Interest*

As well as being experienced by those who were involved, change on the site would also be experienced in a more passive sense by those using or observing the space on a regular basis.

The observation of such change could indicate to less involved residents that the group was still active, sustaining the positive feelings associated with an awareness of community involvement. In contrast, a lack of activity on site was seen by a number of members as a factor contributing to a lack of interest in the project, particularly among more peripheral members and volunteers.

*... 'cos I know that was one of the thing we were going to do to try is raise the profile and remind people that we're still operating and – but I think one of the things that might help to re-inspire people is if... you know, if a few kind of interesting things start to materialise.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road

This effect on how the project was seen by other residents was also mentioned by another group member, focussing on the need to see visible change to maintain motivation both within the group, and support for it more widely.

*R. ... sometimes when we've been up there you can't really see that you've actually done anything because of the nature of the thing.*

*I. Yeah, I know yeah, from being on days I've...*

*R. Yeah, you think, well we've spent two hours and it doesn't look as though anybody's been there, and I think from... from other residents' point of view, sometimes they've felt the same, well there's not much happened.*

*I. Right. So people have kind of mentioned it?*

*R. Yeah, yeah, people have said, well there's not much happening, but it's like... again because it's slow progress, because obviously things have got to grow...*

Tina, group member, Kent Road, part of a discussion  
about activities undertaken on workdays

In this case the lack of change on the site is attributed to the nature of the project. In some cases activities, such as seeding, would not create an immediate effect, and consequently the sense of progress perceived by those observing the project can be lower than the actual achievements on site.

### *Challenges to achievement*

There are a series of more specific barriers that individuals or groups have faced, which if not overcome may have restricted further progress of the project, and consequently further involvement. In some instances the barrier itself may be sufficient to prevent further involvement if not overcome, while in other instances the relationship is less clear.

One example would be the bureaucracy encountered when trying to develop a project. All projects studied encountered such problems as all were owned by the City Council, and required permission for improvements to take place. The prospect of having to acquire licences and arrange leases for example, can be a daunting prospect for many. One group member recalls the groups reaction to the legal negotiations required to enable the project to go ahead.

*'Cos Peter's been involved in that a lot, 'cos of these legal wrangings initially, we were quite horrified that it was holding everything up.*

Patrick, group member, Kent Road, discussing roles within the group

It was suggested that difficulties that had been encountered in the course of the project may have dissuaded some people from getting involved. Whilst recounting an incident where scaffold had been erected on the site to service the adjacent property and group members had had to discuss damage to the site with the workmen.

*...I don't know whether things like that kind of, you know, put people off, you know, if that looked like it was too complicated for them to be bothering if they were negotiating.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road



The demands of fundraising were another challenge that most group members seemed to consider a barrier to the progress of the project (due to the timescales involved and uncertain outcomes of applications). Although both Kent Road and Carfield Farm had been very successful in attracting funds during the early stages of the project, it became evident at Carfield Farm that many of the ideas and aspirations that the group had were being restricted from realisation due to a lack of financial resources. This was further complicated by restrictions within funding schemes that enabled certain aspects of a project to be funded but not others, and the difficulties found in managing a range of different grants, each with their own evaluation process. As well as preventing progress on the site, the administration created by the need for funds could also detract from the sense of enjoyment felt by otherwise enthusiastic individuals (see section 7.2.2)

### *Disillusionment*

As well as the direct barriers to the achievement of aspirations that these challenges create, a more indirect effect can be the disillusionment and frustration resulting from the limits to progress achieved.

*...I mean we still have got a lot of work to do. I see that, I mean you only need to look at it to see that really only a third of it has been – I know there's other stuff that's happened, but I mean all the ideas we had about railings, lamp posts and I mean the mosaics have been done last year, but we had so many ideas, and I just get the sense – and maybe I'm wrong but I just get the sense that we've lost our way a little bit with it [...] I suppose that's inevitable with any project, that you know, there's a real sense of optimism when you first start thinking that you're gonna transform it quickly, and the time factor has definitely been something now. It's three years down the line and we're still, people aren't seeing enough movement.*

Julia, group Member, Kent Road, discussing the need  
for greater involvement

The slow progress experienced in this case was common among projects, and mentioned by a number of group members. The need to experience positive outcomes from the effort invested in a project can be undermined by delays and a limit to progress possible within the resources of a limited group

of people. The description of 'excitement' during the early stages of a project, where improvements to the site are new and obvious contrasts starkly with the later experience of gradual progress, and has stark implications for a project in its maintenance phase where efforts are orientated towards managing a site in its completed state rather than making visible alterations and improvements.

The nature of community garden projects focussed on planting or a semi-natural environment, means that the site itself is constantly changing. In many cases, a considerable proportion of effort is focussed on managing this change to sustain a site that both looks attractive and can be used as intended. At Carfield Farm a number of clearings had been created, providing routes through the site and space for events. Mulching of the ground restricted weed-growth but by no means prevented it, creating a constant task of removing encroaching weeds.

*There's such a lot to do up there, especially at this time of year, if you don't get enough people then its just depressing when you go back and everything's grown back.*

Frances, group member, Carfield Farm

The sense of drudgery that is associated with such maintenance tasks, in contrast to the excitement and interest created by changes to the site, has significant implications for the long-term management of community spaces.

While group members who have been part of the project for some time may develop feelings of frustration due to limited change, disillusionment can also be more immediate, where new volunteers have expectations of the experience of volunteering which fail to be met.

*I mean when we have a work day it's the same faces. Now and again you get an odd... and you think, oh I've not seen those before. And... but then possibly they won't come again. You might see them once... because possibly it's not what they anticipated it being. I think people have got an idea of, oh well we do this, this and this and in actual fact it's something quite mundane like putting the bark chippings down and... and some people don't find that that's achieved anything.*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

It was difficult to confirm such experiences with volunteers who had only attended a single session for methodological reasons (see Chapter 3), but on several occasions it was observed that new volunteers appeared uncomfortable with the activities they were doing. This could be exaggerated where the particular task being undertaken was not conducive to conversation with other members, or the group were pre-occupied with other matters and did not display conscious efforts to integrate new members into the group.

Another way projects could fail to meet the aspirations of group members was over the longer-term, related to how the space was managed and used (or abused) once complete.

*There was a notice board on, like there is at the farm you know, they put notices in it. But that got vandalised.....And people started taking their dogs on. And of course, gradually... gradually it got sort of, it got a bit neglected. People lost heart I think when they were.../it wasn't only dogs going on, there's a large cat population [laughing]. Mine don't go out into there, but there's a large cat population round here, and it's a myth that cats bury whatever they do, because they don't they just do it. And people who were gardening got a bit disheartened by that, that everything was covered in cat muck. And children were playing on it, which, fair enough, but they started scuffing all the grass up so that was a.../and then when the ball went in the plants, because they didn't respect the plants they just trampled through them, they just broke things down, you know...*

Anna, former participant, Alexandra Road

This narrative, from a close neighbour of the space who had been involved in the original project, reveals a range of outcomes that were not anticipated by those creating the garden, and which over time led to a feeling of disillusionment with the space. It is important to note that most of the problems that were experienced with the garden were not issues that could easily be resolved by the group, a factor that appears likely to have added to the sense of disillusionment.

## 7.2 Personal values and interests

A common reference when discussing the motivations for taking part in a project was the connection the project (or a specific activity) had to personal values and interests. The most common themes to be identified are outlined briefly below.

### *A horticultural interest*

One of the most common interests that group members tended to share was an interest in gardening.

Although the creation of a community garden would entail a range of different activities (see section 6.1), the horticultural aspect of the project was the element that was most commonly referred to, both in terms of aspirations for the site (forming a major element of the designed spaces) and the activities undertaken. Consequently, the projects would often attract individuals who already had a passion for gardening, or were keen to develop their skills.

*And so, sort of, well I've always been keen on gardening and it's become like a real passion and so I started to...well having only a small garden myself...*

Kate, leading figure, Kent Road, part of initial description of project

In this instance a passion for gardening and the restricted opportunities that the home environment provided for pursuing this interest were an explicit motivation for initiating the project. At Carfield Farm the interest that many members already had in their own allotment plots provided an basis for many of the activities to be incorporated into the community garden as it developed, including the incorporation of herb beds and a focus on the retention and restoration of crops associated to the sites past (including raspberry beds and apple trees). This interest among members formed the basis for many of the conversations held during workdays and meetings, both

concerning the site itself and more widely in the sharing of general horticultural knowledge.

### *Environmental values*

In addition to horticultural interests, a concern for the protection of the environment was also common among those involved.

At Carfield Farm these values were associated explicitly with one of the main aims of the project, the protection of a 'wild' area of the site. The protection of this natural area, and the ecological benefits it provided was a prime motivation for a number of the original members, and an interest in the wildlife that was found was shared among group members more widely.

*...we haven't really done a great deal for that section because that's just off the edge of the orchard is where the foxes are. And one of the main reasons for saving the site was we wanted to keep most of it as it was with minimum intervention. Because that's... that's why people appreciated, you know.*

Jason, group member, Carfield Farm

At Kent Road, although the aims of the project were more aesthetic in nature, the project was still associated by some members as an opportunity to support their environmental values by encouraging nature to the site.

*But I mean, one of the things that appealed to me about the site, was that we were going to try and attract wildlife, you know butterflies and bumble bees and all that kind of stuff. Knowing about the decline of those sort of things, that'd be another motivational factor for me to try and keep it going.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road

### *Community values*

The importance of community involvement was, by definition, central to the aims of the projects and was reflected among group members by the

importance placed on engaging local residents and community members in the process.

*And the idea always was that we'd get local people involved in actually you know, sort of doing the spade work and becoming involved in the design and the planting and so that's kind of the community aspect, yeah.*

Kate, group member, Kent Road

In many cases this attribute was seen to corresponding with personal values towards community action, sometimes expressed as a feeling of "civic responsibility".

*Erm...[long pause] I think that civic feeling I was telling you about earlier, you know. I want... I see it, I do see it as a communal space. Erm... I would like it to be a garden, I like gardens, I like flowers [...] But I also felt like if I... if I... if I want gardens and things to walk by and these kind of things, then I need to put in you know. So I couldn't say, 'oh well I think it's a good idea but I'll have to stay at home', I felt... no I need to go and do it, I need to be part of it*

Naomi, volunteer, Kent Road, response to prompt on motivations

A number of people explained that they had been keen to get involved in some form of community activity prior to their involvement in a project, and the community gardens had provided a focus for this intention.

*... I mean I think realistically we were looking to get involved in something, so if this hadn't come along we'd have got involved in something else, you know, it would have been as I say right thing, right time.*

Dominic, group member, Kent Road

In these cases the aims of the project appeared to be less important in their decision to become involved than a general desire to take part in something. In this respect the role of their relationship with the space in encouraging their involvement could be seen to be less important than a general value towards community activity and the need to be part of something.

This value placed on the process of communal action itself was common among those involved, and was also perceived by some as a quality lacking in those who did not take part in the project.

*They just... you know there's this apathy of, oh well somebody will do it.  
But... and if everybody thought like that nobody would do it obviously...*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

### *Creative interest*

This interest was of particular relevance to the projects which incorporated an artistic element in the creation of the garden, most commonly in the form of a mosaic project. The organisation of such a project was observed as a particularly effective way of attracting involvement among a wider number of people.

*R. There WERE a lot of people came to.../ I mean there weren't people coming to the meeting but the actual work days there were a LOT of people came round to erm... the Meersbrook Pavilion to do them.*

*I. Oh right, at the open...*

*R. Yeah.*

*I. Right, people that wouldn't... that hadn't been to the...*

*R. Well people that have not been to the meetings or the planting days day as well. I think it's because it was a craft thing...*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

The expansion of activities beyond the more regular tasks associated with gardening and working on site, encouraged a large number of participants who were attracted by the opportunity to create a mosaic feature. Although it was unusual for these activities, that were often undertaken away from the space itself, to result in further activity with the project, they did provide an opportunity to raise awareness of the project and provide a wider sense of involvement in the space. A notable result of such activities was the direct association with the resulting feature that could be fostered among those having taken part. The involvement of school children in the creation of mosaic tiles for the steps at the top of Kent Road (where parents congregate to collect their children) resulted in a great deal of interest and the direct association with their own tiles among school children following their installation on site. The project at Kent Road also had the effect of

encouraging more active involvement among some group members who had previously started to drift away from the project. Sophie, who during her interview had described herself as “more of an ex-member”, became involved in the organisational meetings that were arranged to organise the art project, explicitly because of a keen interest in mosaic work.

### 7.2.1 Shared values

By influencing the likelihood of individuals to become involved in a project, interests and values would often be similar among group members. This commonality of values could be seen to lead to a social environment in which individuals could relate to other members, share knowledge and experiences, and feel comfortable. This connection to others contributed to feelings of belonging and shared identity that could be seen to reinforce the group. At Carfield Farm the identity was particularly strong, in relation to connections with an existing ‘allotment community’, and this was acknowledged by one of the more recent members who suggested a lesser involvement due to a lack of identification with this subject.

*R. So there's a core group of people who have been involved from the beginning and are dead keen. And also, you know, they're.../although I think Alicia's got an allotment as well, but they're sort of keen allotment people, I suppose...*

*I. Yeah, there does seem to be a lot of allotment holders in the group.*

*R. Yeah, and they're the mainstay, which is understandable I suppose, it's an allotment thing, so you know, perhaps I'm you know, not quite as involved as that, drop in and out of it.*

Jason, group member, Carfield Farm

On one level, a lack of identification with the shared identity of a group could be associated with a general lack of interest. This issue was raised by a former group member at Alexandra Road who had put considerable effort into encouraging people to get involved in the project in the past:



*R. That's why I got involved [gardening]. It's what I do, for me, for fun. It gives me enjoyment.*

*I. Sure. That seems to be common in people I've talked to that are involved. R. A lot of people don't have that interest in gardening*

Jim, former group member (now moved away), Alexandra Road

On another level however, those who have an interest in the project and its actions may still feel outside the main 'shared identity' of the group due to a lack of confidence in the topics being discussed and tasks being undertaken (see section 7.4.3).

### **7.2.2 Enjoyment of involvement**

By relating to existing values and interests, the activities undertaken as part of the project would often be considered enjoyable by those taking part. Participation in a project at the level of physical participant (attending the mosaic session for example) or event attendee appeared to be particularly motivated by the prospect of undertaking an activity for personal enjoyment. In these instances, the involvement appeared to be conceived primarily as a recreational activity, and as such needed to be enjoyable to fulfil the motivations. As a group member, although feelings of enjoyment were often expressed with relation to the activities undertaken, it appeared that other factors (such as social relationships and supporting the aims of the project) played a more dominant role in the decision to be involved. This was reflected in the acceptance of group members to undertake tasks that were perceived as less enjoyable but were seen as necessary to achieve the aspirations of the project.

Many of the administrative aspects of a project can inspire such feelings, considered as necessary tasks that must be undertaken to enable the project to progress. A couple who decided to decrease their level of involvement in the organisational aspect of their project offered a number of reasons, one of which being the burden of administrative work that the project created. The

following narrative illustrates the tension that can arise between the achievement of personal values through the outcomes of the project, and the less enjoyable tasks that are required to achieve them.

*Joy. I still go to the meetings when I can. But I just, I was spending a lot of time sort of stuffing envelopes and filling in stuff, running round, you know.*

*Owen. There's more admin involved. Those funding applications. They took hours of our lives didn't they. Bloody hoops you have to jump through to get...*

*Joy. Well I mean it was, yeah, but I mean it was worth it. We got the money in the end.*

*I. Yes. It's a lot of time.*

*Joy. It is, you couldn't go on...*

*I. like you say, you're volunteering you're time.*

*Joy. Well, you know you are, and it's to sort of something that you believe in so you don't, you know, that's fine. It's just time is finite.*

Joy (leading figure) and Owen (group member), Carfield Farm

In this instance the need to complete funding applications to provide the funds to continue developing the project were a particularly unwelcome task, viewed as a necessity for achieving the project aims, but outside the initial expectations of involvement. While the comments above relate to both the time demanded as well as a lack of enjoyment it is notable that they are not ascribed to the time spent on the site, which was perceived as a more enjoyable and satisfying experience. Among all the tasks undertaken by groups, funding applications had the least immediate impact on the development of the site, with the effort of completing them separated from the satisfaction of gaining funds (where successful) by sometimes long periods of time, and further still from the on-site impact of actually spending the money. The risk of becoming tired of the more mundane element of the project was increased where responsibility was left to a small number of individuals. In these instances the extent of tasks undertaken to support the organisation of the project in relation to the amount of time spent undertaking more enjoyable aspects could impede enthusiasm.

### 7.2.3 Acquiring skills

As well as offering the chance to undertaken tasks and activities that were considered enjoyable, the prospect of gaining new skills in an area of interest was also evident as a motivation among some members.

*We've learnt some gardening. At the time I don't think myself or [partner's name] were particularly clued up on gardening, we'd only just moved here and the garden looked like a... erm... we could have filmed a first world war Somme drama with all the holes and mud and rubbish left lying around by our previous occupants here. So it seemed also a good idea to get some skills...*

Dominic, group member, Kent Road

Members motivated by a desire to learn new skills would rarely take a leading role in the project, instead tending to follow the lead of other more skilled members both at workdays, and during discussions at meetings. In the case of leading figures a degree of expertise in the issues relating to the site (be they horticultural or ecological) appeared to be crucial in providing the confidence to lead a project. Where expertise was lacking, the need for support was subsequently increased.

## 7.3 Social relationships

### 7.3.1 Development of social relationships

The collective activities that a community garden provided offered a context in which social relations could be developed, and the perception of the projects as a social opportunity emerged as a motivating factor among a large number of those involved. The nature of activities provided a range of opportunities for social relationships to be developed. The regular nature of activities provided a context in which social relationships could develop over time, and the type of activities that were undertaken were described as conducive to informal conversation.

*... when you're digging away or kind of active you know, it's not that one on – you know, it's quite natural to start talking to people, you don't have to maintain all the eye contact, you can just dip in and out of different sort of conversations in that sense.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road

Taking part in a workday provided a situation in which conversations and discussion could take place over an extended period of time, in a way that would not be possible in more casual neighbourly encounters. During workdays, lengthy conversations, sometimes related to the project, but often more sociable in nature were regularly observed (and taken part in).

Even where involvement had been limited to attendance of a initial meeting, and had not been followed by voluntary activity on site, the beneficial effects of meeting other local residents who may otherwise have remained strangers could be identified.

- I. *Did you know any of the people that were there at that meeting?*
- R. *Well I knew an odd one or two. I know the people across the road - I don't know their names [laughing] unfortunately, but yet I know the lady and gentleman from across the road. And Tom obviously from the farm, erm, and I know the lady from the house above, I speak to her, but I didn't know her husband. But since coming to the meeting, I have*

*spoken to him when I've seen him. I mean, not.../just to say hello, you know, 'how are you?', and things like that. Erm, so, you know, that's one positive isn't it.*

Anna, former group member, Alexandra Road,  
discussing attempts to revive the project.

In some instances these social opportunities were expressed as a reason for becoming involved in the project.

*So... so yeah, there was that aspect I was interested in as well, sort of doing something locally that was part of the community and getting to know people in the community.*

Holly, group member, Carfield Farm, part of  
narrative on motivations for involvement

*...and all the obvious sort of stuff about meeting – you know, I mean I've actually met so many neighbours through it it's incredible*

Julia, group member, Kent Road, part of a narrative  
about motivations for involvement

The role of social opportunities as an incentive for involvement was largely confined to members who became involved in a group later in its development however, and was less evident among those who had been involved since the conception of the project. Among founding members, although personal satisfaction gained through social opportunities was often expressed, it was evident that the fundamental aims of the projects and their alignment with personally held values (see section 7.2) were stronger influences on their decision to support the project. While the social opportunities may not have been instrumental in their decisions to become involved, they appeared to have a considerable influence on their perception of the project as a positive activity to take part in, and the benefits gained were expressed by a large number of participants.

*From a social point of view it's been nice. I mean I probably would never have erm got to know Kate or Peter or any of the other helpers if I hadn't have gone up there.*

Sophie, group member, Kent Road

*When you go along on a Sunday morning, there's a group of like minded people there, you know, its just - people go to the pub for a social gathering, it's a similar sort of thing in many respects. It's just that you don't – you get to bed a bit earlier!*

Alicia, group member, Carfield Farm

As a project progressed, and some of the initial motivations for becoming involved were fulfilled, particularly in relation to a response to the circumstance of the space (section 7.1.2), some members explained that the social aspect of the project had become more important to them and had become a stronger motivating factor in their continued involvement.

*R. [following a description of the development threat as a motivating factor] But that's secondary now I think, it's because of the sort of project it is, the sort of things people around here can get involved in that I'm more interested in now.*

*I. So what kind of things are they then? How would you describe the project as it is now?*

*R. Erm. I think there's two sides to that now. I think, sort of socially I get a lot out of it, I think they're a great group of people, you know, all completely different in their own way.*

Frances, leading figure, Carfield Farm

The establishment and reinforcement of social relationship that developed over the course of a project could provide group members with a feeling of belonging, fostered by the collective effort to achieve a shared goal. This feeling of belonging was described positively by group members, and for some provided an explicit motivation for their involvement.

*But also getting involved and being part of something, you know, not being an individual, being part of a group.*

Tina, Kent Road, group member, part of response to prompt on motivations for involvement

### *Sense of responsibility to other members*

One of the effects of the social relationship present within a group, was a sense of commitment towards other members and the feeling of responsibility that this could create.

- I. *So do you find yourself losing motivation sometimes due to the fact that things haven't been done?*
- R. *I think I could easily do that, erm....yeah I could easily do that. But I suppose 'cos I feel I've got a conscience towards it really. I mean its always...you always feel that when you see other members, or neighbours, whatever, sort of giving their time you kind of think 'oh it lets them down as well', so there's that sense of kind of the bigger – not letting the group down as well. I've felt very conscious if I haven't attended days for whatever reason, I've kind of felt guilty about it, and that I should be there, and that I've got to have justifiable excuse. So I've got a responsibility towards the group really, so I wouldn't pull out at this stage anyway 'cos I feel too much of a commitment to it.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road, following  
narrative expressing disillusionment

In this instance, the feeling of commitment towards other group members was expressed far more explicitly than any sense of commitment towards the space or the underlying aims of the project. The neighbourhood context of the projects provided a situation in which group members would often be encountered outside the activities of the project itself, adding to feelings of guilt if activities had been missed. The need to justify a lack of attendance at a meeting emphasises this point. This context contrasts with many other forms of volunteering (including the environmental restoration work that much of the existing literature is based upon), where the location of the activity is remote from the home environment. In these cases the social relationships with other volunteers is more likely to be confined to the activity itself, whereas in the context of community gardens, the existing relationship with the space and other members that often exists appears to create a more immediate sense of responsibility.

## Conflict

While most references to the social relationships with a group were positive in nature, one comment highlighted the potential negative influence that friction within the group could create. While such occurrences were rarely observed, differences in opinion regarding the direction of the project could create conflict among members, which was seen in this instance as conflicting with the more positive aspect of the project.

*Joy. Also sometimes it got quite annoying at the meetings. When it got into things about perimeter fences.*

*I. Yeah. That was a particularly controversial issue as I remember!*

*Joy. [laughing]*

*Owen. [in serious tone] It could get heated. You know, if you're doing something for pleasure and enjoyment, and it's taking up a lot of your leisure time, you want it.../you don't want aggravation you know, do you.*

Joy and Owen, group members, Carfield Farm

Conflict within the group, as well as presenting a potential barrier to progress, was also seen here as conflicting with one of the initial motivations for getting involved, enjoyment. The decision-making process in a participative context is likely to bring about differences of opinion, particularly over a project timescale of several years, and resolving such differences can prove difficult to achieve, leading to frustration.

### 7.3.2 Role of existing social relationships

While some of those involved expressed social opportunities as a motivation for becoming involved, for others it was the presence of existing social relationships that influenced involvement rather than the desire to achieve them. Among all projects, existing links between group members could be identified and these links emerged as one of the strongest influences determining who became involved in a project.



At Carfield Farm, the importance of social relationships was illustrated in the recruitment of a number of new members shortly before the research began. The group was concerned that numbers were not sufficient to develop the project successfully, and it was decided to try and increase the size of the core group. To achieve this, a number of individuals already known to one of the organisers were targeted, having already shown a degree of interest by attending events on the site.

*We did sit down last year [...] and we decided that it was, we opened it up a bit....you know, you need new ideas and new energy don't you, I mean it's important I think. So we did.../we talked about who'd shown an interest in the workdays and turned up at events and people....that I could lean on really!*

Frances, leading figure, Carfield Farm

The importance of the existing connection was highlighted when talking with those members who had been successfully encouraged to join.

*Right, well, I think I got into it fairly late really, it was already to some extent up and running when I became involved. I suppose the reason I became involved was partly....pressure from a neighbour who was in the group [slight laugh], who er, I thought, you know, deserved a bit of support, so I went along with it for that reason.*

Wendy, group member, Carfield Farm

Existing relationships provided a basis upon which encouragement could be based, providing a more direct connection to the project that could easily be fostered with individuals who were not personally known.

*So, it was like, it was more people who knew each other really well, who got involved. Because at the end of the day the first people who you go to, and because you can cajole them, you can, you know what I mean, to come along and do that. Trying to get Jo Bloggs who you don't know to turn out is just [sigh]...*

Jim, former group member, Alexandra Road,  
discussing workdays the group held

This comment, as well as highlighting the importance of existing social connections in encouraging involvement, also indicates the difficulties that can be experienced trying to get people outside a particular social community to get involved. These people may have lived close to the site (in this

instance many would have lived closer than the interviewee) but were considered hard to engage in the project because of the lack of existing social relationships. As well as providing a tool by which existing members could try and encourage involvement, existing relationships could also encourage involvement without the need for such pressure. A number of founding members ascribed their initial involvement in the project to existing relationships without any evidence of active encouragement.

*Here is somebody who you know even at that stage we sort of liked and respected, who wanted to make a bit of a difference, wanted to do something. That sounds like the sort of thing to give some support to and to get involved in and contribute in any way we can.*

Dominic, group member, Kent Road

In this instance a feelings of admiration was expressed towards the leading figure and their ambitions which contributed towards Dominic's decision to support the project by becoming a group member.

The role of existing social relationship could be particularly important later in a project (as in the Carfield Farm example above) when opportunities for becoming involved without existing connections were notable fewer. At the initiation of a project a public meeting was usually held, which although often containing a core of individuals who already knew each other, provided an explicit invitation for unconnected individuals to attend. Later in the project, the occurrence of such public meetings would often be limited, and the identity of the group already established.

Although work mornings offered an opportunity for individuals to become involved at the level of volunteer, they rarely appeared to lead to a decision-making role or status as group members. Some of the reasons for this were practical. At workdays for example, it was not always the case that names of attendees were recorded, particularly where the organisation of the project was of a more ad hoc basis. This precluded any further invitations to group activities that were not publicly advertised (such as meetings), and reinforced a separation from the 'core group'. This was reinforced by a separation from

the 'word-of-mouth' networks that could often form an important element of communications within a group.

*I. How do you tend to find out about the meetings then, how do they get...?*

*R. Kate. I've had... because Kate goes to school, takes all mine to school...I'll see her and she will grab and say, oh so and so... I used to get flyers but I've not had anything through the post for a while now, so I don't know whether that's because they're... people are expecting to pass it on by now, or whether it's just...*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

The potential for exclusion through a reliance on existing social networks (including those developed through the initiation of the project), was expressed by a number of group members.

*I mean maybe people don't like to join in because - it's a vicious circle isn't it - because they don't know people very well, erm, so they don't like to join in so much. I mean if they were invited to join in erm...*

Anna, former volunteer, Alexandra Road

For some current group members it was expressed as a concern, which they felt may have been preventing a wider involvement.

*Possibly because people think there's an existing, you know, and existing group and it would be hard for them to come at this stage. Or like anything really, when you think that...you know, something's been going on for a certain amount of time you kind of, you don't see yourself as becoming part of that group at a later stage, and all the kind of, the barriers.*

Julie, group member, Kent Road

It is important to note that this concern at being perceived as a 'clique', while mentioned by several group members, was not revealed in any discussion with non-participants. The personal experience of group members also tended to play down the difficulties of getting involved in an already established group.

*I. And you found it alright going into a group of people that... that you didn't know?*

*R. Well initially I was a bit... oh I don't know who people are so... but since doing it I think... I think that's an age thing as well, as I'm getting older I just think, well, just, you know, brazen it out sort of thing.*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

However, the fact that it was likely to be more confident and articulate individuals who agreed to be interviewed for the research, and the methodological difficulties encountered when trying to elicit specific reasons for non-involvement suggest that the potential for a lack of social connections to deter involvement should not be dismissed.

## 7.4 Practical ability

A number of additional factors were identified that were more explicitly related to how able an individual felt to support a project at a particular level. The practical ability to support could be influenced firstly by their awareness of a need for support, and secondly by their perceived ability to fulfil that need. While many of these factors link closely to preceding issues, they tend to be more specifically focussed on the relationship between individuals and the practical management of the project, rather than with the space or social relationships.

### 7.4.1 Awareness

A prerequisite of any involvement in a project is awareness of its existence. Without the knowledge that a project is taking place, or that there are opportunities for getting involved, participation will not be considered. While this may appear an obvious point, a lack of awareness was identified as a major factor limiting both the involvement of existing members in activities, and the potential for other individuals to get involved.

#### *Awareness of the project*

A group member at Carfield Farm described her lack of awareness prior to being approached about the project, illustrating this point.

*And I didn't even... you know even living here I didn't have a clue that there was anything called the Carfield Farm site or what it was or anything.*

Holly, group member, Carfield Farm, discussing becoming involved in the project

While the Carfield Farm site is unique among the projects studied by virtue of its secluded location, a lack of awareness could also be identified at the other projects. Even when the site is visually public, the daily routine of residents can mean they may never travel through or past a space that is geographically close. Two residents interviewed on Alexandra Road, when prompted on other projects in the area by means of photographs, were entirely unaware of a site which had been the subject of a community-based project at the end of their street, in one case just 150 meters away.

*Oh I never go that way, Denmark Road and all that, yeah. That's why I didn't recognise it because that's not somewhere... that's not my route at all, I've no reason to go straight on. Yeah, yeah, so I wouldn't have recognised that. So I'm neutral about that really.*

Mary, non-involved resident, Alexandra Road,  
response to photograph prompt

The issue of site awareness was acknowledged by group members as well. At Carfield Farm, one participant mentioned the lack of involvement among residents of a nearby, but separate, neighbourhood.

*And the people in the flats who haven't got gardens, you know not far away, just ten minutes walk away from Abney Drive, they don't particularly seem to be involved. I'm sure some of them have allotments, but I don't know if they would know about the site sufficiently to actually come and sit there.*

Wendy, group member, Carfield Farm, discussing use of the site

It may be that residents are aware of a site, but not that it is being developed or managed by a community group. One questionnaire respondent living less than one hundred meters from Kent Road described the space as somewhere they valued, but was not aware of the project when prompted by its name. When asked whether they had been involved in any local projects they suggested an enthusiasm that was hindered by a lack of awareness, providing this supplementary written response to a tick-box question:

*I haven't but would really like to know more about all of them. I'm only aware of the Millennium Park and the Allotments by walking past them*

Survey respondent, non-involved, nearby resident of Kent Road

Responses from the questionnaire survey suggested a fairly high awareness of the projects by name (45 of 52 respondents living in the Kent Road area were aware of the Kent Road project, and 16 of the 20 respondents living on Alexandra Road were aware of the project on their street), but further exploration within interviews sometimes revealed a less clear perception of the nature of the project. One volunteer at Kent Road who had attended a mosaic session and one workday was surprised to find out during the interview that there was a group who organised the work.

*I didn't... I didn't know that Kent... I thought that was just a name used to mobilise people on those days, I didn't know that there's a, I don't know, a committee or anything.*

Naomi, physical participant at Kent Road

In this instance there was a perception that the workdays and activities on site had been organised by the facilitating organisation (Heeley Development Trust), rather than a local group. While this hadn't prevented an occasional physical involvement in the project, it meant that any involvement at a higher level would not even have been considered. Not being aware of the group also appeared to limit the feeling of being part of something (as described among group members), and it was notable that during activities that had been undertaken there was limited social interaction with other group members. Had conversations been initiated, it is likely that understanding of the project would have been improved.

A group member who joined the Carfield Farm group once the project was underway, when discussing how she got involved commented:

*I would probably have been involved earlier if I'd been aware of things, I work shifts so I think that tends to throw me out of kilter, every week. All the time.*

Alicia, Carfield Farm, group member

This illustrates the existence of potential volunteers who are not motivated to get involved due to a lack of awareness of the project or its activities.

### *Perceived need for support*

Another level at which awareness can influence involvement levels is the comprehension that the group is in need of support. An individual may be aware of the site and the project taking place, but may not be aware that additional support is required. One resident close to Carfield Farm, who hadn't visited the site but had been made aware of the project through a flyer that had been posted, explained;

*Well I think I read it, and thought 'oh well that sounds interesting' and that was probably the end of it. I don't know whether they wanted volunteers or whatever, but my spare times a bit, as I say, a bit pressed.*

Phil, non-involved resident, Meersbrook Road (close to Carfield Farm)

While the prime reason for not getting involved was lack of time, there was uncertainty over the intention of the leaflet and whether the group was in need of help. This could be due to ambiguity in the flyer itself but seems more likely (following study of the group's promotional material) to stem from a limited interest in the subject which meant limited attention was afforded the flyer. This suggests that while promotion and awareness can be addressed by a group, it may not be enough to overcome a lack of interest or motivation.

The need to raise awareness of the need for support among local residents was mentioned by some of the group members themselves, perceived by some as a barrier to wider involvement. "...I think it would be interesting if we made that really explicit to people, through whatever media to sort of say ooh, you know 'hey guys, we're down on numbers, you know, anybody that – we're still here' type thing. And I think that would be really interesting, 'cos people perhaps think that we've abandoned it – I don't know. 'cos there doesn't look like there's much movement, so maybe people think that we've abandoned it." Group member, Kent Road [Julia], interview discussion about the need for new members



This quote relates back to motivational issues of experiencing positive change on a site and the encouragement to involvement this can bring (see section 7.1.3), but also acknowledges a role for the group in providing this change, and raising general awareness.

While in some cases, the lack of awareness was described or observed as a failure of communication, in other instances it was described more in terms of an excuse for inactivity.

*R. Mmm. I suppose it's like anything else, people think that somebody else will do it.*

*I. Yeah.*

*R. They just... you know there's this apathy of, oh well somebody will do it. But... and if everybody thought like that nobody would do it obviously...*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

A similar feeling was mentioned at Carfield Farm, where allotment holders were instrumental in initiating action due to their concern over threat to the allotment site more generally. A group member explains,

*After the first couple of meetings, as soon as sort of the allotment holders and the locals realised that there... there was people going, 'oh I'll do that, I'll do this, shall we meet there' and so on they thought 'ohhh, we'll leave it'.*

Jason, group member, Carfield Farm

In these instances, it is implied that the belief that a project is being (or will be) successfully undertaken by those already involved can reduce personal motivations to contribute. A local resident exhibited such justification when discussing her reasons for becoming involved with another local project while having ceased involvement with the Carfield Farm group. After expressing feelings of guilt at not being more involved with the Carfield Farm group (which she considered to be doing good work locally), she justified her inactivity by commenting:

*But yeah, I suppose I really don't have to. There's quite a lot of people involved in it.*

Libby, non-involved local resident, Carfield Farm

Even among leading figures, the perceived need for involvement can alter over the course of a project, resulting in changes in the amount of time invested in the project. At Kent Road, despite still being seen by other group members as a leading figure, Kate commented that she had become less involved in the project over time.

*I. You said that you're involved less now...what do you think is the reason for that?*

*R. I think part.../I think probably it's just the erm, the kind of natural history of the project because I think to begin with, erm, you know, needs a lot more thought, a lot more planning a lot more meeting, a lot more sort of contacts making. That was when we were sort of applying for all the grants, erm, and now it's sort of taken on its own sort of momentum you know, we're in a kind of pattern where we maybe have a meeting once every couple of months in the summer, we're probably doing a dig once a month and so it's taken on its own kind of pattern.*

Kate, leading figure, Kent Road

This description highlights the concentration of activity required in the early stages of a project, when a group is defining itself, planning its ambitions, and in some cases undertaking much of the major physical work. The fact that activities and tasks are described more specifically when referring to the early stages, whereas current activity is more vague, could have considerable implications where personal motivation includes the achievement of particular tasks.

#### *Awareness of activities*

At a more specific level, the awareness that an activity (such as a workday or meeting) was taking place was an important factor for many group members and less involved individuals alike. While at some of the more publicly visible sites the sight of activity taking place could sometimes prompt involvement on an ad hoc basis, this was relatively rare. Instead, the majority of involvement relied on a prior knowledge of the date and time of an activity. The importance of information was stressed by a local resident at Alexandra

Road in response to what he perceived to be poor promotion of the meeting arranged with the intention of reviving activity.

- I. *Do you think there were any reasons why the meeting didn't turn into anything more than what happened?*
- R. *To be honest with you, I...first of all that meeting wasn't advertised very well, to be honest with you. I think I found out the night before, and I live next door. And if I found out the night before, I mean how much prior notice did anybody else get?*

Tom, local resident (participant at meeting), Alexandra Road

Their informal nature of some groups meant that knowledge and awareness about group activities was not always circulated effectively.

*... at not the last meeting but the meeting before, we had two dates that we were going to do stuff in the evenings, and I turned up for one and nobody was there, and then I found out after the event that they'd not – that they'd never been publicised either so I suppose I should have known really.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road, discussing  
a recent lack of activity

For the first few months of the research, the Kent Road group were meeting monthly to discuss the progress of the project and further ideas. Within five months however, the meetings had become less regular. A brief recurrence of meeting activity occurred to arrange a specific project (the mosaic work), but otherwise meetings were infrequent and increasingly arranged between a limited number of core members without wider publicity. Part of the reason for the lack of regularity appeared to be a feeling that there was not sufficient need for discussion to merit a meeting (although the site was not complete, many of the larger tasks had been undertaken). In addition, the role of the facilitating organisation in supporting activities appeared to reduce the perceived need for organisational discussion among the group members. As a result of the group not meeting as frequently, it appeared that the awareness of workdays on the site also declined. Members were sometimes informed of the dates, or could see them on the site notice-board, but the absence of any prior meeting to discuss the work to be done appeared to limit the association they felt with the project, with consequences for their

future levels of involvement. One member suggested that she thought the group had stopped asking her to do things because she had not been around so much recently, the implication being that activities had been taking place in her absence. Observations showed that there had in fact been limited activity by the group prior to the interview, and the feelings of separation from the group, promoted by a lack of awareness, were misplaced. Conversely, another member of the same group described a feeling of dissatisfaction that there had been an overall lack of activities to take part in.

*But again, I just get the sense that things, things, in the early days things seemed a lot better, erm, co-ordinated, like I say leaflet drops and laminated things, and then things have sort of slid really, to the point now where you know...this year, I don't even know how – I've done one, I've attended one this year, and we're now July. There may have been another one that I didn't attend though, you know, that happened.*

Julia, Group member, Kent Road, discussing  
limitations to involvement

The suggestion that there had been few workdays conflicts with the records of activity, which show three weekend workdays in that March and April followed by the two evenings of no turnout. Therefore, even when workdays had been undertaken or planned, the perception among group members (and non-participants) may be that activity is low because they were not made aware of it. These experiences at Kent Road were partly a result of the irregular nature of project activity, which tended to be arranged as and when it as felt required (and when the supporting staff of HDT were able to attend). Meanwhile, Carfield Farm workdays were held at regular intervals, on the first Sunday of every month. This helped to overcome the problems of letting people know when the sessions were, and enabled volunteers to plan ahead and avoid conflicts of commitment.

*Yeah. I don't think, I wonder if I'd not read the newsletters properly, I don't think I actually realised there was a fixed workday, until possibly just before the AGM. So that was, I think I prefer having a fixed time and place to do something. So I went to that first workday, and that first meeting. Just to see what I could do.*

Harriet, group member, Carfield Farm

In this instance, the regular nature of workdays is explicitly cited as a factor in the decision to get more involved in the group. A lack of awareness was not only reliant on the information being passed on, but also relied on personal retention of the information. One group member described having not attended any of the work days for a long time, and partly attributed this to the fact that she would,

*Sophie admitted that she sometimes completely forget workdays, despite marking them on the calendar, because there were always so many other things to think about*

Sophie, group member, Kent Road (notes from interview)

The establishment of regular dates and times for workdays could be a possible means of overcoming such a problem.

#### 7.4.2 Personal commitments

One of the most common reasons given for not being involved, or for limiting the level of involvement, was the presence of other commitments. Among many of the non-participants spoken with this was conveyed in a non-specific manner by claiming to not have spare time.

*I mean I like next door and I can assure you I've never done anything in there, and that is a reflection of me. I mean I'd like to it's just, I don't have time.*

Tom, local resident (participant at meeting), Alexandra Road

*I mean I belonged to the group for a little while - I don't anymore because I don't have time...*

Libby, former member (during initial protection campaign), Carfield Farm,  
initial description of site prompted by photograph

Where lack of time was mentioned, it was sometimes difficult to assess the meanings behind it, presented as it often was in quite a vague manner.

Underlying most comments suggesting a lack of time was the prioritisation of

available time, and the relative value attributed to taking part in a project in relation to other commitments

- I. *...are there any [local spaces] that you feel some kind of responsibility towards yourself?*
- R. *[...]I suppose... yeah I suppose in as much as... well in as much as I thought it was important to respond to your questionnaire and have that very little bit of community involvement, I see it as that. But I wouldn't say that I was... no I wouldn't say that I would DO anything, and that's probably competing priorities.*

Mary, non-involved local resident, Alexandra Road,  
response to prompt during photo-elicitation interview

Even for those predisposed to giving their time to voluntary activities, it was accepted that there was a limited amount of time that could be committed, which meant that choices had to be made about which projects to contribute time to, and how much to contribute.

*I went along to one of the early meetings, but it was just one of those things that, there's a certain amount of time you have for voluntary activities and, and there's.../I'd like to think I could give time to it but given that I don't even always make the Kent Road things I think it's unlikely.*

Sophie, group member, Kent Road, discussing another local group

As well as preventing individuals from becoming involved in a project on an active level, personal commitments could also restrict the number of activities that an individual who had decided to become involved with a project could attend.

*I mean there's been a number of occasions when we've had a chance to – when Thom's asked for volunteers to do certain things that have been on a weekday – and I'm just, you know, I suppose it's a cop-out, but you know, if you're working you just can't do that.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road

*If there's a work day and we're not away we do our best to go down.*

Group members, Carfield Farm [Joy and Owen], discussing personal involvement

In other cases the commitment was more general in its hindrance Childcare for example, prevented some from taking an active role at workdays. The

demands of supervising a child made it difficult for some to commit the necessary attention to tasks being undertaken on site, or to attend meetings.

*I would say that probably....how can I put it, I mean I would love to do more of the practical stuff, 'cos I really do enjoy having a good old dig and weed and a plant and everything, but erm, you know, sort of, the first part of the project I was pregnant, and then I had a new baby, and now I've got a toddler, so unless he's asleep or my husband's around at the time of a Kent Road digging day then I can't really do that much, which is a bit frustrating, erm...but and likewise sometimes for meetings...*

Kate, leading figure, Kent Road

In some instances a conscious re-evaluation of personal commitments and the ability to get involved was evident. In these cases, an aspiration to become more involved may have remained unfulfilled for some time due to personal circumstances, but could be realised if these circumstances changed. A more recent member of Carfield Farm had been a subscriber to the project for some time but describes the process leading to her more active involvement.

*I think quite, erm, it's NOT selfish, you know, I work really hard and, it's quite a stressful job so when I have my time off I look after my own allotment and look after myself in that way, but I like to support in principle and financially, but it felt...right, changing that a bit [...] and in a personal sense life's a bit more straightforward now so I can manage it*

Harriet, group member, Carfield Farm , discussing reasons for getting involved

Harriet also acknowledged the potential for working around commitments, as long as the work to be undertaken is explicit and can therefore be done in personal time, rather than at pre-arranged times.

*You know, so sort of erm... you know a selfish point of view, you know Saturday and Sunday mornings are key time. You know Saturday and Sunday afternoon is easier. But again there's no reason why you know if they're having a day doing something you know you can say, well actually I can't be here at that time but I will come and do half an hour whenever, you know, so long as you know what it is that's being done.*

Harriet, group member, Carfield Farm

Although a limited amount of incidental work was observed to take place outside arranged activities at Kent Road and Alexandra Road, at Carfield

Farm this practice was more common, despite the less immediate location of the space. This was enabled by the clear establishment of tasks to be undertaken at regular meetings, and appeared to be further supported by the horticultural knowledge and experience that many of the group members possessed (providing the necessary confidence to undertake tasks independently). Related to perceptions of how much time an individual was able or prepared to offer a project were more general concerns about the commitment that might be expected by a group.

*I think a lot of people want to be involved but they're SCARED of committing themselves to it. I mean even I did it, because I've always done bits and pieces like this, and even when I went into it I thought 'HOW much am I going to end up doing' and then I thought 'well stop being stupid [own name] it's as much of a commitment as you want it to be - nobody's PAYING you to do this, you know, you're doing it in your own time and because you WANT to' so it's a bit.../but I do think people you know, are hesitant sometimes. But how you present it to them as manageable, I don't know that. I don't know the answer to that.*

Frances, leading figure, Carfield Farm, discussing reasons why people may not get involved (unprompted at end of interview)

Although such comments were exclusive to discussions with group members, some of the comments among non-participants concerning personal commitments and lack of time supported this suggestion, with the inference that involvement needed to be long-term and regular and was therefore something that conflicted with their existing commitments. While the level of commitment required was perceived as a factor preventing individuals from becoming involved in a project on any physical level, it was also explicitly recognised among group members as a factor which discouraged them from increasing their level of involvement and taking on more responsibility.

*...I suppose I don't want too much involvement in terms of time and I am quite happy for other people to take the lead, you know.*

Holly, group member, Carfield Farm

Group meetings regularly displayed examples of such reluctance, particularly in relation to administrative tasks. A request for volunteers to undertake administrative tasks would commonly be followed by a silent pause as



everyone in the group waited for someone else to volunteer. Although tasks were generally successfully assigned, it was clear that the administrative nature of such tasks made them less appealing than the practical site-based tasks. One particular problem created by this apparent apprehension towards commitment, was the appointment of key roles within the groups. While the levels of organisation among groups varied considerably, the appointment of at least a chair and treasurer was necessary for the majority of funding opportunities available, as most stipulated the need for a constituted group. For all the groups studied, this stage of constitution was prior to the research period, but the Carfield Farm group experienced a period of change when a number of existing position holders decided to stand down, requiring the appointment of new individuals to the roles of chair and joint-secretary (a role originally shared among two individuals for the very reason of sharing the burden of commitment). In addition, the existing Treasurer had requested that someone share or take over his role due to future personal commitments which were likely to make it harder for him to undertake the responsibilities involved.

*Daniel volunteered for the treasurer role without great delay, but there was little response to the other vacated posts. Owen [Chair of the meeting that was standing down] made a few direct attempts to encourage people (Wendy and Holly in particular, who both declined), and after a long wait Jason agreed to do it. He later commented that he did it only because no-one else had and it seemed like it didn't necessarily mean a lot of work.*

Notes from the Carfield Farm AGM, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2004

While it may be the case that being the Chair of a group need not necessitate a great deal of additional effort, the implications of reluctant members taking on these roles through necessity rather than interest may be that less effort is put into the associated tasks and that organisation of the group could suffer. In the case of Carfield Farm, much of the organisation was undertaken by the remaining secretary, meaning the implications (and apparent effects during the following year) of this particular appointment were limited. The effect of the loss of the secretary however, could have been far more severe. Although no-one agreed to formally take over the sharing of this role, over

the subsequent two years the secretary made a clear effort to distribute the responsibilities of the role more widely, and succeeded in rotating some of the administrative tasks, such as minute-taking, around the group.

Where commitment was discussed in interviews, whether on a personal or more general level, it was often accompanied by recognition of the length of time a project can take.

- I. *You've been involved quite a long time, so have you seen a change in the number of people that have been involved?*
- R. *It seems to wax and wane a little bit. Erm... we... /I think because everybody leads lives, most people do things, and it would be unrealistic to expect over a three-year project, and we're looking at another five years we've got funding for from some of what Thom said, you know we're looking at eight years and there's a lot going to change in eight years, in terms of what time people can commit.*

Dominic, group member, Kent Road

Several group members referred to the slow, gradual process of the project as being at odds with the commitment they consider most people able to make.

### 7.4.3 Personal ability

Community garden projects invariably involve a focus on physical change and practical land management and many of the tasks undertaken in the course of the project are physically based. How these tasks, and the more general physical demands of being involved in the project, are perceived in relation to personal ability can influence the decision to take part.

#### *Physical restrictions*

Physical health can be a restrictive factor, whether through injury, disability or age. Although no cases were followed up with interviews, there were observational accounts of comments among passer-by at workdays, referring to their lack of physical ability as the reason they were not helping. Among

group members and former participants, deterioration in personal health was sometimes given as a reason for restricting the contribution made.

*I. So did the level of maintenance decline then as...*

*R. Yeah, it's.../I've, well I'm still not well now, but at that time I couldn't even../I mean it was killing me.*

Jim, former group member, Alexandra Road

In this example, the group member continued to mow the grass at Alexandra Road following the decline of the project group, and despite deterioration in personal health. Such action illustrates a strong feeling of responsibility towards the project, combined with a disposition happy to offer time to community good. Eventually however, poor health (alongside other factors) can lead to the cessation of activity. At Alexandra Road, declining physical ability among older group members, and death in one case, was a key factor (alongside migration from the area) contributing to the collapse of the group.

*Erm, so Jack died, a couple of women over the back, Kim - her marriage split up or something, so she moved away, erm, and somebody else move, yeah one of the chaps who was very active, decided he was getting on a bit and decided he had too much arthritis and couldn't do it. So the group just sort of, just sort of three - timescale wise I suppose, I think we probably got on site say seven years ago, and then the group lasted for three years.*

Alan, former group member, Alexandra Road

Physical limitations are by no means defined by age alone, injury and disability can also present barriers to physical activity which may discourage involvement.

*R. I mean I... I have a... I've had a couple of problems with slipped discs and I've had a kind of major back operation and I have to be really careful. So I can go out and do bits, but even something...well something like picking up litter is really difficult to do...well I can do it but then it's the cost of bending, and then the next day I realise it was a stupid thing to do. But then it's not necessarily a visible thing so, you know, you don't want to be constantly explaining why you can and can't do things.*

*I. Yes.*

*R. Whereas there might be something else that's actually easier to do because it doesn't put pressure on your back, so....*

Amanda, former volunteer, Kent Road

In this instance the feeling that personal ability might not meet the expected contribution level among others (illustrated by the worry about providing an explanation) was suggested as a barrier to getting involved in workdays. This suggests that a level of involvement based within personal physical limitations may not be considered where the most obvious activities of the group are beyond that limitation. While awkwardness at standard work days is described as a barrier, the project more widely is praised for the variety of opportunities available. This variety of tasks and activities is suggested as a good way for people with physical limitations such as hers to get involved. Despite there being no evidence of involvement in any of the activities described (other than temporary storage of the mosaic bollards), the fact that less restrictive activities are available appears to promote a more positive perception of the project and its organisation. Physical on-site activity, which can deter individuals with physical limitations, was the most visible and obvious role played by group members and volunteers. As described in section 6.1 however, there were a range of other tasks and responsibilities, and physical limitations can lead to a greater involvement in less physical roles. In one case, where physical commitment was not possible, efforts were concentrated on administrative aspects of the project, such as managing accounts.

*... I'm not too good at digging or humping barrows around so I don't do any physical work of that nature, but I go in with Thom at meetings with the BCTV, you know, the conservation trust volunteer people. I have a liaison with them every so often, and we talk about money and finance, and where it's been spent, and what invoices I've had, and so I'm the sort of local resident reference person*

Patrick, group member, Kent Road

Such a role in the organisation of a project seems to require an established position within the group, usually developed from involvement in the early conception of the project (as above) or through regular attendance at physical workdays. For this reason, it may be difficult for casual volunteers to contribute to such tasks, considered to be the preserve of 'core' members. In

such cases, the inability to undertake physical tasks may form a barrier to any type of involvement with the group, despite opportunities being available.

It should be noted that in addition to the restrictions imposed by physical health it seems likely that similar issues may be presented by mental health. Although this was not an issue that was revealed or explored in the course of this study these potential effects should be acknowledged.

### *Specialist skills*

Even among those who consider themselves physically able, limitations were evident as to the kinds of tasks that volunteers were able to undertake do a limitation of experience, knowledge or skills.

*R. 'Cos there's some things that maybe volunteers can't do with the best will in the world, because it's too, it requires too much skill.*

*I. So there's limitations to what the volunteers can provide?*

*R. Yes. I see that as the case anyway.*

Julia, group member, Kent Road, discussing using contractors to undertake tasks such as constructing paths

Many of the workdays for a project focussed on the 'soft' elements of the space, such as planting or tidying. The creation of a community garden often required considerable 'hard' works, which at times demanded the use of machinery (such as earth works), specialised skills (such as dry-stone walling) and other tasks considered to be beyond the capabilities of group members (such as installing furniture). In these instances, tasks tended to be passed to an external group or company, unless someone in the group had the required skills and was willing to undertake the work.

## Confidence

At Carfield Farm, it was evident at workdays and meetings that many of the group had considerable horticultural knowledge and skills that provided a confidence to undertake tasks at workdays and play and active role in discussions about this aspect of the project. At Kent Road however, it was notable that such horticultural skills were less common among members and confidence when undertaking general activities was sometimes low.

*And, I mean it's always struck me as well how – again along the unstructured line of the whole kind of project really [laughing], which I'm sure is important but erm, but sometimes you'll kind of be sent down to the bottom with a barrow – 'do that!' – and you kind of think 'is this what I'm supposed to be doing?' and you just follow everybody else – look around and think, 'well they're doing it so we must be digging in the right place!' [laughter]*

Julia, Group Member, Kent Road

Although this lack of confidence did not prevent involvement in this instance, it reveals a feeling that may be held by other potential participants where, without other motivations strong enough to override the feeling, it could be sufficient to prevent involvement. Supporting the suggestion that a lack of confidence could prevent involvement, another participant described how prior experience in a volunteering programme run by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) had contributed to his decision to get involved.

*So they [BTCV] always said what the names [of the tools] were, which helped you, if they said 'oh pass me the blah blah blah' you knew what they were talking about as opposed to...it's, if you were a bit thick, you wouldn't know what it was. But we always were led through what tools were erm... so you know it's easier if you ask how to use them, so that sort of gives me the go ahead to do this group because it's sort of... you sort of know a bit about what you're doing, it's not completely foreign.*

Daniel, Group member, Carfield Farm

Use of the phrase 'go ahead' is interesting in this example as it suggests a perception that a degree of skill or knowledge in the areas of work being undertaken by the group is necessary to validate involvement. This individual

later went on to explain why they hadn't become involved in another local project, supporting the feelings implied above.

*I. So why wouldn't you go for the committee on that one?*

*R. Erm... because I think it's.../because it's more of a garden like it's a different sort of emphasis on it.*

*I. Oh.*

*R. And there's going to be lots of gardening people on it and they'd be sort of talking about things that I wouldn't really understand and not so interested in. Whereas I feel a bit more comfortable in this group because it's sort of things I've had a bit of experience with before.*

Daniel, group member, Carfield Farm

At Alexandra Road, where local involvement in the management of the space had ceased several years previously, a lack of confidence in the basic maintenance tasks that were required was expressed as a major factor preventing one local resident from continuing to support the management of the space.

*Erm, but erm, it'd be nice if it was maintained again, you know, but it needs somebody that knows something about gardening. If not..I don't mean for them to do the work themselves, but - I'd be happy to go and have an hour or two on there when you know...erm, if somebody told me what wanted doing.*

Anna, former group member, Alexandra Road, discussing the current lack of local involvement in the site.

This example highlights the importance of figures with the knowledge and skills to lead other willing, but less confident, individuals.

Factors affecting involvement based on personal ability were not limited to physical capability and perceived limitations to personal skills in areas of organisation and administration were also expressed. At Kent Road, the initial conception of a community garden on the site was hampered by a lack of confidence in how to realise the idea.

*I'd sort of talked about [the idea for a community garden] to my husband and he'd said 'yeah, that's a good idea' but I didn't really know how to take it forward.*

Kate, leading figure, Kent Road, initial description of project

In this case, it was the presence of a supportive organisation (Heeley Development Trust), and the explicit call for local project suggestions that incited action:

*But then we, erm, we get the Heeley Voice delivered, sort of every quarter, and it was one issue of the Heeley Voice a couple of years ago, you know, and it caught my eye, it said you know, if you've got any ideas sort of for your local area, erm, you know, give us a ring, so I did, I rang Heeley Development Trust and described sort of what my idea was and the person put me in touch with Peter, and the rest is history really [laughing]*

[continued from above]

The perceived lack of personal ability in developing a project (whether due to lack of knowledge, lack of experience or lack of confidence) was clearly considered a barrier to conception of the project in this instance, and the leading role that this individual went on to take was clearly enabled by the presence of support from Heeley Development (see section 7.4.5).

Other members described avoiding organisational tasks, or a position of responsibility within the group, due to a lack of confidence.

*R. Erm....I'm not very academic so I, I feel as if I'm the hands on person that goes and just nods when....[laughing]...when decisions are made I just say yes or no, either way 'cos sometimes I don't understand the.....erm, I don't know how to explain it....er, I you say 'there's a shovel, can you dig a hole, can you dig that plant?', yes I can. If it's going into the logistics of things, the costings of things, I'm totally lost. I'm the first to admit that, but...I, I'm willing to listen.*

*I. Not everyone's into...that kind of...*

*R. Yeah, and organisation of it, I can't, I never put myself forward to organise anything. I can help, but I'm never very confident of organising something. 'Cos I know Kate [leading figure] is very confident, and very able to come across and explain to people what she means, whereas I get muddled.*

Tina, Group member, Kent Road, part of initial discussion of project

This narrative is notable as it was part of the initial description of the project (following a 'grand tour' question), suggesting the feelings described were particularly prominent within the overall perception of the project. A series of perceived barriers were described in this instance, all discouraging active



involvement in organisational matters. These barriers did not however prevent attendance at several group meetings, suggesting a willingness to support the project (and from records of the meeting, contribute ideas), despite a suggested lack of confidence and reluctance to take on responsibilities.

Such a willingness to support, but reluctance to lead or organise, was common among group members and was often related to a perceived lack of skill in administrative or organisational tasks. Another member at Kent Road described how his lack of experience, in relation to other group members who had skills in particular areas, had led to a less focussed role.

- I. Yeah. So what was your... you say you were on the committee did you take a particular role on the committee?*
- R. Just help out, you know, it was... erm... I haven't got particular fund raising skills, I haven't got contacts on the council, I know [Patrick] was very good with erm...as he demonstrated with the Mayor [laughing]*
- I. Yeah, of course.*
- R. He seems to have... know quite a few people around the place and he's very useful. People like Marcus had a lot of erm... knowledge of soliciting money out of strange pots of... strange organisations we never knew existed [laughing] and obviously Peter [leading figure from HDT] has had his past experience I think, he's good at that.*
- I. Yeah.*
- R. Kate's had bags of enthusiasm to actually do it and get out and start it and then there's the other people sort of came and went, like Julia and Tina and others who..../I think my role was just to, sort of support, agree with it erm, help where I could.*

Dominic, group member, Kent Road,

While the perceived lack of directly relevant skills or experience may have prevented taking a more defined role in the group, this participant was one of the more active group members at workdays, and had remained part of the core group since the first meetings, suggesting that motivations and enthusiasm for a project are able to overcome perceived limitations to ability.

#### 7.4.4 Established roles

Among the more active of the groups studied, clear roles could be identified among members. These roles were sometimes formalised in the form of a constitution, and in other cases remained an informal role that was recognised by members, but not formally appointed.

The establishment of clear roles appeared to strengthen the ability of groups to achieve particular tasks. In most cases roles would be established based on the particular strengths of willing individuals. By attributing tasks to those individuals most likely to be able to undertake them, groups could capitalise on the skills of their members. This was evident in cases such as Kent Road, where the responsibility of fundraising was placed with two individuals (one a group member, the other from the facilitating organisation) and was widely recognised to have resulted in a particularly strong financial position.

The appointment of particular role could also be seen to give a sense of purpose to individuals, and appeared to inspire a sense of commitment based on the particular responsibilities taken on. It seemed that the strong structure of roles at Carfield Farm was at least partly responsible for the group's success in sustaining involvement over a long period, whereas the more informal structure at Kent Road allowed the group to gradually dissipate, leaving the responsibility of most tasks with the facilitating organisation. It was also notable that, aside from the leading figure of the group, the one individual who remained a regular attendee of any sort of meetings was the person who had been appointed Treasurer for the purposes of a funding bid. Despite undertaking few of the responsibilities usually attributed to such a role (the accounts being managed by Heeley Development Trust), this formal role encouraged attendance at financial meetings and provided the reason for sustained involvement.

While the establishment of roles was seen to have a positive relationship with the ability of a group to sustain involvement among the group, there were also examples where clear roles could be seen to discourage involvement

among other members. At Carfield Farm, a new participant with considerable administrative skill gradually took over responsibility for organisational aspects of the group, previously undertaken by a founding group member.

*...you know, I did step down.../I did used to have the role of secretary and then I handed that over to [Frances] 'cos, she was doing it anyway! You know, she came in and sort of...kind of started doing it, and I thought well you know, 'you're enjoying it and you're good at doing it, get on with it' you know what I mean.*

Joy, leading figure, Carfield Farm, discussing roles within the group

Although the original member seemed happy to pass on these responsibilities, this change in dynamics also influenced the willingness of the original member to voice concerns about the progress of a particular aspect of the project at the time of the interview.

*Well. I don't want.../I don't want to.../Frances is the organiser. I've backed down. I stepped down. I don't want to push back in again.*

Joy, Carfield Farm, Group member

Such comments suggest that although roles and responsibilities were often discussed as formalities, usually to enable funding bids, in actual fact the dynamics of the group could have a strong effect on the levels of participation and engagement among members.

As well as the appointment of particular roles, the relative length of involvement between participants can also have an effect on the level of involvement offered. This is particularly noticeable between long-standing, and often founding, members of a group and more recent recruits. In the following instance, there is a clear willingness to contribute to the administrative aspects of the group, but a reluctance to go so far as to take on one of the more formal committee roles that the group was currently trying to fill.

- I. Do you think, as you've been along to the AGM and the meetings, and along to one of the workdays, erm, do you have any idea what kind of involvement you intend to continue with?*
- R. Mmmm. I think definitely the workdays when I can. And I'm happy to get involved in the work of the committee if there's a small bit I can help*

*somebody do, I don't mind doing a bit of...form filling or paper chasing if that's needed. Yeah, so I'm thinking that I would like to offer that within the limits of what I can do, yeah. I. So as far as, for example because they were looking for particular roles to be taken on, how would you feel about those kind of roles?*

- R. *Erm, not at the m.../I wouldn't feel like I know the group well enough, but if I stay involved then I would think about it.*

Harriet, recent group member, Carfield Farm

#### 7.4.5 Presence of support

As highlighted by sections 6.1 and 7.4.3, the need for particular skills to develop and implement a project created a need for support among all groups, which would vary depending on the skills and abilities of the members and volunteers it could attract. The ability to ask advice, and assist with tasks, without the pressure of making decisions or organising activities, was expressed as a positive factor among many group members and volunteers.

- R. *So... and sometimes when it's been a busy [work]day, a busy planting time I'VE found it hard in the fact that it's like organised chaos because there's too many people and you're like... so I tend to try and get myself away from that and possibly work with John or Frank [HDT park maintenance staff] and I think right, just go and do that, and you're doing something. Because there's too many hands on deck which...*

*[later in interview]*

- I. *So having Frank and John there as well makes you feel... feel more comfortable on the day, because you said that you...?*

- R. *YES, because they know what they're doing, yeah, because that's their job as such.*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

Although the above group member attended some meetings at the time, it was clear her motivations were not to organise, but to support, a feeling shared by a number of volunteers. In these instances it is the presence of someone willing and able to organise that is fundamental to their involvement. In these cases, as long as events and activities were arranged, they were willing to attend when able, but if the management of the group

declined and events were not organised, further involvement on site was precluded.

The reluctance of many potential volunteers to take on commitments demanded a core of individuals who could lead the project and provide the opportunities for wider, more informal, involvement. At Carfield Farm the skills found among the group members provided a network of mutual support between members that lessened the need for external support.

At Kent Road however, the reliance on external support from Heeley Development Trust was greater. The conception of the project was influenced by the presence of the Trust to a greater degree than at Carfield Farm, and the organisation of activities was observed to be more reliant on the efforts of the Trust throughout the project as a result. A number of members acknowledged the importance of this support and although it did not detract from the feeling that the project was community-led (helped in part by the local nature of the supporting organisation), it did create a situation of considerable dependence. One member reflected at some length on the role the Trust had played in the development of the project.

*Well, I suppose we've always been led by Peter and – I mean I sort of like that really, 'cos I mean I've got a lot of respect for him, he's clearly knowledgeable, and I suppose although we're all working in conjunction, I kind of see the Trust as sort of... you know, the kind of main sort of core of it really, you know, we kind of hold on to that. I mean I don't think that it would have happened if we hadn't have had that kind of stabiliser really. That kind of – do you know what I'm trying to say? – that the Trust, that it generates around the trust really, that they kind of - I wouldn't say they're leading it 'cos it's very much a kind of you know, open to negotiation and everything, but they're the main stay throughout the whole thing, you know, as people come and go and everything, you've got to have something that's going to be there. And maybe as a volunteer you just can't give that commitment to be, well I couldn't anyway – I couldn't have been the one that could have co-ordinated all that – and of course all the, I suppose knowledge and stuff that the Trust have that we've kind of drawn on for funds, money.*

Tina, group member, Kent Road

The sentiments in this quote are characteristic of comments made among other members, and the importance of the Trust to sustain the project through periods of lower involvement was seen as particularly valuable.

While this situation was effective during periods where Trust staff had the capacity to provide such support, it created problems where other commitments restricted such a role. This was illustrated by the high reliance on the Trust to organise activities, and the reduced levels of activity that were observed during periods where this was not initiated. The expectation on the Trust to instigate activity appeared to reduce the motivations of the group to organise activities themselves.

Similarly, at Alexandra Road it was evident that a lack of external support was perceived as a major barrier to the re-establishment of community activity on the site. This was reflected in a number of comments received within questionnaire responses, including the following lengthy reply to a prompt to describe the form of any involvement with local projects:

*Initial meeting of local residents called by Heeley Development Trust and follow-up 'work session' on site - digging/weeding/cleaning up etc. (unfortunately further session was cancelled due to bad weather and Trust workers didn't rearrange future gathering - I think this was a lost opportunity - people felt that expectations were raised and then dashed - especially youngsters but also adults involved who felt a bit let down.)*

Survey response, female, aged 40-65

Here, the Trust had presented itself as a facilitating organisation, helping to arrange the meeting and offering advice and suggestions for tasks a new group could focus on. The public meeting that took place did not explicitly establish a group however, in the way that an early public meeting at Kent Road did, instead concluding in the arrangement of a workday to initiate activity on the site. This initial workday took place, attracting a dozen or so volunteers, some of whom were present at the meeting and some of whom attended in response to publicity that was distributed. Following the cancellation of a second session however, the momentum of the project was halted. At the time, the resources of the Development Trust were stretched due to pressures to acquire core funding to sustain the organisation and the prioritisation of other tasks prevented the arrangement of further activity. Without the establishment of a group among local residents, and the lack of a clear leading figure willing and able to adopt responsibility for the

organisation of activity, the capacity of local residents was not at a level able to continue work without this support, and the revival of the project subsequently failed.

*I mean alright, people round here don't want houses on it, so therefore really we should all get together and do something with it and not leave it to everybody else. But I say if somebody who was a gardener organised it and said you know, we want volunteers to do this, this and this, erm, maybe some people don't feel confident at erm, pruning plants, I mean I wouldn't really, but other people might do if they were told what to.../how to do it.*

Alan, former group member, Alexandra Road

In this case, the lack of any facilitation to support the organisation of activity acted as a barrier to otherwise willing volunteers, who were either unwilling or unable to take on the responsibility and commitment of leading a project. The motivations for activity were made clear by this particular individual (the recurring risk of losing the site to development if it fall into disrepair), but the lack of a willing leader was offered as the reason the project had not been revived.

Even those willing to lead on a project could often require some support to develop a project from scratch. The leading figure at Kent Road explained the importance of the Development Trust in enabling her vision for a community garden to be progressed to a functioning group (see section 7.4.3). The support in arranging meetings (enabling the establishment of a group) and advice regarding what could be achieved and how the group could achieve it was instrumental to the successful establishment of the project.

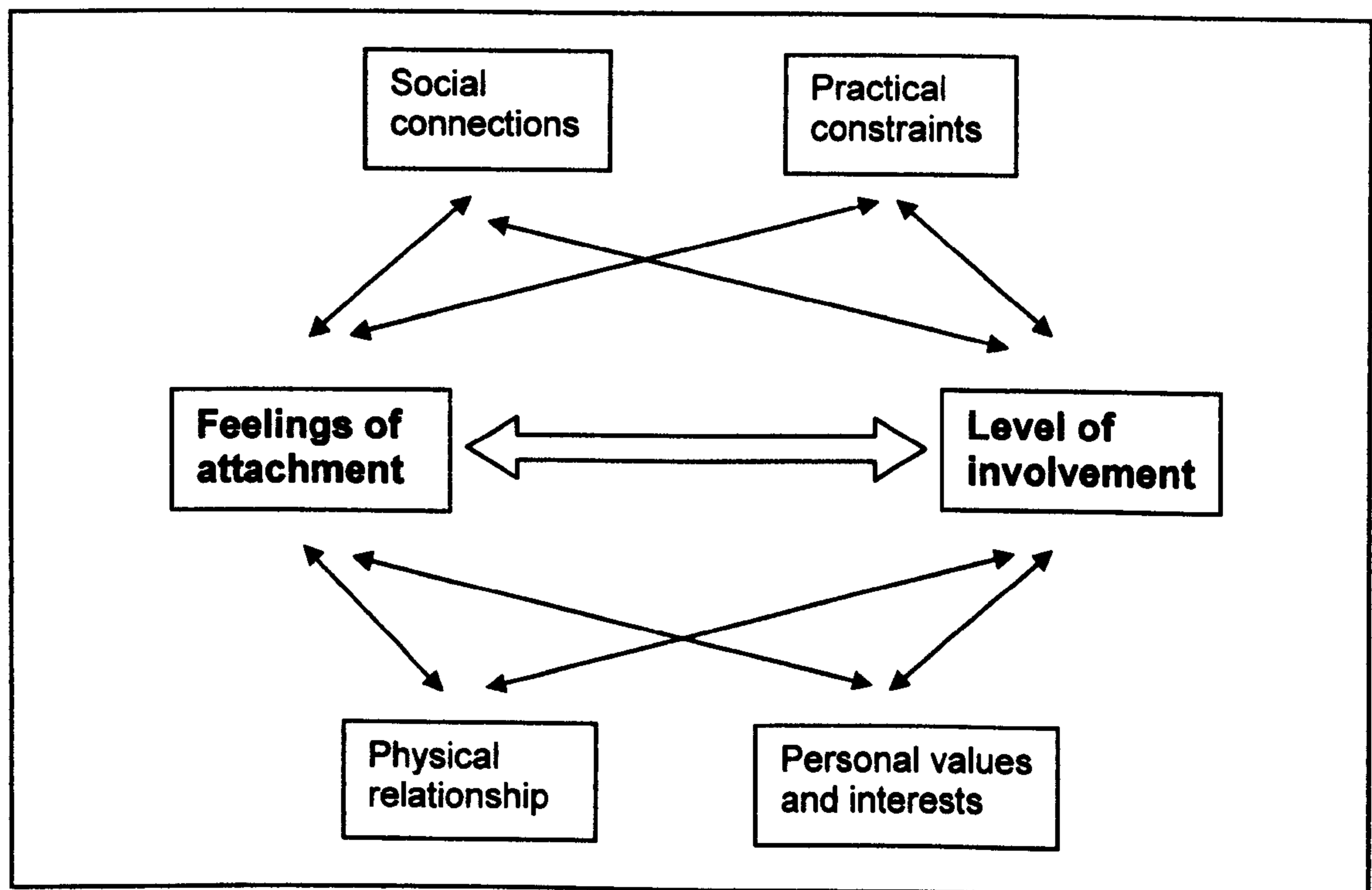
# Chapter 8

## Discussion

The preceding chapters have explored the qualities of community gardens, the multifaceted nature of 'community involvement' and the factors that influence an individual's level of involvement (or non-involvement). Central to this exploration has been a consideration of the relationship between people and place, informed by concepts of 'place attachment'.

The nature of these people-place relationships has been found to be complex and highly individual. Both involvement and attachment have been found to be influenced by a range of factors, not least each other (see fig 8.1).

Figure 8.1: Factors moderating the relationship between attachment and involvement in the context of community gardening.





This web of interrelations, combined with the case study methodological context of this research, deems the pursuit of generalised causal links inappropriate. The relationships encountered and explored do however raise a number of valuable issues with important implications for both the theoretical conceptualisation of 'place attachment' and the practical consideration of 'community gardens'. This chapter aims to highlight and explore the theoretical implications in relation to the original research themes, while chapter 9 reflects on the value of the research and its practical implications.

These final chapters are structured around the three key themes that were defined in Chapter 1 and informed the focus of the research undertaken:

### **Longevity of Involvement**

The extended period of time spent in the field, combined with historical records, has enabled changes in the patterns of involvement to be observed and explored. The discovery of such diversity among the forms of involvement experienced (see Section 6.2) has revealed longevity of involvement to be far more complicated than a simple examination of the 'number of people involved' over time. In particular, subtle changes in personal levels of involvement over time and variations between individuals regarding the meaning of involvement have made examination of the phenomenon especially challenging. However, observations over time and in-depth discussions revealed a number of patterns among the case studies which reveal some of the challenges faced in sustaining involvement and the prominent role of particular levels of involvement in achieving success. This theme is discussed in section 8.1.

### **Attachment to Place**

A key aim of the research was to explore the relationship between people and community gardens, and the importance of emotional bonds in

encouraging and sustaining involvement. Exploration of the factors influencing involvement (see Chapter 7) revealed a broad range of influences, some connected to ideas of attachment to place, others focused on more practical issues. Although it was clear that emotional motivations could be strongly mitigated by a number of practical factors, the exploration of feelings towards place undertaken revealed a number of valuable issues of relevance to the field of place studies. This theme is discussed in section 8.2 and 8.3.

### **Community Support**

The third theme was closely associated to the context in which the research took place and the relationship developed with a particular community development organisation. It was intended to explore the role of this organisation in the fortunes of the projects studied and the potential value of such a model for the future management of urban green space. Although the amount of time available to explore and consider this theme became limited by the demands of the previous themes, the importance of organisational support among the cases studied was clearly revealed. This theme is explored alongside the practical implications of the research in Chapter 9.

## 8.1 Longevity of Involvement

Among the projects studied, the patterns of involvement varied considerably. In some cases the differences could be clearly attributed to certain factors while in others the relationships were harder to distinguish. This section aims to highlight the main qualities among the patterns of involvement and reflect on the factors which appeared to be most influential.

It is important to note before exploring the more subtle patterns of involvement that among *all* projects studied (both the in-depth cases and the peripheral groups observed), the overall trend in physical involvement levels was decline. While the rate of decline (and the form it took) varied among projects, overall the number of individuals offering physical support (either on-site or at meetings) and the frequency with which it was observed declined.

To reflect on the changes in involvement experienced and provide a context for the later discussions on place attachment (section 8.2), there follows a brief exploration of the patterns encountered at each case-study garden.

### 8.1.1 Alexandra Road (ARGUE)

Alexandra Road illustrated the most severe decline, offering a case in which all original activity on the space had ceased and maintenance was undertaken by Heeley Development Trust with no resident involvement. Accounts of activity during the first few years of the project describe groups of volunteers regularly attending workdays and organisation undertaken almost exclusively by one voluntary leading figure. Although volunteer numbers, and the range of individuals involved proved impossible to establish, photographic records and verbal accounts suggest a core group of about five individuals and the involvement of further volunteers, with activities

such as 'ladies day'. Early campaigning to protect the space encouraged a high number of supporters, largely through petitions but there did not appear to be any effort to continue this level of involvement further into the project.

The decline of the group could be attributed to the loss of a number of core group members, including the leading figure. Although hard to verify, it appears that the reasons for leaving the group were largely unrelated to the project itself, comprising the death of one member and a number of other moving out of the neighbourhood. Without the leading figure, who had been perceived to hold organisational responsibility for the group, the organised activities on the site ceased. Volunteering continued in the form of a lone remaining group member who took on the responsibility for maintaining the grass for a short period, but this soon proved untenable due to health.

Those on the periphery of the project, such as volunteers or peripheral group members (some of whom remained and were interviewed), although in some cases willing to volunteer their time to the project were unwilling to do so without guidance. Without the presence of the original leading figure, and in the absence of anyone confident or motivated enough to take on the role, the project remained inactive.

This example highlights the importance of leading figures in encouraging and sustaining involvement, and the vulnerability of projects in light of this dependence. The short-lived revival of activity as a result of intervention by Heeley Development Trust illustrates the value of this role as well as the potential value of such an organisation. The limited success due to other commitments on the part of the Trust meanwhile, highlights the limitations of such a model.

### **8.1.2 Kent Road Ground Force**

Kent Road displayed a gradual decline in routine activity over the period of the research, contrasting with occasional high involvement for particular events or activities.

During early workdays the project often attracted more than twenty volunteers, but towards completion of the work the numbers were more commonly less than ten and on occasions there was no volunteer turn out at all. Following completion of the project there were several attempts to revive regular workdays on the site but limited success in attracting volunteers.

Alongside the fall in volunteer numbers, a decline in the degree of organisation was also observed. Regular meetings had never been arranged by the group, but following three distinct periods of frequent meeting activity (coinciding with the establishment of the group, the organisation of the first art project and a period of discussion with the local authority regarding licences to plant), there was a long period of inactivity for the group. Attention shifted to the second arts project, and although meetings were arranged these were exclusively for this issue, limiting attendance to those interested in this element of the garden. A year later, when attempts were made the restart general group meetings in advance of a planned opening event, attendance remained limited to two or three core members.

It was observed that as the organisation of the group became less structured, a number of core group members became peripheral members or volunteers, with little knowledge of the activities of the group beyond the workdays they occasionally attended. For some this coincided with personal situations that prevented greater involvement (such as having a child) but it was clear that the lack of organisation and the reduction in communication between members that this resulted in, undermined peoples ability to identify with the group and resulted in feelings of being on the periphery rather than being part of something. As a result, a core group could no longer be defined beyond the leading figure and the treasurer. While this did not preclude volunteer activity among former core group members, it presented the project with less capacity for organising further events or project elements. It also limited the accountability of any further decisions that were made. Early in the project, consultation had been a prime concern and considerable effort was channelled into disseminating the plans of the group and encouraging responses and comments from other local residents. Without the group of

individuals required to organise and undertake this, the group's capacity to consult could be seen to be limited.

In contrast to the general decline observed, several key events succeeded in attracting high numbers of people as either volunteers or event attendees. The two mosaic workshops that had been organised by the group in 2004 attracted nearly fifty people, around half of whom had had little or no involvement with the project to that point. It also attracted a number of individuals whose involvement had until that point tailed off. Similarly, the opening celebrations attracted a mixture of current, past and non group members, with numbers far exceeding any past event (at least seventy).

Despite the physical, and in some cases very personal, contribution to the space provided through the mosaic project, it was notable that no long term involvement in group activities was observed as a result of this contribution. Some individuals did continue their involvement beyond the organised mosaic creation events and assisted in their installation on site, but these were largely limited to people who had been involved to some degree in the past, lived particularly close to the space and already knew others helping out. The broadening of involvement at a lower level did not, in this case, encourage any new regular volunteers or group members.

### **8.1.3 Carfield Farm Community Garden**

Among the cases studied, Carfield Farm was the most successful at retaining the numbers involved at a range of levels throughout the course of the research.

The core group had managed to retain its numbers despite a number of members leaving. In common with Alexandra Road, most core members leaving the group did so as a result of moving house. Unlike Alexandra Road however the Carfield Farm group succeeded in attracting new members to the group therefore sustaining its size. In the majority of cases this was achieved through conscious efforts, such as approaching friends or

neighbours that had shown interest in the past or encouraging attendance at the group's public Annual General Meeting. Although the numbers attracted were small, they were sufficient to sustain a defined group and ensure the continuing progress of the project.

While the core group numbers remained fairly constant, the frequency of attendance showed an overall decline over the course of the research, particularly with regards to meetings. In 2003 each meetings tended to attract between seven and ten members but by 2006 the usual attendance was five. Work mornings were harder to monitor, but discussion with leading figures towards the end of the research confirmed an increasingly limited turnout for practical activities as well.

The secluded location of the site of the site made informal volunteering difficult to encourage, and therefore the commitment of group members was particularly vital to the sustained progress of the project. This reliance on a small group made progress particularly sensitive to variations in individuals' frequency of attendance. The resulting slow progress could at times create feelings of frustration and limit the sense of achievement among group members.

Should the group have been exclusively focused on the physical change of the site, such disillusionment may have become dominant and prevented the survival of the group. However, the project's strong commitment towards the use of the space for annual community events provided a positive distraction from physical challenges, and a tangible reward at each event through the visible enjoyment of attendees.

Another factor which supported the long-term success of the project was the organised system of membership which created a category of involvement at the level of 'supporter' which was not sustained at the other projects. This membership not only provided valuable revenue funding (through subscriptions) to enable the rent to be paid on the site, but also provided the core group with a reassurance of wider local support and a method of accountability through regular communication and opportunities for feedback.

Towards the end of the research period, there were several notable cases of leading figures and core group members with specific roles, making a conscious decision to stand down and reduce their level of responsibility to the group. In all cases this was at least partly prompted by a lack of enjoyment with the administrative tasks that such a role required, such as form-filling, minute-taking and letter-writing. Efforts to distribute these tasks more widely among the group had, at the time of leaving the field, been successful, but the ability of the group to maintain its carefully organised routine following such a division of responsibilities was far from certain. The sharing of minute-taking duties for example resulted in the records of meetings varying in style and detail as those less experienced in undertaking such a role were asked to contribute, making the continuity of issues at meetings harder to track. While the group has remained active and continues to develop the garden, these patterns emphasise again the high reliance on key individual figures to maintain a degree of organisation, and the difficulties that can be encountered when such efforts are withdrawn or reduced.

#### **8.1.4 Key overall trends**

Despite the differences encountered among the projects studied, a number of common trends can be identified. Firstly, it appears common for involvement to decline either upon completion of the physical transformation of a space. The shift in gear from campaigning, fundraising and dramatic physical alteration to the more mundane tasks of green space maintenance can have a dramatic effect on the motivation of individuals to take part. Satisfaction at seeing change has been shown to be a common feeling encouraging further involvement, and a number of group members admitted that, despite their best intentions to continue their involvement into the maintenance phase, there was less to motivate them with the bulk of the groups aims achieved. The situation at Kent Road highlights the problem of sustaining organisational structure to a group. With activity limited to maintenance tasks, the need of group discussions and meetings was perceived to be less and



this element of the project declined. Consequently, without such meetings the identity of the group became less clear and individuals began to feel less involved. It is difficult to assess to what degree this change influenced individuals to lessen their involvement against other personal factors that were described, but the shift from a motivated group with a clear shared goal to a disparate group with a shared maintenance task (described as a “chore” by some) has serious implications for the ability of community groups to manage green spaces in the long term.

Another common pattern was a decline in involvement levels when progress towards the goal became difficult or particularly slow. A number of individuals (both core group members and volunteers) admitted that they were looking for a role that was enjoyable and uncomplicated. The complexities of developing and realising a community garden project often present situations that are neither of these two things, such as the filling of forms for funding or the experience of vandalism to a groups efforts. When barriers to progress such as these are presented, the motivation to continue involvement at the same level can be challenged. This was evidenced by a number of cases where individuals consciously stepped down from ‘official’ roles because they found themselves spending their free-time doing tasks they did not enjoy. This is a particular risk among leading figures and the most active of the core group, who take on the responsibility for the more organisational tasks that enable the workdays and events to take place. While some enjoy this role, it was more common for people to undertake it reluctantly (“because no-one else will”) or avoid it all together. The voluntary nature of involvement was stressed by many individuals, and in particular their expectation that a voluntary activity should be in some way enjoyable. When this enjoyment is outweighed by tasks perceived as difficult or uninteresting then the motivations to continue can be undermined. Descriptions of disheartenment and frustration were often associated with the lessening or discontinuation of involvement, with examples including the stepping down of the leading figure at Carfield Farm and the cessation of involvement from the last group member at Alexandra Road.

While these two trends may suggest that changes in involvement were largely influenced by responses to project activity or progress, it is important to note that the majority of group members and leading figures who ceased their involvement did so as a result of external factors, most commonly moving from the area (and therefore severing the residential proximity) and practical ability (whether through ill health or changes to personal commitments). The prominence of these external factors in determining whether involvement continues highlights the challenge facing voluntary groups. While intervention may be able to prolong motivation and interest, there is little that can be done to avoid the barriers created by personal change.

### **8.1.5 Factors influencing involvement**

Although motivations for involvement are explored in more detail in section 8.2 with regards the role of attachment to place, it is worth commenting at this point on the relation between the factors identified in section 7 and the existing volunteering literature.

In volunteering studies, which it should be noted tended to be aimed at highly organised volunteering activities, four common factors were identified: altruism, personal values, personal benefit and practical ability (see section 2.4.1).

Three of these factors align well with the findings of this research. A sense of altruism can be compared to the category of 'personal values and interests' (see section 7.2), particularly community values and the desire to 'get involved in something'. In contrast to ecological restoration research however, altruistic motivation was found to be focussed towards both the environment and other people (neighbours and other potential users of the space), rather than solely ecological values (Still & Gerhold, 1997; Grese et al, 2000; Schroeder, 2000). This reflects the neighbourhood scale of the projects and the centrality of many gardens to daily life. Meanwhile, the second factor, personal values, is closely aligned with several of the other

categories identified within 'personal values and interests', including horticultural interest, creative interest and environmental values (see section 7.2). Finally, practical ability also aligns well with the range of issues revealed under the same heading in section 7.4.

The area in which the findings of this research appear to be in greatest variance from existing research is personal benefit. Personal benefit is commonly referred to in terms of skills development and the further opportunities that a volunteering role might offer (IVR, 1997). Among those involved in community garden projects however, skills were rarely mentioned as a factor influencing their involvement, and instead a number of other factors had a far more prominent role than suggested in most existing literature.

Firstly, the personal benefit of social interaction figured prominently among group members and volunteers alike. Although this has been acknowledged as a motivation within some ecological restoration studies (Grese *et al*, 2000), the extent of its influence has not been explored and is less commonly considered in more general volunteering studies. Existing social networks have been shown to be influential in the encouragement of involvement, and the prospect of meeting neighbours and developing stronger social ties locally was also highlighted by many as an important factor in their decision to take part. Both the neighbourhood context of the activity (in which other participants may already be known or at least recognised) and the social context in which activities are undertaken (many tasks encouraging informal conversation) create a situation in which social relationships are central to the activities of the groups. These particular qualities of the community gardening experience, which are not always present among volunteering opportunities may explain the lack of prominence among existing literature. However, in a political context where the push for 'active citizenship' places considerable focus on activity at the neighbourhood level (through neighbourhood management for example), this lack of acknowledgement and understanding within existing research suggests a need for greater consideration. The social bonds, whether existing or developed, were seen to

create feelings of duty and responsibility among group members, particularly as neighbours are likely to be seen outside project activities. While it could be expected that these feelings of responsibility help to ensure sustained involvement, it was clear that this was only the case if the organisational structure of the group remained strong, providing a framework in which involvement could easily take place. Without this structure of leadership and organisation, as evidenced at both Alexandra Road and Kent Road, feelings of responsibility are less likely to bring about involvement. With no organised workdays, voluntary activity towards the creation or management of the site is rare. With no regular communication, core groups and support memberships cannot be sustained. So while social relationships can be a powerful encouragement to involvement, they rely on a number of the more practical factors being met, highlighting the crucial role of leading figures and the vulnerability of projects to their loss.

Secondly, the importance of an individual's 'relationship with the space' (see section 7.1), played a far higher role than most existing volunteering literature would suggest. While other volunteering opportunities may provide opportunities for social interaction, the focus of activity on a physical space in the neighbourhood setting provides a unique setting for volunteering, which has revealed a distinct category of influential factors based on people-place relationships. Volunteering literature rarely considers the role of emotional bonds in encouraging or sustaining involvement, and it is the nature and role of this relationship which is explored in more detail in the following sections.

## **8.2 Place attachment and community gardens**

One of the key aims of this research was to explore the feelings held towards community garden spaces and examine the role that such feelings can have on the encouragement of involvement in a community garden project.

Popular literature and policy documents repeatedly claim the benefits of a “sense of ownership” in encouraging pro-active behaviour and responsibility towards the urban environment, praising community gardens for their ability to develop this, but little very little research has been undertaken to explore the relationship further.

It is clear that the community gardens studied have demonstrated considerable potential to become perceived among local residents and community members as ‘special places’ (Gifford, 1998). They offer a physical setting, in which activities and actions can take place and to which meanings can be ascribed, the three factors commonly identified when conceptualising place (Relph, 1976; Canter 1977). In this sense, the process of creating a community garden is intrinsically a ‘place-making’ exercise, transforming small areas of urban green space from “just another space” to distinct and meaningful places. While the concept of place can be attributed to a range of spaces and landscapes, of different types and at different scales, there are two key qualities that together distinguish community gardens from other green ‘places’: their neighbourhood location and the role of community involvement. This section explores the effects of these qualities on the development of ‘place’ and more specifically ‘place attachment’. This is followed by an examination of the nature of attachment to place experienced, with particular reference to ways in which it has been found to differ from traditional concepts of attachment to place. Finally, the role of social interaction, already identified as particularly important to many of those involved in community garden projects, is considered in relation to ideas of place and place attachment.

### 8.2.1 A neighbourhood context

The location of the spaces within the 'neighbourhood' environment enabled particularly strong relationships to be developed. This 'scale of interaction' was acknowledged by Canter (1997) as a fourth 'facet' of place in his reconsideration of place theory, and has been identified within this research as a particularly important factor in the development of place attachment. The proximity of a space to personal environments (such as home or an allotment) offered increased opportunities for experience and in many cases was seen to be important in feeling justified to lead or become involved in a project.

Much of the existing literature exploring attachment to open space focuses on recreational space (e.g. Moore and Scott, 2003) or large natural areas (Ryan, 1997, 1998, 2000), both of which are treated as destinations which are chosen to visit. While they may form part of the personal construct of 'neighbourhood', their use and experience appears largely to be influenced by a conscious decision to visit. In contrast, most of the community gardens studied formed an intrinsic part of a neighbourhood at the micro-level, experienced on a daily basis by many residents either as part of a regularly-used route or in some cases as visible from home. The importance of this regular experience was reflected in the descriptions of attachment received from both non-involved residents as well as those involved in the garden projects. Descriptions commonly evoked feelings of joy and satisfaction at viewing or passing through a community garden in the course of daily routine, and in some cases even encouraging a deviation from the most practical or quickest routes specifically to experience them. While the meanings and feelings towards the spaces were often heavily influenced by the processes of involvement taking place (see 8.2.2), it was the physical relationship with a space that afforded such feelings to be fostered in the first place. Among photo-elicitation interviews, while positive comments were commonly received towards all community gardens shown, it was those with which there was a personal relationship, either through proximity to home or

being regularly passed, that elicited the depth of response that indicated an emotional connection.

As well as affording positive attachment through regular experience, the centrality of some community gardens to the neighbourhood environment could also be considered to increase the susceptibility to potential negative changes. Rivlin (1987) acknowledged that people can be particularly sensitive to change in a neighbourhood context, due to the proximity to the home environment and the knock-on effects that negative change can have to wider feelings of attachment to place. In this respect, community gardens have the potential to create negative feelings towards the neighbourhood should they fall into disrepair or become abandoned. When considered in relation to the unpredictable nature of community involvement also revealed in this study, this raises important questions regarding the potential effects of community garden decline on feelings of place attachment.

It is also important to note that the physical relationship of a space with the neighbourhood has also been shown to be able to influence feelings of attachment without the benefit of regular experience, in cases where the fortunes of a space had wider implications for the neighbourhood or personal environment. This has been illustrated by the threat of development at the secluded Carfield Farm site and the resulting strength of feelings that initiated action to protect the space. The relationship of the space to regularly-used allotments provided the emotional connection for many of those who became involved in the project, rather than the regular experience of the space itself.

The characteristic of a location within the neighbourhood environment has important implications for the development of place dependence, considered to be an element of place attachment and described as a function of “how well a setting facilitates users’ particular activities” (Moore & Graefe, 1994, p.27). This concept is more commonly associated with recreational activities such as walking (Moore & Graefe, 1994) or rafting (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000) and tends to be explored in relations to spaces to which individuals travel for a specific recreational purpose. Group members could be

considered to develop a dependence of this type based on the ability of the space to fulfil certain needs, related to their motivations for getting involved (such as gardening or social interaction). In addition however, where a space is highly visible in a neighbourhood a wider sense of dependence can be conceived through the impact that changes to the space may have on those who experience it, related to the heightened sensitivity proposed by Rivlin (1987). Such dependence was evident among the reactionary motivations identified among those involved, whether in response to threat or a negative perception. Whereas recreational users may be able to find substitute spaces to fulfil their needs, the loss or deterioration of a space in the neighbourhood environment cannot be avoided or substituted. Without this option, place dependence based on the physical relationship between home (or daily routine) and a space would appear to have particular potential to encouraging action to prevent loss or negative quality. Leading figures tended to exhibit particularly high place dependence, influenced by a close physical association with the space and its particular circumstances, which would appear necessary to elicit the degree of involvement and commitment required to take on such a role.

Once a threat or dissatisfaction was overcome (or at least reduced), the strength of place dependence exhibited appeared to diminish. Although the general psychological dependence on the space to contribute positively to the local environment remained present, a lack of clear functions or roles sometimes appeared to preclude the development of any further dependence on the space. The descriptions of Alexandra Road as 'lacking purpose' and the low usage of Carfield Farm due to its seclusion are illustrations of this. Where use was evident, it would tend to be incidental, such as passing through or informal play. Without the level of dependence that was evident in the early stages of a project, this element of attachment would appear to have a reduced potential for influencing involvement in the long-term, unless the threat were to return or the space were to revert to a poor condition.



### 8.2.2 The role of involvement

The second distinctive characteristic of community gardens is the role of involvement among members of the local communities. The effect of personal involvement in the creation or management of a space is rarely acknowledged specifically within conceptualisations of place, which tend to concentrate on relationships developed through passive experiences or uses. While the levels of involvement associated with a community garden could be considered within the 'activities' of place, involvement in the creation and management of a place has been shown to constitute a distinctive relationship whereby the space is not only a setting for activity, but is also the focus of such activity. At the same time as using the space, those who become physically involved in a community garden project play an active role in constructing both the physical form of the space and the meanings and conceptions that will define it as 'place'. Gustafson (2001a) expanded the conceptualisation in his triangular model of place (focussed on the relationships between 'self', 'others' and 'the environment'), and acknowledged the potential for 'modification' of the environment as a factor contributing to the creation of place. In his work, 'modification' is identified as a relationship between environment and self, focussed on modifications to personal space. As the activities of community gardens are explicitly related to communal action rather than a solitary relationship with space, they in fact encompass all three of Gustafson's broad themes, encompassing relationships between 'self', 'the environment' and 'others'. Gustafson also identified 'citizenship' within his model, but defined it as a relationship between people and "institutional" (p11) environments, which could sometimes include others in the form of "participation". Again, this fits closely with the experiences of community gardens, but appears to focus on citizenship as a relationship with existing mechanisms of governance, rather than the locally-based decision-making and service delivery observed among community gardens.

Rather than forming a consultative mechanism for a local authority (as in the case of many Friends Groups), or an organised volunteering opportunity in which individuals can participate (as in the case of much environmental volunteering), community gardens are initiated, organised and planned by local residents or community members. This role in the initiation and decision-making processes of a project offers opportunities for the development of strong attachments to the spaces developed. Attachment encouraged by involvement was revealed not only among those taking part in the project, through direct involvement in the process, but also among those observing the involvement, through the feelings of community pride it elicited.

#### *Attachment to place through personal investment*

Being actively involved in a community garden creates a direct connection between actions and the transformation of a space. Whether through the labour involved in creating a garden, the creative opportunity offered by artistic features or the behind-the-scenes efforts to raise money and organise activities, each effort contributes in some way towards the creation of the resulting community garden.

The satisfaction experienced through the achievement of a task was apparent in a number of different contexts, but attachment appeared strongest when the focus of efforts was a specific feature that could be identified. Art projects offered the clearest example of these feelings, producing a clearly definable feature within the space, as well as offering the opportunity for personalisation. Paxton (1997) and Winterbottom (1998) have both highlighted the potential value of opportunities for self-expression enabled by the ability to incorporate personal or culturally valuable elements to a community garden, and art projects provided just this opportunity. Some of the most explicit emotional bonds expressed during interviews were towards artistic features that had been produced, such as the mosaic bollards and tiles undertaken at Kent Road. The creation of a feature that could be identified as having been personally made elicited pride, satisfaction

and a strong connection to the site. Such contributions provided a powerful means of self expression, eliciting feelings of attachment related to place identity rather than place dependence. By contributing a personally produced feature to the space, a strong connection between self and space could often be seen to be created. Such objects would feature prominently within discussions of the space, and evoked strong feelings of pride and satisfaction. They also provoke expressions of concern for their maintenance, which appeared to be related to the personal time and effort invested. It is interesting to note however that such concern, although particularly strong in certain instances, was rarely seen to result in remedial action if damage occurred.

More physical tasks such as earth moving and mulching provided less evidence of a distinct attachment to the outcome, due to the collective effort that usually achieved them, and the lack of opportunities to reflect personal identity. Planting occasionally offered such opportunities, but tended to be strongest where individual plants were added and could later be identified, or where the plants had a particular relevance (such as the apple trees on Carfield Farm). Involvement in more widespread planting tended to lack the specificity of attachment that individual planting enabled, and comments suggesting a specific bond established by these means were less evident.

In addition to attachment towards specific features that had been personally created, general investment in the project also appeared to create a sense of attachment. In this case the attachment was broader in nature, being ascribed to the project as a whole. While specific features offered an opportunity for personal expression, more regular involvement in the project appeared to create a form of place identity more related to the expression of shared values. Personal interest in environmental issues and community values was a common example of this, and workdays for many provided an opportunity to act on their values in an environment of like-minded individuals. This attachment, while related to the social relationships which were at the same time being developed, was based in the opportunities the project held for expressing personal values. Consequently, the gardens

produced could become representations of these values, fostering feelings of belonging and identification with a neighbourhood through this personal identification.

The general investment of effort into a project, as undertaken by leading figures, group members and some regular volunteers also had the potential to develop feelings of ownership and responsibility. Such feelings were often strongly related to the personal level of involvement and the relationship with the core group, the strongest feelings of ownership evident among those who had been physically involved since the start of the project and who felt a firm sense of belonging within the group. Individuals tended to be hesitant when describing such feelings of ownership however, and were often careful to stress that the feeling was not possessive in nature, but characterised by care and concern. Possessive feelings were perceived to go against the collective nature of the projects, and conflict with the identity of the spaces as “community” gardens.

The relationship of personal investment with continued involvement was hard to establish. Although the feelings of ownership and responsibility that could result were often expressed by those who had been involved, they did not always correlate with continued or further involvement. This disparity suggests that while the attachment developed by investing personal effort into a project can encourage further involvement through a sense of ownership and responsibility, the realisation of such pro-active behaviour is dependant on other factors.

#### *Attachment to space through the knowledge of community involvement*

In discussions with less involved residents a further expression of attachment was identified that related to the process of involvement, encouraged in this case through the observation or awareness of community involvement, rather than actual engagement with the project.

The awareness that a space had been (or was being) created by other local residents inspired particularly positive feelings among many non-participants

in a project. The observation of other residents making efforts to improve the local environment inspired positive feelings, not only towards the space itself, but towards the community more widely. The gardens in this respect embodied many of the qualities associated with a 'good neighbourhood' such as community spirit and a sense of responsibility towards the local environment. Even without any active involvement with a project these implied qualities that a community garden projected could be seen to promote a sense of place attachment on a neighbourhood scale, making residents feel more positive about the area in which they lived. While positive feelings could be encouraged by the physical change taking place, the knowledge that local residents and neighbours had created the space encouraged much stronger feelings of attachment and meaning. Discussions with non-participants routinely elicited positive feelings towards images of community gardens generally, but those which were considered to be within the personal perception of neighbourhood elicited far richer narratives that tended to focus on the efforts of local residents more than the physical qualities of the space. In this respect community gardens are able to encourage feelings of place identity not only among those taking part, but also among non-participants who share similar values and see the gardens as verification that others in their neighbourhood share the same values. At Alexandra Road, the garden was still seen as symbolising the 'community spirit' on the street by some, despite the fact that no involvement in the space had taken place for many years. Such an example illustrates the degree of place identity that community gardens can produce and its potential effects on how the wider neighbourhood is perceived.

### **8.2.3 The nature of attachment**

The process of community garden creation has been found to be a powerful stimulus for the development of positive attachments to place, both at the level of a particular feature of garden and also on a wider neighbourhood scale. In the course of the research however, it became clear that there were

other forms of relationship between people and place that encouraged involvement but did not fit comfortably with traditional concepts of place attachment as a positive affective bond (Altman & Low, 1992). These relationships have important implications for the theoretical conceptualisation of place and place attachment, as well as the understanding of involvement in community gardens.

While the process of community garden creation has been shown to elicit positive emotional bonds, supporting many existing claims (Winterbottom, 1998; Glover, 2004), the establishment stage of a project (the period when involvement in a project tended to be at its highest) has been shown to be associated with considerably different feelings. This disparity casts doubts over the commonly assumed importance of positive feelings in the encouragement of involvement.

In contrast with the suggestion that positive associations can encourage involvement, in almost all cases encountered the initial establishment of community involvement was encouraged not by positive feelings, but by feelings of either threat or dissatisfaction (see section 7.1.2). Therefore, rather than being motivated to play an active role in the creation of a community garden through the presence of a positive emotional relationship with a particular space, it was in fact the case that most individuals at this stage of a project were encouraged by either negative feelings towards the space itself (through poor maintenance for example) or negative feelings towards a threatened alternative to the space (such as proposed housing development).

The strength of these feelings were illustrated in the passionate narratives that were forthcoming on the issues. These contrasted with narratives about the space that had been (or was being) created, which although consistently positive tended to be shorter, less evocative and more difficult to elicit. Both of these situations suggest particular forms of place attachment that could be considered within a wider conceptualisation of the theory, but tend to be overlooked among traditional definitions of the term.

### *The role of threat*

The threat of development was a key initiating factor in the establishment of two of the community gardens. When discussing this issue with individuals who had been motivated to volunteer their time or support as a result of this threat, it initially appeared that such feelings were illustrating a strong sense of attachment to the space.

A number of quantitative studies use the strength of feeling when faced with the hypothesised loss of a place as one of the measures of place attachment (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Mesch & Manor, 1998; Brown et al, 2003). These studies consider attachment to place at the neighbourhood level however, defining loss in terms of an individual leaving the place, rather than loss by means of a direct threat to the place itself. In this respect, the role of threat in relation to place attachment is less well understood. Ryan (1997) acknowledges that the loss of a special place (or feature of a place) can promote a “very real sense of personal loss....significant enough that people with a strong sense of attachment to these areas will voice their opposition in the public arena” (p.110), but an explicit link with site-based volunteering activity to protect and maintain a space is not made.

In contrast, two of the community gardens studied in this research demonstrated an explicit link between the perception of a threat and the motivation to become actively involved (or even initiate) a community garden project. The initial assumption that this response was related to feelings of attachment towards the space, in many ways proved misguided. When discussing the nature and role of threat as a motivation for involvement in a project, it emerged that the focus of concern was often less place-specific than originally assumed.

For example, in the case of Carfield Farm, although strong feelings in response to a threat were observed and described, the focus of the concern was rarely the site itself. Instead, concern tended to either be for the surrounding allotment site (that was seen to be at risk if the initial

development went ahead), or the more general opposition to further development in the neighbourhood. The role of these factors in the development of the project was further verified by the secluded and overgrown nature of the site which precluded all but the most adventurous of local residents (or those with neighbouring allotments) from developing an attachment to the space based on any kind of use or experience. Strong attachment to the allotment site, on which all of the early voluntary group members held personal plots, was instrumental in encouraging pro-active behaviour on the Carfield Farm site.

This illustrates that attachment and involvement can be linked, but not always in the direct and place-specific manner that is more commonly considered. Instead, an indirect relationship between attachment and involvement can be proposed, in which positive feelings towards one place (in this case the larger allotment site) can result in pro-active behaviour on another space (the Carfield Farm site) as a result of the physical relationship between the two. Although positive feelings towards the existing Carfield Farm space were expressed in a small number of cases, the majority of those involved in the project had no prior experience of the space, and displayed no place-specific attachment to it before the project.

At Alexandra Road, another project initiated by the threat of development, it was notable that early campaign efforts were focussed not only on the future community garden site, but on several other small spaces along the road. In this instance attachment to the spaces appeared to be more generic and principled in nature, rather than based on any strong emotional connection to the specific spaces themselves. Indeed the siting of the resultant community garden appeared to have been influenced largely by the decision of the council as to which space could be retained, rather than a conscious decision among the campaign group. Such generic feelings of value towards green spaces were common among interviewees at all levels of involvement, and reflect the 'conceptual attachment' to natural green spaces identified by Ryan (1997).



In Ryan's (1997) work it was suggested that environment volunteers and staff shared a general attachment to a particular type of landscape, that could be substituted for another space should negative change occur. While 'conceptual attachment' to green space has been found in this study to be an important motivating factor, particularly where community gardens were established in response to threat, Ryan's suggestion of a resulting low degree of 'place dependence' has not been supported.

In contrast to environmental volunteering, where the focus of activity tends to be outside the immediate neighbourhood, community gardens have been shown to be intimately connected to those involved in them. While motivations for involvement may sometimes have been 'conceptual' in nature rather than a product of direct place attachment, some form of close existing association was usually present among group members. Unlike environmental volunteers who choose to associate with a space, those involved in community garden project are already closely associated, by virtue of their neighbourhood context. This pre-existing association would appear to make the substitution of activity to another site described by Ryan (1997) less likely in a community garden context. In this respect community gardens illustrate a high degree of place dependence, in contrast to the experience of environmental volunteering.

Although the likelihood of substitution may be less in a neighbourhood context, it is important to note that this context has other important implications for involvement. The location of spaces in a neighbourhood setting, and the strong 'community' identity that they developed, tended to restrict the motivations to become involved to those within the neighbourhood or related communities (eg. allotment holders or families attending a particular school). This creates a smaller pool of people from which willing volunteers can be expected to be found. Furthermore, the additional responsibilities of organisation that are placed on group members (as opposed to those taking part in organised volunteering activities), and the effects this organisation have been shown to have on involvement over time, may also moderate any benefits of a higher place dependence.

It is important to note that the 'conceptual attachments' associated with community gardens included attachment to less ecological landscapes. More ornamental horticultural values were often identified alongside wider environmental values, reflecting the residential context in which they were placed. 'Conceptual attachments' were also evident to the project as well as the space itself, most notably evident with regard communitarian values of civic responsibility (Etzioni, 1995).

The belief that green spaces are of intrinsic value, regardless of their quality, was regularly encountered among those interviewed. This conceptual value meant that although bland or poorly maintained spaces may not inspire strong positive feelings they still tended to be considered important to preserve when discussed in terms of loss. These findings cast doubt on the usefulness of 'feelings of loss' as an indicator of place-specific affective bonds to green space, despite its frequent use to measure place attachment at the neighbourhood level.

The two relationships with place that have been identified above (an indirect attachment and a generic or conceptual attachment) do not fit easily within the definition of place attachment as an affective bond to a specific place (Altman & Low, 1992). Nevertheless, both relationships have been shown able to have a considerable influence on the development of pro-active behaviour and the establishment of more place-specific bonds. In this respect, such relationships deserve more careful consideration and acknowledgement when examining the motivations behind the establishment of, and involvement in, a community garden project.

#### *The role of dissatisfaction*

Alongside the threat of development, the other main instigator of community action on a space was a feeling of dissatisfaction with the condition and opportunities provided by a space, as observed at Kent Road and Denmark Road. These examples suggest a further form of attachment that can lead to involvement but again is positioned outside the common assumptions of the

relationship between attachment and involvement. Instead of being encouraged by a positive emotional bond with a space, individuals in these cases were motivated to initiate and support the project due to strong negative perceptions of the space. Unlike the cases prompted by a threat, the feelings were more explicitly place-specific, provoked by both the strength of the negative impact, and the potential for improvement that was conceived.

Giuliani and Feldman (1993) call for a broadening of the concept of place attachment to acknowledge that negative emotional connections to place could be possible, and the findings of this study certainly support this argument. Those who reacted against the condition of a local open space illustrated strong feelings towards them. These were not 'placeless' spaces awaiting intervention to become meaningful; they already held meaning to the people living nearby or frequently passing. Kent Road for example, due to its prominent location within the neighbourhood, was described evocatively by many interviewees who had known it prior to the establishment of a community garden, referring to (for example) the lack of care offered by the local authority, the abuse of neighbourhood space illustrated by littering and vandalism and the effects this had on personal feelings about the neighbourhood. For some of those living closest to the space the feelings conveyed were clearly emotional, inciting anger, frustration and disappointment. It was these feelings that prompted action among the early initiators of the community garden, rather than any form of attachment based on a positive relationship with the space.

In this respect the term 'place attachment' is perhaps unhelpful, 'attachment' suggesting fondness and affection by definition. In contrast, the terms 'place dependence' and 'place identity', often considered components of place attachment, do not share such explicit positive connotations. Yet it seems the dominance of the attachment model in much of the literature has limited more detailed consideration of negative relationships with place. The popular association of 'place' as a positive attribute and 'placelessness' as a negative

characteristic further contributes to a general neglect to explore and understand relationships with 'negative places' (Manzo, 2003).

### *The role of aspiration*

Alongside the reactionary motivations that have suggested a need to broaden the conceptualisation of place attachment, the motivational role of aspiration (section 7.1.3) also has implications for the way place attachment is theorised.

In all the active projects observed, the primary aim of work undertaken on site was the transformation of a space from its original state to that of a 'community garden'. The characteristics and features that constitute this vision varied between gardens and between individuals, but all shared a desire to implement change and improvement. In most cases, this aspiration for change was expressed more strongly than any existing attachment to the space (largely due to the reasons outlined above). The attachment in this instance is clearly associated with the space itself, but rather than relating to existing qualities or features, is rooted in a sense of potential and opportunity. The existing body of work on place attachment presents a diverse array of components that have been proposed to constitute attachment to place, but throughout the work, attention is focussed on the relationship between peoples and existing places. In some cases reference is made to the role of memory of past places, but rarely is the concept of future places considered. In the context of community gardens (focussed on change to the local environment), the concept of attachment to an envisioned space was fundamental to the feelings developed towards these spaces and the achievement of proactive involvement. This finding suggests a need for wider consideration of 'aspirational attachment' within the development of theories of place attachment.

The collective development of a design or vision for a site (whether through consultation or group-decision) provided a focus for the early stages of every project and provided an important tool in engaging wider involvement and

support. While feelings towards the existing spaces may have been negative or general in nature the creation of a vision for the space provided a focus for collective positive aspirations and a goal towards which place-specific positive attachment could develop. These feelings of attachment appeared strongest among those who were actively involved in the project, forming as they did a major motivating factor in their decision to get involved, and an aim towards which efforts were being channelled.

While this form of attachment can be extremely powerful in encouraging the involvement and support of local residents, as the project progresses feelings are inevitably prone to change as aspirations are either realised or fail.

Where aspirations are achieved, it is possible that attachment can be transferred from the ideal to the actual, resulting in a more conventional form of attachment to the space or a particular aspect of it. Where aspirations are not realised however, the potential for disappointment and disillusionment (as identified in Chapter 6) can be considerable, particularly where the emotional investment into the project ideals was high. Given that the motivations for involvement, and the corresponding aspirations for a space, can vary within groups, it would appear that the potential for expectations to remain unmet is high. Of course, expectations can be adjusted over the course of the project, in response to changing circumstances or as greater understanding is developed, but where project outcomes differ considerably from the anticipated outcomes, the risk of disappointment remains high. It is important to note that there was no clear indication that experiencing such disappointment affected involvement, with many who expressed such feelings continuing to remain active. This suggests that although unmet expectations may limit the establishment of positive attachment to the space (at least from this source), involvement tends to be influenced more by other factors.

#### **8.2.4 The role of social relationships**

Alongside relationships to the project that were focussed on the space itself, whether through aspirations of what could be achieved, or in relation to the achievement of these aspirations through personal involvement, attachment was also evident towards the group itself. Involvement in a collective effort to achieve or maintain a community garden could be seen to invoke feelings of belonging and the development of social relationships that were enabled by, but distinct from, relationships with the space itself. In this respect the garden acts as both a catalyst and a stage for social interactions between group members, other volunteers, and at times less involved participants or observers.

Mesche and Manor (1998) highlighted the importance of social relations that take place within a space for the development of attachment, and the findings of this work would strongly support such a claim. However, while community gardens offer this opportunity, the aspect of active contribution towards the physical creation and shaping of a place that is central to the community garden model, provides an additional social aspect that is intrinsically linked with place. In this respect the space is actually the focus of social activity, rather than simply a backdrop in which it can take place. Consequently, while the feelings of belonging tended to be expressed as social, the close associations of the group to its respective space provided the potential for a particularly strong form of place-based attachment. The spaces were often seen to represent the efforts and achievements of the group and as such were considered particularly meaningful to those who had taken part in this shared effort. While some examples of attachment were specific to individual features achieved on a personal level, many expressions of attachment to the space were focussed not on personal effort, but on the collective effort that had contributed toward its creation.

Furthermore, such feelings of pride and achievement were not restricted to those who had taken part, but were found to have the potential to develop attachment among non-involved residents and users. The knowledge that a number of local residents had established a group and been able to make improvements to the physical neighbourhood appeared to project a "sense of

community” to the wider neighbourhood, indicating firstly that the neighbourhood environment was cared for by its residents, but also that social networks were in place to enable such action. This finding supports the suggestions of Hummon (1992), that attachment can be developed on a ‘community’ scale towards places of shared value, and that the social relationships associated with a place can encourage feelings of “community spirit”. The potential for such an effect appears especially strong with regards community gardens because of the central role of community members and social activities in their creation and subsequent identity. This potential to alter the perception among wider residents about not only the visual and physical quality of their neighbourhood, but also its social vitality and responsibility illustrates the potential value of community gardens to contribute to much wider agendas of neighbourhood renewal and active citizenship.

As well as offering a basis for a sense of pride based on collective achievement, feelings about the gardens were also heavily influenced by the social opportunities that the garden offered for their own sake. Aside from the achievement of creating or maintaining an attractive and valued space, many of those involved on an active level (volunteers and group members) associated the garden with the sociability of workdays and events that were held on it. In actual fact this social construction of the gardens, focused on the relationships with other people that being involved enabled, tended to emerge as a much stronger element of interview narratives than references to physical elements of the space. This tendency to stress the social value of a space was observed within photo-elicitation interviews as well as standard interviews, refuting initial speculation that it could be a result of social encounters and values being easier to bring to mind than physical features in an interview context divorced from the site. It was initially anticipated that the use of photographs would generate richer narratives regarding attachment to the physical elements of place but the fact that, even with visual prompts, interviewees tended to offer accounts of personal meaning based on social constructions of place highlights the fundamental role of the social context

the gardens are placed within and the social opportunities they offer. As highlighted in section 7.3.1, it was common for founding members to emphasise the initial aims of the garden itself rather than the social opportunities it offered, when discussing motivations. But even in these cases, expressions of attachment were often associated with the social relevance of the space, whether it be the desire to improve the visual appearance of the neighbourhood for all residents (rather than personal gain), the delight of involving local school-children in the project, or the opportunity to express and act on personal values with like-minded people.

The emphasis on social activities and meaning illustrated the important role of the social within constructs of place. Although most theorists within the field of environmental psychology have long acknowledged the role of social interaction in the creation of 'places', it is perhaps surprising that much of the existing work regarding place attachment and green space relies on models of place attachment that overlook this element of place. Altman and Low (1992), in their seminal work on place attachment, suggested that the social relations that places signify could be as, if not more important in the development of attachment than the physical place itself, while Gustafson's (2001a) tri-polar model of place emphasised the importance of relationships between 'self' and 'others' in constructions of place. Meanwhile however, most of the studies within the fields of ecological restoration and leisure studies (where much of the existing work concerning place attachment and green space is to be found) rely on efforts to quantify attachment based on models that overlook the role of social relations. The use of indicators designed to measure the degree of place dependence and place identity (as key components of place attachment) focuses on the functional qualities of a space and the strength of emotional feeling toward it (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Moore & Graefe, 1994; Ryan, 1997). Consequently, while findings contribute to an understanding of relative degrees of attachment among places, they do little to develop an understanding of how these attachments are developed and why places become meaningful.



Exceptions, such as Stedman's (2004) photo-elicitation based study of residents attachment to a National Park, reveal that those places that are considered 'special' are often defined not by their physical attributes, but by the activities that have taken place there and the social relationship associated. In this respect place attachment is considered a bond to the meanings attributed to a space rather than a bond with the space itself. Such a conclusion reflects more accurately the theoretical models of place proposed by Relph (1976), Canter (1977) and Gustafson (2001a), than the findings of quantitative attempts to measure attachment based on restrictive definitions of attachment.

The observations and findings of this research support the notion that the social relationships associated with a space play an important role in the development of place attachment. Furthermore, in the context of community gardens, socially-based constructions of place are particularly significant, due to their location in a neighbourhood setting, the communal activity fundamental to their creation and the opportunity for expressing shared values that they provide. Community gardens were considered special not only for the physical elements they contained, but as an opportunity to meet new people, reinforce existing relationship (by both showing support and spending time together), and express personal values among like-minded individuals.

### 8.3 Place attachment and involvement

The discussion so far has revealed the complexity of factors influencing involvement and the forms of attachment to place that have been found to be most strongly associated with feelings of attachment towards these spaces. By exploring these two issues in some detail it has been possible to investigate the role of feelings towards place in the decision to become and remain involved with a project. This section aims to summarise some of the key implications suggested by these findings.

Firstly it is important to stress that feelings of attachment are but one of a range of factors influencing people's decisions regarding involvement in a project. The widespread attachment to place that was identified among residents and community members that were not involved in the projects highlights the strength of other factors in mitigating the positive effects of attachment on personal involvement. Although reasons for not becoming involved were methodologically difficult to explore, it was clear that a range of practical factors (see section 7.4) were particularly influential in preventing initial involvement and restricting the longevity of continued involvement. Practical mitigating factors aside, it was also clear that feelings about a place had a prominent role among the motivations encouraging involvement, albeit in a form that did not always align with traditional conceptualisations of place attachment.

#### *Reactionary relationships with place*

During the early phase of a community garden, while it was found that relationships with place are a key factor in the motivation of individuals to initiate activity, it was discovered that the nature of these relationships tended to take a form distinct from traditional notions of place attachment as a positive bond with a particular space. Instead, relationships with place that prompted activity and involvement in the initial establishment of a project

were characterised by negative feelings towards a space, conceptual attachments to a type of space and aspirational attachment to the potential a space offered. It is suggested therefore that while place attachment forms a valuable model for exploring people-place relationships, conceptualisations of the phenomenon need to be expanded to better reflect the complexity and variety of emotions towards place that can be experienced.

At the initiation phase of a project, the motivations to create a garden were in all cases reactionary. While this may not always be the case in other situations, literature on community gardens in this country (Ferris *et al*, 2001), as well as the strongly reactionary roots of US community gardens (Francis *et al*, 1984) suggest that gardens tend to originate in this way. The strength of this reactionary element to the feelings towards place has implications for the continuation of involvement through the life of a community garden project.

If motivated by a threat of built development, should this threat be overcome and protection of the space be achieved the original incentive for involvement would be lost. In the case of Carfield Farm, the ability to sustain the motivations appeared to be at least partly due to the fact that the fear of threat to the site (should the project be abandoned) remained strong among many participants. In contrast, the threat that initiated the Alexandra Road project was rarely referred to in the present tense, either among former participants or non-involved local residents, and motivations to 'protect' the space were no longer evident.

If motivated by the poor condition of a space rather than a threat (as at Kent Road) then the achievement of improvements during the capital phase will, by definition, reduce the original motivation. The urgency for action inspired by a derelict and unattractive space, and the negative feelings created, is no longer present when an attractive community space has been created. While management of the space was referred to as important by many group members, the fall in group activity as the project neared and reached completion suggests that the incentives to maintain a positively-perceived

space are considerably less than the incentive to improve a negatively-perceived one.

Consequently, while feelings of attachment (whether towards a specific space, its surroundings, or the value of green space in general), are fundamental to the reactionary and aspirational motivations for establishing and supporting the development of a project, the connection between attachment and involvement in later stages of a project is far less explicit. The excitement and passion created by a protection campaign or the first signs of change on a site are hard to sustain and as a project reaches its 'completion' the focus of activity naturally shifts to the less dramatic maintenance and use of the garden. While feelings of attachment to the space can remain, and indeed appear to have the capacity to continue long after active involvement has ceased, it seems that in the absence of a threat or negative quality to overcome, the influence of this attachment is more strongly moderated by the range of factors identified in Chapter 7.

#### *Investment, attachment and responsibility*

While the original relationships with place that characterise early involvement and the conception of a project can be seen to decline over the course of a project, more positive forms of place attachment (reflecting more accurately popular definitions of the term) can be seen to develop. The process of creating a community garden provides a physical environment more conducive to positive attachment and the opportunity for personal investment into the creation of such change. In combination with the opportunities that can be presented for personal expression (as described in 8.2.2), the potential for attachment to place is considerable. This was reflected in discussions with some group members and volunteers, who offered evocative descriptions of particular elements which had been contributed towards and towards which a strong attachment had been developed. This observation is in contrast to some of the findings of Ryan (2001), who during his study of ecological restoration volunteers found that feelings of

attachment remained fairly constant over the course of involvement. It may be that much lower relative impact of volunteers in a large natural environment prevented feelings of achievement expressed by those involved in community garden. It may also be that the increased physical distance from home prevented frequent appreciation of the space and the changes made, limiting the strength of feeling developed. It certainly appears to be the case that conceptual attachment to a type of landscape was particularly important among ecological volunteers, whereas community garden volunteers and members, although often sharing a conceptual attachment to green space were also physically connected to the spaces with which they were involved by virtue of their location within the neighbourhood environment.

Descriptions of attachments developed towards the gardens (or elements within them) were usually combined with expressions of care, concern and responsibility towards the features described and in some cases the garden more widely. The investment of personal time and effort into the creation of a feature or element of the garden clearly created strong and direct emotional bonds between people and place (or elements within place). Despite the strength of these emotions, it was striking that there was little evidence to suggest strong attachment in this form encouraged continued active involvement and commitment to the maintenance or management of the space. In fact, those individuals exhibiting some of the strongest displays of attachment to the gardens often showed a decline in involvement over the course of the research period, in some cases ceasing to have an active role at all. This observation casts significant doubts on the assumption that positive attachments to place encouraged through involvement can engender feelings of responsibility sufficiently strong to influence behaviour and sustain and active involvement with a project.

### *The social elements of place attachments*

Like the attachment developed through personal investment, the social element of place attachment also appeared to have particularly strong relationships with feelings of responsibility. When attributed to social ties however, feelings of responsibility appeared to have a far stronger relationship with actions as well as feelings. It seemed that while personal investment created a personal sense of responsibility (based on the desire to protect or maintain the outcome of personal efforts made), social relationships created a feeling of duty to others (based on a sense of duty to support the collective efforts). It appears that feelings of responsibility to other members (often friends) were more effective at promoting a physical action in response, with social attachment associated at times with feelings of dependence (and at times guilt where involvement was perceived to be lacking) that were not expressed in association with more personal motivations. This finding reflects those of Lewicka (2005) who found that civic activity in Poland was influenced more by the social elements of place than the more physical-orientated forms of attachment between people and place. However, it was also observed that the collective sense of responsibility that community gardens engendered had the potential to undermine the commitment of individuals. The knowledge that a wider group of people were taking part in a project and the reluctance among most members to express a personal ownership or responsibility of the space, could create a situation in which group members or volunteers felt comfortable to decrease or cease their involvement, in the knowledge that there were other people willing to take on the responsibility. This factor had the potential not only to enable group members to reduce the extent of their involvement, but also to limit the success of efforts to encourage new involvement.

These insights into the complex relationships between attachment and involvement have revealed a strong emphasis on the social constructions of place as an influence on involvement, influenced by the context and nature of community gardens. In the field of volunteering literature, the role of emotional factors in the decision to become involvement in a project are often overlooked in favour of more practical considerations. This study suggests that, while mitigated by many practical factors, the role of emotional motivations deserves much greater consideration. Meanwhile, in the field of community gardening, the social element of involvement is widely acknowledged. However, an emphasis in popular literature on the potential of attachment to place (often referred to in terms of 'ownership') to foster long-term responsibility and commitment to a space has been found to be severely compromised by the effect of more practical factors.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Implications and Conclusions**

This final chapter aims to put the findings of this research into a practical context. Previous chapters have examined the phenomenon of involvement in community garden projects and explored the relationships between volunteering activity and feelings towards 'place'. While several important implications for the theoretical consideration of 'place' and 'place attachment' have been identified, it is perhaps in a practical context that the work has the most significant implications.

The chapter begins with a reflection on some of the practical lessons which can be learned from the experiences encountered through this research, including an assessment of the role of a community development organisation in the support of community gardens. This is followed by an examination of the key implications for policymakers, with particular regard to the current agenda of 'active citizenship' as well as more specific green space policies.

Finally, before a concluding summary of the aims and key findings of the work, a reflection on the limitations of the research is offered alongside suggestions for further research to develop the findings.



## **9.1 Practical implications**

Observing community garden projects over a period of time has allowed a unique insight into the successes and challenges that projects can encounter. It is clear that sustaining an active community garden is far from easy and early enthusiasm for the excitement and delight of the creation stage can be difficult to transfer into long term commitment towards management and maintenance of a garden. While fundamental to the success of a community garden, the involvement of local residents and community members has been shown to be susceptible to a wide range of influencing factors. When exploring the motivations and disincentives among individuals at various levels of involvement, while relationships with feelings of attachment could be identified, a number of more practical factors were found to moderate the ability of such feelings to result in positive action. Although the case study approach precludes any attempts to generalise the findings, they raise valuable issues to be considered by those organising and supporting community garden projects.

### **9.1.1 The importance of organisation**

The way a community garden project is run and organised can affect both the likelihood of attracting new volunteers and the ability of a project to retain existing volunteers. Regardless of the motivations that may be present (be they feelings of place attachment, social relationships or personal interests), the ability of a group to organise itself well has been shown to be crucial in translating such motivations into physical support.

Awareness of both the project and the events that are taking place (meetings and workdays for example) is crucial to achieving involvement, and the methods for communicating this information need to be carefully considered. Regular publicity provides an effective way of keeping people informed, and can avoid feelings of exclusion or distance that can develop through a lack of

contact. Even core group members living in close proximity to a site have been shown to become distanced through a lack of information. The acknowledgment of periods of inactivity on the site could be a useful addition to communications, with the aim of reassuring members who may believe they have missed activities and consequently perceive themselves to have become less involved. Such perceptions have the potential to reduce attendance at meetings (by reducing their perceived role within the group) and could restrict overall commitment to the project.

Publicity can be geographically based, either in the form of posters on site or leaflets through nearby doors, but it is important to consider those further from the site, who can become excluded by such a localised approach. Equally, the restriction of communication to existing group members can limit opportunities for new involvement and threaten the long-term survival of a project. The e-mail communication established by Carfield Farm proved to be a very effective way of communicating project information between core members, and could be applied on a wider level to keep peripheral members and past volunteers informed of activities.

Regularity in the occurrence of workdays or meetings also proved to be effective in promoting awareness. The regular workdays observed at Carfield Farm, while not achieving a high turnout at every occurrence, gave group members a sense of routine and clarity regarding the commitment they were making. In contrast, the ad-hoc workdays that were observed at Kent Road prompted far more comments that days had been 'forgotten' or the dates were not known. Much of the involvement that was achieved following such ad-hoc arrangements appeared to be reliant on the visibility of the site, with residents responding to the sight of activity on the space rather than scheduling the activity.

Although not always considered necessary when the amount of work to be undertaken on site declines, meetings provide an important way of retaining an identity among group members. The definition of a group's core membership through formal minutes (or more informal communications) can

prevent members from 'slipping away' unnoticed. While attendance at such meetings may not always be high, the knowledge that they are continuing helps to maintain awareness that the group is still functioning and could be effective in capitalising on feelings of responsibility that may have been developed.

Finally, a membership system was seen to be an effective way of sustaining public awareness of a project. As well as providing the opportunity for raising funds through subscriptions, a formal membership contributed towards broader feelings of involvement among those who were not physically involved. The ability of formal membership to provoke feelings of ownership and belonging, in respect of a site rarely experienced (Carfield Farm) illustrated the potential of this method. Although membership did not tend to result in any further participation or involvement (other than attendance at celebratory events), it provided an important tool for establishing wider support for the actions of the group. As such it has potential to increase the accountability of the group, in the face of some criticism at the fact that community gardens are run by an unelected minority.

### **9.1.2 The social identity of projects**

Social relationships have been shown to have a central role in the phenomenon of community gardening, both as an influence on the levels of involvement achieved and a source of wider benefit through the development of social ties and projection of a 'sense of community'.

At times, the focus of leading figures on the practical completion of site-based tasks could overlook the importance of this aspect. Pressure to see physical progress on site, work within funding deadlines and successfully undertake basic maintenance tasks could all conspire to direct attention away from the social elements of a project, and the support and consideration they can require.

In the case of new volunteers, or attendees of site events, efforts to welcome and introduce them to group members provides opportunities for conversation, the identification of shared interests and an awareness of the opportunities and needs for further support. In many cases new volunteers would gravitate towards support staff from the Trust, possibly looking for direction and guidance. While this could provide tasks for new volunteers to undertake, it had the potential to reduce the opportunity for interaction with other volunteers from the neighbourhood, with whom social relations could encourage further involvement.

The value of personal encouragement should also be recognised, particularly by leading figures and group members. A reliance on posters or leaflets to promote continued involvement can have limited effect, and discussions regarding the project are important for retaining feelings of involvement at the level of group member. These may take place during activities on-site, but by restricting discussion to this context there is a danger that those who are physically inactive for a period can become further excluded from the project. In this respect, the continuation of meetings can be an important way to ensure discussion about the space and the project continue and that group members sustain a feelings of involvement, as opposed to feeling the project has been completed and the group has dissipated. Informal discussions would also appear important, and the opportunity for leading figures and group members to share information about the project within an informal social settings (such as waiting for children outside school) could offer an effective way of maintaining awareness and encouraging sustained involvement. Such an approach must be supported by more comprehensive distribution of information however, to ensure that those outside the main social networks of key members do not become excluded.

### **9.1.3 The potential role of events**

One of the biggest difficulties for community garden groups trying to sustain involvement into the management phase of a project is the lack of motivation

that changes in feelings towards the space can bring about. The shift from reactionary or aspiration forms of attachment to a more direct positive attachment can result in a lack of incentive, while the completion of a project can reduce the potential for levels of satisfaction deriving from the experience of involvement.

The organisation of events on a space can provide a focus for achievement and a motivation for continued group activity than may not be provided by the mundane nature of maintenance tasks. It was evident that events could be an effective way of providing the incentive necessary to continue a group, providing a purpose to meetings and a tangible focus for maintenance efforts. They could also provide a sense of satisfaction akin to that experienced during periods of change.

Events also have the potential to provide a function and purpose to a space, which at times could be lacking (particularly among gardens established as a reactionary response to threat). The role of annual events at Carfield Farm provided a valued function for the space among the wider community that otherwise could be seen to be limited due to its secluded nature. Meanwhile, perceptions among some residents of Alexandra Road that the community garden lacked purpose could perhaps have been revised if the space was used as the setting for an organised event. Where opportunities for informal use are limited an event can provide an otherwise lacking stimulus for local residents to experience a space, and alongside the context of social celebration, offers the potential for stronger feelings of attachment to be developed.

#### **9.1.4 The value of widening interest**

The strong identity that can be developed by a community garden based on the horticultural and environment values of many members has the potential to limit the motivation to become involved among those who do not share such values. This effect may not constitute a problem as far as sustaining a

core group is concerned, where the attraction of the most interested and committed would appear a benefit. However, the incorporation of activities or events that widen the perceived interest of the project can be valuable in encouraging a broader number of individuals to be involved at the levels of either volunteer or physical participant. Art projects in particular were seen to be an effective means of encouraging people to contribute who would otherwise have been unlikely to become involved through more traditional volunteering tasks.

Although the longevity of involvement encouraged by a particular interest may be restricted to a single activity or phase of the project, the scope for encouraging feelings of attachment towards the space is still considerable. The consequence of this attachment may not be sustained involvement with the group, but certainly has the potential to increase positive feelings towards both the space and the neighbourhood more widely.

### **9.1.5 The role of a community development organisation**

All of the above suggestions require a greater commitment and effort from those leading the project, particularly leading figures. The increased effort and organisation that a well managed project entails can put considerable strain upon those who are volunteering their time to support and co-ordinate a project.

For most group members, the organisational aspects of managing a project (including funding applications, meetings and publicity) tend to be perceived as a necessary chore in contrast to the enjoyment and satisfaction achieved by undertaking work on site. Restrictions based on the amount of time available to contribute to a project and the level of skills or experience, can compromise the ability of even the most committed and enthusiastic of leading figures. In situations where successful organisation is established, the reliance on key individuals to sustain it can lead to dissatisfaction at the

amount of time invested in less enjoyable administrative tasks. This increased reliance over the course of a project can lead to feelings of resentment and an eventual reluctance or inability to sustain the project.

In one case, responsibilities were successfully distributed among group members when dissatisfaction became too great, but this required a strong existing structure within the group that was not evident among other projects. In these cases, the presence of a supporting organisation that could facilitate the effective organisation of a project was essential to their continuing progress and activity.

Although the scope for investigation into the role of a supporting organisation at the level originally planned was restricted by time constraints, a great deal of observation and discussion with group members has focussed on this issue, providing a valuable insight into the issue.

It was widely acknowledged among group members (including voluntary leading figures) that by providing skills (in term of landscape design and community development) and physical support, the supporting organisation was able to facilitate achievements within projects that otherwise would not have been possible. The extent of tasks required to undertake a project (see section 6.1) is considerable, demanding a broad range of skills that may not always be present among those willing to support a project on a voluntary level. The presence of an organisation with the skills and resources to offer support in this respect can clearly encourage the development and implementation of community garden projects and help to support the long term-management.

#### *The effect of support at the neighbourhood scale*

The support commonly available to community garden projects is characterised by organisations with specific skills and a wide geographical remit. Groundwork, for example, is a national network of organisations that tend to operate at the scale of cities or districts. Heeley Development Trust

offered support to groups at a level closer to neighbourhoods, with a geographical remit akin to that of wards or parishes. The implications of this scale were considerable.

Firstly it provided the opportunity for support to be sustained for a longer period. Rather than supporting projects through their establishment and implementation phases and then moving on to other projects, Heeley Development Trust offered a permanent presence in the neighbourhood which (subject to resources) could continue its support of projects over the long-term. Given the difficulties encountered in sustaining volunteer activity to maintain projects, this potential could be of great value to ensuring the long-term success of community garden projects.

Secondly, the identity of the Trust as a local organisation had an effect on the way support was perceived. When other support organisations were involved (such as the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens or BTCV) their relationship with the group was limited to distinct activities or periods of time, whereas the support offered by the Trust was considered by group members to be an integral part of the project. Such was the extent of their relationship with the projects that in many cases the staff involved were perceived as group members rather than facilitators. Their connection to the area, whether as a member of Heeley Development Trust or in some cases as a local resident, clearly affected the way they were perceived by group members. Being perceived as 'local' fostered a respect and acceptance among group members that appeared to ensure that their role in the organisation and development of projects did not compromise the 'community' status of the projects. A position within the neighbourhood also ensured an understanding and awareness of local issues that strengthened the level of support they were able to offer. In particular, local networks developed as a result of being geographically focussed provided contacts and knowledge that could assist or enhance the efforts of the group. The involvement of a local artist, the sourcing of plants from a local city farm and the integration of community garden groups into the Trust's annual 'Heeley



Festival' are all examples of the added benefit that this local level of support was able to offer.

Thirdly, the geographical focus of the Trust enabled community garden projects to be considered on a strategic level. The multi-disciplinary remit of the Trust enabled efforts to improve the environment to be integrated with other aspects of the Trusts work. A notable example is the collaboration between the green space team and the youth team on several occasions to develop projects, or elements of projects, with local young people. The ability to not only tie-in with other local initiatives and activities but actually plan and develop them together offered opportunities for even greater benefits through community gardens. The involvement of young people in the production of artworks for a space as part of an ongoing programme of youth support (rather than a one-off activity) is such an example. As well as considering the projects strategically within the broad aims of the Trust, there were also opportunities to consider community gardens strategically as part of the local green space network. By identifying green spaces of strategic value within the neighbourhood, the Trust had the potential to direct support towards the development of these spaces and the encouragement new projects, as well as reacting to requests for support. The success of such an approach could not be judged within the scope of this research as much of the Trusts efforts remained focused on existing projects during the study period, but their aspirations to develop a strategic plan for green space across Heeley highlighted the opportunity enabled by the geographical focus of the organisation.

#### *The risk of reliance*

While the support offered by the Trust was clearly of great value to all the groups who received it, a distinction could be made between those groups for whom the organisation was a source of support and advice and those who relied on the Trust to manage the project. Although a relationship may have

commenced at a supportive level, it was clearly possible for projects in which organisational capacity became limited (through the loss of members or changes in commitment available from individuals) to gradually become more reliant on the organisation.

In some cases groups became largely inactive as an organising body, relying instead on the Trust to provide opportunities for workdays on site. The shift from active organisation to a more passive role as volunteers did not appear to be a conscious decision on the part of group members, but rather an unanticipated result of a project reaching a certain stage. As projects developed it was evident that the need for decisions to be made could often diminish, as elements of the garden were completed and any problems or issues initially faced were in time overcome. While the early capital phase involved much discussion and debate, the need for decision-making as the project reached 'completion' and certainly during the management phase was far less. Without decisions to be made, the imperative for formal meetings or group discussions was lessened and unless further elements to the project were initiated, the organisational aspect of the group could in some cases be seen to naturally fade. Although decision-making declined, the need for organisation (to arrange workdays and maintain interest) remained and the presence of Heeley Development Trust enabled groups to become organisationally inactive without physical activity ceasing entirely. Surrender of organisational responsibilities to an outside body could be seen to have several important effects on the project however.

Firstly, the identity of the group could be seen to be affected. Without a need for meetings, which provide an opportunity for a core group to be clearly defined, involvement became limited to attending organised workdays. While offering many of the benefits associated with involvement (such as social interaction, enjoyment and satisfaction), the less formal nature of attendance made it increasingly hard to define a core group and personal identification with a project among group members could become weakened. If compounded by poor communication among the group, members could feel distanced from the project, in the belief that organisational activity was taking

place without them. Although feelings towards the space itself appeared resilient to periods of inactivity, feelings of belonging to the group responsible for the space appeared more reliant on some form of regular association or involvement.

As a consequence, one of the motivations to attend workdays - a sense of responsibility to the group - was weakened. Although hard to attribute directly, due to the wide range of factors affecting individuals' involvement, it seemed that this was an important factor in the gradual decline in activity at Kent Road. The presence of the Trust, and the continuing presence of the original leading figure, ensured that sporadic activity on the site continued, but observed attendance tended to be low and frequency unpredictable, offering limited contribution to the maintenance needs of the space. The intervention of the Trust ensured that the space remained visually acceptable insofar as weeding and mowing were concerned, but other signs (such as unprepared damage to mosaic work and a notice-board) suggested that the space was lacking care. The timeframe of the research precluded further investigation into the effects of such decline, but the feelings of disappointment and disillusionment expressed by some group members prior to such evidence of neglect suggest that the negative effect of poor maintenance could be considerable.

It was evident over time that the capacity of the Trust to support local projects was being eroded. As the core funding that had been supporting Heeley Development Trust declined, there was increased pressure on those who had otherwise spent time supporting groups to bring in funding to support the future of the organisation. The uncertainty of the Trust's future both limited the amount of time offered to projects and increased the amount of pressure and stress that was placed on its staff. As a result, those projects which had developed a level of reliance on the Trust to achieve necessary management tasks were at risk of becoming neglected.

The development of a form of reliance makes the implications of the supporting role of the Trust are hard to evaluate. The presence of the Trust

was considered by many group members to have encouraged the development of projects that otherwise would not have had the capacity to be established. By doing so however, it could be considered that projects were being encouraged that did not have the capacity to be sustained by voluntary efforts alone, leading to a reliance on the Trust which could not always be fulfilled. The timeframe of the research makes it hard to judge the effect that a withdrawal of Trust support for projects would have. It may be that the loss of the maintenance support would provide the necessary incentive and motivation of groups to become active and take responsibility for the spaces they had created. The experience at Alexandra Road suggests that this is by no means guaranteed and it may be that the more mundane characteristics of maintenance tasks simply do not offer sufficient satisfaction and enjoyment to sustain the involvement of volunteers. Alexandra Road had suffered the loss of many of its members however, which created an additional barrier to the re-establishment of activity. It may be that with sufficient remaining group members the loss of a supporting organisation could be compensated.

## 9.2 Policy implications

### 9.2.1 Promotion without understanding?

In the drive for greater community involvement in the management of our parks and green spaces, community gardens appear to have been seized upon as a model example illustrating how 'communities' can lead the development of local green spaces.

The dynamics of community involvement in the context of community gardens tend to be poorly considered however, largely due to a lack of in-depth research and a popular tendency to focus on promoting the benefits of the phenomenon. Despite this limited understanding, the development of community gardens is now actively encouraged by a range of funding bodies offering sizable grants to community groups.

Although capital funding is increasingly common, the lack of long-term revenue funding exaggerates the reliance placed on the capacity of groups and individuals to maintain a community garden following its establishment. The level of capital investment being placed in these projects demands that greater consideration be paid to the management of the spaces and the implications of the investment in the long term. The difficulties that can be encountered in sustaining involvement and managing a community garden project that have been highlighted in this study must be recognised to enable a full evaluation of the role and requirements of these distinctive forms of open space.

The experience of the community gardens studied is indicative of problems faced more widely within the area of community development and neighbourhood regeneration. Both government initiatives and community-led organisations frequently find it difficult to sustain their activities and achievements in the long-term, particularly when initial sources of grant funding and support come to an end (Macauley, 2003). Regeneration

programmes are increasingly encouraged to consider 'exit strategies' for their work, often as an integral part of their any grant funding. Among the funding bodies supporting community gardens however, such encouragement appears to be limited, with a focus on the results of the capital phase rather than an emphasis on long-term management. As a result, despite awareness and concern being voiced by some group members during interviews, the issue was rarely raised collectively and consideration of long-term management by groups was extremely rare.

Admittedly, many of the approaches to sustainability recommended among larger regeneration initiatives, such as the development of an asset base, are simply not appropriate to such small scale community projects. One approach that could have potential however is the concept of 'mainstreaming' whereby projects are adopted by local service providers (Macauley, 2003). By adopting the basic maintenance regime for a garden, the unpredictability of voluntary labour could be mitigated, ensuring that the gardens are protected from falling into decline if volunteering activity tails off. In Heeley, examples of this approach could be seen, in the ongoing maintenance provided by Heeley Development Trust at both Alexandra Road and Kent Road. As highlighted in section 9.1.5 however, the insecure future of the Trust itself fails to provide the reliability needed to secure the future of the spaces it supports. An alternative approach could be the adoption of gardens by the local authority. While this could theoretically provide a secure management framework, the practical feasibility of already stretched councils taking on the level of management required at such a small-scale local level seems extremely limited at present (CABESpace, 2004:2006). This situation calls for careful consideration of the support structures in place for community-led projects and how the benefits of community gardens that have been highlighted can be secured in the long term. Without adequate support the widespread positive effects of the creation of such 'special places' in the neighbourhood environment risks being overshadowed by the disillusionment fostered by the degeneration of involvement and the deterioration of a valued space.

The fragility of community involvement that has been identified also has implications for the management of green space more widely. The promotion of community involvement in green space provision is widespread, to the point that funding for parks and green spaces is increasingly dependent on the presence of such involvement. The Green Flag Award, increasingly used as a benchmark for assessing green space quality, places a high emphasis on 'community involvement', while most associated grant funding is either offered directly to community groups or demands evidence of some form of involvement. The danger of such an emphasis is that spaces that fail to achieve or sustain the involvement of local people will find themselves excluded from the provision of resources. While the involvement of local people has been shown to offer considerable benefits, the fragility of voluntary activity raises questions as to how much emphasis it should be given when assessing quality or distributing resources. For example, how does the distribution of funds based on the capacity of local residents to form a group and initiate a project fit alongside the encouragement of a strategic approach to green space provision? Is there a danger that neighbourhoods without strong leading figures or residents willing to volunteer will contain a poorer quality of neighbourhood space?

### **9.2.2 The role of communities in service provision**

The government agendas of 'active citizenship' and 'civil renewal' place a strong emphasis on the engagement and involvement of local residents in the management and governance of the areas in which they live. However, the findings of this research raise questions regarding the extent to which communities should be relied upon to deliver local services.

Voluntary activity is seen as a key component in the drive for a more civil society and a method of achieving quality service provision by increasing the responsibility of the individual (Blunkett, 2003). This research has shown that the success of voluntary activities can be limited by a wide range of factors,

some related to the ability or desire of individuals to take an active role and others associated with the capacity of groups or organisations to offer suitable opportunities for involvement. These findings support claims that in order to sustain the active involvement of residents, there is a need for strong support to overcome such barriers (Skelcher, 1996). Without a secure model of support, the efforts of volunteers and the achievement of long-term 'active citizenship' would appear to be highly compromised. Development Trusts have been seen to offer a potentially valuable model for such support, but without adequate funding to secure their future their ability to achieve this potential is greatly undermined.

In order to provide suitable support and achieve the ambitions of the active citizen agenda, this research suggests that a more considered approach to the idea of 'community involvement' is required. Use of the term community in its singular form, routinely used in policy documents and academic literature alike, suggests a single cohesive entity. There is increasing criticism of this conception of communities, but its popular use in political rhetoric remains prevalent. Such uncritical reference to 'community' masks the diversity, complexity and potential conflict that can exist among the residents and users of a neighbourhood. It also fails to acknowledge the fact that 'community involvement' can often be referring to the involvement of a relatively small number of individuals within a neighbourhood. Even among those projects that attracted high levels of involvement, through events or memberships for example, the number of people directly influencing project decisions remained small, usually limited to leading figures and a number of the core group at any one time. This structure questions the notion that community gardens provide a high level of participation to a wide 'community'. Significant control and influence may be in the hands of community members, but only those willing and able to take on the responsibility and commitment necessary to lead a project. Despite decision-making being lead by an active minority, the issue of accountability raised by a number of commentators (Twelvetrees, 1996; Selman, 1996) did not emerge as a significant problem among any of the cases studied. This was



avoided partly through the efforts of groups to consult and consider the wider neighbourhood, but also by virtue of the fact that the improvement of a local open space was considered by most to be a positive intervention.

While most existing criticism of the terminology focuses on the idea of 'community', this research has revealed a diversity and complexity within the concept of 'involvement' that is equally misguided. The notion that an individual is either 'involved' or 'not involved' has been shown to be wholly inappropriate in the context of community gardens, with involvement taking a variety of forms. Perception of personal involvement could vary between individuals, quite independently of actual behaviour, while level of involvement frequently changed in the course of time. Measuring involvement has been shown to be difficult, if possible at all, questioning many of the evaluation methods used because funding bodies to assess the success of their investment. In order to properly assess the quality and impact of projects encompassing 'community involvement' it seems clear that a more detailed consideration of who is involved and how they are involved is required.

A final note of caution for the policy drive towards the greater involvement and responsibility of local people in the provision of services is offered by the experience of the Alexandra Road garden. Part of the argument in favour of such an approach is the assertion that by devolving power to neighbourhoods or communities, more appropriate and successful service provision can be achieved. At Alexandra Road, it was evident that despite being lead by local residents and despite considerable consultation taking place during the design phase, a space had been created that did not meet the needs of local a people in a functional sense. Although it was seen by many as a positive achievement and a representation of a local 'sense of community', as a local resource it was rarely used for any of its intended functions. It may be argued that in the case of community gardens, the positive effect on how people feel about their neighbourhood is sufficient benefit to justify the process, whether people use the space or not. Nevertheless, it should be recognised that the devolution of power to 'local

communities', in this case through the availability of funding to enable projects to be undertaken, should not be seen as a guarantee of more locally-appropriate solutions.

## 9.3 Limitations and further research

### 9.3.1 Limitations to the research

The experience of researching community gardens has raised a number of important issues, both practical and theoretical, as well as being personally fulfilling to undertake. It is however important to recognise some of the limitations of the work. Some limitations were recognised and accepted during the development of the methodological framework as a result of the methods and techniques used, while others were unforeseen results of the actual experience of undertaking the work.

The in-depth qualitative approach taken, and particularly the decision to focus on a small number of case studies, provided many opportunities for insight and exploration that would otherwise have been impossible, but also places considerable limitations on how the finding should be read. While more detailed considerations of the methods and techniques used can be found within Chapter 3 it is important to stress that generalised claims from the findings have been avoided by virtue of the methodology applied. Studying a restricted number of cases within a particular location provides an insight into the issues that *can* be faced by projects and the feelings and meanings that *can* be associated with community spaces. It has allowed these issues to be considered in some depth and the relationships between feelings and behaviours to be carefully explored in this particular context. Nonetheless, attempts to categorise phenomenon, such as the levels of involvement or the factors affecting involvement, are not presented as definitive frameworks. It is accepted that further categories may be observed or encountered in different locations and different situations. While this offers a limitation to the generalisation of findings in a qualitative sense, it is argued that the depth of understanding achieved and the questions such investigation can raise, is equally valuable in the furthering of understanding in this field.

This firmly qualitative stance was adopted early in the research process, in an attempt to achieve the depth of investigation intended, but the experience of the project has served to highlight the potential value of mixed-method approaches, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. In particular, the use of a questionnaire (undertaken with the primary aim of identifying potential interviewees rather than collecting data) revealed the potential of such a technique for placing the insights of more qualitative methods within a wider social framework. With more time, greater consideration could have been given to the value, content and analysis of questionnaire-style survey to provide robust quantitative data with which to support (or question) findings from qualitative techniques.

The aspiration to depth within the research also created limitations on a practical level. Attempts to avoid undue bias during interviews, particularly among 'non-involved' residents, lead to unstructured interviews often commencing with broader themes, the intention being to identify the importance and role of a community garden without encouraging 'off-the-peg' responses to direct questions. While this proved successful in many instances, it was also exceptionally time-consuming; limiting the amount of time spent discussing issues directly relevant to the key research issues. This had the effect of limiting the number of interviews achievable within the time available, and also contributed to the need to limit the exploration of the third key theme of the research. With more time, or a greater awareness of the demands of in-depth interviewing, it may have been possible to have undertaken more detailed analysis of the role of Heeley Development Trust. Interviews with members and officers of the local authority could also have placed the work in a wider context, particularly with regards the accountability of projects and the status of community gardens within a wider green space infrastructure, but proved beyond the scope of the project.

Also restricted by time, but with the potential to advance understanding further, was the use of repeated interviews to explore changes in feeling over the course of a project. Although a small number were undertaken, these were rarely more than a few months apart. It is felt that a greater use of

follow-up interviews over the course of my time in the field could have provided opportunities for greater reliability. The reliance on single interviews to explore feelings over time, based on retrospective accounts, was obviously limited by the memory of interviewees and their skills of articulation. In practice however, repeat interviews proved impractical. More time than anticipated was spent establishing rapport within the field, developing the methodological techniques and processing the large amount of data amassed during ethnographic study. As a consequence, follow-up interviews would have had to have been undertaken following the main withdrawal from the field and during the main period of writing up, and risked preventing successful completion of the work.

### **9.3.2 The scope for further research**

The lack of existing research into community gardens in this country offers a great deal of scope for further research in this area, and the exploratory approach applied in this study has raised a number of specific areas in which further work would be particularly valuable.

First and foremost, the case-study focus of this work prompts a need for further work to evaluate the relevance of the issues raised among community gardens more widely. The study of a larger number of community gardens, in a range of locations and contexts, would invariably put limitations on the methodologies that could be used, but would provide a valuable insight into the commonalities (and differences) among this type of green space and the issues they face. Existing surveys which consider community managed spaces alongside other forms of community involvement such as Friends Groups (Ockenden & Moore, 2003) overlook many of the most important issues due to their breadth. The difficulties encountered by the projects studied in sustaining involvement and achieving long-term management highlights a pressing need to evaluate the success of community gardens nation-wide and the long-term effect of the policies and campaigns that have supported their creation. Current evaluation schemes are fragmented

between funding organisations and largely focussed on the outputs and outcomes of investment. A more comprehensive evaluation of gardens would be hard to achieve, due to the phenomenon's informal nature, but would be valuable to inform future support and resources. Of particular value would be the monitoring of gardens over a longer time-frame, studying the rates of involvement, management and use over a period of years. While this study has provided a two year snapshot of projects, most were still in the capital phase on conception and therefore the long-term evaluation of management has not been possible. Revisiting gardens on an annual or bi-annual basis over the course of ten years, for example, would provide a much clearer picture of the patterns of involvement in the long-term, the issues faced following 'completion' and potential strategies for sustaining the positive effect of the gardens. Is the funding aimed at the creation of community gardens creating successful spaces in the long-term? Should more effort be put into long term support, as this study would suggest?

Continuing this theme, there is clearly a need for further consideration of the role of supporting organisations. The presence of a local organisation with such relevant skills and expertise as Heeley Development is an exception rather than the rule. Comparing the experiences of groups without such support, particularly regarding their abilities to overcome challenges during creation of a garden and sustain interest and involvement over time, would provide valuable evidence to inform policy decisions regarding the potential role and structure of community support. Furthermore, an evaluation of the relative benefits and drawbacks of different models of green space management would help to inform the strategic provision of green space now advocated by central government. Can the more prevalent model of community support, provided by organisations such as Groundwork, achieve similar results in the long term? What is the effect of support being less local and does the time-constrained intervention (often limited to the capital phase) further weaken the ability of projects to succeed in the long-term? How could local authorities play a more supportive role in the management of community gardens?

Another important issue that has been highlighted in this study and requires further investigation is the specific relationship between local involvement, feelings of ownership and responsible behaviour. The assumption that feelings of ownership or attachment developed through capital-phase involvement will ensure long-term responsibility towards a public space is widespread, but this study has revealed that such a relationship can be strongly mediated by other factors. To rely on such an assumption without question risks undermining the success of many community-based open space projects. Further research could develop the exploration of place attachment and its effects, informed by the theoretical understanding offered by this work, and in particular extend its study over time to compare changes in levels of involvement with changes in feelings towards the space. Is a fall in involvement levels indicative of a fall in attachment towards a place? If not, how far can such feelings be relied on to maintain involvement and management? This study has gone some way to exploring these issues, but investigating in different contexts and over longer time-frames could greatly enhance understanding.

Further study into the perceptions of non-involved residents would help to develop a greater understanding of the relationship between community gardens and their 'communities'. Exploring reasons for non-involvement has proved difficult, but there is scope for developing research to explore the accountability of community groups associated with community gardens as perceived by other local residents. The experience of this research suggests that although directed by an active minority, other residents tend to be in favour of the project; expressing gratitude towards those making the effort rather than resentment at any exclusion from the process. Exploring the experiences of other community gardens, particularly examples where conflict has been experienced would help to reveal more about this relationship.

This work has illustrated the importance of small neighbourhood spaces to many people and the strength of feeling that can be developed with spaces close to home. The creation of a community garden is able to foster strong

positive feelings towards the wider neighbourhood, but could similar feelings be achieved through improvements without community involvement? Photo-elicitation work suggested a strong dissatisfaction with local authority managed spaces at this scale. Is there scope for local authorities to improve the perception of spaces which communities do not have the capacity or inclination to take on themselves? Should more resources be focussed on neighbourhood spaces rather than large parks and destination sites? Further research into feelings towards neighbourhood spaces of all types would help to answer some of these questions, while the photo-elicitation methods applied in this research could provide an effective way of overcoming some of the difficulties found eliciting responses regarding this type of green space.

As with any study of this nature, the questions raised far outnumber the conclusions reached, and the scope for further research is considerable. In light of the potential benefits that have been associated with community gardens and the potential risk to their future highlighted within this study, all efforts to increase understanding of the phenomenon should be encouraged.



## **9.4 Concluding summary**

Community gardens constitute a distinctive model of urban green space that is becoming increasingly common as a result of considerable government encouragement and capital funding opportunities. The principles of community-led environmental improvement align well with current government agendas that encourage the values of 'active citizenship' and 'liveability'.

These spaces differ from traditional open spaces in their initiation and creation by local residents and community members. This creates an opportunity for a range of benefits associated with community involvement, but also places responsibility for the management of the space with those who created it.

The opportunities for involvement they offer also differs from many traditional forms of environmental volunteering by virtue of their urban context and their intimate relationships with a neighbourhood at a local level. This provides the potential for particularly strong relationships between people and place, but also creates a context in which the success or failure of efforts can have a direct impact on the environment in which people live.

This study has explored this particular form of community involvement in urban open space through an extended ethnographic approach focusing on a number of case studies. The aims of the research were to explore the phenomenon of community gardening in order to further the understanding of the relationships between people and place and the processes that contribute to the success of these projects. Theories of 'place attachment' (Altman & Low, 1992) were used to explore the role of emotional bonds to place in the encouragement of involvement, and the ability of such bonds to sustain involvement. Broader influences on involvement were also examined in order to situate the effect of these relationships within a practical context. Key findings can be identified which raise a number of implications for the

practical management of community garden projects as well as deepening theoretical understandings of the complex relationships that can be formed between people and place.

The 'community involvement' encountered among the projects studied revealed a broad range of levels at which people could be (and identify themselves as being) involved. This challenges the popular use of the term that tends to imply a single and coherent phenomenon. The diversity encountered was made more complex by the variable nature of involvement over time. Rather than constituting a static phenomenon (as implied in the expectation placed on communities to adopt long-term management responsibilities), individual levels of involvement frequently changed. Due to a frequently heavy reliance on a 'core group' of individuals, these fluctuations in involvement could undermine the ability of a community project to be successfully managed in the long-term.

The factors influencing the level of involvement offered by individuals were explored and found to consist of a complex combination of an individual's relationships with the space, their relationships with other people, their values and interests and their practical ability to contribute.

Among these factors, the common conception of place attachment (a positive emotional bond with a specific place) was found to be of limited influence in instigating involvement. Instead, a number of alternative relationships with place were found to provide more powerful incentives for involvement. In many cases, attachment to place was directed at the wider context of a locality. This 'conceptual attachment' could either be attributed to the area in which a space was found or more generally to the perceived importance of green space in the urban environment. These 'conceptual attachments' were particularly important when a project was initiated in response to a threat. In other cases, attachment could be identified towards the 'vision' of a community garden. This 'aspirational attachment' was based not on the

experience of an existing place, as usually defined by place attachment, but on the opportunities it provided for becoming a valued place.

As projects developed and improvements were undertaken, opportunities for more direct positive attachments could be identified. These attachments were influenced by the positive experiences of use, the investment of personal effort and opportunities for social interaction that involvement in the community garden provided. Attachment to place was also found to extend beyond those involved, informed by positive reactions to changes and a wider 'sense of community' that was promoted by the process. The relationship of these positive attachments with long-term physical involvement was less apparent however, questioning the effectiveness of personal involvement to encouraging long-term active responsibility towards open spaces.

Without the threat or negative condition that inspired involvement in the early stages of a project, it appeared that a range of moderating factors acting to oppose or limit motivations could become more influential. Particularly difficult to sustain was the organisational core upon which the activities of a group would depend. Without the communication and co-ordination provided by this core, individuals would be less able to manage a space as a group and the activity of a project risks gradual decline.

The consequences of such a decline in involvement could be identified in expressions of disillusionment, disappointment and frustration, and the positive attachment developed through the creation of a space appeared to intensify these feelings.

The context of the research in an area supported by a Development Trust highlighted the potential role of such an organisation in both developing and sustaining local involvement. The professional experience of staff from the Trust and the resources available to them provided advice and practical assistance that helped groups to overcome some of the barriers that otherwise may have hindered or prevented progress.

It was also evident however that the capacity of the Trust to sustain the necessary level of support could be limited at times, due to the required efforts towards its own financial security. Those groups with a less organised core group displayed considerable reliance on the Trust to sustain activity on the site. When this support was not available, the capacity of these groups to sustain involvement and continue the efforts of the group at times proved insufficient.

The benefits that community gardens can provide, and the levels of grant funding invested in creating them, suggest that there is a pressing need for greater consideration regarding their support and management. More detailed research is clearly required into methods of providing long-term facilitation to sustain a community role in the management of community spaces, which address the varied capacities of small local groups.

In conclusion, the physical and social elements of community gardens have been shown to offer considerable benefits to both the individuals taking part and the wider communities in which they are situated. As such they offer a valuable model for the management – and sometimes creation - of green space. However, the encouragement of such projects based on a premise that the emotional bonds fostered between people and place will be sufficient to sustain involvement would appear misguided. The difficulties evident in sustaining involvement in the long-term raise important questions regarding the limits of community enthusiasm as a driver for managing green space in the long term.

## **Bibliography**

Adler, P. and Adler, P. (1998) *Observational Techniques*. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London: Sage.

Altman, I. and Low, S. (1992) *Place Attachment*. New York: Plenum Press.

Altman, I. and Wandersman, A. (1987). Introduction to I. Altman and A. Wandersman (eds) *Neighborhood and community environments*. New York: Plenum.

Arai, S. and Pedlar, A. (1997) 'Building Communities Through Leisure: Citizen Participation in a Healthy Communities Initiative' *Journal of Leisure Research*, 29(2), 167-182.

Armstrong, D. (2000) 'A survey of community gardens in upstate New York: Implications for health promotion and community development' *Health & Place*, 6, 319-327.

Arnstein, S. (1969) 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 34, 216-225

Barber, A. (1994) 'A Future for Parks and Open Spaces' *National Student Conference for Landscape Architecture - Manchester Metropolitan University*, 24 March 1994.

Barton, H. (2003) *Shaping Neighbourhoods*. London: Spon Press

Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage

Belk, R. W. (1992) *Attachment to Possessions*. In I. Altman and S. Low (eds.) *Place Attachment*. New York: Plenum Press.

Bonaiuto, M., Fornara, F. and Bonnes, M. (2003) 'Indexes of perceived residential environment quality and neighbourhood attachment in urban environments: a confirmation study of the city of Rome' *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 65, 41-52.

Borman, K., LeCompte, M. and Preissle-Goetz, J. (1986) 'Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Design and Why It Doesn't Work' *American Behavioral Scientist*. 30(1), 42-57

Bradley, C. (1986) *Community Involvement in Greening*. Birmingham: Groundwork Foundation.

Brown, B. and Perkins, D. (1992) 'Disruptions in place attachment' In I. Altman and S. Low (eds.) *Place Attachment*. New York: Plenum

Brown, B., Perkins, D. and Brown, G. (2003) 'Place attachment in a revitalizing neighbourhood: Individual and block levels of analysis' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23, 259-271.

Browning, S. (2005) *Transforming Your Space: Big Lottery Fund Evaluation Update*. Burlington: Big Lottery Fund  
<[http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/er\\_eval\\_tys\\_update.pdf](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/er_eval_tys_update.pdf)> accessed 04/05/06

Bow, V. and Buys, L. (2003). *Sense of community and place attachment: the natural environment plays a vital role in developing a sense of community*. Social Change for the 21st Century conference, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2003, Queensland University of Technology.  
<<http://www.socialchange.qut.edu.au/conferences/socialchange/docs/confpapers2003/Bow&Buys.pdf>> accessed 10/02/06

Bryman, A. (2001) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Burgham, M. and Downward, P. (2005) 'Why volunteer, time to volunteer? A case study from swimming' *Managing Leisure*, 10, 79-93.

Burningham, K. and Thrush, D. (2001) *"Rainforests are a long way from here": The environmental concerns of disadvantaged groups* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

CABESpace (2004) *Manifesto for Better Public Spaces*. London: CABESpace.

CABESpace (2004) *Parks need people: The skills shortage in parks*. London: CABE

CABESpace (2006) *Urban Parks: Do you know what you're getting for your money?* London: CABE

Canter, D. (1977) *The Psychology of Place*. London: Architectural Press.

Canter, D. (1997) 'The Facets of place' In G. T. Moore & R. W. Marans (eds) *Advances in Environment, Behavior, and Design*. New York: Plenum.

Chell, E. (1998) Critical Incident Technique. In G. Symon and C. Cassell (eds.) *Qualitative Methods and Analysis in Organizational Research*. London: Sage.

The Civic Trust (2005) *What is the a Green Pennant Award?*  
<[http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/other\\_schemes/](http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/other_schemes/)> accessed 3/3/2006

Collier, J. (1979) *Visual Anthropology*. In J. Wagner (ed.) *Images of Information*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Cooper Marcus, C (1992) *Environmental Memories*. In I. Altman and S. Low (eds.) *Place Attachment*. New York: Plenum Press.

Cooper Marcus, C., Watskey, C., Insley, E. & Frances, C. (1990) *People Places: Design Guidelines for Urban Open Space*. New York: Van Nostrand Rienhold.

Corti, L., Foster, J. and Thompson, P. (1995). 'Archiving qualitative research data' *Social Research Update*, Issue 10. Department of Sociology, University of Surrey. <<http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU10.html>> accessed 08/04/03

Crabtree, B. F. and Miller, W. L. (1992) *A Template Approach to Text Analysis: Developing and Using Codebooks*. In B. F. Crabtree and W. L. Miller (eds.) *Doing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Crouch, D. (1988) *The Allotment; its landscape and culture*. London: Earthscan.

Davies, W. K. D. and Herbert, D. T. (1993) *Communities within Cities: An Urban Social Geography*. London: Belhaven Press.

de Laine, M. (2000) *Fieldwork, Participation and Practice: Ethics and Dilemmas in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Department of Environment (1996) *Greening the City: Guide to Good Practise*. Norwich: HMSO.

Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (1999) *Towards an Urban Renaissance - Executive Summary*. London: Urban Task Force.

Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (2002) *Green spaces, better places – final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce*. London: DTLR.

Development Trust Association (2003) *Ten: celebrating ten years of the Development Trust Association*. London: Development Trust Association.

Donald, B. (1997) 'Fostering Volunteerism in and Environmental Stewardship Group: A Report on the Task Force to Bring Back the Don, Toronto, Canada' *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 40(4), 483-505.

Dunnett, N. and Qasim, M. (2000) 'Perceived Benefits to Human Well-being of Urban Gardens' *HortTechnology*, 10(1), 40-45.

Dunnett, N., Swanwick, C. and Wooley, H. (2002) *Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Green Spaces*. London: DTLR.

Egginton-Metters, I. (1999) *Memorandum by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (TCP 42)*. Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Memoranda, House of Commons.  
<<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199899/cmselect/cmenvtra/477/477mem45.htm>> accessed 12/04/02

Etzioni, A. (1995) *The spirit of community: rights, responsibilities and the communitarian agenda*. London: Fontana

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (2001) *City Farming and Community Gardening*. [promotional factsheet]

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (n.d.) 'Farmgarden' website. <<http://www.farmgarden.org.uk>> accessed 03/05/04

Ferguson, Sarah (1999) *A brief history of grassroots greening in NYC*. The InterActivist Network. <[http://www.interactivist.net/gardens/h\\_1.html](http://www.interactivist.net/gardens/h_1.html)> accessed 23/10/03

Ferris, J., Morris, M., Norman, C. and Sempik, J. (2001) *People, Land & Sustainability: a global view of community gardening*. Great Britain: PLS.

Fetterman, D. M. (1998) *Ethnography*. London: Sage.

Francis, M., Cashdan, L. and Paxson, L. (1984) *Community Open Spaces*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Francis, M. (1987). 'Meanings attached to a City Park and a Community Garden in Sacramento' *Landscape Research*, 12(1), 8-12.

Freeman, C., Littlewood, S. and Whitney, D. (1996) 'Local government and emerging models of participation in the Local Agenda 21 process' *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 39(1), 65-78.

GardeningWhich? (1998) 'Gardens for People' *GardeningWhich?* June 1998, 205-209



Gaskin, K. (2003) *A choice blend - What volunteers want from organisation and management*. London: IVR

Gibson, J. (1979) *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Gilchrist, A. (2000) 'Design for Living: The Challenge of Sustainable Communities' in Barton, H. (ed.) *Sustainable Communities*. London: Earthscan.

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Giuliani, M. V. and Feldman, R. (1993) 'Place attachment in a developmental and cultural context' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 13, 267-274.

Glover, T. D. (2004). 'Social Capital in the Lived Experiences of Community Gardeners' *Leisure Sciences*, 26, 143-162.

Glover, T. D., Shinew, K. J. and Parry, D. C. (2005) 'Association, Sociability, and Civic Culture: The Democratic Effect of Community Gardening' *Leisure Sciences*, 27, 75-92.

Gold, R. L. (1958) 'Roles in sociological field observations' *Social Forces*, 36(3), 217-223.

Greenhalgh, L. and Warpole, K. (1995) *Park Life: Urban Parks and Social Renewal*. Stroud: Comedia.

Grese, R., Kaplan, R., Ryan, R. L. and Buxton, J. (2000) Psychological benefits of volunteering in stewardship programs. In P. H. Gobster and R. B. Hull (eds.) *Restoring Nature: Perspectives from the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Gustafson, P. (2001a) 'Meanings of Place: Everyday experience and theoretical conceptualizations' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21, 5-16.

Gustafson, P. (2001b) 'Roots and Routes: Exploring the Relationship between Place Attachment and Mobility' *Environment and Behaviour*, 33(5), 667-686.

Hailu, G., Boxall, P. C. and McFarlane, B. L. (2005) 'The influence of place attachment on recreation demand' *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 26, 581-598.

Harper, D. (1987) 'The Visual Ethnographic Narrative' *Visual Anthropology*, 1, 1-19.

Hay, R. (1998) 'Sense of Place in Developmental Context' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 18, 5-29.

Healey, P. (1998) Institutional theory, social exclusion and governance In A. Madanipour, G. Cars and J. Allen (eds.) *Social Exclusion in European Cities*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Heeley Development Trust (2003) *Heeley Community Audit*. (undertaken by Specialist Research Services)

Heeley History Workshop (2000) *Heghleggh Then and Heeley Now*. Sheffield: Pickards Publishing.

Hitchmough, J. (1994) *Urban Landscape Management*. Sydney: Inkata Press

Hodgkinson, E. (2004) *Evaluation of the Doorstep Greens Support Worker and Fundraising Adviser Programme: November 2002 to March 2004*. Countryside Agency.

Holland, L. (2004) 'Diversity and Connections in Community Gardens: a contribution to local sustainability' *Local Environment*, 9(3), 285-305.

Howe, J. (1999) 'Cultivating the cities' *Streetwise*, 38, 24-25.

Hoskins, W.G. (1965) *The Making of the English Landscape*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Hummon, D.M. (1992) Community Attachment. In I. Altman and S. Low (eds.) *Place Attachment*. New York: Plenum Press.

Hurworth, R. (2003) 'Photo-Interviewing for research' *Social Research Update*, 40. Department of Sociology, University of Surrey.  
<<http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU40.html>> accessed 04/08/03

Iles, J. (2003) *Introductory presentation*. European Federation of City Farms Conference 2003, Sheffield. 10<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

Irvine, S., Johnson, L., and Peters, K. (1999) 'Community gardens and sustainable land use planning: A case-study of the Alex Wilson Community Garden' *Local Environment*, 4, 33-46.

Institute of Volunteering Research (1997) *1997 National Survey of Volunteering in the UK* <<http://www.ivr.org.uk/nationalsurvey.htm>> accessed 3/9/03

Institute for Volunteering Research (2003) *Volunteering for All? Exploring the link between volunteering and social exclusion*. London: Institute for

Volunteering Research.

<<http://www.ivr.org.uk/socialexclusion/fullreport.pdf#search=%22Volunteering%20for%20All%3F%20%22>> accessed 13/02/04

Jones, R. (2002) 'Partnerships in action: strategies for the development of voluntary community groups in urban parks' *Leisure Studies*. 21, 305-325.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2000) *Critical issues for voluntary action*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Kaplan, R. (1973) 'Some psychological benefits of gardening' *Environment and Behaviour*, 5, 145-161.

Kaplan, R. and Kaplan, S. (1989) *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kaltenborn, B. P. and Bjerke, T. (2002) 'Associations between Landscape Preferences and Place Attachment: a study in Roros, Southern Norway' *Landscape Research*, 27(4), 381-396.

Knoke, D. (1981) 'Commitment and Detachment in Voluntary Associations' *American Sociological Review*, 46(2), 141-158.

Legard, R., Keegan, J. and Ward, K. (2003) In-depth Interviews. In J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage.

Levitt, M.J., Guacci, N., and Weber, R.A. (1992) 'Intergenerational support, relationship quality, and well-being: A bicultural analysis' *Journal of Family Issues*, 13, 466-481.

Lewicka, M. (2005) 'Ways to make people active: The role of place attachment, cultural capital, and neighbourhood ties' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25, 381-395.

Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (1995) *Analyzing social settings*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

Losito, C. (2000) 'Community Based Arts and Regeneration' *Streetwise* 42, 13-14.

Macauley, A. (2003) 'This Way Out' *New Start*, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003, 12-13.

Manzo, L. (2003) 'Beyond House and Haven: Towards a revisioning of emotional relationships with places' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23, 47-61.

Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage.

- Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- May, T. (1997) *Social Research: Issues, methods and process*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Meegan, R. and Mitchell, A. (2001) "'It's Not Community Round Here, It's Neighbourhood": Neighbourhood Change and Cohesion in Urban Regeneration Policies.' *Urban Studies*, 38(12), 2167-2194.
- Mesch, G. S. and Manor, O. (1998) 'Social Ties, Environment Perception, and Local Attachment' *Environment and Behaviour*, 30(4), 504-519.
- Miles, I., Sullivan, W. and Kuo, F. (1998) 'Ecological restoration volunteers: the benefits of participation' *Urban Ecosystems*, 2, 27-41.
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. London: Sage.
- Moore, R. L. and Graefe, A. R. (1994) 'Attachments to Recreation Settings: The Case of Rail-Trail Users' *Leisure Sciences*, 16, 17-31.
- Moore, R. L. and Scott, D (2003) 'Place Attachment and Context: Comparing a Park and a Trail within' *Forest Science*. 49 (6) 877-884
- Morphet, J. (1996) 'Open spaces, community places' *Town and Country Planning*, May 1996, 148-149.
- Munton, T. and Zurawan, A. (2003) *Active Communities: Headline Findings from the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey*. London: Home Office.
- National Statistics (2002) *Neighbourhood statistics - Ward Profile for: Heeley*. <<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/ward.asp?la=00CG>> accessed 11/10/02.
- National Urban Forestry Unit (2001) *Engaging communities with urban forestry*. National Urban Forestry Unit [leaflet]
- Ockenden, N. and Moore, S. (2003) *Community Networking Project Final Report*. Reading: GreenSpace.
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2002) *Living Spaces: Cleaner, Greener, Safer*. London: ODPM
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2003) *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*. London: ODPM

Omoto, A. M. & Snyder, M. (1995) 'Sustained helping without obligation: motivation, longevity of service, and perceived attitude change among AIDS volunteers' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68 (4), 671-686.

Paxton, A. (1997) 'Farming the city' *Landscape Design*, September 1997, 53-54.

Penner, L. A. (2004). 'Volunteerism and Social Problems: Making Things Better or Worse' *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(3), 645-666.

Power, A. (2004) *Neighbourhood Management and the Future of Urban Areas*. CASE paper 77. London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion.

Proshansky, H., M., Abbe, K. F. and Kaminoff, R. (1983) 'Place Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 3, 57-83.

Relph, E. (1976) *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion

Renewal.net (2005) *Promoting liveability: the experience of NDC partnerships*. <[www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net)> accessed 13/09/05

Riley, R. (1992) 'Attachment to the Ordinary Landscape' In I. Altman and S. Low (eds.) *Place Attachment*. New York: Plenum Press.

Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (2003) *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage.

Rivlin, L., G. (1987) 'The Neighborhood, Personal Identity, and Group Affiliations' In I. Altman and A. Wandersman (eds.) *Neighborhood and Community Environments*. New York: Plenum Press.

Roe, M. (2000) *The Social Dimensions of Landscape Sustainability*. In *Landscape and Sustainability*. London: Spon Press.

Roe, M. & Rowe, M. (2000) *The Community and the Landscape Professional*. In J. Benson and M. Roe (eds.) *Landscape and Sustainability*. London: Spon Press.

Royffe, C. and Taylor, A. (1987). 'Design and the Community' *Landscape Design*, 165, 20-23.

Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP (2003) 'Civil Renewal: A New Agenda' The CSV Edith Kahn Memorial Lecture, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2003. London: Home Office.

Ryan, R. L. (1997). *Attachment to Urban Natural Areas: Effects of Environmental Experience*. PhD dissertation. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Ryan, R. L. (2000). A people-centred approach to designing and managing projects: insights from understanding attachment to urban natural areas. In P. H. Gobster and R. B. Hull (eds.) *Restoring Nature: Perspectives from the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Ryan, R. L., Kaplan, R. and Grese, R. E. (2001) 'Predicting Volunteer Commitment in Environmental Stewardship Programmes' *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 44(5), 629-648.

Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J. and LeCompte, M. D. (1999) *Essential Ethnographic Methods*. London: Sage.

Schmelzkopf, K. (1995) 'Urban community gardens as contested space' *Geographical Review*, 85(3), 364-381.

Schroeder, H. W. (2000) The restoration experience: volunteers' motives, values, and concepts of nature. In P. H. Gobster and R. B. Hull (eds.) *Restoring Nature: Perspectives from the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Schwartz, D. (1989) 'Visual Ethnography: Using Photography in Qualitative Research' *Qualitative Sociology*, 12(2), 119-154.

Scott, M. J. and Canter, D. V. (1997) 'Picture or Place? A multiple sorting study of landscape' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 17, 263-281.

Selman, P. (1996) *Local Sustainability*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Sharp, L. & Connelly, S. (2002) Theorising Participation: Pulling down the Ladder. In Y. Rydin and A. Thornley (eds.) *Planning in the UK*. London: Ashgate

Shaw, K. (2004) *Research Report 22: Liveability in NDC Areas: Findings from Six Case Studies*. Sheffield: New Deal for Communities  
<<http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/Documents/Research%20Reports/RR22.pdf#search=%22Liveability%20in%20NDC%20Areas%3A%20Findings%20from%20Six%20Case%20Studies%22>> accessed 30/06/04

Shell Better Britain Campaign (1999) *Better Life*. Birmingham: SBBC.  
[promotional material accompanying application form]

Sixsmith, J. (1986) 'The meaning of Home: an exploratory study of environmental experience' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 6, 281-298.

Skelcher, C., McCabe, A., Lowndes and Nanton, P. (1996) *Community networks in urban regeneration*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Smith, J. D. (2001) *Volunteers: Making a Difference?* In M. Harris and C. Rochester (eds.) *Voluntary Organisations and Social Policy in Britain: Perspectives on Change and Choice*. Hampshire: Palgrave.

Social Exclusion Unit (2001) *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal*. London: Cabinet Office

Squires, R. (1997) *Proposal: Community Garden for Hulme*. (commissioned by The Hulme Community Garden Working Action Permaculture Group) <<http://www.redbricks.org.uk/permaculture/food/proposal.htm>> accessed 04/11/02

Stamp, D. (1996) 'Parks are us' *Landscape Design*, 254, 34-37.

Stedman, R., Beckley, T., Wallace, S. and Ambard, M. (2004) 'A Picture and 1000 Words: Using Resident-Employed Photography to Understand Attachment to High Amenity Places' *Journal of Leisure Research*, 36 (4), 580-606.

Still, D.T. and Gerhold, H.D. (1997) 'Motivations and task preferences of urban forestry volunteers' *Journal of Arboriculture*, 23(3), 116-130.

Stocker, L. and Barnett, K. (1998) 'The significance and Praxis of Community-based Sustainability Projects: community gardens in Western Australia' *Local Environment*, 3(2), 179-189.

Stokols, D. and Shumaker, S. A. (1981) People in places. In J. H. Harvey (ed.) *Cognition, Social Behavior and the Environment*. Hillside: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

The Parks Agency (2005) *Doorstep Greens Evaluation*. The Countryside Agency <<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Recreation/DG/evaluation.asp>> accessed 05/3/06

The Countryside Agency (2001) *Millennium Greens*. Research Notes CRN 9 <[www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk)> accessed 17/05/2004

Tuan, Y. (1977) *Space and Place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Tucker, S. A. and Dempsey, J. V. (1991) 'Photo-interviewing: A tool for evaluating technological innovations' *Evaluation Review*, 15(5), 639-654.

Twelvetrees, A.C. (1996) *Organizing for Neighbourhood Development: A Comparative Study of Community Based Development Organisations*. Aldershot: Avebury.

Uzzell, D., Pol, E. and Badenas, D. (2002) 'Place identification, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability' *Environment and Behaviour*, 34(1), 26-53.

Vaske, J. and Korbin, K. (2001) 'Place Attachment and Environmentally Responsible Behavior' *The Journal of Environmental Education*. 2001, 32 (4), 16-21.

Vorkinn, M. and Riese, H. (2001) 'Environmental Concern in a Local Context' *Environment and Behaviour*, 33(2), 249-263.

Welch, D. (1995) *Managing public use of parks, open spaces and countryside*. London: Pitman Press

Westphal, L. (1997) Birds do it, bees do it, but why do volunteers do it? A look at motivations. In F. Stearns and K. Holland (eds.) *Proceedings of the Midwest Oak Savanna Conference*.

<<http://www.epa.gov/plnpo/oak/westphal.html>> accessed 09/2/04.

Williams, D., R and Roggenbuck, J., W (1989) *Measuring Place Attachment: Some Preliminary Results*. NRPA Symposium on Leisure Research, San Antonio, Texas, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Williams, D. R., Patterson, M. E. and Roggenbuck, J. W. (1992) 'Beyond the commodity metaphor: Examining emotional and symbolic attachment to place' *Leisure Sciences*, 14, 29-46.

Williams, D. R. and Vaske, J. J. (2003) 'The Measurement of Place Attachment: Validity and Generalizability of a Psychometric Approach' *Forest Science*, 49(6), 830-840.

Williams, C. C. (2003) 'Developing Voluntary Activity: Some Policy Issues Arising from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey' *Social Policy & Society*, 2(4), 285-294.

Winterbottom, D. (1998) 'Casitas: Gardens of Reclamation' *EDRA*, 29, 88-96

Wooley, H. (2003) *Urban open spaces*. London: Spon Press

Zeisel, J. (1981) *Enquiry by Design*. Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.



# Appendix 1: Interview guides

## Coversheet

Interviewee:

Date:

Time:

Duration:

Method of recording:

Location/context:

Comments:

## Standard interview guide (modified depending on context)

	Notes
<p data-bbox="1185 425 1225 486">✓</p> <p data-bbox="237 588 495 625"><b>1. Introduction</b></p> <ul data-bbox="304 702 1044 896" style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Explanation of research</li><li>- Interview format (Time to think and consider – come back to questions)</li><li>- Assurance of confidentiality</li><li>- Permission to tape</li></ul> <p data-bbox="237 1010 848 1047"><b>2. Explanation of project in own words</b></p> <ul data-bbox="304 1124 1165 1635" style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>History</i></li><li>- How project was initiated (who by and when?)</li><li>- How became involved in the first place (practicalities)</li><li>- Length of involvement</li> <li>- <i>Aims</i></li><li>- Changes in aims and intentions</li> <li>- <i>Structure</i></li><li>- Who involved</li><li>- Structure/organisation of participants</li><li>- How participant levels have altered - and thoughts on this</li></ul> <p data-bbox="237 1749 848 1786"><b>3. What does the project bring to you?</b></p> <ul data-bbox="304 1863 1171 2057" style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the site <i>and</i> the process</li><li>- Reasons for involvement in the first place (reasons)</li><li>- Reasons for involvement now – and in future... (does it provide the same stimulation/motivation?)</li><li>- Social connections (prior and now)</li></ul> <p data-bbox="237 2171 818 2208"><b>4. What do you bring to the project?</b></p> <ul data-bbox="304 2285 1165 2448" style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Role within group?</li><li>- Activities/tasks undertaken (and frequency)</li><li>- Changes in activity over the course of involvement so far (in type, amount or frequency) and reasons</li></ul>	

	✓	Notes
<p><b>5. What does the project bring to the neighbourhood?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What project aims to provide (personal or community benefits?)</li> </ul>		
<p><b>6. The future of the project?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thought on future of project</li> <li>- Feelings of responsibility?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>7. HDT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of Trust in the project - how helps &amp; facilitates work</li> <li>- How has affected the project</li> </ul>		
<p><b>8. Other community involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Membership or participation in any other 'community' activities or groups</li> </ul>		
<p><b>9. Residential choice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How long lived in area?</li> <li>- What attracted?</li> <li>- Aspirations to stay?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>10. Ascertain agreement for future research involvement</b></p>		
<p><b>11. Consent form and Thanks</b></p>		

## Appendix 2 - Photo-elicitation interviews

### Preparation guidance for autodriven photo-elicitation interviews



#### *Neighbourhood study through photography* University of Sheffield with Heeley Development Trust

Many thanks for agreeing to take part in this research - your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

The project aims to explore the feelings of local residents towards their neighbourhood, through the use of a photography activity, and a follow-up interview. The work is part of a PhD study being undertaken at the University of Sheffield, and supported by Heeley Development Trust.

#### *Activity directions*

You will have received a disposable camera, and notepad with this letter. At your leisure over the next two weeks, please use the camera to take photos of your neighbourhood. The photos should illustrate aspects of your local area (not including your home) that are important to you, for whatever reason. They could include features, objects, places, people, views, buildings, activities....anything you like! They need not necessarily be of things you feel positively about, negative feelings can be just as important.

- o The camera can take 24 pictures, and you may use as many of these as you like (but please try and take at least 10).
- o Please try not to worry about whether the picture is a 'good photograph' - that is not the aim of this project. Just aim to record some of the things that you have feelings about in you neighbourhood.
- o When you take the photos is entirely up to you. You may find it useful to keep the camera with you and take photos as you come across things. Alternatively you may find it easier to think about it beforehand, and then take all the photos in one go. It's up to you!
- o Feel free to take more than one photo of something if it holds particular importance to you. This may be useful for highlighting specific aspects that you think are important.
- o Please feel free to use the notepad in any way you find helpful. You can also use it to describe something you may think of but were unable to take a picture of. You do not have to use the notepad if you do not want to.

I will contact you in two weeks to arrange a time to collect the camera. If you need more time, that is fine. I will then get the film developed, return a copy of the photographs to you (which you may keep) and arrange a time to meet and discuss your pictures. If you finish earlier, or have any problems or queries, please feel free to contact me (see below).

Happy snapping!

Andy Hinchley

Tel:  
Tel/text:  
Email:



## Photo-elicitation interviews - guide example

	Notes
<p>1. <b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explanation of research</li><li>• Explanation of interview format (informal - take time to think and consider – come back to questions)</li><li>• Assurance of confidentiality</li><li>• Permission to tape</li></ul>	
<p>2. <b>Mini tour of each photo.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) what the photo represents</li><li>b) why it is of importance</li><li>c) is it place specific, or representative of a general aspect?</li></ul>	
<p>3. <b>Focus on open spaces identified, and discuss use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) how used</li><li>b) frequency of use</li><li>c) benefits/value gained from space</li></ul>	
<p>3. <b>Involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) how does involvement differ between spaces? (encourage movement of photos)</li><li>b) use idea of passive and active relationships with the spaces if necessary</li></ul>	
<p>4. <b>Responsibility and ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Group photos according to responsibility and explore (ideas of community responsibility, personal responsibility, council responsibility)</li><li>b) strongest feelings of responsibility</li><li>c) weakest feelings of responsibility</li><li>d) reasons for these feelings</li></ul>	
<p>5. <b>Broaden out to finish. Overall feelings towards the local neighborhood, and the place Kent Road holds within this.</b></p>	
<p>6. <b>Methodological evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) how the process of using the camera went</li><li>b) any problems?</li><li>c) anything that could have made the project easier?</li></ul>	
<p>7. <b>Consent form completion</b></p>	

Photo-elicitation interviews - example image-sheet for photo-led interviews (non-autodriven)


Image	Notes	Image	Notes
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			

## Appendix 3 - Postal survey

### Accompanying letter

**Heeley open space survey**

**Address**



Dear resident,


Work is currently underway on a research project to explore how people feel about the open spaces in their neighbourhood. This questionnaire is part of a larger study being undertaken with Heeley Development Trust and Sheffield University, which aims to provide important information for those trying to improve quality of life in our towns and cities. It will also provide valuable information locally for those working to improve the environment of **your** neighbourhood.

We would be extremely grateful if you could spare 5-10 minutes to complete this short questionnaire. All responses will be treated confidentially, and where names are provided they will not be used in the research. Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed freepost envelope.

Many thanks for your time!

Andy Hinchley

Department of Landscape  
University of Sheffield  
*heeleyresearch@yahoo.co.uk*

supported by Heeley Development Trust 

## The survey questionnaire

# Heeley open space survey

Please answer the questions as fully as you can, but remember that all responses are valuable, however much or little you have to say.

If you have a lot to say, feel free to write on a separate sheet.

**1** Are there any areas of open space or green space that you **particularly value** in your neighbourhood? (these could be of any size, from parks to small scraps of land)

*no*

*yes* .....if so, please name them below (or describe their location):

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What is it about them you value?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2** Are there any areas of open space or green space in your neighbourhood that you feel particularly **negative** about?

*no*

*yes* .....if so, please name them below (or describe their location):

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What is it about them that you dislike?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**p.t.o**



**3** Are you aware of any of the following community spaces or projects in Heeley?

- Heeley Millennium Park
- Kent Road Ground Force
- Friends of Heeley and Meersbrook allotments (the Carfield Farm site)
- Albert Road Bottoms
- Alexandra Road community garden
- Denmark Road community garden

**4** Have you been involved in any activities related to these spaces or projects?

- Heeley Millennium Park
- Kent Road Ground Force
- Friends of Heeley and Meersbrook allotments (Carfield Farm)
- Albert Road Bottoms
- Alexandra Road community garden
- Denmark Road community garden
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

If you have, could you briefly describe how you have been involved?

---

---

---

---

**5** Please complete the following details:

- Sex:  Male  Female  
Age:  0-18  18-39  40-64  65+  
Address (or just your street name if you prefer):

---

---

---

---

We are looking for local people to take part in a short (30mins-1hour) informal interview to find out more about how residents feel about their neighbourhood's open spaces. If you would be willing to take part, please tick here  and provide contact details below.

---

---



If you would like to receive information on projects in your area, please tick here  and provide your name and address, or call Heeley Development Trust on 0114 2500613.

***Thankyou for your time - it is greatly appreciated.***

## Appendix 4 - Interview transcripts and coding

Below is an example extract from the interview transcripts, illustrating the coding technique used throughout the interview materials. A small selection of coding 'nodes' have been used for illustrative purposes. This is followed by an example of the extraction technique used to examine the transcripts by theme. Also included is a version of the coding framework (or 'tree') used to aid analysis of the information. Although this framework evolved and changed as the research developed (and nodes were categorised further or removed), this provides an illustration of the main themes considered.

### Example interview transcript extract (with illustrative coding)

QSR N6 Full version, revision 6.0.  
Licensee: Andrew Hinchley.

PROJECT: Community Open Spaces, User Andrew Hinchley

++++  
Margin coding keys for selected nodes in document S1\_I2:

A: (10 1) /The projects/Project Aims  
B: (10 2) /The projects/The group  
C: (10 8) /The projects/Project activities/components  
D: (12 1) /Involvement/Motivations  
E: (12 2) /Involvement/barriers to involvement  
F: (12 8) /Involvement /reference to responsibility

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: S1\_I2

+++ Document Description:

\* Initial interview  
\* Kent Road  
\* 24/06/03, interviewees back yard, 30mins, Tape 15

+++ Retrieval for this document: 344 units out of 344, = 100%

++ Text units 1-344:

1  
2 \* Interview took place in interviewees back yard, with children playing  
about. This made concentration hard, and led to frequent interruptions.  
It also made transcribing the interview very difficult.  
3  
4 \* I. The best way to start would be if you could, in your own words,  
describe the project.  
5 R. Okay, right, to describe the project. Okay, well erm, it's a  
6 piece of land in a residential area. We've been living here for nearly  
7 nine years, and ever since we came and lived here it was just a real D  
8 eyesore, erm it was all overgrown, loads of litter erm, the council used D  
9 to come once a year and they just used to strim it and then puff it with D  
10 erm weedkillers and it ended up looking probably even worse. And so, sort D  
11 of, well I've always been keen on gardening and it's become like a real D  
12 passion and so I started to.../well having only a small garden myself, D  
13 wanting to expand, and you know I had my eye on this plot for quite a D  
14 while [smiling] and started to think well actually this could be a really A D  
15 nice community garden. And I'd sort of talked about it to my husband and A D E  
16 he'd said 'yeah, that's a good idea' but I didn't really know how to take D E  
17 it forward. But then we, erm, we get the Heeley Voice delivered, sort of D E  
18 every quarter, and it was one issue of the Heeley Voice a couple of years D  
19 a go, you know, and it caught my eye, it said you know, if you've got any D  
20 ideas sort of for your local area, erm, you know, give us a ring, so I D  
21 did, I rang Heeley Development Trust and described sort of what my idea D  
22 was and the person put me in touch with HDT1 White, and the rest is D  
23 history really [laughing], because you know, I sort of talked it though D  
24 with HDT1 and he said 'yeah' sort of immediately he said 'I think there's D  
25 mileage in this'. He said there's a lot of grants around, you know, it's A D  
26 within our kind of catchment area, erm, I mean he knew the piece of land A D  
27 that I was talking about and he said, yeah it really really could do with A D  
28 something doing, and I think it would lend itself really well and erm, A D  
29 because it's a, you know, besides being between the houses it's also a A D  
30 main route to school, you know, a footpath to school for children, so A D  
31 erm, so it had a whole lot of reasons why it needed doing up. And erm, A D  
32 how would you like me to...? [laughing, unsure how to continue] A D  
33 \*I. You said there that it would make a really good community A D  
garden. A D

34 What do you see that as? What do you mean by community garden? A D  
35 R. Well, when I say community garden, I mean I wasn't thinking of A D  
36 anything you know, particularly structured in terms of you know, A D  
37 vegetable growing or rotas and this, I suppose I just meant it as you A D  
38 know, from being an eyesore and a hazard to being an amenity that the A D  
39 kids can play on and people can feel involved in. And the idea always was A C D  
40 that we'd get local people involved in actually you know, sort of doing A C D  
41 the spade work and becoming involved in the design and the planting and A C D  
42 so that's kind of the community aspect, yeah. A C D  
43 I. And has it worked that way?  
44 R. Erm, yeah definitely. Yeah, I'd say it has because we've involved C  
45 the schools, you know, the local primary school that's just across the C  
46 road to the site and we've involved the local secondary school and you C  
47 know, the volunteers that come along to dig are all local, apart from you C  
48 <<distinction between volunteers and the 'we' of the group>>  
49 know, sometimes HDT1 brings his Heeley Development Trust parkies with  
50 him, when there's extra manual things that need doing. Erm, and then last C  
51 summer we did a mosaic project and it was really good that, because that C  
52 was with a local artist who sort of helped to co-ordinate it all and sort C  
53 of direct us in terms of skills and materials and design, BUT you know, C  
54 all the ideas came from local people and a lot of people turned up to C  
55 take part and it was actually.../okay some of the people were the ones that C  
56 had been involved in the garden but there was quite a lot of people who C  
57 came just because it was mosaic, erm, you know, and so it sort of C  
58 broadened the community involvement. C  
59 I. That were interested in a different thing?  
60 R. Yeah.  
61 \*I. That's quite interesting actually. Erm, so how long.../when did  
the  
62 whole project start? How long has it been going on for?  
63 R. Erm, lets see. I think...it was...let's see, I'll work it  
64 backwards, he was born in 2001 erm, so I think it was probably May 2000  
65 that we had our first public meeting. Yeah.  
66 I. So did you arrange that?  
67 R. Yeah, me and HDT1, we arranged that. We sort of did flyers and  
68 erm leafleted people coming out of school, and publicised it and used  
69 that as a way to sort of get the ball rolling and get local opinion, get B  
70 people who were really interested to volunteer as a core group for taking B  
71 it forward, yeah. B  
72 I. How many people would you say turned up to that first meeting?  
73 R. I think there was probably about thirty or so.  
74 I. Really? [surprised]  
75 R. Yeah. And then come the end of the meeting there was about ten B  
76 people stayed behind. Yeah. B  
77 I. And are some of those people the people that are still with the B  
78 group now. B  
79 R. Yeah, yep. B  
80 I. Erm, so were there any other reasons why... D  
81 R. sorry I'm just listening if that's happy noise or unhappy noise D  
82 coming out of the house there! [children in the house] erm...sorry say D  
83 that again Andy. D  
84 \*I. Whether there were any other re.../just trying to establish the D  
85 main reasons why you got involved, you know, why you decided to do it in D  
86 the first place. And you've said that it was unsightly, so to improve the D  
87 look of the area, but were there any other reasons for getting into it? D  
88 R. Erm, I suppose yeah the vested interest of you know, my kids at D  
89 that point they weren't sort of old enough to be playing out but I knew D  
90 that they would be and it's actually you know, quite good for burning off D  
91 energy and getting fresh air is them running up and down the hill there. D  
92 I. So although it's so steep it can still be used for play. D  
93 R. Oh yeah, yeah, it does. It does. And erm, this summer, gosh, it D  
94 really seems to have come into its own. They're playing on it all the D  
95 time, yeah. D  
96 I. Rather them than me! I don't think I could get up it once, never  
97 mind up and down it.  
98 R. [laughing] Ah well, young legs, young and youthful legs.  
99 I. I'm just going to go and check what's going on up there  
100 [break in interview]  
101 \*I. So, a place for kids to play. Is the reason for being involved D  
102 changed at all over the time, since the idea first came into your head. D  
103 Do you think your motivations for being involved have changed, or new D  
104 motivations have come in, neew things that you get out of it? D  
105 R. Erm, no I think it's stayed the same probably. D  
106 \*I. And what about into the future. Say in a couple of years time  
107 when you think maybe the things that you'd planned for the site are  
108 complete, what do you see...  
109 R. Mmmmm. Well I guess then we take on more of a maintenance F

110	intermittent maintenance role. I mean there is talk within the group of	B	E F
111	possibly extending the project down to sort of an adjacent site just	B	E F
112	across the road at the bottom, erm, but I think...I sort of feel that	B	E F
113	that's not really MY remit particularly because you know, it's...the	B	E F
114	ownership for that project would be for the people living down that part	B	E F
115	of Kent Road, and if they want to get involved in that then that's fine	B	E F
116	and I would support them and I would go along and I would go along to	B	E F
117	their digging days, but if people aren't going to sort of show much	B	E F
118	interest then I don't know sort of it's debatable at the moment I think	B	E F
119	whether people have sort of shown interest or not. Then you know, I'm not	B	E F
120	going ot foist anything on them, I'd just sort of prefer to concentrate	B	E F
121	on what we've got going here.	B	E F
122	I. Because this is closer?		F
123	R. Yeah, that's right.		F
124	*I. So do you practically use the site?		
125	R. Yeah, yeah I mean me personally I mean I do for taking the little		
126	one down to the child minders, erm and sometimes as a route for going to		
127	the local shops, erm and yeah, but you know, when the kids are playing		
128	there then I'm quite often out keeping an eye on the little ones so		
129	yeah...I end up		
130	I. I know, everytime I come past you seem to be there!		
131	R. I know [laughing] I spend my life out on Kent Road railings!		
132	I. [laughing] It's supposed to be the kids hanging out there not		
133	you!		
134	R. I know! So...		
135	*I. On a more practical level do you think you could explain a bit		
136	about what kind of role you have in the group and what kind of tasks you		
137	actually take part in.		
138	R. Right. I would say that probably...how can I put it, I mean I	D E	
139	would love to do more of the practical stuff, 'cos I really do enjoy	C D E	
140	having a good old dig and weed and a plant and everything, but erm, you	C D E	
141	<<described as an unfulfilled motivation. not as important as other	D E	
	factors?>>	D E	
142	know, sort of, the first part of the project I was pregnant, and then I	D E	
143	had a new baby, and now I've got a toddler, so unless he's asleep or my	D E	
144	husband's around at the time of a Kent Road digging day then I can't	E	
145	really do that much, which is a bit frustrating, erm..but and likewise	C E	
146	sometimes for meetings, but, I know that HDT1 always likes me to come	C E F	
147	along if I possibly can, even just to the digs../even if I'm not digging	C F	
148	'cos I think he quite likes me to be there for the sort of moral support	C F	
149	and...and we sort of chat about ideas. And so I suppose, I suppose I'm sort	F	
150	of more of the kind of what I'm able to provide at the moment is more of		
151	the kind of the planning and the ideas and the talking through strategies		
152	and that kind of thing I suppose. Erm, and I keep giving HDT1 plant wish		
153	lists and things like that. So maybe I'm more of an ideas person than a		
154	doing [laughing]		
155	I. Lots of standing and pointing while everyone else does the work,		
156	I see! [laughing]		
157	R. That's right, yeah yeah! That's it. Oh and tea lady sometimes as		
158	well, yeah.		
159	*I. And how much time do you reckon that you, roughly, that gets put		
160	across to doing things for the group?		
161	R. Erm, it used to be a lot more, but now that it's sort of taken		
162	off, it's not as much. I don't know, I mean probably I mean sort of		
163	actual sort of activity time might be about, depending on when the		
164	meetings are, and when the digging is, maybe about 2 hours a month on		
165	average. And then sort of thinking time and you know, sometimes a bit of		
166	telephone time to HDT1 and that kind of thing...is Zak outside [to children]		
167	[interruption from children wrestling]		
168	*I. You said that you're involved less nowm, what do you think is	E	
	the reason for	E	
169	that?	E	
170	R. I think part.../I think probably it's just the erm, the kind of	C E	
171	natural history of the project because I think to begin with, erm, you	C E	
172	know, needs a lot more thought, a lot more planning a lot more meeting, a	C E	
173	lot more sort of contacts making. That was when we were sort of applying	C E	
174	for all the grants, erm, and now it's sort of taken on its own sort of	C E	
175	momentum you know, we're in a kind of pattern where we maybe have a	C E	
176	meeting once every couple of months in the summer, we're probably doing a	C E	
177	dig once a month and so it's taken on it's own kind of pattern. There's a	B C E	
178	core of people that tend to come along, I mean that's a bit of an issue	B C E	
179	is how to get more people involved, erm, so and I suppose you know, the	B C E	
180	bulk really of the actual you know, the hard landscaping has been done,	B C E	
181	and there's just a bit more planting to do, and then the sort of the art	C E	
182	project side of it, like the mosaic bollards to go in and then...it's sort	C E	
183	of at our leisure really we can get the fancy panels and the arches done,	C E	

184 and stuff like that. C E  
185 [interruption from children]  
186 R. Mmmm hmmm  
187 I. Something came up then, I can't remember what it was  
188 R. Oh yeah, volunteers, was it? Yeah.  
189 \*I. Why it's a problem that you think you need to have more people.  
190 Why do you see it as a problem?  
191 R. I think that, to begin with we used to get quite a lot.../okay B  
192 there was always the sort of, the hardcore so to speak, and then we used B  
193 to get quite a few people who would just sort of turn up for the odd B  
194 digging session, you know, but there was enough of them, so okay they B  
195 couldn't make every session but you know, each time there'd probably be B  
196 about five of them, you know, different people each time, and so that B  
197 really boosted the numbers, but they've dwindled the sort of, what could B  
198 you call them, the sort of casual volunteers have sort of dwindled. B  
199 [interruption from children] B  
200 I. So the casual ones have disappeared a bit. B  
201 R. Yeah, or at least they don't seem to turn up in such numbers erm.. B  
202 I. Have you any idea why that is? B  
203 R. Well, we've sort of talked about it quite a lot, and part of it B  
204 we wonder if that's what always happens in a project like this, I don't B  
205 know. Is it partly because people see the work that's been done so far B  
206 and they think 'oh well that seems to be coming along well, they don't B  
207 really need us'. Or do they see us as a kind of closed group, you know, B  
208 erm, we don't really know the answer to that. B  
209 [pause as studied scheduled]  
210 \*I. Were there any aims that were set down in the beginning before A D  
211 things started, or has it just kind of evolved as the projects moved on? A D  
212 Does it have a grand...vision or something like that? A D  
213 R. A mission statement. Erm..I don't think so, other than just to A D  
214 kind of improve that particular plot of ground, erm, and it was sort of A D  
215 as we were going along, yeah, that.../and people you know, people started A D  
216 to get enthusiastic and started to talk about oh yes this could happen A  
217 and that could happen. We could get erm artists...local artists involved, A  
218 we could really make some structural things, we could maybe improve the A  
219 slippiness of the cobbles, you know, make the cobbles less slippyand A  
220 improve the surfacing, and you know, somewhere to sit and... you know, so A  
221 yeah, it did kind of evolve. The ideas sort of increased as we went along. A  
222 I. And where did the suggestions come from? B  
223 R. Erm, mostly from the people that expressed the interest that B  
224 first, you know, the core volunteers. B  
225 I. So it was at meetings and..  
226 R. Yeah. And then we all sort of did some sort of fairly early on, I A C  
227 suppose it was a few months into it, we did at the Carfield Summer Fayre, A C  
228 we did a questionnaire and had a stall, and so we got some more ideas and A C  
229 opinions then, and it seemed to...I mean the message we were getting was A C  
230 that everyone was dead keen on it to be developed and to be made to look A C  
231 nicer and to be more accessible. But there was divided opinion whether A C  
232 there should be benches or not, that seemed to really divide people. Some A C  
233 were definitely for, some were definitely against. A C  
234 I. Did they give reasons? A C  
235 R. Yeah. The people for thought it would just be, because it's got a A C  
236 great view it would just be a really nice place to sit and look out. And A C  
237 it's a steep hill so you need somewhere to rest on your way up, erm. And A C  
238 then the people that were against were against it because they thought it A C  
239 would cause teenagers to congregate more and it would be a focus for A C  
240 noise. And depending on where the actual benches were sited they could A C  
241 actually end up overlooking people's houses, yeah. Their back gardens, so A C  
242 that's why we kind of went for the, erm, compromise of these kind of A C  
243 mosaic bollards where you can you know, stop on one to just catch your A C  
244 breath a bit but they're not that comfortable to [laughing] sit and A C  
245 congregate on. A C  
246 I. Would you like to have seen seats. C  
247 R. Erm, I didn't really mind either way. 'cos I mean I think that C  
248 kids congregate there anyhow, erm, I think they're never gonna C  
249 congregate.../even if there are seats it's sort of you see that the groups C  
250 come and go, really. They'll come and they'll hang out for maybe a week C  
251 or two at a time, and then they'll find somewhere else that they want to C  
252 be. And I think they hang out far more now over by the park gates because C  
253 it's turned into an off license, what was just an ordinary convenience C  
254 store now sells alcohol and so I think they've started to hang out there. C  
255 I. And I understand the opposite happened to that place down there -  
256 there used to be an off licence at the bottom that closed.  
257 R. Yeah, yeah. Oh why, have people said that less people hang around  
258 now since that's closed.  
259 <<picks up on suggestion in my comment that may have implications for  
project and how people see it - possibly with a view to trying to put

seats on again?>>

260 I. I've just found out that that...is it an estate agent now? That  
261 that used to be an off licence. So yeah, maybe.

262 <<avoidance of direct question>>

263 R. Mmmm, yeah.

264 I. Do they hang about on the railings at all?

265 R. Sometimes yeah, I mean gosh, a couple of summers ago there used  
266 to be about thirty of them everynight, it's like they came to roost every  
267 evening. And erm, and then a favoured place the last couple of summers  
268 has been halfway along, you know where there's that break in the wall,  
269 which is actually the top of somebody's garden, and erm, they've been  
270 sitting there and drinking, and just chucking their cans into [laughing]  
271 <<doesn't stress this comment as a negative aspect>>  
272 people's back garden and smoking god knows what, and it's funny because  
273 although the teenagers don't really hang out there much now, the little  
274 ones ie. the sort of eight, nine, ten year olds, because they've seen the  
275 teenagers hang out there they think that you know, that's a cool place to  
276 hang, so it sort of gets passed down from age group to age group. Yeah.

277 I. It'll be yours then.

278 R. They have, they have! Get out of my back garden! You don't sit  
279 there!

280 \*I. The group of people itself, you said the core group, they're...is B  
281 there like a structure or an organisation to it, or do people have B  
282 different roles. Could you describe how that works? B

283 R. I think...no, the...there was certainly no structure to begin with, B  
284 other than HDT1 is like the facilitator because well, I mean I suppose B  
285 that is partly his remit, erm and also because he's got far more B  
286 experience and he sort of knows how these things go and certainly that B  
287 was something I mean, when you asked about why did things require more B  
288 time early on, I think quite a lot of it was sort of navigating with the B C  
289 council and trying to get licences and writing letters and things like B C  
290 that, which you know hopefully we've got straightened out now, erm, so B  
291 that's not so time consuming, erm, but. So yeah, so HDT1, he had the B  
292 knowledge and the skills for a lot of that, erm, and certainly when we B C F  
293 have our meetings, bless him, its usually HDT1 taking the minutes and B C F  
294 HDT1 writing up the minutes and circulating them and I sometimes feel a B C F  
295 bit bad about that to be honest, erm, but we didn't sort of take on any B F  
296 specific roles such as you know, treasurer, chairman or anything like B F  
297 that until some of the place that we applied for grants you know, B F  
298 required in form filling-in to nominate people as this and that, and so I B  
299 think Ron nominally is the treasurer and I don't know if I've been put B  
300 down as something or other I don't know. B

301 I. For on paper. B

302 R. Yeah. But in reality it's just a kind of consensus lead thing, B  
303 and I don't think we've ever sort of had big disagreements at all on B  
304 things. B

305 I. So people are generally willing to compromise. B

306 R. Oh yeah. And I think we've got a fairly similar kind of vision, A B  
307 and er, yeah...so it becomes, it's quite a sociable erm, group and the A B  
308 meetings are enjoyable. yeah [laughing, distracted by kids] A B

309 \*I. You said that the casual volunteers, they changed in numbers, B  
but B  
310 has the core group changed much at all over the life of the project? B

311 R. I wouldn't really say so. No. I think that's stayed pretty B  
312 constant, erm. Certain of the core group, sort of like myself, their B E  
313 circumstances have changed in terms of new babies, young children and so B E  
314 that's limited how much they can sort of physically come and contribute, B E  
315 erm, but, but no I'd say the core groups stayed pretty much the same. B E

316 I. So the main thing preventing you from doing it more is lack of E  
317 time more than anything else, is that fair to say? E

318 R. What for me? Yeah. Yeah, I would say so. E

319 <<questionable prompt given that comments were more about commitments to E  
childcare rather than lack of time per se>> E

320 I. The only other thing I've got was about the Trust, but you've  
321 already brought that up a bit about how much HDT1 does. You kind of  
322 covered the kind of things that he does. Do you think it would...do you  
323 think you'd have been able to do it without the help of the Trust?

324 R. Definitely not. Definitely not [laughing]. Without a SHADOW of a  
325 doubt. I just...I would not have known...how to take it forward, and I think E  
326 the first time that I would have come up against any kind of erm, council E  
327 red tape it would have just put me off completely. Erm, yeah, and I E  
328 wouldn't have known about the different funds that are out there, and I E  
329 wouldn't have had the time or probably the inclination to go through the E  
330 fund-raising process myself. And certainly some of the forms for some of E  
331 the funders, have been like seventy-odd pages long and er...yeah. I think  
332 you need professional form filler inners to do this kind of thing. Yeah,  
333 yeah.

## Illustration of theme (or 'node') extraction to aid analysis

QSR N6 Full version, revision 6.0.  
Licensee: Andrew Hinchley.

PROJECT: Community Open Spaces, User Andrew Hinchley

### REPORT ON NODE (12 1) '~/Motivations'

\*\*\*\*\*  
(12 1) /Involvement/Motivations

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: S2\_I1

+++ Retrieval for this document: 36 units out of 686, = 5.2%

++ Text units 7-9:

7 I was involved - I mean it started with sort of rumblings in the  
8 neighbourhood that they were going to take this piece of land over to  
9 build on, which immediately raised my hackles, because, I had also heard

++ Text units 17-19:

17 parking for this development. I didn't want the development, I didn't  
18 think it was appropriate, and I certainly didn't want them to whip my  
19 allotment, so that was my first bit of involvement really. So I did

++ Text units 61-69:

61 R: Erm. It's because it's the sort of thing that I'm passionate about.  
62 I mean I've had an allotment for twelve years, and I love gardening, and  
63 it just seemed to - a project like that, trying to get off the ground on  
64 your doorstep, you know, something. And I was still aware that we need to  
65 use that site, you know, I think if it lapses, there will be another case  
66 of the council coming in and saying it's a prime spot of land. But that's  
67 secondary now I think, it's because of the sort of project it is, the  
68 sort of things people around here can get involved in that I'm more  
69 interested in now.

++ Text units 72-74:

72 R: Erm. I think there's two sides to that now. I think, sort of  
73 socially I get a lot out of it, I think they're a great group of people,  
74 you know, all completely different in their own way. And I've always been

++ Text units 78-82:

78 So I've always sort of been involved and try and get involved. So it's  
79 the social side, and the fact that you know, people might suddenly think  
80 'yeah this is a good thing to do' you know, 'we could have an allotment,  
81 we could grow fruit trees' and I think it's spreading the word [slightly  
82 tongue in cheek - laughing]

++ Text units 223-231:

223 I: So since you did get involved, and it became more of a project, the  
224 reasons from the beginning, which are kind of an interest in that kind of  
225 project, is that the same motivation that kept your involvement all this  
226 time, or are there other reasons?

227 R: Yeah. But, there's the social side of it. They're a nice group of  
228 people. And the variety really, 'cos you know, there's the work mornings,  
229 which I really enjoy, and then the other bits, which, you know, as I say  
230 I didn't really intend to get involved that much, because that's what I  
231 do anyway, but it just happened.

++ Text units 578-581:

578 I. So would you say that that influenced your decision to get  
579 involved with the Carfield Farm project, the interests that you already  
580 had?

581 R. Yeah, yeah. Certainly. Yes

## Illustration of coding framework (or 'node tree')

- (10)** /The projects
  - (10 1) /The projects/Project Aims
  - (10 2) /The projects/The group
  - (10 3) /The projects/Group members
  - (10 4) /The projects/Initial description of project
  - (10 5) /The projects/Valuing the project
  - (10 6) /The projects/Effects of project
  - (10 7) /The projects/Meetings
  - (10 8) /The projects/Project activities or components
  - (10 9) /The projects/Support
  - (10 10) /The projects/Project organisation
  - (10 12) /The projects/Challenges and problems
  - (10 18) /The projects/events
  - (10 20) /The projects/funding
  - (10 22) /The projects/reference to others views of project
  - (10 24) /The projects/history of the project
  - (10 26) /The projects/demands of the project
  - (10 28) /The projects/membership
  - (10 30) /The projects/reference to the group
  - (10 33) /The projects/decision making
  - (10 35) /The projects/Future of project
  - (10 36) /The projects/maintenance
  - (10 44) /The projects/promotion and local awareness
  
- (11)** /The spaces
  - (11 1) /The spaces/Negative feelings
  - (11 2) /The spaces/Relationship with space
  - (11 3) /The spaces/Reference to visual qualities
  - (11 4) /The spaces/Threat to the space
  - (11 5) /The spaces/Awareness/knowledge
  - (11 6) /The spaces/reference to management
  - (11 7) /The spaces/Effects of space
  - (11 8) /The spaces/Responsibility
  - (11 11) /The spaces/ownership of site
  - (11 15) /The spaces/reference to locality
  - (11 16) /The spaces/valuing the space
  - (11 17) /The spaces/use of the space
  - (11 19) /The spaces/access
  - (11 32) /The spaces/description of site or site features
  - (11 38) /The spaces/History of site
  - (11 39) /The spaces/reference to context of site
  
- (12)** /Involvement
  - (12 1) /Involvement/Motivations
  - (12 2) /Involvement/barriers to involvement
  - (12 3) /Involvement/strategies for overcoming barriers
  - (12 4) /Involvement/activities undertaken
  - (12 5) /Involvement/Visits to site
  - (12 6) /Involvement/reference to skills
  - (12 7) /Involvement/Roles
  - (12 8) /Involvement/reference to responsibility
  - (12 9) /Involvement/History of involvement
  - (12 10) /Involvement/Changes in involvement
  - (12 11) /Involvement/involvement of others
  - (12 12) /Involvement/Sustaining involvement
  - (12 13) /Involvement/Future involvement
  - (12 16) /Involvement/Expectations and experiences
  - (12 20) /Involvement/reference to wider community involvement
  
- (14)** /The neighbourhood
  - (14 5) /The neighbourhood/Forms of communication
  - (14 10) /The neighbourhood/Reference to other community activities
  - (14 25) /The neighbourhood/Reference to HDT
  - (14 52) /The neighbourhood/feelings about neighbourhood
  
- (15)** /Other Issues
  - (15 1) /Other Issues/Young people
  - (15 21) /Other Issues/conflicts
  - (15 42) /Other Issues/Reference to social elements
  - (15 45) /Other Issues/Family
  - (15 48) /Other Issues/Wildlife
  
- (17)** /Attachment
  - (17 27) /Attachment/expressions of attachment