

HEADLEY PARISH PLAN

Social Inclusion

Preface

When the Parish Plan was being written in 2005, the team attempted to tackle all the modules suggested by East Hampshire District Council which seemed relevant to the Parish. The relevance of the Social Inclusion module was recognised, but at that time there was no volunteer available to research and write it up as an extra section in the Parish Plan. Happily this omission has now been rectified and the Parish Council is most grateful to Caroline Hunt for undertaking the task. She received a great deal of help from Janet Easton (Woodlands Hall Manager), Gary Hopwood (Heatherlands Action Group), Jim Leggatt (Police Community Support Officer), Helen Cave-Chinn (Woodlands Youth Activities), Andy Boughton (Drum Housing Community Project Worker), Liz Panton (EHDC) and Guy Riddoch (EHDC)

Ideally we should like to see all groups of people in all parts of the Parish having reasonable access to work, shopping, support, social and leisure facilities. We are aware of at least two situations where people may feel excluded - residents of the Heatherlands Estate, and older residents more generally who do not have access to a car. This paper recognises both aspects, but concentrates mainly on Heatherlands where EHDC has been very active.

The Parish Plan was adopted in March 2006 and distributed to all households in the Parish. Copies of this important extra section may be obtained from the Parish Office.

Introduction – Social Inclusion in Headley

The Government's Social Inclusion Unit defines social exclusion as:

'A shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, high crime, bad health and family breakdown'.

Social exclusion is closely associated with (relative) poverty: termed as 'economic exclusion'. It is also often associated with particular groups of people: people with disabilities, people from ethnic minority communities, people with poor health, young people and the elderly. To promote social inclusion means working to ensure that everybody is 'included' in the benefits of living in a modern, well organised society. It also means creating strong and cohesive communities which support people and which people contribute to.

In a nutshell, therefore, social exclusion, and more particularly social inclusion, is about the match between resources and need. As a result of inadequate income and resources, people may be excluded and marginalised from participation in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society. National research has shown that not only can such social exclusion be

devastating for individuals' lives and their children's life chances, but also inflicts huge costs on the economy and society at large.

It may, at first glance, seem unnecessary for a rural area such as Headley to consider social inclusion as one of its Parish Plan priority areas – we are not exactly 'inner city', and many aspects of our 2006 Parish Plan make the Parish read like 'Miss Marple land' without the murders. However, one dimension of exclusion relates to the concentration of social exclusion in particular places – cities, towns or even smaller local neighbourhoods. Within our Parish, we have the most deprived Ward in East Hampshire, in the form of Headley Down and the Heatherlands Estate. For this reason, it is felt by EHDC that the current Parish Plan reflects only one side of Headley Parish, and that the problems associated with social inclusion may, for many of Headley Down's residents, have been overlooked.

With this in mind, the Parish Council has undertaken this report as an addendum to the current Parish Plan, concentrating its investigations primarily, but not exclusively, to the Heatherlands Estate.

Heatherlands

Within the Parish of Headley, the Heatherlands Estate comprises 350 dwellings, housing approximately 1/5 of the parish population. Phase 3 was completed in 1977, some of it on land reclaimed from landfill. Residency is characterised by two groups of people in particular - the relatively stable population of Housing Association tenants (around 50%, including some families who have had three generations living on the estate) and a transient population of first time buyers.

The geographic isolation of Heatherlands is the source of many of its issues - poor public transport and distance from mainstream provision makes access difficult. The age profile of all residents on the estate is low, with over half being under 19. Compared to the rest of the District, unemployment levels are high, perpetuated by a low skill base.

The area has high deprivation indicators, with the majority of families being benefit reliant, excessive numbers of children with learning difficulties, higher than average incidents of teenage pregnancy, and considerable numbers of children not attending school regularly. Other issues include adult and family learning needs and health inequalities – poor access to healthy food, knowledge, health and income all affect a person's ability to obtain an adequate diet.

A door-to-door survey undertaken in the last 6 months by Andrew Boughton, a Community Project Worker from Drum Housing Association, provides the most up-to-date statistics on the Heatherlands Estate. In the survey, 158 of the 350 households in Heatherlands were contacted, with 116 (33%) agreeing to participate. Some of the more pertinent statistics for this report from this sample include:

19.3% of households are single parent households

53.5% of households claim benefits

30.4% of households do not have a family member at work

17.5% of households do not have a car

(More statistics from this survey can be found in later section of this report, marked (*))

The Headley Down Community Association (HDCA) is committed to working closely with the local community of Heatherlands Estate to enhance, develop and improve local facilities through the identification of local issues and addressing, with the support of key agencies. The Association strives to address the overall community needs in two main ways:

1. Management of Woodlands Hall, the community building which is the base for the Association. The Hall provides a venue for community activities and a base for outreach services by statutory agencies. It is also hired by community groups
2. Community activities and services directly run by the Association. These have been developed in response to needs surveys on the Estate and community consultation.

HDCA undertook a “Planning for Real” exercise in 2003 to identify community needs and aspirations. The exercise was supported by District, County and Parish Councils, Drum Housing and Community Action Hampshire. The findings clearly showed an absolute priority was for services for children and young people. Additionally, in January 2004, HDCA undertook a thorough Learning Needs Survey – knocking on every resident’s door, eliciting a 76% response. This corroborated the wish by parents for local Pre School provision, in order to give their children a good start in life. They also wanted further activities / child care for older children and leisure activities for adults

Child care and youth activities are focused around the Woodlands Pre School (WPS), the Woodlands Children’s Club (WCC) and the Woodlands Youth Club (WYC). WPS provides quality pre school education and care for children aged 2 to 5 years. WCC provides quality child care after school and in the school holidays, for 6 -11 year olds. Both organisations provide a safe and structured environment for children to learn, develop skills and play. They also provide support to parents and carers and opportunities of work and volunteering. WYC works in partnership with the County Youth Service and aims to provide challenging, exciting and supportive opportunities for young people, aged 12 – 16 year olds, to promote learning, personal development and positive response to change. It also develops community awareness and encourages volunteering.



The main provision for adults is focused around the IT centre. There are 8 PC’s in the IT suite and a recently installed new PC in the meeting room for community use. HDCA runs several courses, typically basic skills, using the I.T. room as a learning environment. These have been a mixture of term time weekly courses and one off “taster” sessions, including participation in the HCC Silver Surfer events in May 2006. The Internet is available for community use at the rate of £1 per hour.

Investigations and Opinions

The research for this project included meetings with the management of Woodlands Hall, members of EHDC and Headley Parish Council, the Chairman of the Headley Residents’ Association, the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) and the Drum Housing Association Community Project

Worker, as well as other 'opinion formers' in the community. Account has been taken of the findings of both the 2003 Planning for Real exercise and the 2006/7 door-to-door survey undertaken by Drum Housing Association, plus documents provided by EHDC (see 'References'). The findings from this research were as follows:

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour:

There is a view held in the local community that Heatherlands is an area of comparative high crime. Despite popular opinion, however, the PCSO feels that he experiences no more problems with crime on Heatherlands than he does on the rest of his 'patch'. The crime problems that he is called to investigate are not 'major crimes', but more minor social disorder issues and juvenile nuisance, which he feels are mainly due to boredom. He does point out, however, that such petty crime – such as stealing from gardens and vandalism, can be very inconvenient and annoying for the victims.

There is also a situation where Elderly Residents are fearful on the Estate, especially at night time – which may be more due to a perception of threat rather than actual experience of violence or intimidation.

The introduction of Pre-school, After-school and Youth Club activities at Woodlands Hall appears to have brought about a noticeable change in behaviours/vandalism, as have the recently introduced CCTV cameras around the Hall building and the visible presence of the PCSO.

The introduction of the PCSO role is felt by many to be a 'major asset' to the Estate. Therefore, continued funding for the post of PCSO is considered essential.

Youth Activities and Facilities:

None of the Woodlands Hall youth activities are self sustaining, yet the economic realities of the Heatherlands residents indicate that the facilities would not be used if they were charged to the users at cost. Therefore, the Hall and its activities are dependant on grants plus support from HCC, EHDC and the Parish Council. Core government funding keeps the hall maintained and staffed, whilst grant funding tends to keep the activities financed.

As grant funding is always tenuous, there are no guarantees for year-on-year funding for activities. However, a recent lottery grant of £42,000 over 3 years has provided security for the IT services at Woodlands for the near future. Additionally, 'SureStart' funding has secured the Children's Club and Pre-schooling for the next 3 years and a 3-year funding agreement from EHDC means that the current activities at the Hall are financially secure until 2009.

In March 2006 a meeting was held at Woodlands Hall to ensure individuals and agencies are not working in isolation, but instead are becoming involved in a concentrated focus on promoting activities for young people. Two priorities came out of the meeting:

- The provision of a Community Project Worker for the Estate
- Development of the recreational area to make it safe for football/sports activities.

The introduction of the 'Youth Pod' appears to have moved much of the intimidating behavior away from the shops area in the Estate, giving young people somewhere else to meet. However, in bad weather, the area around the Pod and the Basketball Court gets very wet underfoot; hence the Pod is not used regularly in the winter. A grant application has been made to the Youth Opportunities Fund for resurfacing and for extending the surface to the Youth Pod area.

The current Parish Plan highlights that 'the failure to reclaim the field on the old landfill at Heatherlands for football is regretted'. Yet despite the poor surface on the recreational area, Portsmouth FC ran 4 training days for Heatherlands' children during summer last year, and are running the scheme again this year. This demonstrated that there is an enthusiasm amongst the

young people to form a football team, but without a proper pitch/surface, this is not possible in the longer term. There are also individuals who are willing to run events on the Estate such as a football team, but they need the appropriate backing and professional support from local government. Without an appropriate play-surface, such activities cannot take place.

Therefore, one of the strongest recommendations for action has to be the resolution of the issue of the football pitch play surface. It is also felt that such action has to be viewed as a long-term investment, not a 'short-term fix'. Quote: 'A botched solution is not sustainable, so we'll end up with exactly the same problems in the future'. A project group, led by EHDC, is looking at turning the football area into a proper pitch. They are currently making grant applications, and are hoping to start work in spring 2008.

Transport:

Isolation from services in a rural area such as Headley Down is only a minor problem if a family can afford to run a car (or even two) or are able to drive, but is very difficult to deal with if they cannot. The 17.5% of Heatherlands' households who do not have a car are marginalised as a result of the Estate's location.

29.8% of Heatherlands residents need to use public transport (*). The current Parish Plan highlights that 'the majority of comments from bus users would indicate that existing bus services are barely adequate and by no means ideal'. The cost of bus fares, even with the use of a bus pass, are considered to be high, especially for those on low income (the cost of bus transport per mile is far more costly than the train and does not encourage usage). Those commenting on school buses were agreed on the need for dedicated transport.

The majority of residents use Tesco at Bordon to do their shopping and 86.2% feel that Bordon is the main shopping area for Heatherlands (*).

A commonly quoted problem for young people on the Estate, which compounds the lack of local sports and social facilities, is the lack of transport to facilities further afield. An added issue for older teenagers is that fact that lack of available transport reduces their chances of taking part-time work (i.e. Saturday jobs), which in turn reduces the income they have available to make use of transport links to more remote leisure facilities. It could even be said that the inability to take up such part-time work also reduces their skill-base and hence their ultimate job prospects.

The availability and safety of parking facilities on the Estate continues to be an issue, with 59.3% of residents wanting to park outside their own home, but with only 35.7% being able to do so (*).

Minority Groups:

As many as 50% of residents on the Heatherlands Estate are under the age of 19, so it was no surprise when in 2003 the promotion of activities and the development of activities and events for young people were identified as the greatest need. However, some of the opinion formers interviewed did express the view that perhaps the focus of Woodlands Hall's activities is now too focused on young people and that minority groups such as the Elderly are not being considered.

There are currently no specific Woodlands Hall activities targeted at the Elderly - there used to be a Lunch Club, but this finished a few years ago. Nearly 30% of Heatherlands residents surveyed recently (*) felt that regular lunch clubs or coffee mornings run at Woodlands Hall would be of benefit. The fact that Woodlands Hall is not currently open on Fridays (except in the school holidays for the Holiday Club) could provide a day to use the facility for projects for the Elderly. Funding applications might be possible for such projects as there is now a proven need.

There are small groups of ethnic minorities within Heatherlands who tend to be employed as carers in local care homes, but this in itself does not appear to be causing any direct problems within the Heatherlands community. Additionally, they are supported by an Ethnic Minority Group in Bordon plus the provision of 'English as a second language' training at the Forest Community Centre in Bordon.

Health and Social Welfare:

A 2005 report by North Hampshire Primary Care Trust highlighted that many residents living on the Heatherlands Estate were suffering from 'food poverty', having limited access to fresh fruit and vegetables, poor cooking skills and inadequate diet. This was found to be coupled with limited physical activity. The residents reported that the main barriers were affordability and knowledge of cookery. The report identified that long term healthy food access for Heatherlands Estate needs to be linked to wider policy aims such as planning, health and regeneration.

The 2004 HDCA Learning Needs Survey indicated a desire for leisure activities for adults. However, an exercise class which was subsequently set up on a weekly basis was unfortunately stopped in October 2005 due to insufficient interest – 1 or no people attended over the last few weeks of operation.

Health issues on the Estate are not helped by the fact that Heatherlands sits on an NHS trust border, which leads to financing issues. It is hoped, however, that such problems have been improved by the recent willingness of the Trusts to work on jointly-funded projects. The majority of residents feel that they have convenient access to primary health care (*).

There are a number of interest groups (e.g. Primary Care Trust) looking at Heatherlands as an area for investment, but such activities require co-ordination across all the interested parties. No one agency can carry out all the required activities/investments alone.

81.3% of residents feel that a full-time community worker is needed on the Estate and that this role should be a generic one covering welfare, youth and health (*).

Residents' Priorities:

The recent survey undertaken by Drum Housing Association provides an interesting set of statistics on the areas which residents feel should be priorities for future action. Respondents to the survey were asked to rank the importance of a range of potential actions from 1 to 10 (10 being the highest possible priority). The following table shows how many respondents ranked each issue 8 or above:

<i>Potential action</i>	<i>% scoring 8-10</i>
Having teenage youth activities at Heatherlands	77.5%
Improving open spaces, parking, fencing and paths	74.3%
Improving play area facilities	69.5%
Improving transport options to shops	63.7%
Improving accessibility to the larger supermarkets	63.3%
Improving the reporting of/dealing with crime	60.5%
Having increased sports and social activities at Woodlands Hall	51.8%
Having advice to find work or training opportunities	49.1%
Improved access to Primary Health Care Services	44.5%
Access to local income/debt advice	38.6%

The ranking given to these action areas helps to focus Parish/District Council attention and funding to those areas which the residents themselves feel will have most positive impact on making Heatherlands a better place to live.

Neighbourhood Agreement

In a Neighbourhood Agreement residents along with Drum Housing and other agencies agree to provide the best possible service to the area within existing resources. A Neighbourhood Agreement aims to give residents more of a say about the management of the area in which they live, by involving them in the setting of local service standards, agreeing performance plans and reviewing the quality of services they receive from the community partners. It works like a contract and is negotiated between residents, landlords and other agencies. It usually lasts for one year, sometimes for up to three years, and provides an agreed way of dealing with under performance.

Social Inclusion and the Parish Plan

Whilst issues such as employment levels, education, benefits, health, social work etc. require targeted action for Heatherlands, it is hard to see how far the Parish Council can go in meeting these requirements. Financial constraints alone mean that these 'big picture' issues cannot be addressed by the Parish Council. In fact, it could be said that the only tool at the Parish Council's disposal to help with such 'macro' activities is to continually support local/central government initiatives for the Estate wherever possible, and to actively promote the needs of the Ward.

This does not, however, let the Parish 'off the hook' on all Social Inclusion issues connected with Heatherlands or, indeed, issues concerning Social Inclusion in general throughout the Parish. The Parish Plan provides the Parish Council with the opportunity of both promoting and addressing some of the more local issues which combine to compound social exclusion within the area.

It is gratifying to see that many of the issues that have been raised in the process of compiling this report have already been addressed by the recommendations of the 2006 issue of the Parish Plan. These include:

Transport & the Emergency Services

- g) Provide adequate off-street parking for residents where needed.
- k) Review local bus routes in conjunction with neighboring parishes with a view to improving services.
- l) Examine the feasibility of introducing dedicated school buses.
- m) Improve communication and cooperation between residents and the police.

Leisure and Recreation

- a) Press for football pitch on Headley Down, if reclamation of landfill unachievable.
- c) Increase use of halls.
- d) Provide meeting places for teenagers.
- f) Recruit professional help for youth at Heatherlands.

Business Development

- a) Resist conversion of commercial to residential use
- b) Support inclusion in any Bordon, Lindford, Liphook and Grayshott Plans of facilities useful to Headley

In addition to these, however, are a number of recommendations which could be added to/amended in the Parish Plan to specifically target the local issues of social exclusion. These are as follows:

Social Inclusion Recommendations:

1. To continue to support the provision of youth activities at Woodlands Hall, and the maintenance/development of appropriate recreational facilities.
2. To work to support the EHDC project looking at the development of the Heatherlands recreational field in order to make it a safe and sustainable football/sports facility.
3. To support the allocation of a Community Project Worker to the Heatherlands Estate.
4. To fund/support the continued role of PCSO.
5. To investigate the possibility of a free bus service from Heatherlands to Tesco in Bordon.
6. To promote the introduction of a lunch club or coffee morning for the Elderly at Woodlands Hall.
7. To support the development of a Neighbourhood Agreement.

References:

**Heatherlands Community Questionnaire Results, January to March 2007
– Andy Boughton, Drum Housing Association**

Woodlands Hall Manager’s Report, December 2006 – February 2007

Headley Parish Plan 2006

Headley Down Community Association Business Plan 2006 – 2009

Headley Down Community Association Business Plan 2006 – 2007

Headley Down Community Association Annual Report 2004 - 2005

‘Planning For Real’ Draft Report, 2003 (EHDC)

‘Planning For Real’ Results Summary (EHDC)

Formal Interviews/Discussions:

- Janet Easton (Woodlands Hall Manager)**
- Gary Hopwood (Heatherlands Action Group and Headley Parish Council)**
- Andy Boughton (Drum Housing Community Worker)**
- Jim Leggatt (PCSO)**
- Helen Cave-Chinn (Woodlands Youth Activities)**
- Jim Grevatt (Headley Parish Council)**
- Liz Panton (EHDC)**
- Guy Riddoch (EHDC)**

‘North Hampshire NHS Needs Assessment to identify the barriers preventing residents of the Heatherlands Estate from obtaining an adequate diet’ – by Alison Maxwell (Public Health Nutritionist) 2005

‘Consultation techniques: strengthening social inclusion and individual empowerment’ – Action in Rural Sussex

www.planningportal.gov.uk (UK Government’s online planning and building development resource)

www.dta.org.uk (Development Trusts Association)

www.socialinclusion.ie/poverty.html (Office for Social Inclusion website)