Proceedings of the 1994 National Countryside
Recreation Conference

Organised by the
Countryside Recreation Network

University of York
13th to 15th September

Communities
and their Countryside

Helping communities to help themselves and others
enjoy local countryside opportunities

Price £15.00

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Foreword

Countryside Recreation Network

The Countryside Recreation Network (CRN) is a UK wide network. The Network provides a link between all those who are involved with recreation in the countryside; from policy makers to countryside managers.

Membership of the CRN is drawn from the principal agencies concerned with countryside and related recreation matters: the national statutory organisations, the local authority associations and the research councils. The Network also serves many organisations and individuals in the voluntary, public and private sectors.

CRN helps the work of agencies and individuals by *exchanging and spreading information, to develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation.*

This is achieved by:

- identifying and helping to meet the needs of the Network for advice, information and research;

- promoting co-operation between member agencies in formulating and executing research on countryside and related recreation matters;

- encouraging and assisting the dissemination of the results of countryside research and best practice on the ground.

In addition to the National Countryside Recreation Conference, CRN also runs a series of topical workshops throughout the year, to which all are welcome. All conference and workshop proceedings are published and available from the address below.

CRN also publishes a Research Directory which details subject areas of recent research undertaken by the member agencies.

"Countryside Recreation Network News" is produced three times a year and is available on free subscription.

For further information, please contact
Catherine Etchell, Manager
Countryside Recreation Network
Dept. of City & Regional Planning
University of Wales
College of Cardiff
PO Box 906
Cardiff
CF1 3YN Tel/Fax 01222 874970

COUNTRYSIDE
RECREATION
NETWORK

Welcome

Richard Broadhurst

Senior Recreation Officer, Forestry Commission
CRN Chairman

Welcome. I am going to keep my introductory remarks quite brief. I want to allow plenty of time for the discussion that will follow Bernard Lane's presentation.

Let me start by welcoming you to the Countryside Recreation Network Conference – Communities and their Countryside, which is the topic for this year's conference. It is timely that we should turn from looking at matters to do with the harder end of countryside recreation and the countryside, towards the community. We made a step in that direction last year in looking at customer care. Those of you who were not there missed a jolly good conference – tough! But this one will be good and there will be more.

I would like to welcome speakers and participants who have come from all over the UK. I extend a special welcome to anybody for whom this is the first Countryside Recreation Network event they have attended. You will not be disappointed and you will find out that there are plenty of other events in which you will be able to take part.

Some words then, particularly for those new to Countryside Recreation Network events, about what the Network actually does and is. It is a UK-wide network which has as its core the principal countryside agencies concerned with countryside recreation and related matters. It extends out through a range of organisations that plan, manage, design and keep recreation going in the countryside. It extends out, through local authorities, through many organisations and individuals in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

It really has three separate aims. Firstly, CRN serves the needs of the people in those core agencies for advice and information. We all know they need plenty of advice and information. Secondly, CRN serves to act as a forum to encourage co-operation between agencies. It allows agencies to get together, spot areas of work which overlap, or for that matter, gaps where work is not being done. It encourages joint work and co-operative ventures. Thirdly, CRN spreads information and best practice. This conference is one of the ways in which we can do that.

There are other ways in which the Network spreads information and advice and Robert Wood, as Manager of the Network, has done a terrific job in introducing the newsletter which I hope most of you will have seen – *Countryside Recreation Network News.* It is free, it contains news of all the events and some interesting articles.

The Role of Community Action in Rural Recreation and Tourism

Bernard Lane

Rural Tourism Unit, Department for Continuing Education
University of Bristol

"There is no such thing as community"
> – a quote sometimes attributed to Lady Thatcher.

"Local participation ... means empowering people to mobilize their own capacities, be social actors rather than passive subjects, manage the resources, make decisions, and control the activities that affect their lives"
> Cernea, M., *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development.*
> OUP, New York, 1991.

"Where you from, boy? You just travelling through? Good. This here ain't Malibu in the mountains."
> Montana rancher advising a would-be recreationalist in a Flint Creek bar.

The quotations above illustrate some of the plethora of issues which face rural people and planners when they consider a community, perhaps participatory, approach to questions of recreation and tourism development or management. These issues are not merely of academic interest. Statistics from most OECD countries indicate a strong and growing interest in the countryside, and in outdoor recreation and rural tourism. To many rural families, and even whole communities, that growing interest represents a possible way of diversifying their economies and maintaining their living standards. The recreation and tourism business is, however, an enormously powerful one, in the grip of global forces both social and economic. Long recognised as a valuable motor for economic change, it is now also accepted as being a very effective agent for the degradation of local societies, local environments, and even local economies. But green or sustainable tourism management principles, first developed in the 1970s, can, it is said, maximise the benefits and minimise the ills of tourism development. And within the principles of sustainable tourism, community action and community control hold a central place. They are claimed to be one of the keys to successful and environmentally friendly development. But are they? And can they deliver the economic goods? Could they even be all-purpose tools for solving the countryside's problems?

This paper draws on 30 years of experience working with rural communities in Britain, Ireland, Europe, North America and Asia, the last eight of which have concentrated on issues of communities and rural tourism. It is a paper which is designed to give an overview of the dilemmas to be considered by all those who venture into the field of rural tourism development, be they committed community first-aiders, or sceptical

Answers for the County Wildlife Trust, and for Friends of the Earth

- Local people know their heritage well, and will look after it if empowered by community action.
- Local pressures will restrain unacceptable development proposals.
- A good community action group will work with the district conservation officer, giving conservation ideals increased legitimacy.
- Community action groups have a successful track record in local conservation projects.

And in the Bar when Meeting Colleagues?

- Community action is a bandwagon one must be on.
- Community action can save money on wage costs.
- There are grants available for it.
- It makes very good copy for the media, and offers photo-opportunities for both elected members and chief officers.
- It appeals to all political persuasions: to the Conservatives it is self-help; to the Socialists it is collective action; to the Liberals it is grass roots democracy, and to the Greens it is an opportunity to be empowered even though they did not win a seat at the election.
- It employs a lot of project officers, builds empires for local government officers, and provides a whole *raison d'etre* for ACRE, parts of the Rural Development Commission and Countryside Commission, and for county community councils.
- It provides material for worthy papers from academics, few of whom have ever worked in tourism professionally, but who hope one day to be community tourism consultants.
- Successfully hyped case studies help obtain invitations to national and even international conferences at no personal expense.
- Community action is slow, harmless and remarkably easy to manipulate by a variety of simple techniques, thus providing good cover for the real decision-making process.
- Local people rarely understand their heritage, living, physical or non-physical: most would sell it if the price was impressive.
- The real world of recreation and tourism development is concentrated in the board rooms of quangos and companies far removed from the countryside. It is a world of power far too great for community action. Community action, however, conveys an illusion of power to the people.

WHAT MAKES COMMUNITY ACTION IN RECREATION/TOURISM TICK?

This is a key and extremely complex question usually asked by those who do not understand the subject and/or wish to solve insoluble local issues quickly and painlessly. However, there is a series of guidelines which all experienced consultants in this field give when asked to distil a lifetime's knowledge into a few paragraphs:

Sometimes retired people can provide leadership: David Gorvett's work, first in Eardisley in Herefordshire, and later in a series of communities around Britain with the Country Village Weekend Breaks Group is a good case study. Sometimes it can be a collective leadership – the work of the Ucliva group in building a community based hotel in the village of Waltensburg in Switzerland is a classic example. But of all the factors which make community action work, the availability of leadership, of 'movers and shakers', is critical to success. Leadership training, and training for potential leaders, perhaps on the lines developed by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development in Nebraska, USA, is therefore a subject worth considering.

- Supporting skills, amongst local government officers and in development agencies, are the fourth key area in determining the likely success of community action. Community action is rarely successful without assistance from the authorities. Sympathy to the aims of community action is important, but skills are critical. There are four types of supporting skill. There is a need to understand communities, their hopes and fears, their power structures and the power brokers operating within and outside them. One of the understandings which can be very useful is that of knowing when to be supportive, and when to be discreetly negative. There are the operational skills necessary to work with communities – setting up structured consultation meetings, understanding the differences between collaboration and co-operation, knowing how and when to assist without taking control, knowing when to bring in outside help and independent advice. There are the critical professional skills which make recreation and tourism successful, and which mark out rural recreation and tourism as something special. Too often community action is left to make basic technical mistakes. Too often community activists, having been on holiday once or twice, believe they know about the tourism business: they rarely do, and often fail to make the most of opportunities, or overestimate their likelihood of success. Community action supporters, therefore, have an important educational/training role: sometimes they too are inexperienced, and untrained for that role. As a result communities can be left disappointed by their efforts.

The fourth type of support skill is rarely needed, and rarely found. Sometimes a community project shows such promise that it needs linkage and development beyond the local stage, and/or beyond what a single authority or agency can provide. Country Village Weekend Breaks needed that support some years ago. Assessed as a purely tourism venture, it was relatively small beer. But as a venture into rural community and economic development, it was an effective agent. Sadly, it received real support only from the regional tourist board, and that wider linkage which could have added on the rural development dimension was never made. This fourth type of skill is a mix of judgement/leadership/contacts/and sheer nerve.

WHAT CAN COMMUNITY ACTION DELIVER?

This is the question which most advisers and believers in a role for communities in recreation and tourism development in the countryside fear most. It is a feared question because community action may deliver very little in easily quantifiable terms. The following points must, however, be made:

A VIGNETTE FROM REAL TIME

Last year, as part of a district-wide consultation programme on a rural tourism development strategy, I worked with 14 individual communities assessing proposed ways forward in tourism development for their individual communities and for their districts. Each community had two sessions, each of up to two to three hours considering their situations. Most found it very hard to consider issues beyond their immediate localities: community action may try to fulfil the slogan 'act locally, think globally', but it seems to find district action – and especially prioritising – difficult. In that regard, those groups were typical of many I had worked with before.

But the real problem came with their assessments of what should be done, and what should be prevented. As an experiment, I tried a voting game at the end of the second session, asking each group member to give points out of ten to each of 14 proposals. Aggregate scores were then computed, and, in theory, the community had spoken. But had it? The majority of citizens did not, needless to say, bother to turn out to the meetings. Were they then disenfranchised?

But a more telling question came at the second session with community number three. A local government officer attended to see how the process was going (wearing dark glasses and a wig of course). At the voting session the officer was clearly distressed. Why? In the safe and secluded gloom of the village hall car park, shrouded in late autumnal mist, it was explained: "I don't think you should carry on with that voting idea. What would the elected members say if their hands were tied by a 'community' vote"...In the *realpolitik* of the district council, a fair enough point.

But the crucial question was perhaps a little different. After just four or five hours of discussion, how could a community group weigh the pros and cons of heritage centres, access restrictions, zoning proposals, farm tourism assistance programmes, etc, each of which required professional expertise and experience to assess, especially when none of the members of the community group would be investing their own cash in the projects? (But would district councillors be any better informed when their turn came to vote in their council chamber?)

SOME QUESTIONS ON WHICH TO PONDER

- Mrs. Thatcher's famous/infamous attributed statement about the lack of community was curiously farseeing. In the modern world, it is not clear what community is. Is community the whole community in a local geographic sense? Where does that community end? At the edge of the village envelope? At the edge of the local valley? In the wider district or, if working in France, the *pays*? Does the wider community, in the sense of the regional community of urban and rural people who may take much needed recreation in an area, have legitimacy? Within a community itself, who should be involved? The business community? The political community? The chattering classes? Those who never attend meetings? Those who attend meetings, but are not committed to involvement in action, perhaps remaining armchair critics or pundits? Only those who draw their income from local sources? Only those who were born in that community?

- How much power/cash/resource can be given to unelected groups, with little long term responsibility?

FURTHER READING

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DISCUSSION SUMMARY

ROB WIGHTMAN *(University of Central Lancashire)* asked what the speaker saw as the distinction between co-operation and collaboration. BERNARD LANE recommended an article by Getz and Jamal in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, currently in press, which addressed that question. In effect, co-operation allowed people to work together even though they were doing totally different things, whereas collaboration meant working together for the same aim.

TERRY SUTCLIFFE *(Cleveland County Council)* asked whether there was a difference, in terms of action, between community groups that were brought together for a specific project and groups such as parish councils. BERNARD LANE described various kinds of community groups – those which had formed themselves for a specific purpose; groups formed and fostered by an outside agency; groups which evolved over a wider area to make things happen. It was difficult to predict at the outset how groups would perform; a great deal depended on their leadership, the skills available within them and the support they

more difficult. He recommended the ACRE publication *Doing by Learning: A Handbook for Organizers and Tutors of Village Based Community Development Courses.*

TERRY ROBINSON *(Countryside Commission)* asked for a comment on how far the concept of sustainability was helpful to, or even synonymous with, community action, and how far it might get in the way of community action. BERNARD LANE replied that sustainability was a big issue and a tricky thing to define. On the face of it the idea of sustainable development could only be a good thing. The problem was in deciding over what term you wished to be sustainable, on whose terms you wished to sustainable, and how actually to carry it out. There was no guarantee that local action would be any more sustainable than non-local action. It could be argued that a well planned development, funded and controlled from outside the area, might be more sustainable than a local, badly planned project, forced through on a grass roots vote inside the community. So, the two things were not synonymous, but there was a strong case for saying if the community became a stakeholder and was assisted in thinking out the long term implications of the scheme, it ought to be more sustainable than something which was imposed from outside and which was not well thought out in terms of environment and community.

CHRIS SIMMONS *(Scottish Natural Heritage)* asked the speaker what criteria he applied in choosing groups to work with. BERNARD LANE pointed out that he could only go where he was welcome and where somebody was prepared to pay! There were cases where community co-ordinators were imposed in the sense that they were paid for by a body hoping to set up some kind of community involvement. However, the community voted with their feet on whether or not they were interested in being involved. If they were not interested then community action did not take place. The role of the animateur was a difficult one. The way in which you presented the issue to be worked on determined how many and what sort of people would become involved. In a consultation exercise, if a meeting in a particular area was well publicised and yet only two people attended, that was a valid result. It indicated that the people there were not worried about the issues and had no burning interest in them. So a negative reaction was as important to identify as a positive one.

NIGEL ADAMS *(Wales Tourist Board)* thought there was a role for the community to play in integrating tourism into the local economy. BERNARD LANE strongly agreed and said this point related to his plea for synergy.

TERRY KEMP *(Kennet and Avon Canal Trust)* returned to the question of how to measure success. He asked the speaker to imagine he had inherited £50,000 which he proposed to offer as a prize to a community action group for a recreation/tourism project. What three criteria would he set in the competition? BERNARD LANE said his first requirement would be that the submitted project should be commercially viable in the long term for the benefit of the local community. Secondly, it would have to enhance the environment. Thirdly, it would have to lead to an improved visitor experience.

In closing the session, RICHARD BROADHURST *(Chairman)* thanked the speaker warmly for his presentation. He also thanked Fiona Simpson of Forest Enterprise for leading the very successful pre-conference tour to look at projects on the ground.

entrance fees have paid for the new car park extension. Also, the countryside centre is now employing three more part-time seasonal staff, so it is obviously making a considerable contribution to the local economy.

And thirdly, Minister, the last initiative I would like to bring to your attention is the Mossing Trusswick Community Sports initiative. Ah yes, this has been part of our Sports in the Community initiative on a national scale. It has proved very popular, so popular in fact that people have come from far and wide to Mossing Trusswick and this has enabled us to put the receipts back into the development of the project, and we have further 'pay-as-you-play' facilities planned. Yes, yes Minister, I do appreciate that we have had to put off the community and meeting room development but that it is only until we have finished the commercial facilities. And indeed, the district council has arranged for a minibus scheme to take local people to nearby venues, at cost only. So we are very pleased with this one.

Finally Minister, may I now move on to our new Communities in the Countryside initiative, which will build on all this good experience. We have agreed with the partners that the performance indicators ….."

Jeff Bishop

Whoa, whoa, I am sorry, that is enough of that. You do understand that this is only a rehearsal. We are just rehearsing the presentation to the Minister and it is quite clear to me, as his personal adviser, that frankly the Minister will not last that long. So, if we are going to have a limited amount of time, we must put in front of the Minister not so much what we have done in the past but something about the excitement, the innovation and the challenge of what we are looking at up ahead.

So, now we have got such a wonderful departmental briefing team here, I think it is important to take advantage of everyone who has joined us for this session. When we get to that final session we really need to challenge the Minister; we really need to demonstrate breadth, we need to demonstrate vision, we need to demonstrate challenge, we need to show that this new initiative is not just some nice little initiative for a few people to have a few project officers and a jolly time. We need to demonstrate that this is really going to make a difference.

So what I would like is to get some advice from you about some of the aspects of that. So, let us move on to that and take advantage of your presence here. One of the issues – and we heard this from the session last night – is what on earth is the community? From your background and experience, who do we mean when we are talking about the community? Who are the communities that might get involved in something about communities and their countryside? Can we have some suggestions please (see Table 1).

(At this point, and subsequently, the audience was asked for its own suggestions on specific themes.)

We have done the 'Blue Peter' version for you (Table 1A), offering some more to think about. We have a few comments on some of them. We have listed national voluntary bodies. There is a lot of contention about the role that national voluntary bodies play in local community action. They often have been shown to intervene, and intervene quite worryingly, in local community action. So, although they are a good thing, how do they actually operate?

Bernard Lane last night. So, are they not also perhaps part of the community that one should be dealing with – local businesses, local shopkeepers, local companies, even national companies which have a local base?

Let us move on to another heading – action (Table 2).

Table 2. Action

A		
Opening/managing a business Interpretation Recycling Energy conservation Transport schemes Arts events Walks and trails Site management	Informal policing Waste management Habitat creation/conservation Rights of way Festivals/events Orienteering Design Waymarking	Tourism Sports development Management plans Audit and monitoring Environmental conservation Renewable Crafts
B *Improving facilities* *Maintaining property values*	*Having fun* *Collective NIMBYism*	*Creating jobs*

A: BDOR list   *B: Additional suggestions from the audience*

Jo Rose

The other word in this phrase which seems to dominate what we are doing at the moment is the word 'action'. As you did with Jeff, can you now start thinking about what are the outcomes that people anticipate for what they do? What are their objectives and aims? What is it that they want to achieve? Why do they actually do it? What do they actually want out of their action? What do they do to achieve those things? (Table 2B)

We took a more pragmatic view, a more direct view, looking at action in a direct manner. The things that we put down on our list, to which we will add your comments are these (Table 2A). We have examples of people undertaking all these types of activities.

I want to pick up a number of those. Jobs and the economic importance were mentioned but there is also the security angle; which is that people do undertake things like Neighbourhood Watch schemes in order, not just to secure the value of their properties, but their own personal security as well. In doing that they undertake a process which changes and develops their own environment. We call that design, but not necessarily towards buildings or shapes of things. More recently, there has been a great deal of change in people's attitudes in actually watching those changes and developments within their community in terms of auditing and monitoring. What is very important when we look at action *per se* is to ask whose objectives we are trying to fulfil. Are they those of the community or those of the lords and masters? We have to make sure that when we suggest something is successful, or not, we use the right types of criteria to make that judgement.

This leads us on to the process of understanding what action is all about and what goes on.

with just putting money in, if you have no spare time or effort to put into something because you are devoting it elsewhere? Someone also raised, an extremely important point about networks, but whose network? Are you at the centre of a network or are you putting others at the centre of a network? Who is at the edge of a network in relation to all this?

'Permitting' is very important, i.e. giving up controls, letting people do something, allowing something to happen – saying, for example, that something is not quite what we wanted but, yes, it is fine on this occasion.

The other one in there is 'playing'. You raised this – the drinking, the prevaricating, the whingeing, and so on. All the rest is completely irrelevant if you are not enjoying it, if there is no fun as part of it. I remember a number of years ago doing a long environmental education programme with a group of sixth formers, a whole week. It seemed to be a successful project and we brought someone in the following week to evaluate it. She sat with the sixth formers. Two of them were saying, "Oh it was great, we learnt so much about the environment". Two were saying, "It was wonderful, we learnt so much about ourselves". The others were saying, "It was wonderful, we just had a good time". They could not understand how you could do all three together, and the fact that doing all three together made the whole thing better. That is the important thing about playing. Playing is not addition; it is not just fun, it is not just enjoyment in its own right; it is something that you can get to, as we have done with loads of workshops with communities. You get to the end and they are saying, "I am absolutely exhausted, I have never worked so hard", and they have got smiles on their faces.

Jo Rose

It is also about not having preconceived ideas about what people can do within projects. My own experience indicates that there are situations which arise when it is easy to make a decision, for example, that the WI can do the tea. Well, I have an example where I was actually involved with a community group and we did not ask the WI to do the tea. We actually asked them to paint themselves green! They had a great time and somebody came up to me afterwards, out of the blue, and said that the best bit about the whole thing for her had been that she hadn't made a cup of tea during the whole time. She was still washing green paint out of her ears but she thought it had been wonderful. Everybody always assumes that somebody has a particular role to play but they have a lot more to offer. How we work with people is just as important as what we do.

Now I want to move on from what people do to how we do it with them, and who we work with. So, can we now think about who else are the partners within this process. Who else are the partners that community action is partly dependent on? Who do you work with in community action, apart from the community in its broadest sense? (Table 4)

Right, let us see what we put down as our list (Table 4A). Quite a lot of it is similar to the suggestions you have made. The other thing I would add to that is the 'other communities' that the communities themselves would recognise – their friends and neighbours, the next parish down the road. That is very important in terms of sustainability, in that other people go on promoting good practice.

Table 5. Mechanisms

A		
Partnerships Grant aid Employing Bursaries Scholarships Secondment Twinning/shadowing Education	Training Skills transfer Equipment Advice – technical/financial/managerial Performance indicators Publications/reports Charters/mandates	Case studies Good practice guides Media initiatives Projects Experiments Research Monitoring and evaluation
B *Dissemination* *Events* *Resources*	*Recognition* *Competitions* *Management plans*	*Networking* *Meetings* *Initiatives*

A: BDOR list   B: *Additional suggestions from the audience*

You picked up training, and skills transfer is extremely important. If you are setting up a mechanism, presumably you are setting it up not solely so that it works once only, then you lock the file away in the cabinet and that is the end of it, but so that what is learned – the skills, the knowledge and experience – actually transfers. So, when you lock away the parish paths project file, you immediately open another which is perhaps about recreation and interpretation, and the skills are transferred. That mechanism is a sadly under-developed one – how to set up a procedure that can take skills and transfer them from one example to another.

We also listed charters and mandates – another form of recognition. I used to be very sceptical about things like charters and mandates; I am now more convinced about them because they are a public statement of commitment. In some senses it may not mean much, but if your local authority has said, "We support community involvement in the following procedures and principles in these types of projects", if someone has signed up to it, it is a piece of paper that the community can roll up and hit the officer over the head with – "Your authority supports this, do it, support us". So they can be very important, like recognition and competitions, perhaps not so much of value in their own right but because they change the climate, change the feeling people have about things.

Good practice guides – again, that is part of the skills transfer issue. Good practice guides are sometimes good, sometimes disasters, but they are important if they succeed in transferring information and ideas across from example to example or area to area.

Case studies are also of surprising value. I worked a number of years ago with teachers, doing a project with the Schools Council. I managed to persuade a whole core of teachers of the value of the well kept diary as an extremely powerful piece of case study work. We often finish a project and think that perhaps we could write a case study of it, but then for various reasons it does not get done. It is the idea of building up general practice into case studies and spreading them – and suggests one issue we did not put down on the list but which we should add – *dissemination*. Having done all this study, who gets to learn about it?

in Ireland who had been of the community, had left, travelled abroad, gained all sorts of experience abroad, and had arrived back. Presumably when they arrived back they would be able to come up with all sorts of different suggestions and they would be listened to, but only because they were residents who had gone away and come back. But if I was a newcomer who had been in their village for only 25 years, and I was perceived as a newcomer, and I made exactly the same suggestions, I would not be listened to in the same way. Newcomers can bring immense challenge and new ideas to a local area, and challenge the oldies. The oldies also have other sorts of knowledge. So none of these arguments are about better/worse or either/or; they are about sharing both.

And how do we balance the view of the voyeurs, the people who just waltz in and look at the countryside, as opposed to those who are fundamentally dependent on it for their livelihood?

Also, where is the countryside? I remember a nameless Countryside Commission officer who once turned down a grant for something because he could hear cars, therefore it was not the countryside. So where is the countryside? Does it include urban fringe? Does it go into towns as well? Can we deal with countryside issues right the way into towns – green lungs – those sorts of approaches and ideas? Where does the countryside start and finish? In every sense, who owns it? To me, one of the benefits of community participation that Bernard Lane did not pick up last night is the changes of feeling of ownership people have about projects. Who manages? Who has the right to manage? Is some of the work you are doing very peripheral, because the core decisions are taken by other people?

Is the countryside one thing or is it varied? Some categorisations of the countryside have strange conjunction – or not – with local authority boundaries, but which is correct? Is the countryside a resource or an asset? Is it fixed or changing? I am sure I do not need to rehearse with you all those arguments about the extent to which the countryside is 'natural' or 'man-made'. What is a natural environment? Where do we start and where do we stop when we go back to 'let's restore it to the way it used to be'? Do we restore it to the way it used to be 8000 years ago, or 1000 years ago, or 500 years ago, or 100 years ago, or the one we happen to remember from our own childhood?

Also, does countryside equal rural? When we talk about rural policy and rural development, is that the same as countryside? And then do we all have mental blocks? When we look at the countryside do we notice that there are buildings there or do we look only at the green? Do we take account of the roads or somehow blank them off? There was a lovely piece of research that one of Bernard Lane's colleagues did in America, in which he managed to show that people driving into national parks in America would not notice countryside until they saw the sign that told them they were in the national park! There were the hills on the side of the road and suddenly there was a sign saying 'national park' and people would say, 'That's nice' because they had actually been told they had arrived somewhere. When we look at the countryside, do we see the work that goes on there, do we see the industry, do we see the agriculture, or are we looking with a different set of guidelines and spectacles?

Again, none of those are either/or. There is no right or wrong in that. Those are all valid perspectives, but how do we balance them together?

of tea and a good gossip with someone and you have got to go back on the court. It completely destroys the whole purpose of being there which is to meet people; tennis is just the excuse. The tie-break is a professional construct which has been imported into amateur activity. There are people here who know of similar things happening in climbing. The importation of professional technology into climbing has actually damaged some of the old traditions, particularly about the enjoyment of the countryside.

Is recreation regulated, is it free for all? Who controls and manages the regulation and free for all? And traditional and new issues. Would we, for example, include country crafts as a recreational activity? Would we include car boot sales?

Are garden centres a recreational activity? Well, they are. Look at America – the biggest leisure activity in America is shopping. And yet, using garden centres also takes us on to our next issue of standardisation. It was not that long ago I found myself in a garden centre in Cumbria trying to get lunch in the café there. Someone walked through the door and with a wonderful southern accent, said, "Isn't this lovely, it looks just like the one in Weybridge"! So standardisation occurs. Regionalism in Scotland has been argued to be damaging the regional distinctiveness of different ways of playing shinty.

Resource impacts need to be considered along with capacity, and whether activity is focused or dispersed. In terms of capacity in the countryside, how much recreation can we sustain if we focus it or disperse it? How does recreation link to arts, to cultural development, to social and economic?

And then particular initiatives. How do we view Center Parcs and visitor centres? How do we deal with nuisance, litter, pollution? And issues of access. The actual activity may be fine; everyone supports it, no problem. The problem is solely one of how people get to it.

Let us move on to the next theme, 'initiatives'. (Table 8)

Table 8. Recreation

Whose initiative?	Who decides?	
Who manages the budget?	Does it reach the parts ......?	
Constricting or enabling	Knock-on effects	Added value
Community capacity	Value for money (in breadth and for each)	
Long term, short term, sustainable?	Equity	Use of resources
Offering something to everyone (including you?)		Dependency culture
Open to change (at all stages)	How predetermined is it?	
Adaptable/replicable	Does it change, threaten, challenge, complement the system?	

'Initiatives' is a wonderful word. In some ways it does not mean anything at all, it is a sort of catch-all that brings things together. Someone thinks of a good idea and it becomes an 'initiative'. But whose initiative is it? Who decided that that was the boundary of it in the first place? Who manages the budget? Does it reach the parts that it wants to reach, effectively?

Jo Rose

I came to community action well over 20 years ago, before we had actually coined the term 'community environmental action', and I had something of a baptism by fire because my initial brush with it was in Londonderry where I worked with the Bogside Community Association. I was very green about the ears then but it taught me things that I have never forgotten. That is probably what committed me – or made me commitable perhaps, all those years ago. But a lot has changed in that time. There have been positive and negative changes, good and bad. But we have to live with what we have and make the most of it.

Particularly important is the change in government thinking. Government is something of a pragmatic animal in its short termism, but it is also influenced by outside bodies such as the wider Europe, even America. A lot of the changes in thinking, particularly in environmental policy, have come because of those outside influences. Government has produced charters for itself, for ourselves, and for local government. It has tried to promote a form of more global thinking. This was evident in the fact that we went to Rio – but whether we have actually come back from Rio is another matter.

Government action also changes the way that we operate, not just its thinking; the way that it manages its resources; and the way that it provides resources to bodies such as the Countryside Commission, English Nature, Rural Development Commission, down to local authorities and the voluntary sector. I remind you of the changes in the Single Regeneration Budget and the way that the Environmental Action Fund is operated.

Competition was mentioned earlier – well, government is not beyond competition either. It has produced something called City Challenge. They have now moved that into the rural context and if anybody has seen NCVO's report on community involvement in City Challenge, let us hope that we learn a few salutary lessons before we apply it to the rural sector.

I ask you whether the driving force behind community action is market-led or demand-led. Are we asking for value for money in community action that we would not demand from other places? Community action is responding to the changes that have occurred. In particular, it has had to weather the recession, possibly more than industry even. It has also had to change with the advent of high-tech. Certainly over my lifetime in community action, information technology has become much more accessible and accepted in communities, perhaps more so than with some of us as facilitators.

A major change has been telecommuting and the mobility of populations. Different people and resources and skills are now more available than they ever were. There is a greater awareness on all fronts about the importance of community action and the environment. But do we still only respond to short term projects? Do we still look for the short, sharp answer? And do communities only ask for that because they think that is all they are going to get? Are there equal opportunities in community action? Are all people equally able to fulfil their own objectives? The opposite of that is subsidiarity; can they also opt out and do it their own way? Can they exclude, as well as include?

So, who is determining all these changes? Is it us as facilitators, as initiative initiators, or is it the community? We look at government, we look at Europe, we look at what local authorities are doing. We look at what project officers are asked to do, and fulfil, and for

lots of variations within that view. But as Bernard Lane again pointed out, there are also lots of others outside this room who are actually neutral about community involvement or positively against it; people for whom, like some of those developers, it is just a cynical trick you turn on and off as you feel like it. It is too often seen as an optional extra; as an aside; not as an integral part of the programme; but something we do as we feel like it.

What we have put in front of you is a very rich and complex map of a territory in which your role, anybody's role, our role in any project we do, will only permit us or you to explore a very small part. But if you are going to be effective you must have in your mind a sense of that overall map, within which your small bit will work, so that when you are working with people on your small bit, you know the links and connections that will make it sustainable by adding it to all the things that other people are doing in parallel. Only through them as a whole will we actually fulfil our professional responsibility to communities.

Terry Robinson *(Chairman)*

Jeff and Jo, thank you very much for that broad sweep across the whole issue and for posing the questions that we will need to ask ourselves throughout the course of the conference.

The Pentrefoelas Initiative

Imagine a small Welsh rural village, located in the upland part of the county of Clwyd. Although rural it is located on the A5 between Llangollen and Betws Y Coed (it seems that everybody knows of Betws Y Coed). Most town people think that Pentrefoelas is quite remote from everywhere, well I have got news for them, Pentrefoelas, to us, is the centre of the universe – as one old character said – we have Europe all around us on one side, and with Ireland and America on the other, you can't be much more central than that!

Pentrefoelas (which means a village on a green field) has a fascinating history but I do not have the time to indulge in nostalgic memories this morning. Like many other rural villages, it has suffered a long declining economy, with no jobs in the area, young families and whole families having left the area in search of work. We are all too familiar with the scenario. Although every single village is unique in some respect, Pentrefoelas is probably more unique than most. It is a complete, unspoilt and unchanged example of a 19th century 'estate' village, and still is an estate village to this day. It was therefore important for any development not to change that character.

As a result of that declining economy, there emerged a rural grass roots economic initiative, core funded by the public sector but energised at local level. Our first task was to rebuild all the old dilapidated workshops in the village together with some infrastructure projects so that small businesses could be accommodated. Our other important challenge was to encourage a more enterprising culture amongst the indigenous local people; with encouragement and support we wanted to see more local people start up their own businesses. It was certainly not our intention to try and attract a branch factory into the area – because we all know what happens to those if the economy even sneezes, they are away like a shot leaving all kinds of problems behind them for the local community to grapple with.

With Pentrefoelas our objective was twofold. First, it was to rebuild the old village workshops and a few infrastructure projects, so that it might return to being the prosperous living village it once was with small businesses, employment and people going about their daily lives with some degree of security and confidence. Secondly it was to create Pentrefoelas as a 'heritage' village. Because of its unique character it had so much to offer the visiting tourist. This had to be done extremely sensitively, lest we spoilt the very character we wanted to preserve, because, as we all know, tourism unfortunately can have its own momentum.

As an initiative, our other prime challenge was to strengthen the economy of the whole Hiraethog area. Hiraethog is a rural upland area, suffering from a declining economy. It is an area that has no towns, only small villages and farmsteads dotting its hill farming windswept landscape. I suppose it has the same features as many other rural areas – village shops being closed, primary schools also being closed – I am sure you are all familiar with such stories. Our task therefore, as a grass roots initiative, is to work with these communities to try and reverse this downward spiral of events. Again you will find a summary of what has been and is being achieved in my paper. However, the video I want to show you in a few moments will illustrate to you one example of how another small village has reversed that decline.

Although as an initiative, I think we have succeeded in achieving quite a lot, the important message I want to highlight is that success has come about because of our network and partnerships with the local authorities and public agencies. This was established during the

- A number of local people had sufficient commitment and perseverance to see the project through.

- We recognised very early on in the project that we had to have the enthusiastic support of the individual officers of the county and borough councils, the development agencies and others who we needed in order to achieve our objectives. The co-operation we have received has been tremendous and their support was fantastic, working with them has been a pleasure. They not only gave of their time but they also ensured the necessary funding resources for the many projects to be completed.

Having said this I hope you do not get the impression it was all a piece of cake. No way! We certainly have not been able to get all the funds that were needed, not every project got under way. The officers themselves were continuously treading the fine line between supporting Pentrefoelas and their support for other rural areas.

The role of a grass roots initiative located in the village was also, I would argue, fundamental to the whole project. It is one thing to start a project, when everybody concerned is enthusiastic, it is another to keep it going, especially when that 'going' gets tough. This I think has been one of our most important roles, continuously to re-energise the project in order to ensure its completion.

Our other important role has been the necessary link between the local management committee and the local people and businesses. Empty workshops of themselves do nothing for the local economy, but now at Pentrefoelas, all but two small workshops are occupied with a variety of small businesses, some tourist oriented others not, but what is important is that they all be viable businesses.

Although, together with our partners, we have achieved and accomplished a lot at Pentrefoelas, there are a number of projects still outstanding awaiting the necessary funding mechanisms. However, that being said, development work is never completed.

4. A COMMUNITY COMPANY AT GROES

Having put the development of Pentrefoelas near the centre, in other words in between the two opposite extremes, I would now like to tell you about another development project which is located at the community end. It concerns the tiny village of Groes, where the whole community came together to save their village shop and post office.

Groes is a small rural hamlet in the Parish of Bylchau, it is a village built on a cross roads, it has a village hall, a chapel, an old manorial hall, village shop and post office and a petrol selling garage, all situated around the village centre. While the population of the whole parish is only 309, that of the village is only about 80 (Electors' Register). Three years ago however, the village shop and post office was up for sale, due to ill-health of the owners and as no buyers had been found, a date was fixed for closure. As if this was not enough, a 'For Sale' sign also appeared on the garage, making a very bleak future for the community.

One day I had a telephone call with a cry for help. They knew that I had already been involved in helping another small community with a similar development. Rather than 'throwing in the towel' the whole community came together to see what could be done to save their village services. What transpired is a shining example to all rural communities

In order to overcome this deficiency a few individuals provided an additional loan to the company.

Success has been achieved at Groes because of a number of factors:

- When the local people began to realise how much they would lose with their village shop, post office and their rather 'run down' petrol selling garage, they felt that something had to be done (they were not sure what – but something had to be done). Therefore there was a strong sense of need.

- Groes was already an active Welsh village culturally and they were quite used to organising community events. In common with other rural communities there was certainly a lot of community and business skills in the locality.

- As a community they had a strong sense of identity with their *'Bro'* – this is a Welsh concept describing that area/community with which you relate, or where you feel a sense of 'pride of place'. Apparently, as a name, it has no translation into English. I knew this, I knew the community well and therefore knew I could spend a lot of time and energy in helping with this project. In other words I knew I was tapping into a strong feeling of responsibility the local people felt for their village.

- Following the telephone call for help, I then embarked on a series of investigations. Coming from a business background I felt it important to check the accounts of the two businesses which were closing down in order to satisfy myself that the project would have a fair chance of being viable. A number of cash flow forecasts and break-even analyses were made because I had to satisfy my own 'instincts' that the project could succeed and be profitable before advocating it to others.

- With regard to the other side of the coin, the people side, it knew it would soon emerge in the public meetings whether or not there was sufficient commitment to see the project through to its completion. I obviously had a fair idea but they soon proved that they wanted to succeed.

I also knew what my role had to be in order to help them to succeed:

- First of all I think it was important that I believed in the project, there was no question of my commitment, especially as I had already guided and helped another community through a similar project.

- Because of my business background I could also offer advice and guidance with the financial aspects of the project. My contacts with the Wales Co-operative Centre was also valuable in advising and guiding them how to establish a community company.

- With specific reference to the people side of the scheme I also knew that my role would be continuously shifting during the course of the project; there would be times when I would have to motivate and enthuse those involved, to inspire, but to take the back seat when progress was being made and their enthusiasm was strong; equally when they were at a low ebb I would need to take the lead, without appearing to do so. I also knew that they would need our initiative's credibility when it came to seeking grants from the public sector.

It was therefore a multi-tasking role, sometimes at the back, sometimes at the front and at other times somewhere in between. That I think is the role of a community project officer.

Panel 1: Working with Communities – II

Groundwork

Janet Honey

Groundwork Erewash

I am here to talk about Groundwork, particularly Groundwork Erewash for which I work, and their approach to community action. Groundwork is a national network of environmental organisations which are formed as a partnership between the public sector, i.e. the local authority and central government, not through Marsham Street but through the DoE from anonymous building somewhere in Bristol, and the private sector, represented through local communities – business, voluntary and residents communities. They are a company and they are led by a board of directors who are from the local community. That is the set-up.

Erewash is in the south east of Derbyshire between the cities of Derby and Nottingham. Groundwork came to Erewash really as a result of a very outward looking local authority at that time, so in that sense it came through that local authority process. Not all Groundworks come like that but in Erewash it did.

I am going to show you some slides. Transport routes are very important and the M1 cuts through Erewash. Erewash has a population of some 108,000. It is a mixture of industrial past, represented by mills from the cotton industry, also silk hosiery and stuff that came out of Nottingham, by ex-mining areas, and by gravel extraction areas.

Groundwork was about trying to get a pride in the place, a sense of real ownership from the people, and from that inward investment, more jobs and employment from declining traditional industries.

The area has some particularly beautiful countryside. It is in Derbyshire; most people think about Derbyshire as the Peak District but there are other parts that have lovely countryside, and this needs to be understood. For example, we are involved in trying to protect and preserve an area of ancient woodland. So, there are some lovely things about it.

However, this is a far cry from what most people in Erewash – or in most of the country for that matter – have as their local countryside, the bit that is left between the housing estate, the railway sidings, the canal and the coal yard. It is generally a scruffy, unkempt sort of area of open land that is not what we would consider to be countryside, or even particularly pretty.

However, we forged a lot of links with schools and the local community to understand this area which now has an interpretive display which explains what is there, what is important and how to look after it. We linked to the local school with growing wild flowers in yogurt cartons on the window sill and so on, and then planting them. You do have to be careful to have the appropriate wild flowers but we did this in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust. So we were able to help them to look after the area and plant extra things. The children found it to be great fun, which is important.

So, again, a small area, a small scheme, but it involved people and had a sense of ownership about it.

Moving along the way a bit, I was asked to address a meeting of the Rotary Club. These august gentlemen listened and they told me they were keen to do something for the local area. They had formed an environment committee so they suggested they should give me some money to plant a few trees. I thought to myself, I can say yes to this. This is nice, people giving you money to do nice things which are within your remit. But is this really what I want out of these people, for them just to give me money to plant a few trees?

So I took a deep breath and then told them that I did not think that was really the issue. It would be better to look at the whole of the area spanned by the Rotary Club and what could make it better; what people did not like and what they did like; make plans about the footpath links; maybe map the whole of the green spaces and see what people like to do about them. Fortunately, there were people there who thought this was quite a good idea and, of course, they asked me how much it would cost. That is where you take a deep breath and try to work out how much they are prepared to give!

Basically, what came out of this was a whole programme of small meetings around all of the areas covered, asking people what they wanted of their own area. There is a school for sensorily deprived pupils within the area and they made a model of what they wanted for their garden. We had called the project Green Long Eaton but it got renamed. Community groups have a way of taking over from you – we had thought of a perfectly good name but they did not want that, they wanted to add the word Glade.

We looked at all the planning for real, and all the other things, and adapted them a bit. We thought about it a lot and then took deep breaths, got people in a room and gave them large scale maps. We could not give them models because we did not have enough space in which to keep them. We gave them felt pens with their maps and asked them to mark what they liked about their areas, what they did not like, and what they would like to see happening.

It was marvellous. All those planners and people who think you cannot do this with people because they do not understand plans and maps, are entirely wrong. Everybody knows about their local spot. They know about the bit where they walk to school or the shops, or where they wait for the bus. They know if it looks scruffy and they do not like it, and they are prepared to do something about it.

As an example, in a relatively small village on the edge of Long Eaton they wanted a butterfly garden. They were quite prepared to get all the plants and come out and do everything and now there is a beautiful small corner planted with appropriate plants to

environmental impacts for banks, planting, and so on. It is a great partnership. This is about regeneration and money and tourism to an area that needs it.

Just to summarise quickly. Groundwork does a lot of different things. In the time that the Erewash Groundwork has been there we have done way over 300 projects and I have just picked out a few.

I was asked to give some practical tips and I have four.

1. Be Clear

Be clear about what you are doing, why you are doing it, what you can do, what you cannot do, when you will stop, your exit strategy, if you like, how you will stop and how you will leave people. You cannot just start a group, get them all excited, and dump them. They need to know exactly where they are about it.

Be clear about quality objectives. Just because you are working with communities does not mean that you have to accept a lesser quality than you would for other kinds of schemes. Because you are working with volunteers does not mean it has to be a lesser quality.

And if you are in the position of employing a project officer, be clear about what you expect of him or her. I have been one; I am not now, I employ them. It is no good just telling them to go out there, see what is there, see what the community is, and then eight months later, when somebody is asking you for outputs because they are funding you, coming back and asking the project officer what has been done. They are likely to say, "I have been out there talking to the community, you didn't expect me to do anything did you?" Be very clear what you expect of them, help them and support them.

So, be clear about your aims and objectives, be clear about things.

2. Be Brave

Working with communities is not for the timorous. Listen to yourself; listen to your intuition; go with your guts. Every now and again you need to, and you need to believe that. So you need to know what is being said around about your professionalism, where you are and what you are, and what you can do. But do be brave; there are times not to go back and consult, there are times just to go. I cannot tell you when they are; you should know when they are because that is something inside you.

3. Be Resourceful

Being resourceful is not just about getting money from places. You do need to do that – getting the local firm to give you the railway sleepers, deliver the gravel, or whatever. But it is being resourceful with people as well. Each of you, when you go home, becomes a member of the community, so you do not need to be led through these things. The stuff is there – Berwyn Evans' example of the Welshman doing the plans, and things like that. You might expect to find someone who can do a survey of wild flowers or butterflies, but there are also in communities structural engineers, mining engineers and all kinds of people you can tag on to – analytical chemists, all sorts – and they are dying to become involved in these sorts of things.

Discussion Summary

TERRY KEMP *(Kennet and Avon Canal Trust)* asked the speakers what they would do differently if they were able to go back and start again. BERWYN EVANS said that at the time of the first project, Pentrefoelas, both he and the committee had been very green. They had learned as they had gone along. He was sure they would achieve their purpose more effectively if they were to start again. However, with the Groes project, he would do it in the same way. In fact, that had been the second village he had helped through the same process so he had already been through the learning process there.

JANET HONEY thought that given a second attempt she would worry less about two sets of people: those with vested interests in a project, local authority officers or members, and funders. Funders made enormous demands both in time and outputs. It was right that public money should be subject to accountability but it needed to be kept in proportion. Basically, she felt it was a question of being able to say no to people.

ALAN SHIPLEY *(ADAS Newcastle)* raised two points: firstly, was it important to impose some of your own vision on a project you were initiating; secondly, was conflict a problem. On the first point, JANET HONEY believed it was more a case of helping the groups with which you were working to widen their own vision. On the second point, she said anything that was about change would inevitably involve conflict, one had to accept that and live with it. The important thing was to be clear about one's own role.

BERWYN EVANS said that there was always resistance to change even when there was an obvious need for it. So someone had to have a vision suitable for the particular situation, a vision which would overcome that resistance. That was what had happened in the two cases he had talked about. In Groes, the villagers had known something had to be done but they did not know what. He had offered them a way of solving the problem.

On the question of conflict, JEFF BISHOP *(BDOR Ltd)* said there might well be a difference in perspective at the start of a project but it was best to acknowledge that, bring it into the open and try to achieve a result which was of mutual benefit to as many parties as possible. Conflict might be where you started but it should not be where you ended.

GARETH DAVIES *(Forest Enterprise)* asked Berwyn Evans whether he would have modified his approach if he had been dealing with a larger community and, if so, in what way. BERWYN EVANS replied that he did not know a great deal about larger communities. His experience had been entirely with small communities where there existed what he had described as a kind of community feeling, in Welsh 'Bro'. He doubted whether that existed in larger communities. However, he was a firm believer in community appraisal which presumably could be applied to any size of community.

Panel 2: Woods and Water - I

Community Woodland Planning
The Forestry Authority (Scotland) Approach

Graham Cullen

The Forestry Authority (Scotland)

INTRODUCTION

The Forestry Authority is part of the Forestry Commission and is concerned primarily with the incentives for, and regulation of, forestry in Great Britain. It also has a major role in implementing the government's forestry policy and promoting forestry by means of general advice on forestry issues and through its involvement in developmental projects.

The Government's policy document *Forestry Policy for Great Britain*, was published in September 1991. Forestry policy is set out more fully and updated in *Sustainable Forestry: the UK Programme*, launched by the Prime Minister in January 1994. These make it clear that the policy is based on the fundamental belief that forests should be sustainably managed to meet the social, economic, cultural and spiritual human needs of present and future generations. The twin concepts of multiple purpose management and sustainability in forestry are central to British forestry policy, and were also core elements of the *Statement of Forestry Principles* adopted at Rio in 1992.

The Government's support for the establishment of woodlands on the periphery of towns and cities has developed continuously over a number of years, with notable examples including the Community Forests in England and Wales and the Central Scotland Woodlands Project. Since February 1992, the main instrument delivering this policy has been the Community Woodland Supplement (CWS) to the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS). It has also been possible to enhance existing woodlands of special environmental value, including those where recreation is being developed, through the payment of Special Management Grant. Both the supplement and management grant will continue to be available following the recent review of forestry incentives.

The objectives of CWS can be summarised as:

a)   To provide opportunities for access to new woodlands, which are planted and managed for recreation, in areas where existing provision of such amenities are scarce, yet demand is deemed to be high, as on the urban fringe.

b)   To involve local communities in supporting, implementing or managing the development of new community woodlands.

The local authorities in Scotland have welcomed the initiative and the partnership has proved highly successful. We estimate that 85% of Scotland is now covered by plans, equating to more than 90% of the population.

GORDON COMMUNITY WOODLAND PLAN

Gordon District lies at the centre of Grampian Region and stretches from the outskirts of Aberdeen in the east, to the Cairngorms in the west. Over the last 20 years, it has witnessed a significant increase in new housing developments associated with the oil boom, and a dramatic two-fold increase in its population.

The district has a long established commitment to community involvement in planning issues and felt that this should continue in the production of the Gordon CWP. This approach was actively supported by the Forestry Authority's Grampian Conservancy as it embraced one of the underlying objectives of the CWS, viz the involvement of local communities in the planning, implementing or managing of community woodlands.

On completion of the draft CWP, it was sent to all the community councils in Gordon, in advance of one of their regular meetings. These meetings were then attended by officials of Gordon District Council and the Forestry Authority to discuss the proposals and gather feedback from the council members. The draft plan was also presented to Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), National Farmers Union, Timber Growers Association, and other organisations with an interest in rural affairs. All the comments received, both written and verbal, were reviewed and wherever possible incorporated into the final plan. The result is a Gordon Community Woodland Plan which we are confident truly reflects the views of all the Gordon communities.

The consultation exercise, although time consuming, benefited the Forestry Authority by providing an early boost to our efforts to promote the community woodland concept. In addition, it helped engender a better understanding amongst the communities in Gordon of what the Community Woodlands in Scotland initiative was attempting to achieve.

From the outset the CWPs were seen as a means of promoting and stimulating the uptake of Community Woodland Supplement. The fact that the Gordon Plan has strong community support, as well as the support of many other organisations, has made this task considerably easier. Many more enquiries have been received in Gordon District than elsewhere in Grampian. I am sure that in part, this is due to the involvement of the communities in the whole initiative, from an early stage. A good proportion of these enquiries are now being translated into varied and exciting new community woodland schemes, where communities are keen to get involved and play their part.

For example, on the outskirts of Inverurie a 42 hectare community woodland has recently been completed. Newseat Community Woodland incorporates 8 km of woodland walks (including 2.5 km to all-abilities standard), a picnic site, a native pinewood and several other interpreted woodland and archaeological sites. A car park and a footpath link to Inverurie town centre have been provided to facilitate access to the woodland. Four local schools, the scout troop, several conservation groups and the community association have all been involved in the planning and planting of the woodland, while Gordon Disabilities Group gave advice on the all-abilities facilities. The local secondary school is currently

Panel 2: Woods and Water – II

The Medway River Project
An Example of Community Participation in River Management

Brian Smith

Medway River Project

INTRODUCTION

Rivers, possibly more than any other landscape resource, are the focus of widespread community concern, and provide a common point of interest linking many disparate communities.

Perceptions of rivers range from the totally utilitarian to the purely aesthetic. But whatever view we take there can be no doubt that rivers and their associated landscapes play a vital role in the quality of everyone's life.

Community concern in recent years over the loss of landscape and amenity resources has not been solely in reaction to the capital works schemes that have canalised rivers and denuded many miles of river bank. Of equal importance has been the gradual loss of flood meadows, pollard willows and riverside footpaths, and the damage caused by increasing recreation pressures.
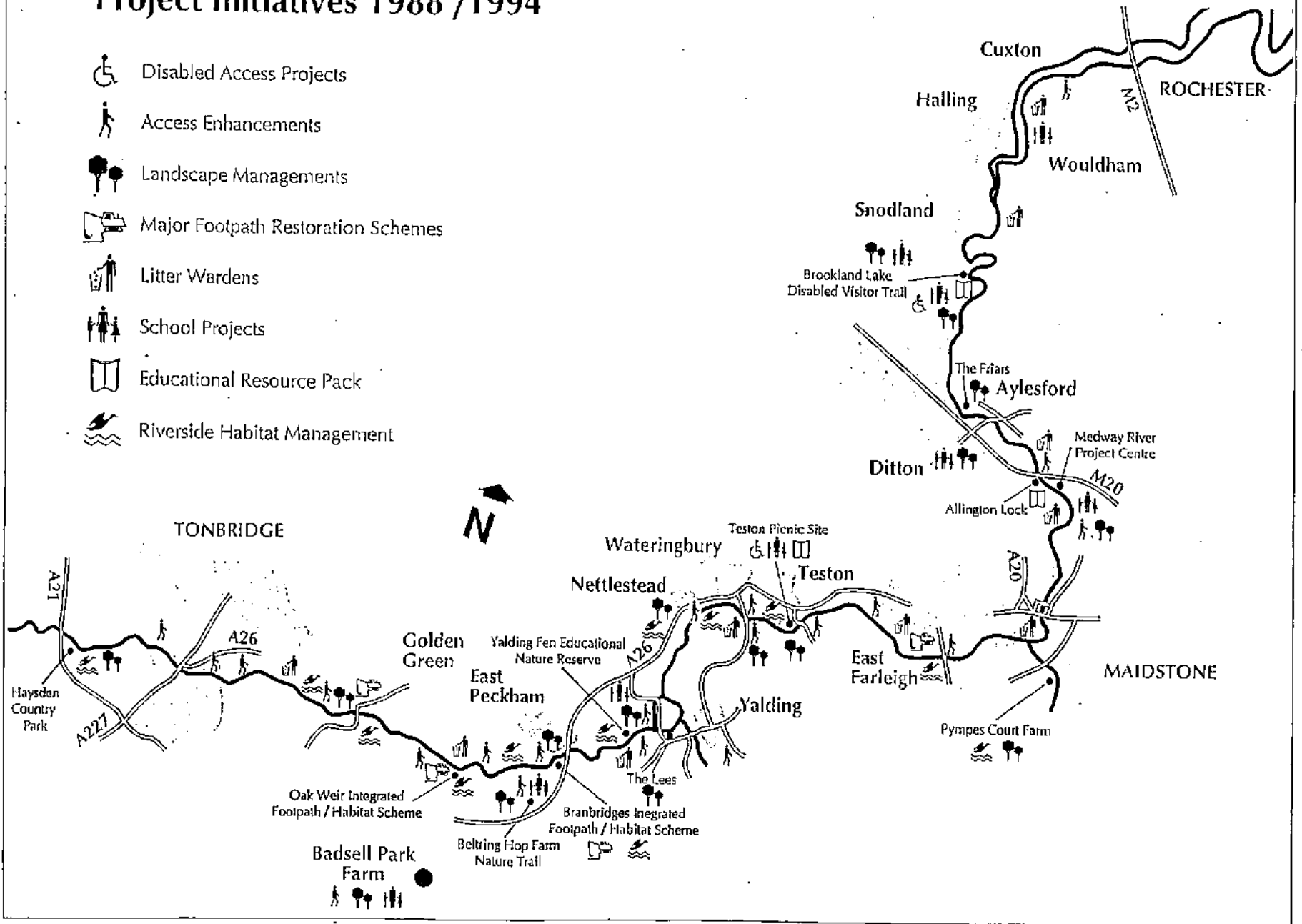
THE MEDWAY RIVER PROJECT: ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND

Established in March 1988, the Medway River Project (MRP) has resulted from community criticism, and has become the catalyst for community action.

The Medway valley is predominantly rural, with a resident population of around 400,000, concentrated in Tonbridge, Maidstone, Rochester and Chatham. However, almost five million people live within a one hour drive of the Medway, and many communities in south and east London have strong cultural links with the river. The recreational pressure from these communities is immense and is a strong base for opposition to changes which may be to the detriment of the river amenity.

In 1979 the Southern Water Authority (SWA), the Project's original sponsors, attempted to close the upper reaches, 5.2 km (4.5 miles), of the navigation. Public opposition was overwhelming, not only from boaters and anglers, but also from parish councils and individuals concerned at the loss of the river amenity. SWA withdrew their proposal and invested in a ten year programme of navigation improvements, but they failed to understand the breadth of community concern and provoked criticism over their neglect of other amenities, particularly access and landscape degradation.

Project Initiatives 1988 /1994

♿ Disabled Access Projects

🚶 Access Enhancements

🌳 Landscape Managements

Major Footpath Restoration Schemes

Litter Wardens

School Projects

Educational Resource Pack

Riverside Habitat Management

Cuxton

ROCHESTER

Halling

Wouldham

Snodland

Brookland Lake
Disabled Visitor Trail

The Friars

Aylesford

Medway River
Project Centre

Ditton

Allington Lock

TONBRIDGE

N

Teston Picnic Site

Wateringbury

Teston

Nettlestead

Golden
Green

Yalding Fen Educational
Nature Reserve

East
Peckham

East
Farleigh

MAIDSTONE

Yalding

Haysden
Country
Park

Pympes Court Farm

Oak Weir Integrated
Footpath / Habitat Scheme

The Lees

Branbridges Inegrated
Footpath / Habitat Scheme

Badsell Park
Farm

Beltring Hop Farm
Nature Trail

Local industry has been an important source of financial and practical support for many Project initiatives. In total, 26 local companies have contributed £37,887 in direct funding, and a further £6101 in contributions in kind. Many companies offer sponsorship in relation to specific initiatives, often on their land; others support schemes which benefit communities throughout their Project area.

The partnership between the Project, Zeneca Agrochemicals and the Kent Trust is the Project's most successful scheme to date. The management of the ten hectare fen and orchard reserve enables the Project to integrate conservation, education and access objectives on a site of high ecological value. The site is open, free, to local schools and community, and is staffed by a team of dedicated volunteer wardens and habitat surveyors. All the management work is undertaken by the Project's volunteers; the teachers' resource pack was prepared by the Kent Trust, and Zeneca contribute at least £7000 per annum to meet the full cost of management. The support and enthusiasm of staff throughout Zeneca has been an essential element in the success of this partnership.

Encouraged by their experience with the Project, and supported by a range of grant schemes, most notably Rural Action, community groups are now seeking the support and advice of the Project to develop their own initiatives. Whilst community-led initiatives have significant limitations in terms of efficient use of resources – they tend to be very localised and lack strategic continuity – they are an increasingly important means of achieving the Project's objective of sustainable management.

CONCLUSIONS: THE BENEFITS AND FUTURE FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN RIVER MANAGEMENT

It could be said that 8000 days of free labour is a clear measure of the Medway River Project's success, and the value of community participation.

But community participation is not about bald statistics or free labour, it is about people, and promoting understanding through participation.

Participation in the management of their local river environment enhances people's understanding of the wider management issues and enables them to contribute in a more effective and constructive manner.

Countryside Management Projects, such as the Medway River Project, offer a mechanism by which such participation can be developed and sustained.

the problems in getting a community to come out in front and lead might be the desperation factor. In the Welsh villages described by Berwyn Evans, the desperation factor had been 100% and the communities were therefore more proactive. In the Medway area it might well have been a case of educating people into perceiving a need which they had not hitherto recognised. BRIAN SMITH agreed that this was very much so. Much of the work was concerned with promoting greater awareness and understanding.

PHILIP LOWE *(University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne)* had been struck by the way in which the example from Kent had seemed to help mobilise groups of local people who had then been able to participate more effectively in the NRA's catchment management planning. He would like to transfer that lesson to the forestry example, and the extent to which involvement in community forestry might be seen, not as an end, but as a means to participation in the wider public involvement of the Forestry Authority. As a development officer working in a conservancy, GRAHAM CULLEN did not feel qualified to comment on what was essentially a policy issue. RICHARD BROADHURST *(Forestry Commission, CRN Chairman)* said that one of the differences between the two presentations was that one had been by someone who was concerned with managing an area, and the other by an agency which was concerned with managing through others dropping ideas into an area. There was now an enormous range of developments involving communities in woodlands and their management. He assured the conference that the Forestry Commission was entirely committed to encouraging the involvement of communities.

RHYS TAYLOR *(ACRE)* asked in what way the support from Rural Action had helped the projects led by community groups in Medway. BRIAN SMITH replied that it had provided a point of focus as much as anything else. It had acted as a mechanism by which local communities had been made aware of a new opportunity. New opportunities excited people. It was one of the problems of a countryside management project that you could not keep doing the same thing because people got so used to it that it stopped generating ideas and reaction. Rural Action had come in with sufficient publicity to attract new attention and act as a catalyst. It had also, of course, provided communities with very valuable funding to get training and advice which might be outside the project's scope.

ROB GUEST *(Forest Enterprise)* asked what proportion of Graham Cullen's cases were established woodlands where the community was being encouraged to become involved in developing the management, and what proportion were creating a new woodland. GRAHAM CULLEN pointed out that Community Woodland Supplement was only available for new sites. He assumed the first example meant additional woodland adjacent to an existing one. That was the most exciting possibility in that there was immediately a woodland for the community to identify with, but although that was being actively promoted, most schemes being put forward were for green field sites. However, it had to be remembered that the initiative was still in its early stages.

TERRY ROBINSON *(Chairman)* thanked the speakers for another valuable session, and the audience for their participation.

small levels (known as Plumbers Levels) were contained in a valley approximately two miles long and 500 metres wide at its floor.

The population of the village in 1911 was 2065, but the writing was on the wall and by 1961 numbers had fallen to 1862, by 1990 it was a mere 1240. In their heyday the pits employed some 3000 men, today there are no miners living in Glyncorrwg. The housing stock is old. Based on the stock in 1965, 53% had been built between 1882 and 1910. In the 1920s there were around 22 commercial premises in Glyncorrwg, today there are just six.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A COAL MINING VILLAGE WHEN THERE ARE NO MORE COAL MINES?

First we must ask ourselves what was it like in the village before the mines closed. Up to and around the 1920s village life revolved around the five chapels. After the 1926 strike the Miners Lodge gradually took over the role of the chapels in giving guidance to the community. Today there are still three chapels and a church in the village but the congregations are often as few as six people. The Miners Hall was built in 1926 and became the heart of the village, the blood being the community, the brain being the Lodge Committee. The Lodge secretary and chairman took the place of the chapel deacons giving advice and help to those in the village that required it.

A massive pit closures programme began in the 1950/60s which affected the village in a number of ways:

- The population decreased
- The most active people, the leaders, left the village.
- Commercial premises closed.
- As miners left the community so the contributions to the Miners Hall decreased.
- By 1976 the hall had closed, and with it the heart of the village stopped beating.
- Public transport was reduced as demand decreased – profit and loss entered the scene.
- The whole community withdrew into itself, laying dormant waiting to be reborn. It is no longer thought of as a coal mining community by its inhabitants – the blood had stopped pumping through the veins.

It would be wrong to say, like many opposition MPs had done in the past, that a village dies when the last coal mine closes, what is experienced is a dwindling decay, carried out over many years – like a cancer if you like, it wastes away the body but is not incurable.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVE – WHERE, HOW AND WHY

The *Western Mail*, July 13, 1977 had this to say of the Upper Afan:

> *'A Government sponsored report published yesterday labels the Upper Afan Valley the worst off among Wales's 28 special development areas because of its lack of job opportunities; poor housing conditions; low standards of schooling; inadequate transport facilities.'*

A few years later the *South Wales Evening Post* had this to say:

> *'The Evening Post was praised last night by a community council for revealing that a*

involved and a video was commissioned in both Welsh and English, which went out on national television, showing the activities of Jigsaw in the village. The enthusiasm of the new leaders was ecstatic, A grant was applied for to commission a second model of the village representing Glyncorrwg of the future. It, along side the first model, was displayed in the school where people could go and put ideas directly onto it or write on forms provided. Both models were eventually displayed at the Royal Welsh Show in Builth Wells. There were many ideas placed directly onto the models by the inhabitants of Glyncorrwg, including wind farms, although they did not include the ponds. Incidentally, the village was asked recently by a national power company to support the idea of wind farms on the surrounding mountains but indeed instead of supporting it they formed an action committee to oppose it!

THE PONDS, BORN OUT OF JIGSO

The enthusiastic new leaders were looking for community based ideas. Doctor Hart came up with an idea to build a series of ponds. One thousand £1.00 shares were sold within and outwith the community. It was envisaged that the project would provide local employment both during construction and after. The scheme was put forward for a Welsh Office grant, through the Community Revival Strategy Project, a dream child of David Hunt (£2.5 million was available for five schemes). The project was accepted and £477,000 was awarded – 75% paid by the Welsh Office and 25% from other sponsors, in this case mainly from West Glamorgan County Council.

As the idea began to materialise, many of the ponds committee lost sight of the fact that the project was a satellite of Jigso, even though it was registered in its own right as the Glyncorrwg Ponds Co-operative. The concept of the Glyncorrwg Ponds Co-operative was set out in the project's first newsletter:

> 'As part of the Jigsaw plan for general development of Glyncorrwg, in August 1990 a scheme was suggested for developing the river between the soccer field and Nantewleath footbridge into a series of ponds, to be used for fishing and boating, attract wild life and plant broad leave trees to make the valley more attractive. With advice from Port Talbot Co-operative Development Agency, we formed the GPC, which is now registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act.'

Of the 15 founder members, the new leaders if you like, nearly 50% (half) were not originally of the village, which perhaps shows the village in a new light. Sub-committees were set up to cover the various aspects of the scheme but, unfortunately, the scheme was so complex and time consuming that these committees faded away as the problems increased. Community participation dwindled. The problems to be overcome were many:

- The local fishing club objected.
- The NRA put forward criteria to be met.
- Floods caused damage during construction which required extra funds.
- Lack of community involvement caused the committee to become overstretched.

Eventually the contract was let to a multinational construction company at a cost of £440K. The ponds have now been completed, and the committee is involved in 'phase 2', the setting up of factory units.

This scheme was purported to be a community based scheme because of the share issue; every household was given the opportunity to purchase shares, not all did, I would go as

From the appraisal came 11 recommendations. These recommendations were delivered to a public meeting to solicit the reactions of the community at large. From this came the go-ahead for the next step – the commissioning of a green plan based on recommendation no.3: village disturbances. The cost of commissioning the green plan was £2000, 75% of which came from CCW and the rest from the Prince of Wales Trust and British Steel.

The remit of the green plan was to design each project in such a way that it engendered community involvement, and not to make the same mistakes as had been made on the ponds project. Each project was to be a living project from the start:

- If you get people interested then this interest must be maintained by making things happen.
- The community must carry out the majority of the work itself in order they do not feel that third parties are providing them with an amenity.

With this in mind the remit was that the sites (five in all) were to be broken into as many projects as possible. In the end 70 projects in all were identified, enough for one project per four households. Before these projects could commence all had to be costed and only when there was enough money available for a complete project would that project be allocated to a group of residents.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

This is the first part of the green plan, there will be others based on the appraisal. It was found that the overall project lacked a co-ordinator, a person to: chase funding; keep the community motivated by making the projects happen; and prioritise the projects to take full advantage of whatever funds are available.

WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL MESSAGES FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES?

1. First and foremost they must take the community with them all the way:
   - Let the community decide what it needs.
   - Do not make the projects so large that they need all-specialist involvement.
   - You cannot inform a community of what is happening unless something happens, therefore get residents closest to the project to take control of one small part of it, this will then be self-advertising.

2. When projects are numerous enough then a co-ordinator is required.

3. There must be a strong central committee to control the project from a financing point of view.
   - Don't let satellite projects break away and in doing so exhaust the limited resources available.
   - Keep sub-committees to a minimum, and make sure that those you do have remain active.

4. Get local industries involved. They can help with:
   - finance; materials; manpower; expertise.

5. Make contact with all the funding agencies possible:
   - Financial help; other help; volunteers.

6. And finally, ask yourself 'Is this a community based project? If not should we be doing it?'

The second broad area is to help to articulate the local voice, to guide people through all the routes of lobbying and seeking support that they might have to go through. It works alongside the elected representatives, not to supplant them, but to provide a parallel route. Village appraisal, which I will talk about shortly, is one of the techniques, tried and tested, that can be used to articulate local voices and focus local concern.

Thirdly, they provide help for practical action. That might be information; or training; or grants. The second part of my presentation refers to one aspect of that support service which is administered with the very active help of rural community councils, which is Rural Action, an advice and grant scheme for environmental work.

Village appraisals, or community appraisals, are a sort of stocktaking by local people, controlled principally by local residents rather than by 'expert' outsiders. They use questionnaires, distributed at least to every household but in the ideal model to every individual. These collect a mixture of facts and opinions. They are questionnaires designed in a way that an academic might use, to collect opinions in a systematic and accurate way. But they are also questionnaires which have to be friendly and accessible. Some of the best examples have very attractive design work on them, a special section which might appeal to children, and so on. So they can be quite creative pieces of work, not just dry, dusty typewritten sheets.

The benefits of appraisals, whether or not you are using automation to help administer them, is that the questions are selected locally, so that the issues are locally defined. The process is a democratic one. It is actually much more democratic than a public meeting because it includes people who would exclude themselves from attending or speaking out at public meetings.

It is also quite fun. There is scope for a large amount of voluntary involvement ranging from the technical desk-work to just foot-slogging when you visit and revisit to collect back questionnaires. The information gathered by a village appraisal can be very persuasive. It can influence the decision-makers and those who exercise controls on the village facilities and land use.

The materials involved include a 12 page handbook on appraisal techniques which is based on several years' experience, particularly in Gloucestershire. Ros Leigh from Gloucestershire Rural Community Council is here and is due to conduct one of the workshops later on today which I am sure will touch on the application of appraisals in Gloucestershire's experience. Much of the lead on this work was done there.

Another piece of resource material is a set of articles about examples of village appraisals and the action resulting from them. In the time available now it is very difficult for me to go into detail.

One of the useful tools I want to introduce to you for undertaking an appraisal is a computer program which assists the local group to handle the data. The program can be used by relative newcomers to computing. It has been tested; it is a program based on practical experience, not just hypothetical work. The local back-up through the 38 county based rural community councils provides a support service on the 'human' elements. Mary Mitchell at the Cheltenham and Gloucester College, who did the software development, can provide back-up on the 'technical' side.

techniques as a recommended method for undertaking that sort of participation. However, I would stress that a village appraisal that arrives uninvited from outside with all its questions chosen by outsiders, has only a slim chance of working. People will just not bother to fill it in. The questions really do have to be 'home grown'.

The second main topic I want to speak about is an advice and grants providing scheme which has developed very rapidly in recent years, supported by a team of participating organisations. The concept behind Rural Action is a very simple one. It is that local communities should be, and are, able to take a leading role in conserving and enhancing their local environment. That is taken as a self-evident point but it does seem to be the case in many different places, ranging from the mining villages of County Durham through to the most affluent and almost complacent villages of some of the home counties.

There is a common concern, often from very different starting points, to care for the local environment. If that common concern can be supported by a grant scheme or an advice scheme, it certainly speeds it up. It may also improve its quality, or its longevity. I hesitate to use the term 'sustainability' because it is so hard to measure, but it may make such environmental work *take root* more effectively.

What it takes is a commitment to help that process of local caring for the environment, and that is really where, as one of my colleagues, Graeme Kirkham, says, we are trying to change the world, not just set up a grant scheme. If you want to encourage the professionals (ourselves at this conference, and many others in other departments and agencies) to be really helpful to local groups, to back the projects on which they take a lead, *which may not be our agencies' priorities*, then we need a commitment to help. Right at the base of Rural Action for the Environment is such a commitment:

- to listen to local aspirations
- to respect local autonomy
- to recognise and build capability to take action
- to offer support.

It sounds very simple on paper, and we have indeed promoted it on paper as well as in practice in what is called *Local Action Commitment* which is a statement that the steering group for Rural Action put, in 1992, to the leading figures of the three statutory agencies who are its sponsors – the Rural Development Commission, the Countryside Commission and English Nature. It is a scheme which has had several origins. It originated in the higher echelons of those three agencies and their discussions with government ministers and the DoE. It has also bubbled up from a practical programme of experimental local projects supported in particular by the Countryside Commission over the 1980s. There was a meeting of grass roots demand for such a scheme and political opportunity, just prior to the last general election.

The three chairmen of the statutory agencies all lent their names to a commitment to work in this way, alongside their other more 'top-down' policy approaches. That commitment has now been echoed by many local authorities in policy statements at district and county level, and by many voluntary sector bodies as well. You will find that commitment to working in this enabling style in the policy document *An Introduction to Rural Action*.

Project grants can be up to £2000 in value and the average grant is currently about £900. One of the key features of the grant scheme is that grant money is matching money. Local effort, including voluntary effort, as well as material help in kind, can be used to qualify towards the matching 50%. That I know is unusual in publicly supported grant schemes, and it took a while to get that concept established.

We have funded over 750 local projects in the first two years. Rural Action is a scheme that is fundamentally about people, about investing help and support in the people who want to do environmental work locally, not just in yet more measuring of outputs of miles of hedge or of numbers of trees planted.

I have had a very limited time in which to try to put Rural Action across but I have three publications which might be of use to this professional audience even if you are not directly involved in the operation of Rural Action. The first is called *Ground Rules* which is about community ownership and management of land. The second one *(Improving the Environment)* is aimed at parish and town councils; it describes the legal powers and opportunities open to them to take environmental action. The third one, produced for us by Common Ground is called *Celebrating Local Distinctiveness.*

Walking with a purpose – Rural Action for the environment helped to fund the recruitment and training of volunteer walk guides who show visitors around the Braunton 'great field' and marsh, in North Devon. Over 750 other community environmental projects have been supported in the scheme's first two years (including several dozen with an access or countryside interpretation theme). Rural Action will be operating throughout rural England by spring 1995. Further information: 0285 659599.

GARETH DAVIES had with him part of the appraisal he had done for Glyncorrwg, showing the type of questions asked and the capabilities of the software in presenting the results in graphic form. Delegates were welcome to have a look at it. CLARE GOOLD *(Rural Surveys Research Unit)* offered to provide more detail about the Welsh experience for anyone who was interested. She also said there were copies available of a Jigso report.

ROGER SIDAWAY *(Chairman)* closed the session by thanking the speakers for their interesting contributions.

Monitoring and Review of the Effectiveness of Programmes

Tony Bovaird

Aston Business School

INTRODUCTION

I am going to talk about some of the principles of monitoring and review of effectiveness of public programmes in a rural context. I will bring in some practical examples in which Aston Business School has been involved. One of them is our evaluation of the RDP process for the Rural Development Commission in the late eighties. Another is the evaluation of the social programme of the Rural Development Commission in 1989/90, which was carried out on behalf of the Department of the Environment. A third example is our current evaluation of the Rural Action for the Environment, an initiative about which you have already heard this afternnoon from Rhys Taylor, who is involved as the Head of the National Development Team.

However, I am principally going to talk about the relevant conceptual frameworks and some of the knotty issues which one confronts intellectually during evaluation and monitoring work. I hope therefore to be able to offer you a mixture of concepts and practical implications.

It is exciting for academics to find that practical people are prepared to sit through an afternoon in a conference and talk about review and monitoring because a few years ago it was regarded as merely the sort of nonsense that one had to pretend to do on behalf of funding agencies. Real performance monitoring and review was all about keeping within budget by 31 March each year – not a penny more, and for goodness sake, not a penny less! That was the essence of performance monitoring until very recently. This narrow approach has not yet disappeared but, thank heavens, we have become a lot more sophisticated. I find it very heartening that we are now reaching out to areas of performance measurement we never dreamt of in the past. The question is, do they really mean anything?

THE AGENDA

The issues I want to address this afternoon are mainly the following:

- What is 'effectiveness'?
- Customer throughput and impact
- PIs tied to objectives
- Hierarchies of objectives
- Types of effectiveness PIs

Of course, this definition begs a lot of questions. Who do you care most about in the environment, in the community? Whose assessment of whether the community is better off do you trust most? To which members of the community will you give highest weight? To what aspects of their welfare will you give most weight? How will you assess whether it has increased or decreased? Those are exactly the questions we have to answer in effectiveness analysis.

So, the first part of my agenda is pretty heady stuff. It is about determining whether people have become better off in ways that were defined clearly in advance by the different stakeholders (and maybe even agreed between them, or maybe left as an issue of disagreement). In this approach, each stakeholder has the right to say, "I will define effectiveness in this way; here is my definition. That is what I will be measuring, be warned".

The Audit Commission in most of its reports gets around to this standpoint (eventually) although many of its critiques are written mainly in terms of achieving objectives. But it is sensible enough to probe effectiveness as more than just achieving some blandly written top level agency objectives; and it does not allow agencies just to trot out some standard recitation about the good they are trying to do. It asks, who would care about those achievements and can you demonstrate that those people do get excited when you have such achievements? However, it has stopped short of writing 'impacts on community welfare' into its definition of efficiency.

Comment: Surely you could make community welfare one of your objectives.

Absolutely. I do not think we should rest until community welfare lies behind at least one of the objectives of every public agency. I want to know what the hell we are spending the money for if it is not clearly related to people's welfare improvements. You could make it one of your top objectives, or you could simply make sure that your top objectives embody some vision of community welfare. If they do not, then how can you justify getting any money from the public purse?

EFFECTIVENESS, CUSTOMER THROUGHPUT AND IMPACT

I think that when we are trying to define effectiveness it is useful to see it as product between two interesting concepts – throughput and impact.

Effectiveness = Throughput × Impact.

'Throughput' is the number of punters who have been put through the experience, willingly or not, while 'impact' is the effect you have had on them, the average change in their welfare which has come about. This can be written down in an impressive mathematical formula, in which total effectiveness is shown to be the sum, over all individuals of the impact which the service has on each of them separately – but you don't need to know that!

The idea is that you have got all these clients (or customers or consumers or users or whatever) and you have made some of them better off, some of them much better off, some of them worse off (and some of them have not even noticed that you have been helping). We want to get a large number of clients who feel satisfied but we also want to have a substantial effect on them. By and large, if you are efficient in what you do you face

participants come from? And there is usually a great sigh of relief at this stage. "No, there are none of those people around here"! So you can do it, you can get the answers to such questions on target group participation and very interesting they are too, in many cases.

Measuring success in reaching target groups can be done in urban areas too. For example, these same questions are really important for arts projects in urban areas. Frequently managers in arts organisations come to me and ask what research design is needed, how big a survey must be done in order to find out the range of users of their theatre, their concerts, whatever. I tell them that the research methodology is quite simple. They should get one of their employees to stand at the front of the hall for about ten minutes before each performance and inspect the audience! There is always someone back stage who must faithfully complete a log of things that went right and things that went wrong during the evening, but they are never expected to record who was in the hall. Why on earth not? It only takes ten minutes to inspect the audience. In this country you can tell people's ages within about five or ten years typically. You can also tell genders reasonably well. Ethnic groups you can also tell pretty closely, at least for the purposes of management information. These are not perfect estimates but we are not talking about PhD research here, we are talking about monitoring. Social class, no, not by inspection (if there is such a thing as social class!). Nor is it possible to detect people with disabilities. But the basic characteristics of the audience can be simply recorded in this way. Yet people usually say to me, "That would not be acceptable, that kind of monitoring would be too rough and ready. So we'll do none"!

I conclude that the first essential and intrinsically simple stage of measuring effectiveness, namely measuring the throughput of clients, is being grossly under-utilised. We usually just count the numbers and do not do the disaggregated analysis which would be so simple and is so important.

TYPES OF MEASURE OF IMPACT

Having covered throughput, we now have to assess impact. How can this be done? A list of possible methods is given in Figure 1.

Customer satisfaction

Change in customer welfare or customer state

Customer willingness to pay

Rate of return on assets

Change in asset values

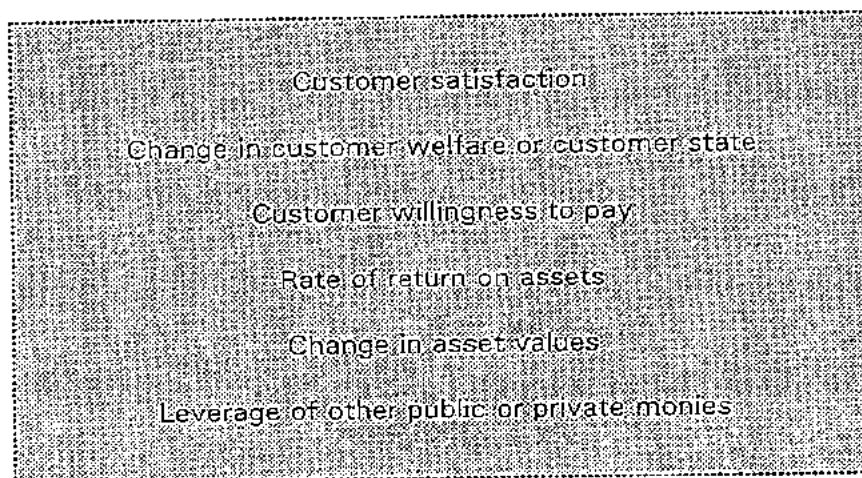Leverage of other public or private monies

Fig. 1. Measures of impact

into measures of how enthusiastic customers are, as revealed by what they would be willing to pay. Just as I hate rate of return analysis, by and large I greatly approve of *willingness to pay* analysis. People who are not willing to pay are telling you something of enormous interest. We should know that. We should find it out – and then, of course, we should change it.

There must be some *caveats*, of course. The rich are willing to pay more than the poor sometimes – surprisingly rarely unfortunately, but sometimes they are – and it is nothing to do with the effectiveness of your schemes. It is to do with the fact that the rich are still allowed to have too much money! Therefore, when I talk about willingness to pay analysis I am unimpressed by and uninterested in the *actual* willingness to pay of each of the income groups. I want to know what *proportion* of their disposable income they are prepared to pay for the scheme. I want to standardise their willingness to pay by how much cash they have got. It is crazy just to add up the willingness to pay for projects of the loaded rich – the countryside recreation officers of this world – while the downtrodden oppressed minorities have to remain working in the universities, investing in our future, and having their preferences marginalised simply because of their low incomes!

Changes in asset value are connected to changes in actual payments made for services, and therefore to rates of return available on assets. As a way of measuring project or service impact, this is largely irrelevant in much of the public sector. However, I have a good example in the case of urban recreation, specifically in theatre and concert hall management, which we could talk about later if you wished.

Leverage of public and private monies

There is another measure of effectiveness which has a lot of currency in the public sector and I know you sometimes get lumbered with it, even in rural and countryside projects. It is the leverage of private monies (or even sometimes the leverage of public funding from other public agencies) which a scheme is able to achieve.

I believe that that is a wonderful measure of how good you are at selling the risk in your project to some other poor unsuspecting creature who puts their money in. Even when it is a rotten project, you can sometimes get other people to invest in it. That does not mean it is any better as a project, although it is more cost effective to you as you have put less of your own money into it and have reduced the risk that you bear. Actually, since 1979 the government has tended to put particular attention on this measure, stealing it from the American experience.

So overall then there is menu of ways in which we might measure impact – throughput on the one hand and then ways of measuring impact, showing the types of performance indicators we might come up with in order to assess whether we are having any effect on community welfare. Client satisfaction is in there, more objective measurement of client welfare, of client state; willingness to pay as one way of looking at client satisfaction, and finally, leverage, although I would disallow this myself. Are there any comments?

Comment (Rhys Taylor): On the question of leverage, it need not be just in terms of cash resources but help in kind, and the matching element.

That is a very good point. I think it is an exciting experiment that Rural Action is

of decisions made differently because those objectives were there, well, that's a different story. Therefore, I have long argued that in practice the objectives that we use in the public sector are very seriously deficient.

If you look at typical objectives in public services or initiatives, they are often bland and meaningless,or vague and unclear, deeply ambiguous. And there is a sense in which every chief officer and every politician *needs* this ambiguity. They need to be ambiguous so that whatever happens they can say it was what they intended all along, that they have achieved their objectives. However, every middle manager desperately needs this same ambiguity to be removed, because otherwise how can they possibly know what is expected of them if the top managers speak with forked tongues?

So there is inevitably a tension in setting objectives between the desire for flexibility (and the tendency towards games playing) at the top level in an organisation and the desire lower down for clarity in order to aid implementation.

Furthermore, many objectives are conflicting. Life is complex and interesting, therefore objectives are going to conflict. Just writing them down on a list does not tell you what to do. You merely have these basic conflicts sitting there in the middle of the list -- if you achieve one objective, you stop another one happening. Development and conservation are two words that usually sit uneasily together; any agency which has both an environmental focus and an economic development focus knows very well that merely writing down a list of objectives solves absolutely nothing.

Furthermore, many objectives interact with each other and if you just list them it does not tell you anything. Many objectives are partial and incomplete, they leave out really interesting stuff. My favourite example is the CIPFA housing objectives in the 1970s which were all about demolishing unfit housing, improving substandard housing, building new housing, subsidising the third sector, better estate management, better rent arrears collection processes to make people better off. And yet it would have been possible to achieve all of those worthy objectives while still making the residents of the council justifiably very angry, because this list of objectives said nothing about affordable rents. It would have been quite simple to achieve all of those objectives by jacking the rent levels up to levels which would have brought riots on the streets. With an incomplete set of objectives like that, you cannot really claim they are helping you in resource allocation.

So, I am arguing that there are a lot of problems inherent in the traditional approach of compiling lists of objectives. It is easy to understand why very often they appear to have absolutely nothing to do with the decisions made in an organisation.

HIERARCHIES OF OBJECTIVES

I want to argue, however, that we can do something about these problems - we can actually construct a usable set of objectives, by taking any list of objectives and developing it into a model of cause and effect, a model of how sub-objectives lead to top level objectives. In other words, we can build a model which says, here at the top is what we really wish to achieve in the community, and here are sub-objectives underneath which help us to do it.

In this way you demonstrate the relationship between objectives, the interactions between

always be quantified, and in so far as that is part of a qualitative analysis, subjective opinion will lead to some quantified PIs.

However, we should not take this approach too far. We may be interested in some qualitative analysis which just uses a check list to say here are some qualities or attributes that we expect to find in a good project, a good service, a good scheme, a good pond, a good public footpath – here is a check list. And we can record if the attributes are there, yes or no. 'Yes or no' answers to a check list, to me, do actually constitute a quantitative analysis: specifically, they represent 'zero' or 'one', because that is how you code up the questionnaire, that is what you put on the check list, that is what you put in the computer. Zero/one answers represent the fundamental qualitative analysis and that is a level of quantification which is perfectly acceptable in target-setting.

For example, you can insist that a specific health and safety check list will be carried out at each site and the answer to every one of the 19 questions on the check list should be 'yes'. At the end of the day, you will ask whether or not your target has been met, have all 19 questions got a tick to say 'yes', that the safeguard is in place or the procedure has been carried out. Such a level of quantification is perfectly good enough to set a target. It may not be very fancy; you will not be able to do a lot of regression analysis on such data but it just happens to be extremely important data for all that.

So targets set a given level of achievement within a given time period. I want to suggest, in additon, that if you want people to change what they do by a process of setting objectives and giving them performance indicators, they have got to have these vividly in their memory. Therefore, performance indicators should be memorable – i.e. short and sharp and snappy – and should be turned into targets wherever possible.

After all, how on earth can you argue that your new performance management approach is achieving anything if half your staff cannot remember for the life of them what the performance indicators are and what the targets are? They may know where they put the documents, but if they are not memorable how can they actually influence major changes? I do not buy the belief in the public sector that people are influenced by osmosis, that because they have once read (or, more accurately, seen) a document, it has therefore informed their every action afterwards. Whatever we do in monitoring and review activities, whatever system we set up, it has to produce memorable PIs and targets – and this usually means that it cannot be too fanciful.

Of course, human beings have quite complex brains so that if you give them information which is really important to them, they can absorb quite a lot of it. By the same token, if you mainly give them rubbish, they typically fling it away at the first opportunity. That is to say, if the performance indicators and the targets you set are just dross, they will go in the bin and no one will remember a word of them. However, if they really do describe what staff feel to be the core achievements in an area of work which they care about, then PIs and targets can be more sophisticated and more complex in that area at least. I am not suggesting treating people as automatons: but I am saying that any performance management system has to be memorable and therefore it has to be simple. Nevertheless, it also has to remain meaningful to the work, otherwise it will just be thrown away, and you will lose all credibility as managers.

and whose lessons are naturally subject to debate, and over which decent people will disagree. It is the finding of these comparisons and the provison of these comparative data which is our job in monitoring and review.

So, it would be nice to say, here are the 1992 objectives; in 1994 we have found out whether or not they have been achieved. In practice, however, we are still trying to uncover what some of those objectives really meant and why some were not written down, and why some people actually said that they shared them when it was crystal clear from the very first moment that they did not believe a word of them, and they would change the scheme as soon as they possibly could. We are still trying to unravel that process. Furthermore, I think that is a proper human process. It is complex, it is messy, but it is about producing more information on the basis of which people can change their minds, only that.

Welfare economics was my intellectual starting point and I think maybe some day we will want to invent a world in which welfare economics works, because as a set of models it is very beautiful. But in *this* world, none of that great intellectual edifice works: we have instead a very complex and messy system. All we can do is to help produce information which informs people, to make the debate more useful to them.

Finally, in respect of this section, I would like to explore the extent to which people in this room are essentially working in a context where they have been given objectives or have written up bottom-up objectives for themselves? ... Right, most of the audience. How many people have got performance indicators attached to those objectives? ... Most. How many people have got targets attached to those performance indicators? ... We are losing a few along the way. By and large there is a major tranche, maybe three-quarters of the people in the room, who have got objectives, performance indicators and targets. How many people can remember what their objectives are for this year? ... A smaller number. How many people can remember what their targets are for this year? ... We have got some, well done! You get my point, there is an awful lot of this garbage about in this area. The paraphernalia of performance management is merely garbage when it does not actually stay in your minds long enough for you to be able to use it.

Comment (Gareth Roberts): I am surprised there were not more people who were mindful of targets they had been given.

I feel the same way. I would have thought that it would be the targets you would remember. Let us just check how many people have a performance appraisal system in their organisations, a staff appraisal system? ... Oh, we have lots of people here. How many of those are in local government? How many in voluntary agencies? How many in civil service? ... oh yes, we have identified where they came from now – the civil service staff appraisal scheme. On the surface, that scheme would appear to invite you to set targets and to check them out at the end of each year. But perhaps you too have had the same experience as many of the people we work with, that you get a horrible fright each year when you go back to the previous year's papers, usually the week before your next appraisal, and see what you wrote down?

Sadly, although you might think that targets would be the sharp, biting end of this whole beast, actually they are often invented overnight, and the measures of their achievement

Purpose	Type of Monitoring	Examples of performance indicators or other information required
What has been/will be the effect of external factors on the work of this agency?	CONTEXT MONITORING	Level of expenditure/action on similar activities by other agencies Level of expenditure/action on complementary/supportive activities by other agencies Changes in level of need or demand Assessment of influence exerted upon other agencies/people Changes in other relevant external factors (e.g. legislation, institutional
Is the activity/project going in the strategic direction intended?	STRATEGY MONITORING	Objectives Targets (areas/client groups) Priorities Expenditure Heads
Is the activity/project meeting its deadlines?	PROGRESS MONITORING	Expenditure (cumulative) Physical progress Key dates
What is provided for the money/staff effort?	ACTIVITY MONITORING	Tasks undertaken Projects completed Buildings provided Posts funded Volume and category of usage
What has been achieved against the highest level objectives and targets?	IMPACT MONITORING	(A) QUANTITATIVE Against forecast targets Against indicators Catalytic effects on other agencies (B) QUALITATIVE Attitudes as revealed in in-depth surveys Indications of scale of need, user/client satisfaction levels Range of features in services Expert assessments Assessement of influence exerted upon other agencies/people
Has the activity impacted upon the wider service delivery system for meeting social needs in rural areas?	CATALYSIS MONITORING	Dissemination events held 'Findings' documents circulated Reportage of service in media Service adopted by other agency/organization

Source: *Managing Social and Community Development Programmes in Rural Areas, PSMRC, Aston Business School*

Fig. 2. Performance monitoring

What is the role of performance incentives – e.g. do you get better monitoring and review if you have performance related pay? The research evidence indicates that this is *not* the case, at least not for dedicated, enthusiastic, middle class, vocational professionals, who love what they do and could not work any harder. You might retort that these people have now all been locked away! However, I believe that this description applies to almost everybody in this room – and the ones who are not like that are unlikely to change the way they work just because you pay them more.

But there are different views on this. The field of performance incentives is probably the one area where there is most disagreement between consultancies and between academics. I will leave it at that. Perhaps you might want to come back to it in discussion.

PERFORMANCE COMPARISONS

Finally, I would like to look at the fraught issue of making performance comparisons. Clinical psychologists tell us that the only way we can learn is by making comparisons. That is how the brain works, how our neural networks actually change. Only by making comparisons can we learn. Yet, on the other side, philosophers tell us that there is *nothing* which is entirely comparable to any previous event or circumstance. Well, I think both of these viewpoints are true. Every comparison we make as human beings is at least partly inappropriate, irrelevant, misleading, dangerous. But only by making comparisons can we learn.

Therefore I think we should never say that those infamous 'league tables' which people fear are entirely wrong-headed. We should never say we will not go into an initiative because it will just lead to league tables, it will lead to stupid comparisons. What we have got to say is that we are going to suggest the *appropriate* comparisons from which we think it will be interesting to learn, while suggesting that some of the comparisons being made by other organisations look rather unreliable to us. That is as far as we should go – dignified caution.

So, there you have it – some pointers on the role of monitoring and review in public programmes. I hope that it has been a little controversial in places. I have even referred once or twice to countryside initiatives as we went along, although rather less than I had hoped, given the time constraints. Perhaps you can pick up points relating to specific countryside schemes – and make clear where you disagree most with what I have said – in discussion.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

ROB WIGHTMAN *(University of Central Lancashire)* expressed his appreciation of the presentation which had been very stimulating to the audience of mainly public sector people. He asked what was the reaction of (a) a business audience and (b) a political audience to this style of analysis. TONY BOVAIRD said that his only direct contact with the business world was in the leisure industry and with small firms in economic development initiatives. For a long time the prevailing measurement of performance in the private sector had been the 'bottom line', measurement of the profits. Accountants had now operationalised the concept of financial control against budget, even in quite small firms. There had been an enormous realisation in the private sector in the previous five years that profit-oriented performance measurement was largely meaningless given that profits were essentially calculated in such a way as to minimise tax liability. Also, published

Drawing the Threads Together: Community Action and Agency Practice

Professor Philip Lowe

Centre for Rural Economy
University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Panel

Richard Graves	Hereford and Worcester CC (Chair)
Berwyn Evans	Menter Hiraethog
Graham Cullen	Forestry Authority
David Oldham	Edinburgh Green Belt Trust
Brian Smith	Medway River Project
Adam Cade	English Nature
Simon Fenoulhet	Artworks Wales (Cywaith Cymru)

Philip Lowe

I would like to focus our discussion around four themes. Two of them are top-down and two are bottom-up. We have to approach it in that way because most of the people here are employed in a top-down capacity by agencies to work with a set of bottom-up pressures. We need to understand some of the dynamics and contradictions for people working in that kind of structural ambiguity.

We have a panel of people here to contribute to this debate – people who seem to have resolved some of the issues of structural ambiguity in interesting ways.

AGENCY REASONS AND RATIONALES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The first of my top-down themes is agency involvement, and their mixed, rather uncertain and evolving motives for engaging in community action. Wearing my political science hat, I would say that, in the broadest terms, they are caught up in a secular process which is not of their own making: namely the general decline in trust in government and expertise. A key achievement of the Thatcherite revolution was actually to stimulate popular distrust in public service and mobilise this in its crusade to roll back the state. The countryside agencies, representing bundles of professional interests and their established policy networks – the farming, landowning, forestry and environmental communities – are having to grapple with this diminished faith in government and expertise. In doing so, they are trying to reposition themselves in terms of service delivery functions and the mobilisation of public support for their activities, partly in order to safeguard themselves from ministers still bent on dismantling the state.

Inevitably, therefore, the agencies have mixed motives for becoming involved in community action. There are, of course, their formal aims expressed in mission statements. But they are also concerned about legitimacy, about mobilising resources that they do not

David Oldham

The agencies are becoming more concerned about community involvement. In a sense, that is from recognition that they work on behalf of the public, so people should be much more involved in the process. Just to stir it up a bit, I think the problem is that Mrs T has made these agencies take action if they have not already done so. They have declining budgets, they are full of bureaucracy, they are run by accountants. They find it very difficult to express their aspirations on the ground and they are increasingly recognising that they need local projects. There then comes the difficulty of relationships between projects like ourselves in the Edinburgh Green Belt Trust, with a degree of autonomy, and yet we are using public funding and must be held accountable. But what I feel is, thank goodness they do not get too deeply involved. We report to them on a quarterly or annual basis and if we are not performing then by all means pull the plug, but otherwise do not interfere. Within parameters, these things needs to be done at a local level. We have to learn from the experience of the field staff and make sure that the two levels communicate. It is only by having a circle of communication that the agencies can become more aware of how they can replicate that experience in some other area and some other task.

Brian Smith

I believe that the reasons that agencies become involved in projects like the Medway are very diverse and often very confused. There is no doubt at all that the Medway River Project came about because of very strong public criticism, and because the lead agency which was then the water authority, totally misunderstood what the people were saying. There was an outcry when they attempted to shut one-third of the navigation, so they focused on the navigation and failed to appreciate the fact that it was not just about getting boats to Tonbridge and back. There was a lot more to it. So, we came about as a knee-jerk reaction. My role has been to turn that into a positive bridge between the authority and the community in such a way that I am not only involved in educating the community but also the agencies that are involved. Obviously, the NRA is the lead one but it applies to the local authorities as well, most of whom are notoriously poor in their relationships with their local residents.

Philip Lowe

How is it feeding back into the evolution of the NRA and its relationship to local communities?

Brian Smith

By involving people in small, local issues related to their river environment, they gain the confidence to start to explore the wider management issues. As a result, they start making more informed comment as and when the opportunity arises, or they make more informed criticism when they see something they are not happy about. Through the Project, they have a direct link into those agencies. They tend to come to us and express concern about a particular issue; we can take it up and we can direct them into putting their concerns into the right court so that action can be taken within the authorities. Again, it is the education process through participation.

One of the most notable examples was when the catchment plan went out to public consultation. We had a large lecture hall in a very imposing building and eight men in grey suits sat at the front talking jargon. The comments and criticisms that came from the

quite sure if I want all these quangos to interfere in our small communities because I am sure they would mess it up! I would like to have more mechanisms whereby we can call on them sometimes for professional advice, on planning issues, on design issues. I have a few of those contacts in the Countryside Council, for example, or the planners in Clwyd. If there were more of those in place it would be helpful but at the end of the day with the Groes project, for example, we had to make it economically viable. It was a £70,000 project. They raised £30,000 and I was hoping to get them another £30,000. Now, to make it economically viable, we only had to pay a dividend on the £30,000 because the rest was in grants. As a community they could never have raised more than that; that was their limit. So if it was not for the fact that there were grants available, the thing would never have got off the ground. So I am grateful for that.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND THE TARGETING OF RESOURCES

Philip Lowe

The second of my top-down themes concerns the targeting of public resources, including professional, technical and financial resources, and the contribution community participation could make to this targeting.

Let us be aware of what is the big agenda here. It is not about local groups scratching around for a £100 grant. The bigger debate is that in a few years time, either the Common Agricultural Policy will have disappeared or a significant proportion of its several billions will have been rechannelled within rural areas as agri-environment and rural development measures.

Where the primary product from our rural areas is food there are market mechanisms – even if politicians interfere with them – whereby people signal their demand. But the problem with agri-environment measures is that their justification is public benefit – landscape, amenity, nature conservation, recreation – but the mechanisms are weak and indirect to ensure that the public actually benefits or that the supply of conservation goods is targeted towards what the public want or demand. It is after all they who are paying the money through their taxes and they who are the supposed beneficiaries.

Other chunks of the CAP are being siphoned into rural development policies. At the moment, in smoke-filled rooms the government departments, local authorities and the European Commission are deciding how hundreds of millions of pounds will be spent in the rural regions of Britain over the next six years (under the European Union's Objective 5b of the Structural Funds). It is a lot of money and it is all supposedly for the benefit of rural communities, but there has been no public debate, no wider discussion, no involvement of the communities concerned. Even the environmental lobbies are not in there. Basically, it is groups of bureaucrats carving up the funds. Again, what is the scope for community participation in targeting these resources?

Adam Cade

Briefly, there are two elements to that. One is that at the beginning of any large scale proposal, or series of options that could be decided on, how far and in what way one consults the public, not just the businesses, the vested interests, the other quangos, the voluntary sector, but how one goes directly right down and opens it up to public consultations in a fully participative and democratic way, and not just in the way that so many authorities and so many governments do, to give 28 days in which an individual or

Adam Cade

I would like to comment briefly on that. CCW's document on community action has very bravely specifically said 'local communities'. Community can hide so many things. In English Nature's terms we are just wondering which way we are going to define it. We could go for the community of vested interests; we could specifically hide behind the term community and still plough on with out traditional partners of landowners and those sorts of communities. Or we could be braver and move down the route which CCW have taken.

Philip Lowe

I suppose so but it is still always being constructed. The argument, let the community decide, is a social process; there are social leaders, established residents, newcomers, the young, the old, the poor and the well-heeled, each differentially involved in any process of defining what the community is and what its needs are. There is not some definitive objective means of specifying the community interest.

Gareth Roberts *(Countryside Council for Wales)*

On the question of targeting, Berwyn mentioned was that he was surprised that the Welsh Office decided to target four areas in Wales. He was interested to know why they targeted those areas. I think it had something to do with the fact that they felt their investment was reasonably safe in those areas. It strikes me that there is a genuine interest in community action in all agencies but there is a concern about letting the genie out of the bottle. I suspect that might be one of the reasons for the targeting.

COMMUNITY SKILLS, RESOURCES AND VOICES

Philip Lowe

Let us move on from the top-down approach. The first of the bottom-up themes I want us to look at is the skills and resources available to communities in expressing their wishes and aspirations. In this respect I was struck by three contrasting observations from the first day. Firstly, I very much enjoyed the opening presentation and I hope the speaker will not mind me picking him up on a contradiction in his paper. In one paragraph he says that community initiatives are seldom effective without professional involvement and professional help. In the next paragraph he says that communities have been evolving for a 1000 years. Yet most of the professionals we are talking about were only invented in the last 50 years. One wonders if communities have been sitting around for the previous 950 years waiting to be visited by these professionals! Historically, communities resourced themselves and were able to look after their needs before community professionals were invented.

The second observation was triggered by the response of the lady from Groundwork Trust to a question about conflict. She said there is always conflict. But surely this is a recent development. I first started looking at rural community participation about 20 years ago. My experience then was that you did not come across a great deal of conflict, or if you did, it was very subterranean conflict, people would not be openly speaking their minds. There were areas of the countryside where there were recognised social leaders and other people would be unwilling to voice a position of opposition to them. There were, of course, underlying conflicts and tensions. There are now fewer parts of the rural UK where elements of paternalism and social deference remain. But clearly the experience of counter-

numbers of people across North America who are thoroughly urbanised, Americanised Irishmen. Is that your point, that in a sense these cultures become consumed by the wider culture?

Gareth Roberts

It is almost as if we need the crisis for a community to recognise that it has invested a lot of sympathy in itself; that the communities outside of it feel they have some commitment and responsibility to it. Clearly, for those who have linguistic or nationalistic links with those areas, that feeling is quite strong. The same is the case with Patagonia where my grandfather was born. We send somebody to Patagonia maybe every two years because of their links.

Philip Lowe

These sorts of examples should make outsiders, particularly external professionals, cautious about characterising communities as abject. They also point to the centrality of language as a binding force and a source of inner cultural strength. So much of community development involves listening to or giving voice to groups and individuals who would not otherwise be heard. The risk is that the technical language of the external professional, indeed their very loquaciousness, may itself be alienating. Community development activists and professionals need to be able to listen if they are ever to be effective advocates.

But how otherwise might neglected groups be given voice? Rhys Taylor's argument would be that the way to get all voices heard within communities is to distribute a questionnaire as part of a village appraisal. Everyone fills in the questionnaire and you analyse it on the computer. That ensures that everyone is heard. If you want to hear the voices of young people, then you code in that particular age group and get out their aggregated response to tell you what the young people in the village want. Or you can single out old people, young mothers, or whoever. We have now cracked the problem technologically. But this seems to me to fall short of the ideal of empowerment. I was struck by the evidence from the art workshop that there are other means of expression that need to be explored which may still involve putting professionals into communities but may allow other, often inarticulate, voices to be heard.

Simon Fenoulhet

I am definitely here as a bottom-up person working on community art projects. I come at it from two different directions because most of the time, thank goodness, I am invited in by communities because they know about the work that we do. But there are occasions when agencies call upon us as specialists because they think they have perceived a particular need. Sometimes within those agencies the level of debate is not as high as it is here, and so sometimes they are looking for us to do a kind of mopping-up exercise where they have created a problem.

I go in as a specialist and I am talking in a pretty funny language about what I think the role of an artist, or the arts, might be in a community. The trick that I have up my sleeve is being able to locate skills that artists have, which differ from the skills that community professionals might have, bearing in mind that most artists are not trained as community professionals. But by using their skills, their craft skills, their creative skills, as a medium, they are able to become insiders. When artists become a part of a community for however long or short a time, they are able to stimulate action through the creative process. It is

the field officer. They are often given a very large amount of discretion but then they realise they still have the rucksack on, they have still to deliver that thing in the bag. Suddenly they have to interject that into their conversations. Their role as a professional overrides any building of a person-to-person relationship.

CONTROL AND CONTINUITY

Philip Lowe

My final bottom-up theme concerns issues of control and continuity. Here we have been presented with a set of conundrums. A number of presenters have told very similar stories: "There was this area of uncared-for land, unkempt, no one knew what to do with it, it was vandalised. We put in a project officer, we mobilised the local community to do all sorts of things, planting trees. getting the school kids clearing litter, etc. It gave them a sense of ownership." But what is meant by a sense of ownership? Are these rather weasly words for token involvement or passing the buck? Or is some sort of control implied? And what does that mean for real property rights? We conventionally think of property rights as very fixed by their legal status but in fact they evolve and people who do not have legal standing can make new claims. I am struck particularly by the way that the middle classes in the countryside exert novel property rights: people who have bought their own detached house, who often have a very strong sense of their own property, will also exert rights over surrounding landscapes; "you can't do that in that field"; "you mustn't do that over there". They are exerting a property right and certain people feel quite comfortable about exerting rights over things they do not own. What then does a sense of ownership actually mean in community action projects? Does it mean that you formally transfer ownership over a piece of land to a local group? Is the argument then a sort of Jane Jacobs' analysis – that the reason the site was vandalised was that no one exercised any form of control over it, and if the same is not to happen again, ownership should be vested in people who feel they can exercise control over it? The pocket park people seem to be all about that, and they now have structures for formally delivering to local groups and local residents, control over small areas.

But what if the people concerned do not sustain their interest and involvement? We all know about small voluntary committees and groupings that wax and wane with people's enthusiasms. People lose interest; and why shouldn't they? We grow up, we move on, we have different enthusiasms. At one stage we are young and single; then we have kids; then they fly the nest. At different times we might have different interests. So how do you ensure continuity of management if you devolve ownership?

Does that mean this cannot be a cheap way in which local authorities get rid of all their management functions, by splitting up all their responsibilities into pocket parks and saying, "Here, local residents, you look after them"? In ten or 20 years time the local committee might have died. There is ownership and there is control, but how do you ensure continuity of management in what are voluntary arrangements that must be fitted into people's complicated and changing lives?

Another point that struck me from the Edinburgh Green Belt example, and also from what is happening with the Medway project, is the way in which they are applying but also extending NIMBYism. If the solution is to give everyone a degree of control over their backyards, in a sense what you are doing is to turn all local groups and communities into NIMBYs by spreading around a proprietorial concern for the local environment. There

Tony Philpin *(Co-ordinator, Pennine Way)*

I think we are in great danger of over-intellectualising and making the whole thing academic. We tend to work on academic and intellectual grounds whereas, in fact, we are talking about social skills, social interaction. These are different groups of skills. Our society values intellectual skills very highly but we have a very much more ambiguous view of social skills. We have heard several contributions, Jo particularly, saying that she cannot intellectualise how she deals with people, it is just something she does. We had the same from Berwyn; he is there, he is responding in that situation. It is a very difficult thing to define.

We are talking about NIMBYs as well. To me, NIMBYism is a good thing – at least there is some level of concern. I would distinguish NIMBYism from the 'not over my dead body' people. What is wrong with NIMBYism? It is a flywheel in the planning process surely.

Richard Graves

That is a very good point that I am afraid we will have to end on. However good people's ideas are they have got to be put into effect at the end of the day by practical people. Thank you very much indeed, and thank you to the panel.

AGENCY LINKS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

CRN is a UK-wide network of the principal agencies involved in countryside and related recreation matters. The network is devoted to *exchanging and spreading information to develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation* and to provide an ideal opportunity to review public policy on community action for recreation and open air enjoyment of the countryside. With this in mind a letter was sent to each member of the network requesting the following information:

- a statement of the agency's statutory remit for involving local people in its work with particular reference to its recreational brief;
- a statement of their corporate policy towards working with the *community*;
- selected examples of how the agency concerned has worked with local communities to help improve opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the countryside.

No attempt was made to define *community* so as not to influence unduly or constrain their responses to this question or imply, by so doing, any commentary on their working relationship with the public.

A summary of the results of the survey is given in Annex 1.

In endeavouring to come to some conclusion about an agenda for future action I felt I first needed to establish in my own mind what individual agencies' motives were for involving local people in their work.

AGENCY MOTIVES FOR INVOLVING LOCAL PEOPLE IN THEIR WORK

The importance of fully involving local people in rural projects has been increasingly promoted in recent years. The European Union's LEADER initiative, launched in 1991, encourages agencies to support development initiatives of local communities. AEIDL, the unit established to co-ordinate the LEADER initiative cites three main reasons for fully involving local people in rural development projects:

- to make full use of local knowledge, skills, energies and resources;
- to gain local commitment and support for efforts to tackle key issues and opportunities, and
- to encourage local 'ownership' of projects in order to sustain development in the longer term.

AEIDL's assessment, based on the experiences of 217 LEADER local action groups throughout the European Community between 1991 and 1994, suggests that involving local people in this way is well worth while. Why then, is it that only in comparatively recent years we have come to this realisation, and what are the motives of agencies and local communities for working together in this way?

My analysis of the words and actions of CRN agencies suggests four sets of factors which make agencies inclined or obliged to work with local communities. These have to do with each agency's remit, its clientele, political pressure upon it, and its experience of community action (or the lack of it).

REMITS

Few of the agencies in CRN have a specific duty to involve local people directly in their work. Provision for working with local communities would be expected to be found included in the primary legislation of these agencies but nowhere is this specified as a duty. More often community involvement is implied, usually vaguely, with the use of words such as 'to have due regard to the social and economic interests' of local communities (Countryside Act 1968, s.37).

CLIENTELE

Although all CRN agencies provide a public service, their duties vary, as do their clientele and the way that they interact with each other. These factors in large part condition the relationship between agencies and their public and help explain their typological position on the 'ladder of participation' described in Figure 1.

Those agencies with the broadest recreational remits <*ipso facto*> embrace the widest clientele. They also appear to be most corporately committed to community action. The four countryside agencies – English Nature, Countryside Commission, Countryside Council for Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage – stand out as a group in this respect.

The recreational briefs of most of the CRN agencies tend to be limited by virtue of the facilities they manage, such as water or woodlands (Forestry Commission, British Waterways, National Rivers Authority), or because they provide a service to a particular client group (Sports Councils, Tourist Boards, ADAS). As a consequence, the corporate commitments these agencies can make to involve communities in their work tend to reflect their more limited briefs. Community action instigated by these agencies will usually involve 'communities of interest' rather than 'communities of location'.

POLITICAL PRESSURE

Provision for the planning and management of public facilities in Britain embraces three interactive elements or value systems representing politics, professions and bureaucracy, and the community. Gordon Cherry sees this system as being *fundamentally unstable, marked by contention between competing interests, the interaction being featured by the strength and tactics of key actors, rather than the logic or force of a particular cause* (Cherry, 1982). This has been very evident in the political relationship between agencies, government and communities in the planning and management of outdoor recreation in Britain as others have commented (Curry, 1992; Lowe and Goyder, 1983).

In recent years there have been several political pressures brought to bear on CRN agencies which have conditioned the delivery of their services and their relationship with local communities.

A spate of Financial Management and Policy Reviews (FMPR) has led to the *raison d'etre*, effectiveness and efficiency of public sector agencies being scrutinised by government. Few quangos have escaped the net. The outcome of these FMPRs has been to revise the briefs of some of the those agencies with 'recreational' remits in ways which have influenced their way of working with local communities. The recent announcement by the Department of National Heritage that the *English Sports Council will cut back on sports bureaucracy and concentrate its resources on helping grass roots sport* is a case in point (Department of

to take direct action to interpret or improve it'. Enlisting community support for policies through demonstration schemes and advice notes is a notable feature of the Commission's work. As a non-landowner it is heavily dependent on establishing partnerships with those who use and manage land in the countryside. The same is true of CCW, SNH and EN, all of whom have moved quickly to declare their commitments to establish partnerships with local communities to help implement their policies.

Inter-agency partnerships to deliver programmes through direct contact with local communities is an emerging feature of public sector agency operation. In Wales, 'Jigso – a partnership in community action', embraces nearly 30 organisations committed to empowering communities to undertake local appraisals. Jigso is managed through a contract and funded by CCW, WTB, Tai Cymru, DBRW and WDA. Rural Action is similarly a multi-agency partnership involving CoCo, EN, the Development Commission and local authorities in England.

Although the motives of all agencies working with local communities may differ in detail, a dominant feature is the emphasis on harnessing the resource of local people to get jobs done which the agency has already predetermined. These activities fall short of 'partnership' with the local community on Arnstein's 'ladder' and equate more strictly to degrees of tokenism.

The test of quality in community action must be judged against its motives and whether the emphasis is on harnessing local resources or working towards local ownership and control. Behavioural scientists would argue that to assess the propensity of agencies to commit themselves to the higher rungs of Arnstein's ladder it is also necessary to understand what motivates communities to get involved in such partnerships.

COMMUNITY ACTION AND INDIVIDUAL MOTIVES

Maslow, writing in the 1950s, drew on his background in social anthropology to argue that people are motivated in ways which suggested a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, A.H. 1970) (Figure 2). These range from basic physiological requirements for food, shelter etc; through social needs such as the need to be accepted by others and belong to a society, to esteem needs – the need for recognition, power, prestige and status and, finally, self-actualisation. Maslow argued that once a need is satisfied it ceases to become a motivator.

Maslow's work has proved an important reference point for subsequent work which argued that individual behaviour does not exist in a vacuum but that human activity is directed towards a goal (Handy, C.B. 1982). Handy regarded motivation as a calculus which considers not only needs and results, but also includes a consideration of the amount of 'effort, energy, expenditure, excitement etc', the E factors necessary to meet these needs and achieve the desired results. The suggestion is that people are not motivated if they consider that the investment in the E factors is not worth their while.

Although much motivation theory has focused on the individual in the workplace, it is equally applicable to communities. Analysing community motives is rarely straightforward. There is usually a hidden agenda and often several of them. Sociologists rarely agree among themselves on a common definition of community. How much more difficult then it must be for agencies, committed to working with local communities, to decide, not only how and when to engage in that process, but also with whom?

GLOBAL CONCERNS AND LOCAL ACTIONS

The communities of locality which comprise Glass's *territorial group* are fast being taken over by communities of interest. In some respects the world is now everybody's community with the *common objectives* (interests) becoming the need to understand, enjoy and sustain cultural and natural environments. CRN agencies should take heart as communities are increasingly showing signs of *thinking globally and enabling locally.*

COMMUNITY PRIDE AND COMPETITION

Although rural communities have all but lost their economic or political autonomy, the sharing of common experiences still brings people together in ways which engender a sense of consciousness for their locality. Participation in sport and recreation, as players or spectators, is a traditional way of achieving this. History reveals that there is an enduring and popular interest in activities which allow people to understand, promote, celebrate, take pride in and enjoy their home area (Williams, 1956; Lloyd 1960). All CRN agencies have a part to play in sustaining and promoting these activities.

DEFENCE AGAINST A COMMON THREAT

Communities rally round at times of adversity such as after a tragic disaster like those which occurred at Aberfan and Lockerbie. Ironically, communities are often most united when faced with an external threat. Conflicts from without create solidarity within. Such threats are frequently prompted by government or its agents usually taking the form of a proposal for large scale or speedy development such as reservoirs or roads. In such circumstances agencies may search for palliatives such as enhanced recreational opportunity arising from development. Many landowning agencies are obliged to provide these (e.g. Forestry Commission, water authorities) though it is often a moot point whether the primary beneficiary is the local community or those communities with an interest in the recreational opportunity the development offers them!

COMMUNITIES OF LIMITED LIABILITY

Increasing affluence and personal mobility is creating what has been described as 'communities of limited liability'. It is suggested that community ties are more likely to be 'negotiable commodities' for people whose wider experience may make them more critical of local situations, more ready and willing to take part in controversies and less afraid of offending those more committed, perhaps for life, to the locality. Pahl urges caution when dealing with such people – *they can always move on, leaving their mistakes behind them* (Pahl, R. 1970) Agencies can be quite taken by such people, often finding them to be willing allies in their cause. Again caution is called for as agencies engage with such communities.

GRANT DEPENDENCY CULTURE

Rural communities have experienced major changes in their circumstances in the past 20 years: much of it induced by grants and subsidies of various sorts. Hill farming communities have become particularly adept at 'chasing the grants', in the full knowledge that to reject them would be almost certain to herald their economic suicide. Those remoter and agriculturally less favoured and otherwise disadvantaged areas have benefited from the positive discrimination that membership of the European Community has brought them. Programmes like LEADER have demanded that communities organise them-

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Community Participation in the work of U.K. Agencies involved in Countryside Recreation.

AGENCY (Date of formation)	Recreational rôle & community remit	Corporate commitment to community involvement	Example of community action
Countryside Commission (1968)	No statutory duty to work with communities.Responsibilities for facilitating the open air enjoyment of the countryside in various Acts from 1949 onwards.	Yes. *We seek to achieve much of our work through partnership with local authorities, public organisations, voluntary bodies and private individuals. (CCP 384)* Promoting and facilitating community and voluntary action is seen to be an *essential component* in countryside management work. (CCP 403).	Community action has focussed on countryside management projects by encouraging local people to take positive action to protect and enhance their local environment. These are expected to contribute to community support networks for 'Rural Action'-a joint initiative with the Development Commission and English Nature. Current practice is founded on the experience of 17 experimental projects in the 1980s. Other key initiatives of note are the 'Parish Paths Partnership' and 'Rural Action' run by ACRE and empowers people to identify local issues of concern, seek grants from Rural Community Councils and carry out projects themselves. "
Countryside Council for Wales (1991)	No, but has to: *have regard to the social and economic interests of rural areas in Wales* (Environmental Protection Act, 1990). The same Act charges the Council with responsibility for improving opportunities for open air recreation and the study of nature.	Yes. *We must continue to work closely with the people of Wales and involve them in our work through community based projects and initiatives.* (CCW -An Introduction 1991) The Council's draft community action policy statement, 'Towards a Common Vision', published July 1994 reconfirms CCW's commitment to work closely with local communities.	Local action has focussed on community appraisals which CCW has supported through 'Jigso-a partnership in community action'. The Council has also invited community participation in recreational and conservation initiatives such as the 'Community Paths', 'Water in the Community' and 'Walk and Talk' campaigns, and national surveys of bats and dormice. The Council issued a 'menu' of seven things every community should be empowered to do in 'A Common Vision'in pursuit of local recreational and conservation objectives.
Dept. of Environment Northern Ireland (Environment Service) (1990)	Responsible for conserving the natural and man-made (sic) environment and promoting its enjoyment and appreciation.	Yes-Under the heading of 'Working with People' Environment Service Corporate Plan 1994-97 regards *the maintenance of an active voluntary sector as being essential to the achievement of our (its) aims.*	In working with people efforts directed at increasing public awareness, and support to voluntary bodies. The 'Promotional Strategy' (December 1992) *...acknowledged the importance of communicating with people, sharing information and seeking to engage popular support for the objectives and activities of the service.*

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Community Participation in the work of U.K. Agencies involved in Countryside Recreation.

AGENCY (Date of formation)	Recreational rôle & community remit	Corporate commitment to community involvement	Example of community action
National Rivers Authority (1989)	The Water Resources Act (1991) gives the NRA recreation responsibilities in undertaking its other functions and a general duty to promote the recreational use of inland and coastal waters. These duties also require the NRA to ensure water and land under its control is made available for recreational purposes. The NRA must also conform to the Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation issued by the Secretary of State, which requires the NRA to recognise the social importance of water--related recreation. No specific duty to work with local communities.	The NRA describes its approach to collaboration, partnership and consultation under the heading of 'Working with Others'(Corporate Strategy) The Corporate Strategy was produced in 1994. The strategy also mentions the Catchment Management Planning process, which is an ideal forum for community involvement.	NRA Strategies for Recreation and Navigation published in 1993 make few references to working with local communities. Examples of NRA work with the local communities,work with the local communities are outlined in the Annual Conservation, Access and Recreation report 1993/94. The Medway Project is perhaps the best example of the NRA involving local people in managing their immediate environment. NRA acknowledges that the: *wide range of interests represented by our (their) customers invariably results in conflict between them.*
The National Trust (1895)	National Trust Act (1907)-charges the NT *...to promote the permanent preservation of lands of historic interest or natural beauty for the benefit of the nation.* No specific duty to involve local people in its recreational brief.	No, however projects involving community volunteers suggest an emerging 'community culture'. *In the last two decades the Trust has gently and of necessity returned to the development of working partnerships; governments, agencies, communities, groups and individuals.* (The Trust in a contemporary society.)	NT Youth Project in Walker Newcastle upon Tyne encourages self help, provides training and ",encourages those who want to organise their own fundraising and programme of activities. Acorn Projects provide opportunities for >11000 volunteers to work on countryside projects. As the country's largest landowner the NT offer many opportunities for environmental education eg Stackpole Schools Centre.
Scottish Natural Heritage (1992)	Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act (1991) makes it the: *duty of SNH in exercising its functions to take into account...the interests of local communities.* (section 3-(1)). SNH is charged with encouraging public enjoyment and understanding of the natural heritage.	SNH aims: *to engage public support and harness voluntary effort for the benefit of the environment* (First Operational Plan 1991-93). *We shall ...increase awareness and understanding of the natural heritage in communities and, wherever possible, engage local people actively in its conservation and enhancement* (Corporate Plan 1994-97 para 75)	SNHs "Countryside around Towns" programme is aimed at enhancing facilities for recreation and access and promoting community involvement in their environment. The "Environmental Education Initiative' gives high priority to the promotion of personal actions and community led initiatives. 'Paths for All' an initiative to be launch in 1995 will enable local groups to get involved in the provision of a better path network. In SNHs north west region several local initiatives to provide interpretive and access opportunities.

Community Participation in the work of U.K. Agencies involved in Countryside Recreation.

AGENCY (Date of formation)	Recreational rôle & community remit	Corporate commitment to community involvement	Example of community action
The Sports Council for Wales (1972)	SCW established by Royal Charter in 1972 to foster sport and physical recreation in Wales. SCW has no specific remit to work with local communities but has powers <to advise and cooperate...with local authorities and other bodies>	No, however the central theme of SCWs 'Strategy Review' is: *...the establishment of structures and the creation of networks. Such structures are far from being bureaucratic; they comprise people facilities, and links between organisations. The aim is to achieve community and voluntary involvement.* (Changing Times - Changing Needs; Sports Council for Wales 1991)	SCWs work does not truely extend to dealing with local village communities but rather a sporting community of sports users. *As a strategic body SCWs customers are usually other organisations and not individuals* and this is reflected in its liaison work.
Wales Tourist Board (1969)	Established under the Development of Tourism act (1969) WTBs functions include the provision and improvement of tourist amenities and facilities in Wales. It has no specific brief to work with local communities.	Yes. WTB believes that tourism needs and thrives on support from the local community, and that: *it is important for its scale and character to respect the aspirations of the host population.* (Tourism 2000 -A Strategy for Wales; WTB, 1994).	WTB recognises that tourism must proceed with the support of the community. The Board's policy is to support community based initiatives in tourism, to provide support and advice to community groups -to encourage good practice, without stifling innovation and enterprise. WTB is a member of 'Jigso -a partnership in community action' and proposes to provide pump priming support to appropriate tourism projects which follow on from Jigso appraisals. Noteworthy initiatives include the Local Enterprise and Development (LEAD) programme of support for community tourism.

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Turning to the question of how to motivate people to get involved in community action, DAVID OLDHAM *(Edinburgh Green Belt Trust)* considered that promoting the concept of thinking globally and acting locally could be a good trigger. The danger was that the global environmental picture was so depressing that it might turn people off. He had found in his own area that an effective stimulus was thinking locally and acting locally in the context of local history. People had shown themselves to be interested in the human scale, the old estate farms and old family names.

ROGER ORGILL *(Sports Council)* provided the background to the ministerial statement which Gareth Roberts had referred to in his presentation[1]. The Sports Council had been under review for some years and at long last there was a ministerial statement concerning its future. It said quite clearly that there would be a Sports Council for England to rectify an anomalous situation as autonomous Sports Councils for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland had existed since 1972, but England and GB affairs had been dealt with jointly from London. There had been no clear focus for England where ten Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation allowed the Sports Council to work very closely in partnership with local authorities and the national agencies. These partnerships had proved very productive, particularly in regard to countryside and water recreation related activities, where the Sports Council had the opportunity to make joint appointments with, for example, the NRA, the water companies and local authorities with project officers responsible for substantial projects available to a wide public, such as the Thames footpath, or the Tyne and Wear in the northern region and community forests. The Sports Council did not have the resources or funding to operate at local or neighbourhood level; it had to operate at a more strategic level. In this way the Council was able to provide access and opportunity for people at large in addition to providing for sporting and active recreational needs. The Sports Council operated under a dual Royal Charter. At one end was sporting excellence in the international realm, about which Ministers, and the Prime Minister in particular, were very concerned at the present time in relation to our performance in a variety of sports. The other element was for the social good of the country, which in reality included less formal countryside-based recreation activity, likely to remain the poor relation in terms of resources. However, in the future there would be structural change with a UK Sports Council and a Sports Council for England as part of the new family of Sports Councils.

SUE PAICE *(Northamptonshire County Council)* reinforced a point that Gareth Roberts had made. She spent a lot of her own time working with communities and she saw a great deal of what people gained from being involved in a community project. She felt that perhaps people were not being given clear goals to aim for by those who sought to encourage local community action. The Pocket Park scheme in Northamptonshire provided a great deal of satisfaction for the people concerned, as well as improving the environment. She believed all the delegates should go away from the conference thinking about the wellbeing of the people who would be contributing to future community action projects. GARETH ROBERTS agreed with that. In the community action draft policy statement of the Countryside Council for Wales -- 'A Common Vision' -- there was a list of seven areas of action in which rural community councils might consider participating. These included establishing their own local nature reserves and surveying public rights of way.

ALAN TEULON *(Northamptonshire County Council)* highlighted the importance to individuals of the benefits of the acquisition of new skills and interests which flowed from

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[1] Department of National Heritage, News Release 8-VIII-94 DNH 101/94

Closing Remarks

Richard Broadhurst

Senior Recreation Officer, Forestry Commission
CRN Chairman

Congratulations to everybody who has had something to do with the organising of this conference. It has been a very interesting conference indeed. I am left with a bundle of thoughts to take away which come into seven categories. I want briefly to share those thoughts with you before I say something about the Network. Lastly I will express thanks to the many people involved.

Of the seven groupings of thoughts that I will take away inevitably the first one is:

1. Community. I will not spend hours in the bath thinking about what is community because we have done quite a lot of thinking this week. But there are certainly three aspects: communities of neighbourhood, whose importance will vary depending on the situation in which one is working; communities of interest, and that might determine where one is on the ladder, or wheel, or whatever other structure; communities of individuals. But community is a relative term. What is local will depend on your work, where you are working, and the aims that you are working to, so scale will be important. So one of the thoughts that I will take away with me is to consider what community means in relation to the work that I am doing.

2. Change. I want to reflect a little about change. What makes change happen? What delivers more or enhanced countryside recreation, or the benefits you are trying to deliver? The sorts of things that contribute to that change are everybody's motives; the link between attitudes, intention and behaviour. People's motives are not always open, on the table or recorded on paper, but all of us have motives. Some of those motives are written up as shared values in our organisations. We all contribute to that process.

Another sub-heading under the topic of change, is the concept of crisis, the desperation factor, or whatever – the tensions that will exist between people's motives.

The third is the whole business about how little change might be required to set off a rather large chain reaction. People have heard me before expounding on 'Chaos' but it is this business of being very sensitive to initial conditions. One small change can set off a very big reaction.

A further sub-heading is enthusiasms. Most of the projects that we have heard about, where there have been great things happening, have been the result of enthusiasm, quite often of one individual.

3. Interpersonal Skills. We have heard about intellectual skills, some of which have been adequately displayed. There is another group of skills which are undervalued generally in management, quite possibly within CRN agencies and elsewhere. These are the

However, the question of performance does not just relate to the aims of agencies. It is very much concerned with what Tony Bovaird was pointing out, our personal aims. In the Forestry Commission appraisal system we have Forward Job Plans. The aims and targets in our plans are very important. Each of us should be trying to focus on performance measurement in our objectives. In the Forestry Commission we set those objectives ourselves, so I have only myself to blame if it is not there. For any of you in appraisal systems, I hope you have a similarly broad-minded system whereby you write the objectives and then agree them with your boss. The point is that we have to tie measures related to global issues right down to personal actions.

7. *Sharing Experience*. We should make full use of the Countryside Recreation Network and our informal networks. Think for a moment how many friends you each have – friends at work, at the walking club, the sketching club, climbing wall club, whatever group you care to think of, how many people you see at Christmas time, how many relations you have. Just think how powerful each of our networks is. In essence through CRN and our combined personal networks we have potentially a very powerful network indeed.

I will now say something about the Network. The Countryside Recreation Network has these aims: 1. meeting the needs of agencies for information and advice, and through that, meeting the needs of the clients of agencies and those who are interested in countryside and related recreation matters; 2. encouraging co-operation between agencies and people involved in this area. Lastly, it has the aim of disseminating the results of all the work that has been done, spreading information and best practice.

We do this in three ways: firstly through meetings, and this is one such, the conference. We do it also through workshops. Quite rightly, someone in the audience said that we had not addressed the business of how you transfer the skills that are required. Those sorts of issues are dealt with by the workshops. There will be a series of workshops during 1995 and there are still some to go this year. They are well worth attending; they are set at a lower cost, they only take a day, so go yourself or encourage someone else from your agency or organisation to go. The third way is through other sorts of events. We have a number of meetings of agency members and occasionally we invite other groups to take part in particular meetings. The results of those events are reported in the publications.

The second way in which the Network operates is through publications. Thanks to the CRN Managers, we now have a string of publications. The *Research Directory* is a brilliant one, much under-used. I think it will be used rather more next year when we start charging for it! I am serious; I think people will take note; it is a brilliant piece of work. Secondly, one for which there is no intention to bring in a charge, is *Countryside Recreation Network News*, which is going from strength to strength. There is another publication which we produce which is the plan. *The Plan for 1994* describes the Network, what we are trying to achieve, and gives an idea of the events throughout the year. We are currently engaged in putting together the plan for 1995.

The Network is broadening its base. It was mentioned earlier that it is a shame the Rural Development Commission is not here. It is an enormous shame. There are other agencies too that could contribute to the Network and gain benefit from being involved. We will be seeking them out.

List of Participants

Nigel Adams
Development Manager
Wales Tourist Board

Judith Annett
Countryside Recreation & Training Consultant

Jim Armstrong
Rural Development Council for NI

Sally Ash
Business Analyst, British Waterways

Jenny Baker
National Volunteers Advisor
The National Trust

Sarah Barlow
Senior Countryside Officer
Countryside Commission

Kevin Bishop
Lecturer, Cardiff University

Jeff Bishop
Director, BDOR Associates

Tony Bovaird
Senior Lecturer
Aston Business School

Richard Broadhurst
Senior Recreation Officer
Forestry Commission

Adam Cade
Learning Services Team
English Nature

Charlie Cairns
Project Officer
Lower Clyde Valley Project

Louise Chittock
Lecturer, Staffordshire University

Neil Clark
Department of Leisure & Tourism
East Lothian District Council

Community Action Officer
Countryside Council for Wales

S J Cooper
Forest Officer
Forestry Commission

Graham Cullen
Development Officer
Forestry Authority

Roy Dart
Senior Rural Enterprise Consultant
ADAS

Leighton Davies
Project Officer
Neath Local Access Project

Gareth Davies
Superintendent of Works
Forestry Commission

Kate Day
Access & Recreation Manager
Cambridgeshire County Council

Ken Dodd
Head of Marketing & Communications
British Waterways

Catherine Etchell
Manager
Countryside Recreation Network

David Evans
Project Director
Valleys Forest Initiative

Berwyn Evans
Manager, Menter Hiraethog

Simon Fenoulhet
Deputy Director
Cywaith Cymru/Artworks Wales

Pete Frost
Community Development Officer
Countryside Council for Wales

Anne Glover
Assistant Co-ordinator
Pennine Way Co-ordination Project

Julia Goodfellow
Local Groups Officer, BTCV

Clare Goold
Rural Surveys Research Unit

Richard Graves
Hereford & Worcester County Council
Association of County Councils

Colin Grayson
Community Woodland Officer
The Forestry Authority

Peter Green
District Forester, Forest Enterprise

Steve Green
Senior Consultant
The Environment & Development Company

Rob Guest
Silvicultural & Environmental Manager
Forest Enterprise

Terry Robinson
Head of Recreation & Access Branch
Countryside Commission

Jane Rollins
Countryside Planner
Land Use Consultants

Jo Rose
Associate, BDOR Associates

John Rotherham
Principal Countryside Officer
Rotherham Borough Council

Helen Rowbotham
Countryside Ranger
British Waterways

Mike Russell
Education & Interpretation Manager
Sussex Wildlife Trust

Peter Scott
Director
Peter Scott Planning Services

Alan Shipley
Senior Consultant, ADAS

Roger Sidaway
Research & Policy Consultant

Chris Simmons
Education Officer
Scottish Natural Heritage

Fiona Simpson
Recreation & Education Support Officer
Forest Enterprise

Penny Sinclair
Community Liaison Officer
Cleveland Community Forest

Linda Smith
Countryside Division
Department of the Environment

Brian Smith
Project Manager
Medway River Project

Iain Smith
Assistant Development Officer
Scottish Sports Council

William Steel
Parish Paths Liaison Officer
Derbyshire County Council

Terry Sutcliffe
Principal Planning Officer
Cleveland County Council

Rhys Taylor
Development Director
ACRE

Alan Teulon
Head of Countryside Services
Northamptonshire County Council

Chris Thomas
Community Project Manager
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Paul Tiplady
Sussex Downs Officer
Sussex Downs Conservation Board

Brian Walker
Head Ranger
North York Moors FD

Roger Walker
State Manager
New South Wales

Malcolm Watt
Forestry & Landscape Officer
Cotswold District Council

Roger White
British Waterways

Ian Whitehead
Parish Projects Officer
Hereford & Worcester County Council

Rob Wightman
University of Central Lancashire

Blair Wilkie
Recreation/Education Ranger
Forest Enterprise

Robert Wilkins
Assistant Countryside Officer
Hereford & Worcester County Council

Diana Wilkinson
Principal Research Officer
Scottish Office

Stephen Williams
Principal Lecturer in Geography
Staffordshire University

Andrew Wistow
Parish Paths Liaison Officer
Warwickshire County Council

Robert Wood
Manager
Countryside Recreation Network

Simon Woodward
Managing Consultant
ASH Consulting Group

Tim Yair
Project Officer
Hereford & Worcester County Council

Sally York
Environmental Education Co-ordinator
Forestry Authority