



**Community Development Projects on Estates
City of London 2012/2013**

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1. Introduction

This report details the engagement work carried out by Waste Watch (part of Keep Britain Tidy) as part of the City of London’s community development projects on estates. The engagement took place over 12 months on three estates managed by the City of London: Golden Lane within the City boundaries, Dron House in Tower Hamlets and Avondale Square in Southwark. This project sits alongside other work carried out by Waste Watch as part of the Our Common Place Programme on City of London Estates in 2011/2012; in the East London Waste Authority area as part of the ‘Recycle for Your Community’ programme from 2011 onwards; and in the Western Riverside Waste Authority area from 2011 – 2013.

This report outlines the ‘Our Common Place’ approach taken, the initiatives delivered and the benefits accruing to those involved. Our approach enabled participants to collectively and practically explore ways to help build strong communities, through developing a shared local identity for residents whilst simultaneously improving recycling performance and supporting residents to develop more sustainable lifestyles.

With expert guidance and advice, each community led, developed and delivered several initiatives based around fostering community cohesion and/or sustainable lifestyles. Communities were encouraged to explore and act on issues relating to community wellbeing that also provided wider social, environmental and economic benefits to that community. Waste Watch facilitated the process, but, as far as possible, initiatives were designed, delivered and led by the community themselves. A diverse set of initiatives emerged over the course of the project ranging from a film club and market day, to holding a summer BBQ and community gardening. In addition, Waste Watch was able to develop the capacity and operations of various residents groups, collaborate with partner organisations, attend and present at community meetings and work alongside council staff to assist in service delivery. Our Common Place closely follows the Waste Watch principle of ‘working from values’¹

¹ Waste Watch (2011) *Discussion Paper 1: Working from Values*. Available online at: <http://www.wastewatch.org.uk/data/files/resources/59/Working-with-values.pdf>

1.1 The Our Common Place Approach

Our Common Place² (OCP) connects people with where they live. It is an approach taken towards working with communities which attempts to engage people in the set-up, promotion and running of successful community led projects. As far as possible, engagement work is long-term rather than 'one-off', such as engaging with residents through a one off public roadshow. The programme aims to inspire and encourage people to get involved in their communities not just as recipients of a service but as fully involved co-producers. Over a period of nine to twelve months, community members work alongside Waste Watch staff to design and deliver a series of initiatives that contribute to global sustainability and community wellbeing. The approach is unique in that through recognising the important role our values play in shaping our attitudes, behaviours and involvement in community life, initiatives inspired and driven by OCP emphasise and reinforce intrinsic values such as care, respect, pride, creativity, tolerance, empathy, sharing and kindness.

By connecting more environmentally sustainable ways of life with community cohesion and an increase in personal wellbeing the innovative work of OCP seeks to help create stronger communities that are happier, more resilient and more sustainable. It relies on an action-learning process involving the co-production of community activities and events. The Our Common Place approach has been recognized as one of the first examples of community engagement work that embeds learning from the influential WWF report Common Cause.³

2. Project Outline

The project aimed:

- To engender a sense of ownership of the estate by involving people in caring for it
- To encourage residents to respect each other and their environment
- To engage particularly with young people and short-term residents, to develop consideration for neighbours and for their estate
- To improve the appearance of the estate through environmental projects
- To promote energy conservation, recycling and environmental responsibility

2.1 Gaining an understanding of the community

Identification of the estates chosen to participate was undertaken by City of London staff. Waste Watch began the project by starting process of 'listening' to get to know each community. Through attendance at community meetings, browsing of locally focused social media sites and door to door visits, Waste Watch staff conducted an exercise in learning about community life on each estate. This 'listening' process allowed Waste Watch to gain a deeper understanding of the concerns, hopes, fears and lives of community members.

A key component of this listening process was the creation of values posters. Residents were asked to write or draw what was important to them in life or what they really cared about. These values were then used to create a display or exhibition at an event on each

² Phillips, M. (2012) *Our Common Place overview and summary report* Available online at: <http://www.wastewatch.org.uk/pages/what-we-do-our-common-place-282.html>

³ Ter Kuile, C. (2012) *Campaign Case Study: Waste Watch*. Available online at: <http://valuesandframes.org/campaign-case-study-waste-watch/>

estate and would hopefully provide inspiration into the initiatives residents chose to work on. It was also part of a process whereby intrinsic values were reinforced and stimulated throughout the course of the project.



Figure 1: Avondale Square values 'wordle'

This 'listening was complemented and delivered, as part of the baseline monitoring for the project. Baseline monitoring included a survey of local environmental quality, observation of recycling bin use and a door to door questionnaire (for details of methodology see section 4).

2.2 Values Exhibitions

Each estate held a values exhibition to officially begin Waste Watch’s engagement with the community and to act as a launch to the project.

Through the launch, Waste Watch and those engaged were to agree on three initiatives to run over the course of the project. Each initiative would need to be focused on strengthening the community and encouraging sustainable behaviours. In the following ten months community group members, partner organisations and individuals would co-design and deliver these initiatives, supported by Waste Watch.

During a brief introduction the aims, rationale and structure of the project were outlined at each launch event. Waste Watch explained that the Our Common Place approach involves the co-design and delivery of initiatives. As a facilitator, Waste Watch does things *with* communities rather than *to* them. Community members were encouraged to think of initiatives which would be fun, exciting and/or useful’ but, in their design and delivery, be mindful of the wider environmental and social impacts that might accrue. These ground rules would ensure that initiatives would serve the dual objectives reinforcing the values of community, kindness, care for others and the environment, trust, respect and empathy that underpin strong communities as well as recycling performance and sustainable behaviours.

Each values exhibition took on a different guise:

2.2.1 Golden Lane

Waste Watch hosted a standalone event and facilitated group discussions during which residents drew up a long list of potential initiatives that would improve sustainability, recycling and/or community wellbeing. These were put to the Golden Lane Estate Residents Association (GLERA) for a chance to gain extra input.



2.2.2 Dron House



The values exhibition was complimented with a display of photographs from the most recent Dron House event: a Jubilee summer party. This was intended to stimulate positive memories of a recent, highly successful community event. The values exhibition was combined with early consultation about the change of use of the Dron House Estate Community Hall⁴. Waste Watch staff facilitated a drop in session during which residents gave their ideas for potential initiatives that would improve

community wellbeing in the first instance, alongside consideration for sustainability and recycling. Further contact details were gathered and a first community gathering was scheduled to take place before the end of the calendar year.

2.2.3 Avondale Square

The values exhibition was organised as a drop in event. Waste Watch staff explained the rationale behind the values exhibition, gathered further contact details and ideas for initiatives from residents. Again, the emphasis was placed on initiatives which would improve community wellbeing in the first instance alongside consideration for sustainability and recycling benefits. A list of ideas was then presented to the Avondale Square Residents Association AGM where residents voted on which initiatives they were most in favour of.



⁴ The Dron Community Hall was part of the ground floor of one block of flats. Due to a shortage of flats with multiple bedrooms the space was earmarked for redevelopment. An office, toilets, kitchen workshop space and the community room were to be redeveloped to provide a dual purpose office/meeting room, smaller toilet facilities and two potential dwellings. It was deemed sensible to outline the plans at an early stage of the project given that action would be taken and consultation started at some point over the next 12 months.

2.3 Initiatives design

The design and delivery of the initiatives formed the central part of the engagement phase, stretching from August/September 2012 to June 2013. The term initiative is used here to describe an event, activity, consultation process, proposal development or workshop that was run as part of the project. In following the Our Common Place approach initiatives would ideally be co-designed and delivered by community members and facilitated by Waste Watch. However, where engagement of the community in the project proved harder, initiatives were designed and delivered by Waste Watch for the community. Other initiatives ran on a weekly or monthly basis, such as a club, for a set period of time, with the potential for them to run indefinitely into the future. Lastly some initiatives were a one-off, but were preceded by a series of planning meetings and promotion.

2.4 Wider context of OCP

A complimentary piece of research was carried out alongside the London wide Our Common Place 2012/2013 project delivery looking at the impact the Our Common Place approach could have on Local Environmental Quality⁵

3. Initiatives

Across the three estates a total of 14 initiatives were run. During the project approximately 570 people were spoken to, in person, about the project, their community and environmental behaviours. 288 of these people were in attendance at events and activities run as part of the initiatives, of whom, 30 were directly involved in the co-design and delivery process.

3.1 Breakdown of initiatives

The scope and variety of activity that emerged is a reflection of the diversity of needs and interests of the communities. The flexibility of Waste Watch staff and the openness of the project design meant that communities were able to follow their interests. Waste Watch took the role of facilitator, helping the community to take the initiatives forward. Waste Watch also aimed to ensure that the initiatives ran smoothly and had the right elements in place to ensure they would have life beyond the period of Waste Watch's involvement. The full range of initiatives is listed in table 1, they are categorised by colour based on the degree to which initiatives were community or Waste Watch led according to the following scale



⁵ Kemp, D. (2013) Improving LEQ: The case for the Our Common Place approach. Available Autumn 2013 – email douglas.kemp@keepbritaintidy.org for more information

Table 1 : Breakdown of OCP initiatives by estate

<i>Estate</i>	<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Golden Lane	Compost training – to accompany new composter	One-off	8
Golden Lane	Garden group composting efforts as part of their usual gardening jobs	Ongoing	Up to 30
Golden Lane	Toy and Book Swap Stall – encouraging reuse at Christmas Fayre event	On-off	2
Golden Lane	Market Day: co-designed and delivered with residents	One-off	40
Golden Lane	Garden volunteering – residents volunteering to help others who are less able with their gardening	One-off	4
Golden Lane	Buddy scheme / Good neighbour scheme – co designed with residents.	Ongoing	2
Dron House	Christmas Event – residents get together	One-off	30
Dron House	Film Club equipment repair session	One-off	1
Dron House	Film Club – films shown in community hall on estate	Fortnightly x 3	5
Dron House	Film Club - Barbican cinema outing	One off	2
Dron House	Summer BBQ – residents get together	One-off	30
Avondale	Bingo – resident run Bingo in sheltered housing block	Fortnightly	10-15
Avondale	Gardening Group – Gardening group area set	Ongoing	6-10
Avondale	Avondale Stories CD – Audio CD created to share stories from residents across the estate. CD delivered to all flats to help connect residents with their community	Ongoing	600+

3.2 Case studies

3.2.1 Golden Lane

Golden Lane comprises 557 flats and is located on the Northern boundary of the City of London. It shares a boundary with the London Borough of Islington. Golden Lane benefits from a community centre, meeting room, bar and sports centre on site. A variety of ongoing and one off initiatives were established on Golden Lane. Several initiatives grew organically throughout the project alongside those discussed at the Values Exhibition.

3.2.1.1 Composting

The Golden Lane Estate has a Capital Growth⁶ supported community garden area known as the Golden Lane Allotment run by the estate Gardening Group. Members from the Gardening Group attended the launch event and expressed an interest in developing a community composting system for the allotments. At the



⁶ See <http://www.capitalgrowth.org/> for more information

time all green waste generated by the allotments was disposed of in the estate's residual waste collection.

Waste Watch supported the Gardening Group to purchase a composter from Bankside Open Space Trust⁷. To compliment the arrival of the composter at the allotments, Waste Watch delivered a compost training session for members of the gardening group. Eight members of the Gardening Group attended. The compost training covered the fundamentals of home composting: how composting works, what ingredients make up great compost and different types of compost systems available.

Resources and compost literature was provided so that Gardening Group members could pass compost training and information on to others. Organic waste from other residents on the on the estate were accepted – although these were closely monitored to make sure correct type and amount of materials was accepted – further reducing the amount of waste to landfill or reliance on food waste collection service.



Establishing composting at the allotment area diverted waste from landfill, provided a fantastic resource for the garden group to use in the compost itself and acted as a catalyst for the Gardening Group to start to see itself as more of a unified group and more involved in other estate activities. Residents remarked through a questionnaire at the end of the project that the composter and workshop has been excellent for the garden - *“it galvanised the garden group to get together and go on to do more for the community”*

3.2.1.2 Toy and Book Swap

Residents had already organised a Christmas Craft Fayre on the estate. Golden Lane resident Anna was keen to include a children's toy and book swap stall at the event to encourage reuse amongst residents looking for Christmas gifts for children. Waste Watch supported Anna in setting up the stall providing a small amount of donations. It was hoped residents would donate unwanted toys and books in exchange for others.

A donations box was set up in the Estate Office and publicity asking for donations was spread around the estate. On the day actual toy and book swaps were changed to toys and books being available in exchange for a donation towards the Cystic Fibrosis Trust⁸ which proved a more popular way to redistribute the items. A large amount of toys and books were passed on setting a good example of a simple reuse strategy which could be applied to future community events. Residents involved their children in the running the stall and said it was *“a fantastic opportunity for them to learn about helping the community, reuse and recycling”*. Any remaining items were donated to Oxfam by residents.



⁷ <http://www.bost.org.uk/> made a generous donation to the cost of the composter.

⁸ See <https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk/> for more information.

3.2.1.3 Buddy Scheme

A request from a concerned neighbour highlighted to Waste Watch the fact that an elderly gentleman had weeds growing up and obscuring his window from sunlight. Being unable to manage this himself, Waste Watch recruited residents to help clear the weeds and give his garden a tidy up. Four residents volunteered two hours of their time and the weeds were cleared and bulbs were planted.



Residents coordinated the volunteering on the day and felt inspired to build on the momentum and make community volunteering like this more of a regular occurrence through the formation of a 'Buddy Scheme'. The Buddy Scheme would be an excellent way for residents to help build strong community relationships between each other. It was also an excellent example of intrinsic values playing a part in motivating individuals whilst also being strengthened through their involvement in a community initiative.

Younger residents were involved with one resident commenting that the volunteering provided *"a great opportunity for my son to get involved in community projects and see the benefit in helping others"*.

At the time of writing the realisation of the scheme was still outstanding, however, the City of London have recently trialled a similar volunteering programme titled 'The Good Neighbour Scheme'⁹ on a nearby City of London estate. Residents involved in the formation of the Buddy Scheme have enthusiastically welcomed the idea of The Good Neighbour Scheme as a suitable platform to take the Buddy Scheme idea forwards.

3.2.1.4 Market Day



Golden Lane Estate residents had organised Market Day events in the past. GLERA had purchased a set of trestle tables to encourage residents to organise more community events. Previously the hiring and storage of tables had been a barrier to organising regular community events.

Throughout the engagement phase on Golden Lane, the Market Days had been referred to fondly by

⁹ <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/housing-and-council-tax/council-housing/housing-estates/Pages/Middlesex-Street.aspx> explains the principals Good Neighbour Scheme as it was when introduced on the Middlesex Street Estate

residents. Hosting another Market Day seemed to offer a good chance to bring the community together as well as by providing another good opportunity for reuse of household items. Residents were involved in planning the day, carrying out a risk assessment and all on the day practicalities such as setting up and packing away. Waste Watch supported them by helping to promote the event and managing stallholder applications. By involving residents as volunteers Waste Watch helped build their capacity as community organisers who would be well placed to run future community events.

The full allocation of stalls was taken up and extra residents turned up on the day eager to take part as a seller. A local band provided acoustic childrens entertainment on the day.

Residents commented that the Market Day had been “a friendly community experience” and that “I think residents enjoyed the experience”.



Early feedback suggested ideas for future events *“How nice today was! Bigger and better next time maybe have more music”*

3.2.2 Dron House

Dron House Estate is comprised of 79 flats and is located near Whitechapel station in the borough of Tower Hamlets. Dron House possesses a community hall for residents to use.

3.2.2.1 Christmas Event



Residents were keen to organise a get together for Dron House Estate that would mirror and build on the success of the Jubilee Party which took place in the summer 2012. The Christmas event was co-designed by Waste Watch and Dron House residents. The event was attended by approximately 30 residents from a wide range of backgrounds including residents from English, African, Caribbean, and Bangladeshi communities and ages from the under 5s to some residents in their 90s!

Waste Watch supported the event running a Christmas decoration making workshop using recycled materials. This engaged younger residents with the topic of recycling as well as encouraging them to explore their creativity. Decorations were used on the day to decorate

the hall then taken home to be used as gifts. Residents were encouraged to bring a dish of food to share.

The event brought residents together for only the second time in recent years. It enabled new friendships to be formed and for residents to see they had the potential to organise community events in the future. One resident remarked that he had *“spent some very good time with people from our estate.”*

3.2.2.2 Summer BBQ

After trialling a Film Club in the first few months of 2013 interest from residents had trailed off in regard to community initiatives. This turn of events actually galvanised residents, who had seen potential to build on the Christmas event to put out a passionate call to action to their fellow residents. Waste Watch facilitated the meeting and encouraged residents to pursue attempts for action as a community despite difficulties. Overall a successful meeting was held and plans were made to try to simply get residents together to meet up once again. The rationale was that until residents felt more unified as a community attempts at community projects which went beyond simply getting together would be hard to realise. Through facilitation of a subsequent planning meeting Waste Watch worked to build the capacity of residents and estate staff to organise future community events. Residents were also encouraged to use their new found desire to act collectively to reinstate regular meeting between a residents association and City of London estate management staff. The Dron House Estate Officer reflected on the project – *“As Estate officer it had considerably broadened my relationships with a number of residents. I have always got on well with most of the residents here but this project has brought a few more on board and I have enjoyed undertaking something positive with them which is not strictly work related; to mix with them as part of their community rather than just’ The Caretaker.”*

3.2.3 Avondale Square

Avondale Square is large estate comprising of 640 homes. It is located on the Old Kent Road in South Bermondsey.

3.2.3.1 Bingo

The most popular choice of initiative from residents was to establish a bingo event. Throughout the listening phase of engagement it became apparent that bingo had been popular with many residents over the years.

The lounge area in Avondale Square’s sheltered housing block (Harman Close) was suggested as a potential venue for afternoon bingo events. The first event took place with residents from another City of London sheltered housing scheme (Isleden House), who lent their bingo equipment on the day, also attending. Waste Watch facilitated the first two events until residents were keen to take over organising bingo themselves. Residents purchased their own bingo equipment and have continued to run the bingo as a fortnightly, afternoon session.



One resident remarked of the first session: *“lovely afternoon, terrific company”*.

Attendees are mostly from Harman Close with some coming from elsewhere on Avondale Square. This has provided an opportunity for Harman Close residents to spend more time with other residents, forming new friendships. One resident fed back that *“I wouldn’t normally get involved in so many community activities but bingo has provided me with the confidence and opportunities to meet new people and get more involved in community life on the estate.”*

Residents and Harman Close staff have worked closely to keep the event running, which has helped strengthen their relationship. Harman Close Scheme manager reported that she was *“Glad to report that Bingo is going well each fortnight - we have about 12 residents each time with 4 or so from Avondale Estate.”* Another resident related that bingo had *“kept me busy when other interests had dropped off [and] organising bingo has made us think differently about what we can organise, get involved with and who our friends are”*.

Residents from Harman Close have since gone on to reinstate a quiz night which runs more occasionally and engaged in the new community gardening opportunities on the estate. Through supporting the residents to establish their own bingo events Waste Watch helped unlock the potential of residents and staff to organise events, have fun and build meaningful relationships as a community.

3.2.3.2 Community Garden

Community Gardens offer a multitude of benefits to the community. These can be seen very much in relation to the five ways to wellbeing as outlined by the New Economics Foundation paper ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’¹⁰. They help people connect and take notice with nature and where their food comes from, in particular fruit and vegetables which can impact on gardener’s diet and nutrition. They also prompt people to become more aware of their surroundings, the weather and changing seasons in particular. They provide an opportunity for participants to become more physically active. Social benefits are felt too as people working together to organise the garden.



Sharing of skills and resources is often common amongst community gardens as is sharing produce when fruit and/or vegetables are harvested. For many gardening is a learning process too with novice and experienced gardeners alike always learning new things.

Avondale Square Residents Association meetings revealed the residents plans to start a community garden on the estate. The Estate Office staff had made application for funding and set out a plan of action. However, the timescale involved meant that funding would not be available until later on in the year and the 2013 growing season would be missed. Waste Watch worked closely with

¹⁰ NEF(2008) *Five ways to wellbeing*, Available online at: <http://neweconomics.org/projects/five-ways-well-being>

estate office staff to find a way to help the garden project develop sooner rather than later. This resulted in the City of London providing financial support to kick start the project.

Discussions with Harman Close about practicalities of setting up a garden area revealed some 'dead space' which could be taken over for garden use, as well as desire for Harman Close residents to have their own garden area. Harman Close residents and staff set about funding and organising their own garden area. Waste Watch engaged with residents of



Harman Close to establish which residents were interested. These residents helped build the raised beds for the Harman Close garden, fostering a sense of ownership in the new garden. Again residents and Harman Close staff worked closely together.

Harman Close Staff commented that "*Planters are all up and running! We shifted 12.5 tonnes of topsoil and gravel last weekend - 3 shovels and 3 wheelbarrows did the trick! Several*

residents helped out and one did food in the lounge for lunch time. Really hard work but brilliant fun - great teamwork!"

Waste Watch supported plans for the garden area to be cleared by the estate porters. Their job was normally based around cleaning so to get involved with a project with a positive benefit for the community helped reinforce their role as caretakers rather than 'simply estate cleaners'¹¹.

News of the garden area spread and many residents became keen to be involved. It is hoped that the desire to be part of the estate community garden will snowball, resulting in the creation of other new gardening areas. By supporting staff and residents with the creation of the community gardens a physical legacy is now in place for the estate to benefit from year after year.



3.2.3.3 Avondale Stories

A communications budget was available to help promote community participation and positive engagement with where residents lived. This was directed at producing some form of multimedia for Avondale Square. Initial attempts to engage residents in a video project on Avondale had limited success. Attention was then focused on a project where residents were interviewed and asked to share their stories about life living on the estate. Waste Watch carried out these interviews as a mixture of vox pops gathered in and around the square, park and shops of Avondale and organised sessions at Harman Close.

¹¹ Kemp, D. (2013) Improving LEQ: The case for the Our Common Place approach. Available Autumn 2013 – email douglas.kemp@keepbritaintidy.org for more information

The interviews would be loosely structured but throughout residents were encouraged to think about the estate in terms of the values brought up during the values poster exercise. Honesty was encouraged so as not to leave an overly rose tinted view of the estate which could have been poorly received. In particular, kindness, sharing and community spirit were discussed. The interviews also provided an opportunity for older residents to reflect on their memories of living on the estate – some for as long as 72 years.



One interesting comment came from Avondale resident, Brenda. She remarked that *“the estate has changed, but so have I”*. This became the subtitle for the CD project. Many of the concerns expressed by residents were focused on the sentiment of the estate ‘not being as good as it used to be’. Brenda acknowledged this but also that she had changed as well which meant that she was far more tolerant of the changes taking place on the estate.

Through the process of carrying out the interviews between Waste Watch and residents, values such as caring, kindness and empathy were being discussed and potentially reinforced. Even residents who thought there were issues with where they lived usually reflected that Avondale was a good place to live.



These audio clips were collected and edited into a 30 minute long piece of audio and recorded onto a CD. Some challenging points were chosen for the final edit as many residents thought there were things that could be improved upon for Avondale however, on the whole however the discussions were positive and a picture of an estate which was a good place to live was presented.

Packaging was designed which told the story of the CD and how residents could get involved in their community if they wanted to do so. Co-design of the project between estate staff and Waste Watch led to the expectation that by distributing the CD to all households and new residents in the upcoming year it would provide an opportunity for residents to feel a connection with their community, realise that lots of their neighbours shared some of their concerns but that their overall feeling was a positive one.

Early suggestions of the success of the CD were observed at the final ASRA meeting where the CD began acting as a catalyst for discussions about how to add value to the new community centre scheduled for completion in 2014.

4. Monitoring impacts

To monitor the success of the work carried out Waste Watch carried out pre and post project monitoring on all three estates. Golden Lane also had monitoring specific to the recycling

performance. Dron House and Avondale, situated in Tower Hamlets and Southwark, respectively do not have their recycling collected by City of London service and therefore this was not monitored.

4.1 Wellbeing and sustainability literacy

The Our Common Place approach enables participants to collectively and practically explore sustainability issues, while simultaneously developing a shared identity and thus greater community cohesion. To measure outcomes in these areas three questionnaires were carried out. Before the project began residents from each estate were taken through a questionnaire designed to establish their understanding of the following:

- Recycling
- Perceptions of community wellbeing
- Their own wellbeing
- Perceptions of LEQ

An identical questionnaire was carried out with residents post project. The pre and post project questionnaires were analysed and give an indication of levels of personal and community wellbeing and levels of sustainability literacy.

At the conclusion of the project Waste Watch engaged with those most active in the delivery of the project, either in small groups or individually. This was an opportunity for those involved to provide feedback on the structure, organisation and concepts behind the project. Secondly, it gave a chance to plan for the future, to assign responsibilities and to ensure the initiatives continued. Finally, Waste Watch staff took participants through an additional outcomes questionnaire designed to allow reflections on the impact that the project had had on those directly involved.

4.1.1 Pre and post project questionnaires

Questionnaires were carried out with thirty residents of Golden Lane and Avondale. Fifteen questionnaires were carried out on Dron House due to the smaller size of the estate. The sample of residents was taken randomly and mostly conducted on the doorstep. Pre project questionnaires also formed part of the listening phase of the project and provided an opportunity to have residents complete a values poster, be invited to the launch event and exchange contact details if they were interested in staying involved with the project.

Respondents were made aware that they were answering questions anonymously. A total of 75 people answered the questionnaire (attached in appendix 1) pre and post intervention.

NB: Constraints on Waste Watch staff time meant that the sample sizes at this stage were perhaps smaller than ideal¹².

¹² Results reported here should not be read as statistically significant due to the small sample size. For this reason it can be difficult to fully attribute findings to the impact of OCP intervention. In addition, residents who responded to the post-project questionnaire had not been directly involved in the project. A result of this is that with a 12 month intervention period, the wider benefits the OCP approach can have on communities may not have rippled through beyond those more directly involved. See limitations and recommendations sections for more detail.

4.1.2 Attitudes to recycling

Analysis of the data indicates there was a positive shift in all measured recycling behaviours for residents from pre to post project. An example being that 72% of resident respondents regarded recycling as very important or quite important pre project, whilst this had increased to 91% of residents post project.

4.1.3 Social and Environmental Behaviours

Residents were also asked to identify if they participated in other pro-social and environmental behaviours. Specifically whether or not they made an effort to conserve energy in the home; compost their food waste; shop at local, independent shops or a market; buy locally grown fruit and vegetables; buy Fair-trade products; and lastly predominantly walk, cycle or use public transport rather than drive a car. Residents stated 251 and 237 incidents of pro social environmental behaviours pre and post project respectively.

4.1.4 5 ways to wellbeing

The New Economics Foundations' (NEF) 5 ways to wellbeing were identified by NEF and the Government as:

1. Connect
2. Keep learning,
3. Take notice
4. Giving
5. Be active

Participating in activities which include any or all of the '5 ways' contribute towards individual wellbeing. NEF argue that once individuals have met their basic physical needs (shelter, food, clothing) they need to attend to their emotional wellbeing. The remaining questions in the pre-engagement questionnaire aimed to explore the five ways to wellbeing.

Connect

To assess how *connected* residents are to their neighbours, they were asked how many people they knew by name on the estate. Combining responses from before and after the project 64% of people reported knowing between one and fifteen other people in their community, 29% knew between 16 and 50 people and 7% reporting knowing 51 or more people.

Keep Learning

32% of residents reported being involved in some form of informal *learning* pre project. This figure was lower from the post project monitoring sample with only 23% claiming to take part in some form of internal learning.

Take notice

To create a picture of the extent to which residents *take notice* of their local surroundings, monitor their perceptions of the local environmental quality and general wellbeing of the community, they were asked to rate the estate on a sliding scale of 1 to 6 for ten variables. Figure 2 display resident's perceptions, on average, for the nine variables pre and post project. Figure 2 also shows the actual template used with each resident during the questionnaire.

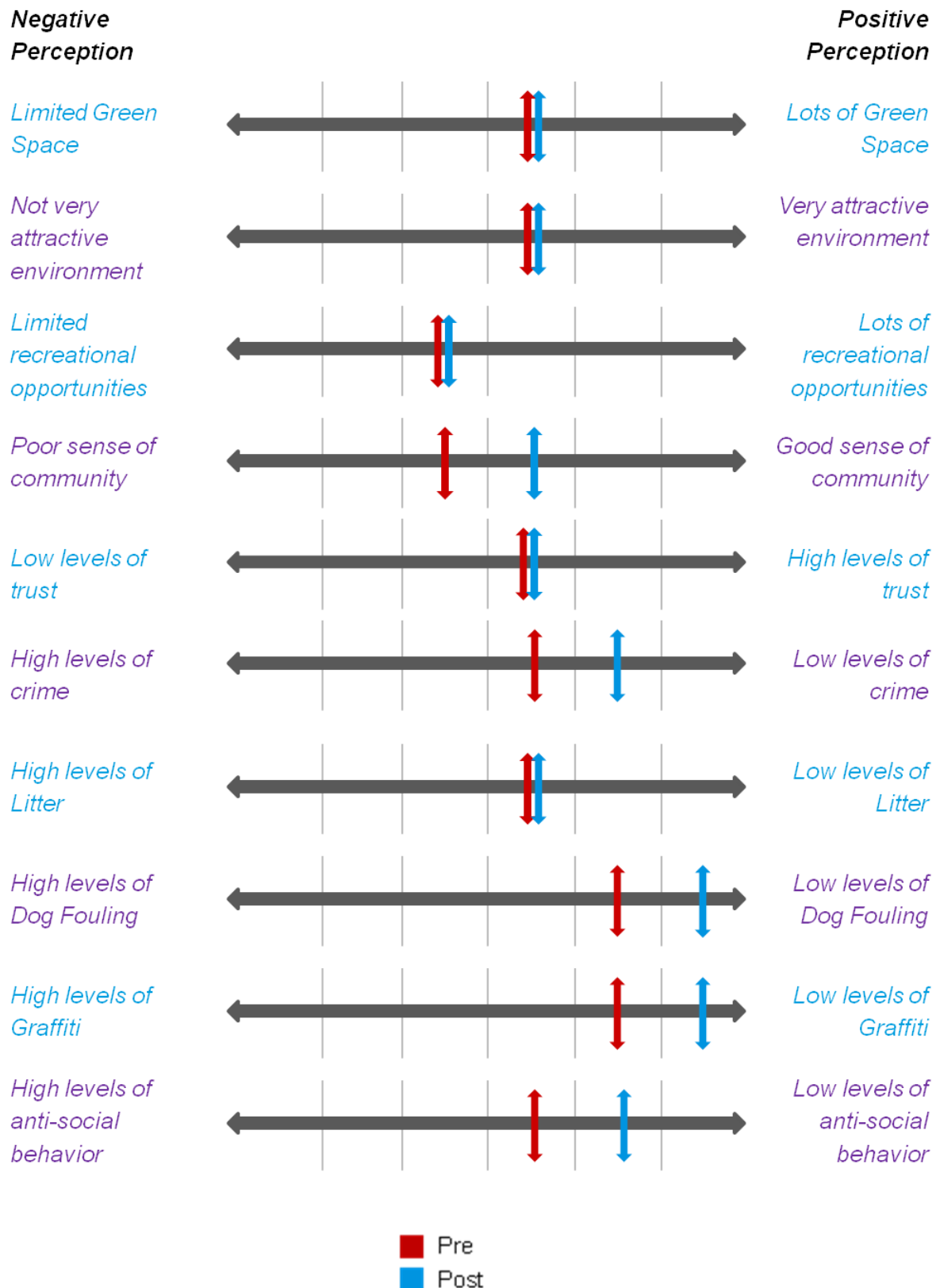


Figure 2: Residents perceptions of local environmental quality and community wellbeing

Figure 2 shows residents were generally happy with LEQ and community wellbeing on their estates. a positive increase in resident's perceptions for: the sense of community, levels of crime, levels of dog fouling and levels of antisocial behaviour for all estates, pre and post

project. All other perceptions remained at the same level pre and post project. The area which residents gave the lowest score to was recreational opportunities available on their estates.

Give

Every resident spoken to reported *giving* in one or more ways. Figure 3 illustrates the different ways in which people give. Respondents were asked to tick as many answers as were relevant.

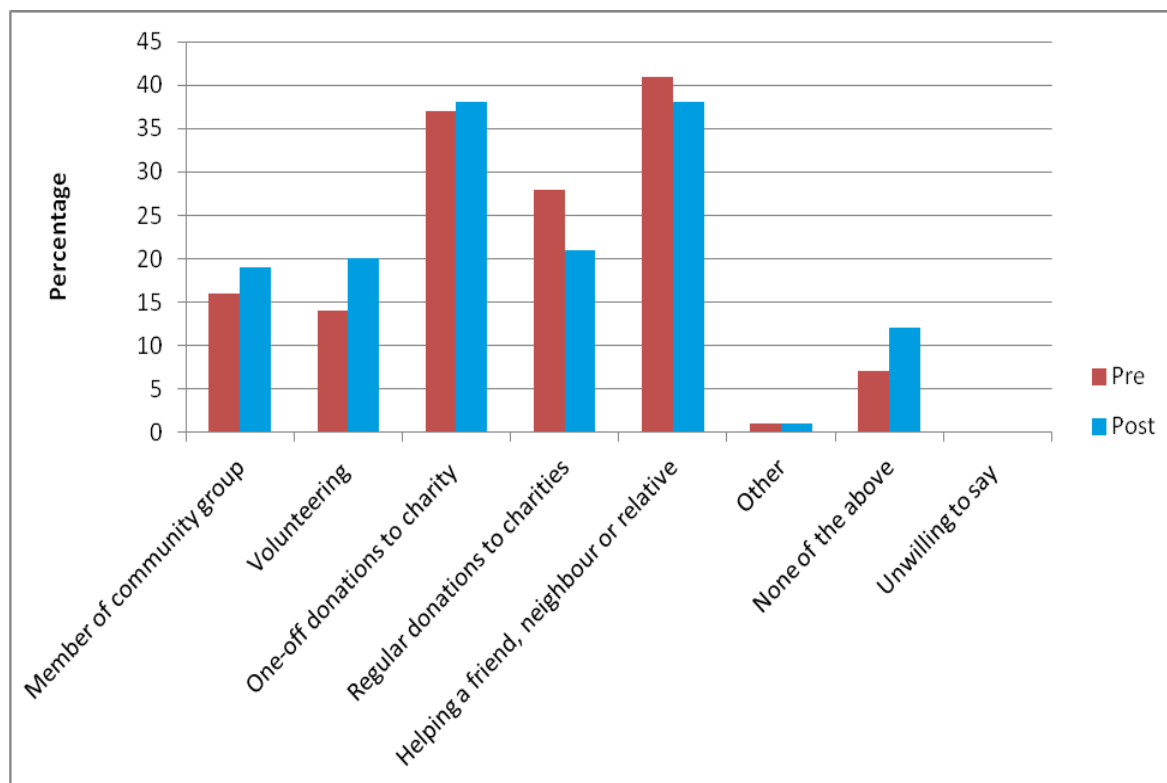


Figure 3: Percentage of people who reported giving in one or more of the ways listed

4.1.5 Post-project outcomes questionnaire

Tying in with Waste Watch’s efforts to monitor the impact of our projects on those directly involved in them, a detailed post-engagement questionnaire was conducted with 18 people from across the estates. The survey was limited to individuals involved in the co-design and delivery of the project. This enables Waste Watch to gather evidence of the impacts a project such as Our Common Place has on those who commit significant time and effort to them.

The questionnaire (included in Appendix 2) was conducted during end of project focus groups and meetings. Participants were asked to provide written answers to a series of questions and rate the extent to which they had noticed changes in their knowledge and wellbeing over the period of their involvement in the project.

When asked to describe their most significant gain from the project, participants responded positively as the following quotes illustrate:

Most significant gain from the project:

“Compost knowledge, practical skills and desire to work together”

Participant on Golden Lane / Composting initiative

“Golden Lane had its community networks consolidated as a result of the project and this helped strengthen our community”

Resident, Golden Lane

“Good company, lots of fun, lots of laughs”

Participant on Avondale Square / Bingo

“Realised the importance of recycling and what products are fit for this procedure in Tower Hamlets borough. Being part of the Dron House Film Club has helped me meet my neighbours who I’d never made an effort to build a relationship with due to coming home from work and making no effort to get to know the community I live in. Being part of a group that helped set up our first Christmas party for the estate.”

Resident, Dron House

“As estate officer it has considerably broadened my relationships with a number of residents. I have always got on with most of the residents here, but this project has brought a few more on board and I have enjoyed undertaking something positive with them which is not strictly work related; to mix with them as part of their community rather than just ‘the caretaker’.

Estate Officer, Dron House

“Spent some very good time with people from our estate.”

Participant in Dron House Christmas Event

Skills gained or enhanced as a result of involvement in the project

“I am now more confident at meeting people, and have a desire to encourage children to get more involved in community projects”

Resident, Golden Lane

“I have spoken out and made myself heard more in meetings related to this project than I generally do in work related meetings. I have found it’s gone some way to improving my confidence in this respect”

Estate Officer, Dron House

“Increased my communication skills and motivation to promote sustainability where I live”

Participant Golden Lane / Market Day

“I have gained new confidence in speaking to others and feel I have more skills necessary to promote community involvement where I live.””

Resident, Avondale Square

“I have increased my sense of value of my local community”

Resident, Dron House

Other comments

“We knew we could do things like this as group of residents but it has been your involvement that has made it happen. Being involved in the project has made us think differently!”

Resident who calls the Bingo games at Avondale Square

“It’s the only time the City seems to have promoted community cohesion – it would have been good to carry on for longer”

Resident involved in co-designing and delivering ‘Compost training and the toy and book swap, Golden Lane

“It was nice to get involved and to know someone was looking out for residents needs in some way. Having things like this happen are great for taking loneliness away.”

Participant, Bingo and Avondale Stories, Avondale Square

“All in all it was a valiant effort, unfortunately for some reasons the residents failed to respond in great numbers. Notwithstanding that, the events and projects were very enjoyable and it has improved my relationships with many of the people who did attend and I would gladly do it again”

Estate Officer, Dron House

“I have lived here for 14 years and there has never been any community at Dron House before this. We have our own community hall that apart from the Jubilee celebrations a couple of years and I had never been to until now where we are starting to see things happen”

Resident, Dron House

Participants were then asked a series of multiple choice questions to assess the extent to which the project had an impact on their knowledge of recycling and five ways to wellbeing.

100% of participants reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they had enjoyed themselves being involved in the project on their estate.

Each person directly involved in the co-design and delivery of the project initiatives reported how being involved in Our Common Place increased opportunities for them to Connect, Be active, Take notice, Keep Learning and Give. Gains were less significant in relation to being more active. This is likely to be because of the nature of the initiatives chosen. Results are in figure 4.

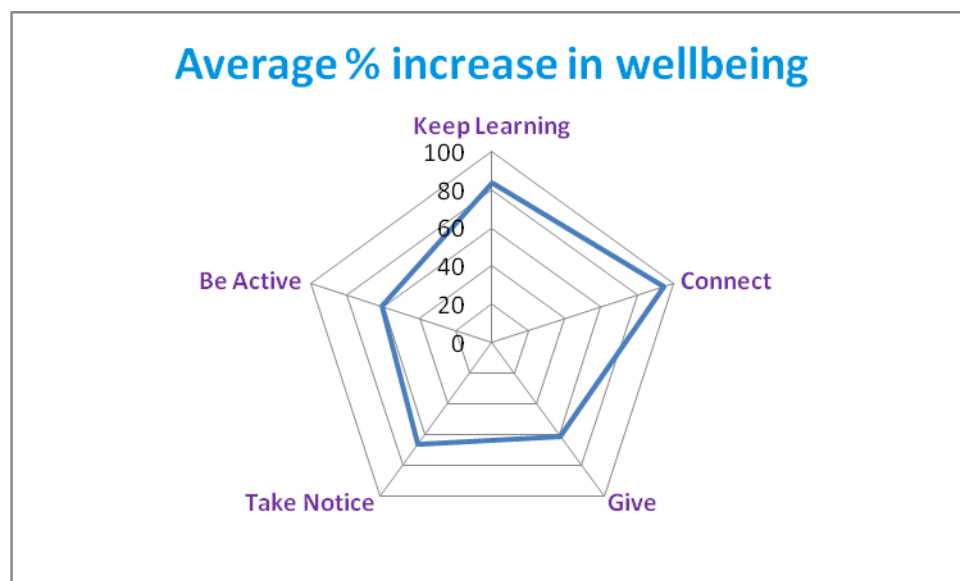


Figure 4: Residents reported impacts on the five ways to wellbeing

4.2 Recycling on Golden Lane

Golden Lane had its recycling performance monitored pre and post project. This monitoring looked at fill rate and contamination of recycling placed out for collection. The monitoring took place on three consecutive collections both pre and post project.

Recycling was placed out by residents in a clear sack that the Corporation of the City of London provides. This sack was then collected by a member of staff from the contractor responsible for collecting household recycling in the City. This was taken to one of seven locations on the estate. Locations consisted of either 1110 litre bins, paladin style bins, 240 litre recycling bins or designated areas for the loose bags to be placed.

4.3 Fill Rate and contamination

Collection areas and bins therein showed similar fill rates pre and post project. 79% and 80% of the bins were recorded as either full or overflowing pre or post project respectively. This coupled with the fact that contamination was low suggest recycling is done to a high standard by residents of Golden Lane. Figure 5 shows 34 incidents of contamination were recorded pre project, whilst 17 incidents of contamination were recorded post project.

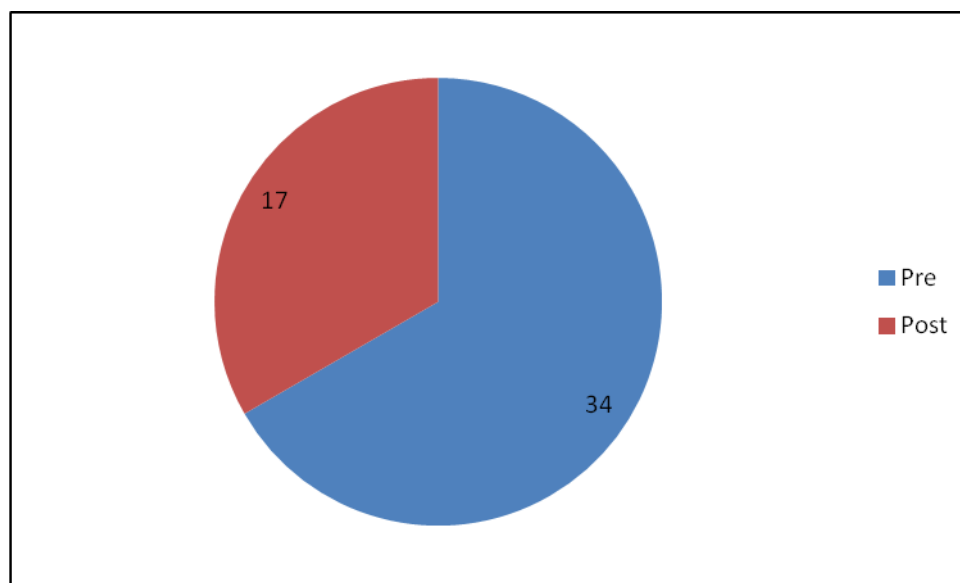


Figure 5: Occurrences Incidents of contamination

The most common type of contamination was plastic wrapping which accounted for 24% of the incidents of contamination.

4.3.1 Locking, Appearance, Type of damage, Bin Size

The above remained consistent pre and post project and did not generally present a large barrier to effective recycling.

The most notable area which required signs of improvement pre project was the WEEE recycling bin. This had high contamination and a low fill rate pre project. This could be attributed to having no lid during pre project monitoring. Post project a new bin had been provided, however, the lid was not lockable and contamination was still higher than in recycling bins across the rest of the estate. The fill rate remained low.

4.3.2 Number of recycling bags

Figure 6 shows the number of occurrences that certain quantities of recycling bags were placed out at the collection points. The number of bags placed out increased post project with twenty or more bags being present on seven occasions as opposed to 4 occasion's pre project.

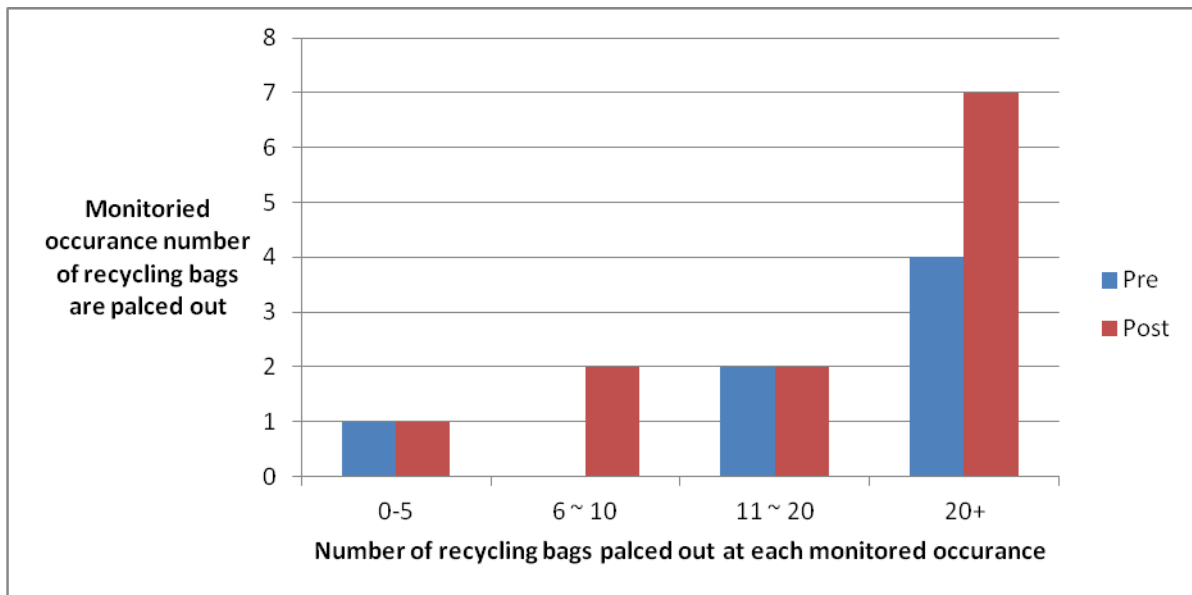


Figure 6: Occurrences and number of recycling bags placed out

4.3.3 Conclusions

The recycling performance at Golden Lane was noted to be of a high standard pre project. Recycling was clean and contamination was low. Each bin or collection point was either full or overflowing, showing a good use of the service by residents. Thus the compost, toy and book swap and market day initiatives all had a focus on reuse and waste minimisation. Post project the standard remained high with an increase in the amount of recycling being placed out by residents and incidents of contamination also showing signs of reduction.

5. Conclusions

By applying the Our Common Place approach to estate engagement work in the City of London, Waste Watch has successfully demonstrated the benefits of a values-based approach to helping residents increase community wellbeing and adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Across the three estates there has been an increased coming together of members of the community which helped foster pride of place and ownership of the estate. The approach encouraged co-production which enabled responsibility from the residents and some estate staff in developing and delivering the initiatives. Through involvement in the initiatives residents have reported on an increased level of satisfaction with the estate as a place to live/work.

Of the initiatives implemented the following offer a legacy for the community:

- Bingo
- CD for Avondale residents
- Avondale garden areas
- Dron twice yearly 'get togethers'
- Dron Residents Group
- Golden Lane Composting
- Golden Lane Buddy Scheme
- Golden Lane Market Day

Building intrinsic values into the project design encouraged residents to choose project activities that were highly conducive to developing community spirit and increasing well-being. By promoting and reinforcing empathy, kindness, altruism, respect, friendship and pride of place the Our Common Place approach has enhanced the commitment to values that underpin strong communities and sustainable lifestyles.

6. Recommendations

Waste Watch would recommend that when working towards a specific outcome, consideration is given to how an open-ended approach to engagement similar to Our Common Place can simultaneously bring about chosen outcomes and numerous other community benefits. For example by focusing on community composting waste reduction is an outcome as well as increased knowledge, skills and community spirit. Similarly, engagement should be something done with a community rather than to it; this helps develop community ownership of the project and increases the likelihood of it being sustained by the community.

6.1 Time

Time is the largest constraint on running the project. As the project neared its twelve month end relationships with residents were beginning to flourish. Levels of trust with involved residents as well as the wider community were stronger than ever. An extra six months to overall project length would enable ideas and enthusiasm generated as the project came to an end to be supported by Waste Watch.

6.2 Community Spaces

The existence or not of accessible community spaces were important influences on the scope and development of initiatives. Communities need spaces to meet and it is important that cost, location, and comfort are not prohibitive factors. Hosting and planning events and meetings needs to be as straightforward as possible if projects and initiatives are to be discussed and realised. How and when long term plans are presented to the community should be considered closely. The Dron House Community Consultation Process for the redevelopment of the community hall presented as a competing priority for residents due to its timing at the start of the project, and this may have discouraged some residents from taking part.

6.3 Community Groups

A more sustained period of engagement is likely to be necessary when community groups are absent. Similarly a good level encouragement should be made to get existing groups to fully support the project.

6.4 Promotion

Consideration should be given to ways to promote the project on estates. Whilst producing and delivering posters and leafleting as effective and should not be ignored time spent on the ground stimulating 'word of mouth' often yields the best results in terms of spreading a messages and generating interest.

6.5 Volunteers

An attempt was made at partnership working with a University. Through this was not particularly successful in this instance, further opportunities to work with university populations could be explored where appropriate in attempt to help delivery; students of social and environmental disciplines could provide a valuable volunteer base.

6.6 Post intervention

Waste Watch has built relationships that, although established, need further nourishment to bring about deeper engagement in existing and potential new initiatives. Further training and capacity building with estate staff is something we would recommend.

7. Appendix 1: Pre and Post Project Questionnaire

Our Common Place, baseline monitoring Questionnaire 2012

Hello, my name is _____. I am from a charity called Wastewatch; we are working on behalf of _____ Council to deliver a new 12 month project on recycling and community building.

We're conducting a questionnaire with a few residents here to gather opinions on issues such as community strength, environment and happiness. We will be conducting another questionnaire at the end of the project to see if we have made a difference in any of these areas.

If there are any questions you would rather not answer, please just let me know and we will move straight on to the next question.

We won't ask you your name and all of the data we collect will be used anonymously. However, to monitor diversity, we would however like to record some basic demographic information.

We'll start with some questions about recycling:

- 1. Thinking about recycling household waste, which of these statements best describes how important recycling is to you personally?**
 - a) Very important
 - b) Quite important
 - c) Not very important
 - d) Not at all important

- 2. Which of these statements best describes your attitude to recycling?**
 - a) I recycle even if it requires additional effort
 - b) I recycle if it does not require additional effort
 - c) I do not recycle

- 3. Which of these statements best describes how much you recycle?**
 - a) I recycle everything that can be recycled.
 - b) I recycle a lot, but not everything that can be recycled.
 - c) I recycle sometimes.
 - d) I do not recycle.

- 4. How many people do you know by name on your estate?**
 - a) 1 – 5
 - b) 6 – 10
 - c) 11 – 15
 - d) 16 – 20
 - e) 21 – 30
 - f) 31 – 50
 - g) 51 - 99
 - h) 100+

- 5. Are you involved in any informal learning?**
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

- 6. Do you give time or money in any of the following ways? (Multiple answers are OK)**
 - a) As an active member of a local community group
 - b) By volunteering for a charity
 - c) By making occasional one-off donations to a charity or charities
 - d) By making regular donations to one or more charities
 - e) By regularly helping a friend, neighbour or relative in need

- f) Other, please state
- g) None of the above

7. Which of these statements best describes your involvement in local events and activities?

- a) Yes I try to get involved in everything that goes on here
- b) I sometimes get involved depending on what the event or activity is
- c) I very rarely get involved
- d) I never get involved
- e) There is nothing going on

8. Overall, how happy are you with your life these days?

(5 is very, 1 is not at all)

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4
- e) 5

7.1 Appendix 2: Outcomes Monitoring Questionnaire

Project feedback

Project / Initiative		Date	
Estate			

A. Project Feedback

1. **Overall I have enjoyed myself on this project / initiative on my estate** (please mark the extent you agree with this)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
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2. **What have you gained during this project / initiative you have recently been involved in?**

(This could include skills, knowledge, experience or anything else you can think of).

3. **As a result of working on this project / initiative, have you experienced a change in any of the following?** (please tick the relevant box for each)

	Large decrease	Small decrease	No change	Small increase	Large increase
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Knowledge of ways I can get involved in my community					
Level of involvement with others in your local community					
Willingness to share your time or skills with others					
Taking notice of the world around me					
Level of physical activity					
Level of satisfaction with the estate as a good place to live					

4. As a result of being part of this project I have.....

Please tick the boxes of **all** that are relevant

Increased my confidence in speaking to others	Increased my sense of value of my local community	
Improved my communication skills	Formed new friendships	
Increased my motivation to promote sustainability where I live	Learned new skills	
Increased my knowledge	Increased my motivation to promote community involvement where I live	

5. Is there anything else you feel you have gained as a result of being part of this project that you consider useful in other areas of life? e.g. skills for jobs

6. Could anything have been done differently during the project to improve it?

7. Any other comments?

B. Further Contact? (optional)

Given the chance, would you be interested in taking part in a project with Waste Watch again? (or continuing if this is the case)			Yes / No
If yes, please enter* ¹³	Name		Email and/ or telephone number
Would you be interested to be added to the Waste Watch newsletter to find out more about our various projects? (your email address would be added as above)			Yes / No / Already

C. A bit about you (optional)

What is your age?

13-16		17-24		25-34		35-44	
45-54		55-64		65-74		75+	

What is your gender?

Male		Female	
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How would you describe your ethnicity?

A.White	English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British		B.Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups	White and Black Caribbean	
	Irish			White and Black African	
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller			White and Asian	
	Other (please specify)			Other (please specify)	
C.Asian/ Asian British	Indian		D.Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	African	
	Pakistani			Caribbean	
	Bangladeshi			Other (please specify)	
	Chinese		E.Other ethnic group	Arab	
	Other (please specify)			Other (please specify)	

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes		No	
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During your participation in this project what was your occupation?

Full-time student		Part-time student		Full-time employed	
Part-time employed		Retired		Unemployed	
Self employed		Full- time carer/ Stay at home parent		Other (specify)	

¹³ If you would like to be notified of our other projects and/or news but would prefer to remain anonymous for this survey then please email us at info@wastewatch.org.uk