

Seeding Sustainable Communities

3 years of inspiring change

Final evaluation report to Defra by
Peterborough Environment City Trust

March, 2008



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Glossary

Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EAF	Environmental Action Fund
SSC	Seeding Sustainable Communities
PECT	Peterborough Environment City Trust
PCC	Peterborough City Council
EST	Energy Saving Trust
RSL	Registered Social Landlord

Executive summary

The Seeding Sustainable Communities project is managed by Peterborough Environment City Trust and has been running over the last 3 years to inspire positive patterns of environmental behaviour in new housing developments in Peterborough before bad practices gain a foothold.

Moving house is a breakpoint where residents can be more susceptible to changing their lifestyles. In addition to targeting a breakpoint the project aims to fast-track community development in new housing areas where there can be a lack of community cohesion. For these reasons the project focused solely on two new housing developments, Hampton and Riverside.

The project officers visited residents at their doorstep carrying out a survey and offering a free sustainable living welcome bag. The survey acted as a tool to facilitate conversation with residents while collecting baseline information on current behaviour. The welcome bag consists of a reusable jute shopping bag containing free environmental goods, a community directory and information to facilitate sustainable behaviour change. For example, by using the free energy efficient light bulbs in the bag residents would later purchase more and continue using them.

6 months after the initial visit, a sample of 30% of residents would be contacted to evaluate the impact the visit had on their lifestyles. It was also a way to contact residents a second time to reinforce our environmental message, answer any questions they might have and collect further information on their interest and needs.

Based on the information collected, and as another way to engage and educate residents, the project organised a series of local events and workshops. For example, the first ever Apple Day in Peterborough, an extremely successful day with over 1,000 residents attending. These events and workshops not only educate people on the importance of protecting and feeling proud of the local environment, but are also an excellent way to create community spirit.

Other successful events were the Farmers' Market and the Woodston Ponds nature reserve family fun day along with a variety of smaller workshops on topics such as growing your own vegetables or composting. These workshops educated residents further in issues they wanted to learn more about but did not know where to start.

Residents´ were further involved in the project through recruitment of sustainable living champions within the community and through the website and online community forum where residents can share their experiences, problems and solutions with their neighbours.

As a result of the Seeding Sustainable Communities project, 100% of residents that were followed up have adopted at least one new sustainable behaviour with 70% implementing 5 changes or more. 87% of participants used the free energy efficient light bulbs provided, 47% more residents are using reusable bags, 25% have continued using Ecover products and 32% of residents have started using the car less for short journeys.

What has made this project a success is primarily the direct contact with residents. It is a high quality approach that ensures the message is personally tailored to each resident, achieving higher percentages of behaviour change than broader, less individual methods. The welcome bag and environmental goods inspire residents to implement almost immediate changes. The continued and high quality level of engagement with residents leads to long term, rather than one off, behaviour change. Additionally this is a flexible project that can easily be adapted to the needs of the community and that of the partners we work with.

Community engagement is another essential factor for success, it generates immediate feedback direct from residents about what does and what does not work when trying to change behaviour and create community spirit. It also makes residents feel empowered to make a difference and make their neighbourhood a place they enjoy and feel proud of, key to every sustainable community.

1 Introduction

The Seeding Sustainable Communities project started in response to the high housing growth rate occurring in Peterborough and the associated environmental pressures of this. Additionally, moving to a new house is a good breakpoint at which new patterns of behaviour can be introduced. The project focused on two new housing developments in Peterborough: Hampton, with around 3,000 dwellings (and a total of 8,000 when completed); and Riverside, with approximately 800 households. See Annex A for community profiles.

The project officers contacted residents at their doorstep offering a welcome bag (See Annex B), for residents completing a baseline survey (See Annex C). This survey did not only collect valuable information about current patterns of behaviour and community needs, but it also facilitated conversation with householders. To evaluate the impact of the visit and provide a second opportunity to engage with the householder, a follow up survey was undertaken (See Annex C).

Another important element of the project was to encourage and facilitate community spirit and cohesion. The project engaged residents in a journey that started at that first direct contact at their doorstep, and continued with the follow up survey and the organisation of local events, recruitment of sustainable living champions and creation of a community forum in the website.

Throughout feedback and input from residents was encouraged. Learning about residents' needs and interests is crucial for the continued improvement and design of the project.

2 Evaluation method

2.1 Baseline Survey

2.1.2 Sample: 954 residents were visited and completed the baseline survey throughout the 3 years of the project (year 1 - 150, year2 - 500, year 3 - 304). All streets were visited and from those residents that were home, 74% agreed to participate in the project.

If householders were home and interested but were busy at the time, we would drop a survey and a pre-paid envelope. For year 1 and 2 a survey was sent to those residents that were not home with a response rate of 12%. In year 3 we started dropping calling cards when residents were not home, with a tear off card that residents could send back to us asking to do the survey (Annex D). The response rate of these calling cards was 5%.

The main incentive to participate was the free welcome bag. Additionally, surveys posted to residents included a free organic fair trade tea bag and invited residents to have a cup of tea while completing the survey (Annex D).

The aim was initially to survey people that had moved house within the last 12 months, however 77% of residents had been living in their house for over a year. Even though the two developments are still being built, many of the houses have been there for up to 7 years. After analysing the first year of data we realised this factor was not affecting results and we therefore decided to continue surveying both newly moved and more established residents.

2.1.2 Procedure: Most of the surveys were completed at the doorstep (78%); just under a quarter were carried out at events (14%) and by post or email (8%). The completion of the survey at the doorstep could take from 10 minutes to sometimes an hour, depending on the resident availability and interest in the subject.

2.1.3 Materials: The baseline survey included questions on all areas of environmental issues: water; energy; transport; wildlife; purchasing and consumption; waste; and local community. The questions were formulated with the assistance of Defra and other partners such as Anglian Water and Peterborough City Council.

2.1.4 Timing: The surveys were completed throughout years 1 and 2 (April 2005-March 2007) and in the first 6 months of year 3 (April-September 2007) with targets set for each quarter.

2.2 Follow up survey

2.2.1 Sample: These surveys were carried out with a sample of 30% of the residents visited, a total of 288 follow up surveys for the three years. They were chosen randomly by calling everyone in our database until we had interviewed 30%. In order to ensure we surveyed a broad spectrum of the community, surveys were carried out at different times of the day, evenings and weekends. 155 follow up surveys were sent out by post with a response rate of 18%.

2.2.2 Procedure: Most follow up surveys were carried out by the project officers and volunteers over the phone, taking about 20 minutes and sometimes more if residents became engaged in the conversation. The rest, 15%, were completed by email or post by residents that did not provide a phone number.

2.2.3 Materials: The follow up survey mirrored the baseline survey in order to measure any behaviour change implemented. Additional questions were included asking if they wanted to become sustainable living champions and if they had any suggestions for project improvements.

2.2.4 Timing: Follow up surveys were carried out 6 months after the initial visit depending on residents' availability. The follow up surveys with residents visited in year 3 had to take place within 3 to 6 months after the visit due to the conclusion of the project.

2.3 In depth interviews

2.3.1 Sample: Initially 12 deep interviews were planned for year 3 but due to time constraints, only 7 were undertaken. Based on the responses given in the baseline and follow up survey a sample of "non-green" and "green" residents was selected. Additionally we tried to choose residents of different age groups and employment status.

To encourage residents to take part they were offered a digital wind up radio or a set of recycled wine glasses and organic wine.

2.3.2 Procedure: The interviews were carried out face to face by the two project officers at the resident's household. Most lasted about 30 minutes, some of them

lasted up to an hour. They were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

2.3.3 Materials: A script was designed for the deep interview (Annex E). The questions evaluated the effectiveness of the welcome bag, the website and forum, the events organised and the overall impact on the resident's lifestyle.

2.3.4 Timing: The deep interviews were carried out during the second half of year 3, October 2007- March 2008 with residents that had been visited in years 1 and 2.

2.4 Water champions

2.4.1 Samples: Residents that wished to know more about water efficiency and specifically those who wanted to be sustainable living champions were invited to a meeting to discuss a water champions programme. Residents that could not attend were contacted by phone. A total of 10 residents were recruited as water champions. However 2 of the 10 champions were later unable to participate in the scheme.

2.4.2 Procedure: The initial contact with residents was through a meeting at which the water champions scheme was introduced. The water champions would have their houses retrofitted with water saving devices and their water consumption monitored with the aim of measuring savings achieved. Anglian Water explained how the water saving devices worked and retrofitted the 8 households with water saving devices. They also recorded meter readings at the beginning and fortnightly until the end of the test period.

A focus group was carried out after completion of the experiment to share water champions' results and to discuss how champions could continue to be involved in the project. Zero waste and other potential champions were also invited. See report in Annex F.

2.4.3 Materials: Residents had a log where they were required to record any changes in their lifestyle that could affect their water consumption levels (Annex G).

2.4.4 Timing: The first meeting with Anglian Water took place in December 2006. The installation of the devices happened in February 2007 and measurements were taken over a period of 3 months from February 2007 to May 2007. The focus group took place in September 2007.

3 Results

3.1 Baseline and follow up survey results

This section will be looking at the results obtained from carrying out the visits and baseline surveys, and the follow up surveys. The initial visit and survey allowed us to collect baseline data against which any behaviour change could be identified through the follow up survey.

The changes in behaviour were largely caused by the three main elements of the visit: the face to face conversation with the residents; the free environmental goods provided in the welcome bag; and the information folders.

“Knocking on the door and giving the bag provided easy access to information and made it easy to start doing things” M. Phillips, Hampton

3.1.1 Water

Behaviour before visit (base: n=954)

Most residents surveyed, 88%, are aware that their water is metered but only 56% of those who are aware said this actually affects how much water they use. As many as 65% of householders visited will opt to shower, whereas only 4% of residents would exclusively bath, the rest would do both (31%).

The survey allowed us to collect information on different water saving behaviours: turning the tap off when brushing teeth; using the half load or economy button on the washing machine or dishwasher; using a bucket and sponge to wash the car; wash vegetables in a bowl rather than using the running tap; and doing the washing up in a bowl. Turning the tap off when brushing teeth is the most popular water saving behaviour and everybody, even those who do not do it, are aware this saves water.

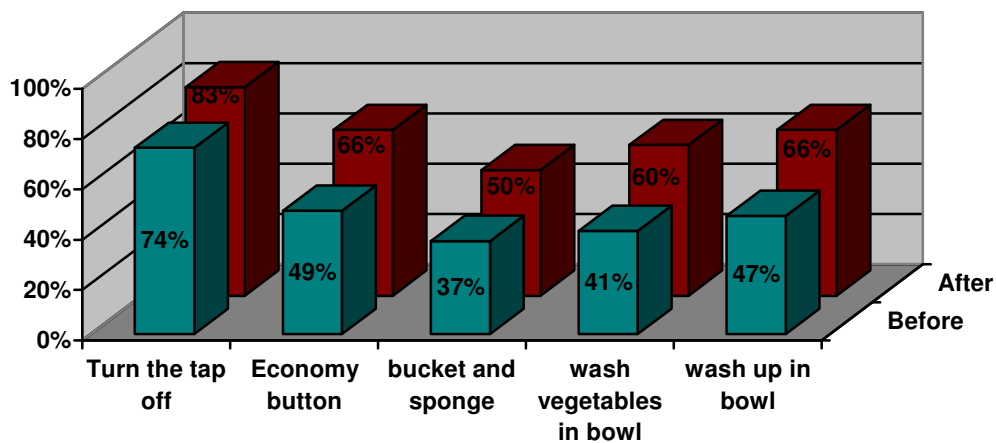
Behaviour change after visit (base n=288)

The results in the graph below show the changes implemented by participants after the visit compared to the baseline data. We have verified that the follow up sample size is representative of the total baseline size as the percentages of householders that were doing these behaviours when we first visited are very similar in both samples. This happens not only for water but for all the strands that we have

evaluated.

The graph shows a substantial increase in all behaviours. The highest increase is in the number of residents that use a bowl to wash the dishes and vegetables (+19%) followed by the number of people that started using the economy setting for the washing machine and/or dish washer (+17%).

Fig. 1 Changes in water saving behaviours
base: followed up participants, n=288

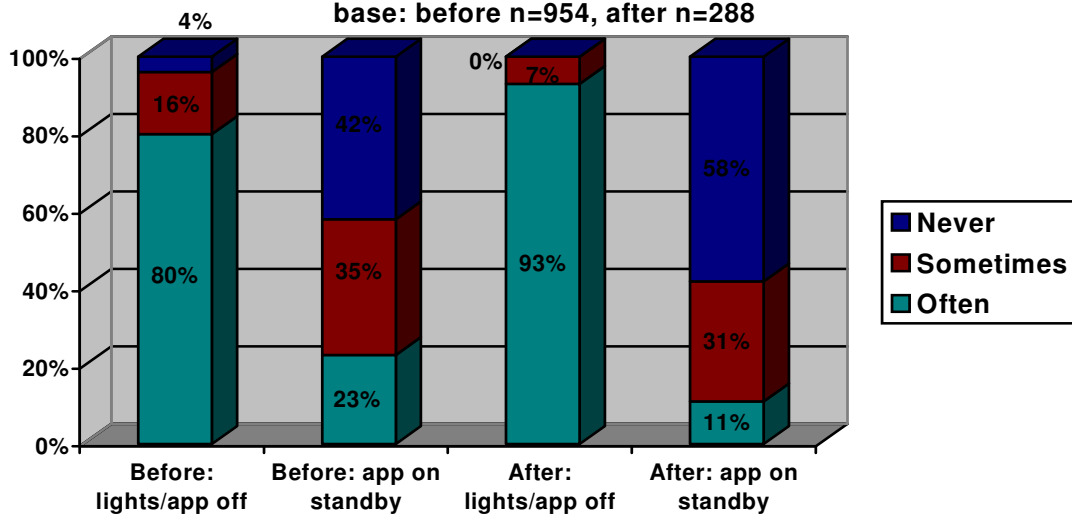


3.1.2 Energy

Behaviour before visit (base: n=954)

74% of participants already use energy efficient light bulbs. The main energy saving behaviours recorded were: turning off lights and appliances; leaving appliance on standby and filling up the kettle only as required. The graph below, figure 2, shows the results.

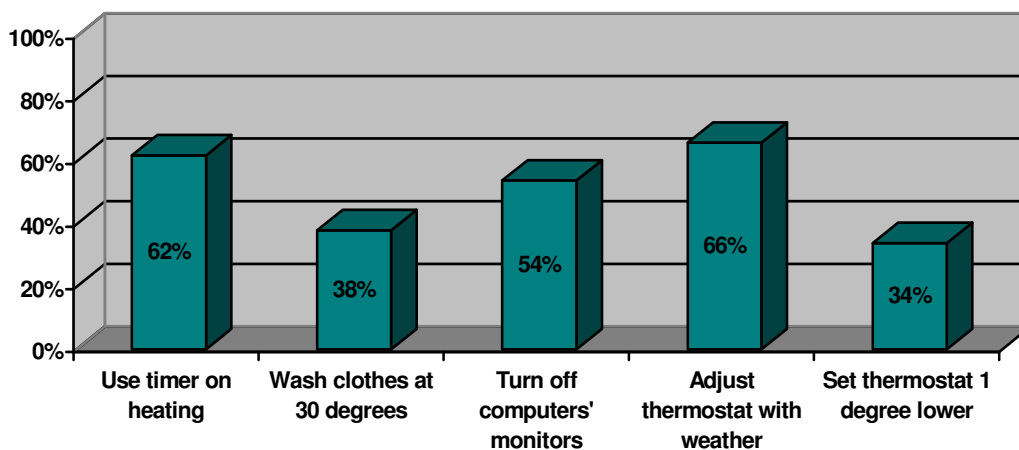
Fig. 2 Percentage of householders that turn lights and appliances off, and turn stand by off before and after visit
 base: before n=954, after n=288



When it is about turning lights and appliances off, people seem to be much more aware; 80% of participants turn them off when not in use. However stand by seems to be a harder to break habit with 23% of residents often leaving it on. Awareness is also high regarding filling the kettle only as required; with 87% of residents doing this.

Additional questions were included in the Hampton survey at the end of January 2007 in order to provide further tips and ideas to residents on what else they could be doing. These were not evaluated as part of the follow up survey, but the graph below shows the results for the 490 participants that answered these questions.

Fig. 3 Energy saving behaviours
 base: all participants that did survey after January 2007, n=490



Although residents were in general aware of these possible behaviours, they were not as popular or widespread as switching lights off. It was therefore a good opportunity to bring this up in the conversation at the doorstep so people would start changing their behaviour. If the project is to continue it would be interesting to see if these changes also increased after the visit.

Behaviour change after visit (base n=288)

Looking at the behaviours analysed in the baseline survey, the follow up found that overall there was an increase of 14% of residents that now switch the lights and appliances off more often. There was also an important 35% decrease of residents that leave stand by on. This second result is very positive considering the high number of residents that found it difficult to do this. Although most residents already took care only to fill the kettle with the water required the project still achieved behaviour change within the minority (13%) that did fill up the kettle completely. Of these 9% changed their behaviour.

“After the visit I have started encouraging colleagues at work to turn lights and computers off” Mr. Seldon, Hampton

Another behaviour we ask about in the follow up survey is the purchase of energy efficient appliances after the visit. 22% of the residents followed up (n=288), purchased energy efficient appliances, 94% and 6% of those appliances were A and B rating respectively.

Even though we cannot ensure these changes are exclusively due to the visit and the information provided in the bag, residents did state the project helped them become more aware of the things they can do to make a difference and motivated them to start implementing them.

“The project makes you think and be more aware about the environment in general. It was a nice way to approach people, so they are more open to try new things. It makes people look at how they live their lives” G.G., Riverside

3.1.3 Transport

Behaviour before visit (base: n=954)

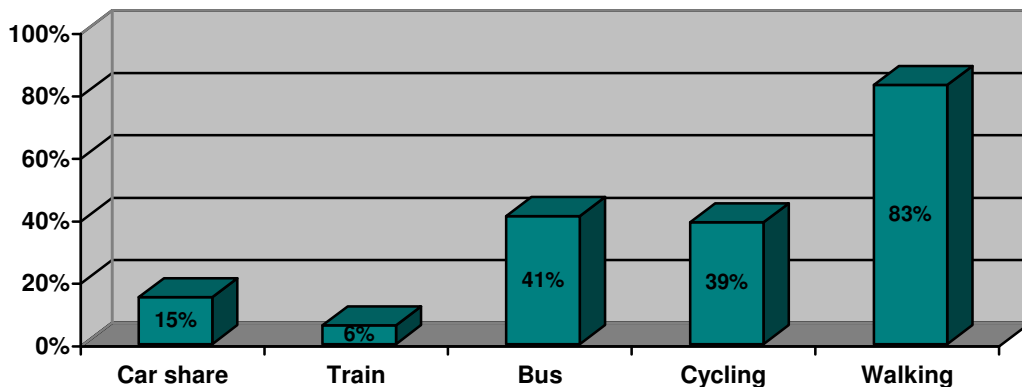
Hampton and Riverside are very similar communities demographically speaking. However there are a few differences. The most important is the fact that Riverside is located closer to Peterborough city centre and therefore has better links. However,

even though 79% of participants claimed to be aware of their local transport, residents from both estates continue to depend on the car for long and short journeys.

71% of residents never car share and only 12% do it often. No more than 14% of residents would be interested in having more information about car sharing.

Behaviour change after visit (base n=288)

Fig. 4 Percentage of householders that reduced the use of the car by adopting different behaviours
base: followed up participants that started using the car less, n=93



Residents were asked in the follow up survey if they had started using the car less as a result of our visit. A surprising percentage of **32%** of participants (n=288) did this for short journeys mainly by walking, cycling or using public transport more often. Taking into account the high reliability residents have on their cars and their reluctance to change this habit, it was surprising to see such a substantial reduction. We therefore consider this to be a highly successful result.

3.1.4 Wildlife

Behaviour before visit (base: n=954)

70% of participants are aware of their local nature reserve. Nonetheless only 28% (n=954) actually visit them.

Behaviour change after visit (base n=288)

After the visit 35% (n=288) had been to a nature reserve and **36% of these (n=100) said it was a result of the information provided in the bag.** This is a very strong

result and one that can be attributed directly to the project as we are asking residents specifically if our wildlife pack is the reason for this change.

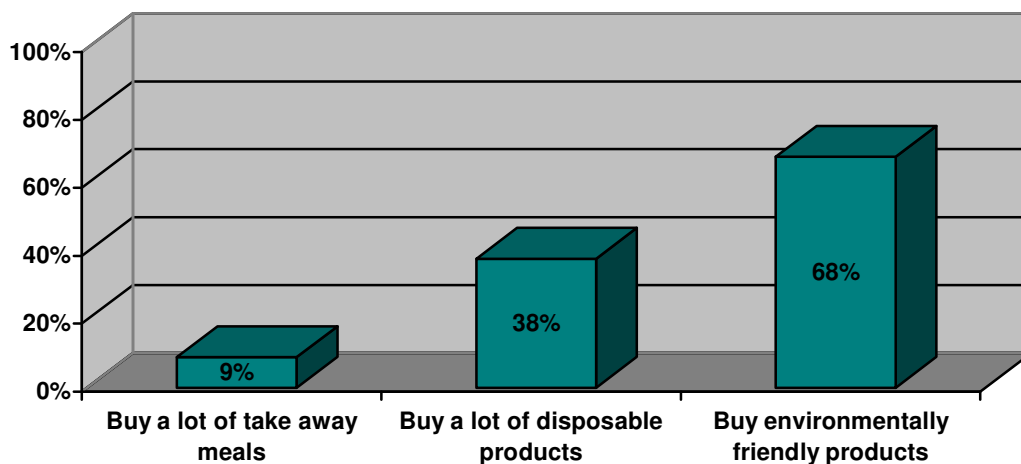
In addition residents were asked if they made their garden more wildlife friendly as a result of our visit. 33% (n=288) of followed up participants had; through planting certain types of plants to attract wildlife, making bird seed cakes (using the fat trap provided in the bag) or placing bird houses and feeders in their gardens.

3.1.5 Purchasing and healthy living

Behaviour before visit (base: n=954)

The two housing developments are overall affluent areas where residents' health and well being issues are not as high as they could be with lower income residents. A very small percentage of 9% buy takeaway or ready made meals whereas 68% of residents purchase environmentally friendly products, which are often more **expensive than non environmentally friendly ones.**

Fig. 5 Purchasing behaviours
base: all participants, n=954

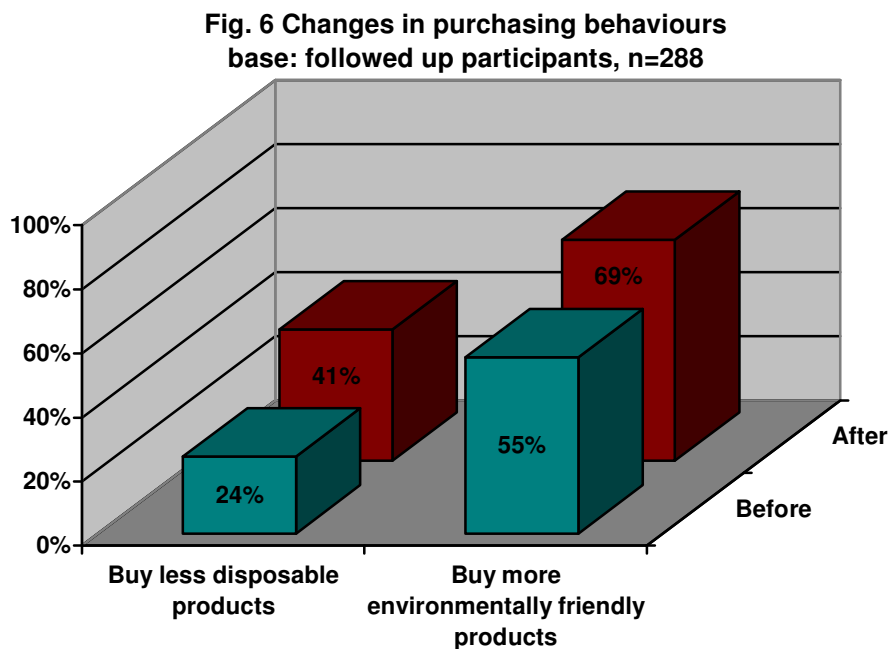


Behaviour change after visit (base n=288)

There has been an important **increase of 14%** of residents that buy more environmentally friendly products and **17% have started buying less disposable products.** Residents were less willing to try a vegetable box scheme, most were put off by the idea of not being able to choose what they can buy instead preferring to buy organic vegetables from a supermarket. Nevertheless, the percentage of people that joined an organic box scheme as a result of our visit was 9% which is a very

positive result.

Unfortunately we do not know how many people were already doing this before the visit as this question was not included in the baseline survey. We provided a free vegetable box voucher to those that expressed an interest, we believe this might have helped some of the residents to take this step.



3.1.5 Waste

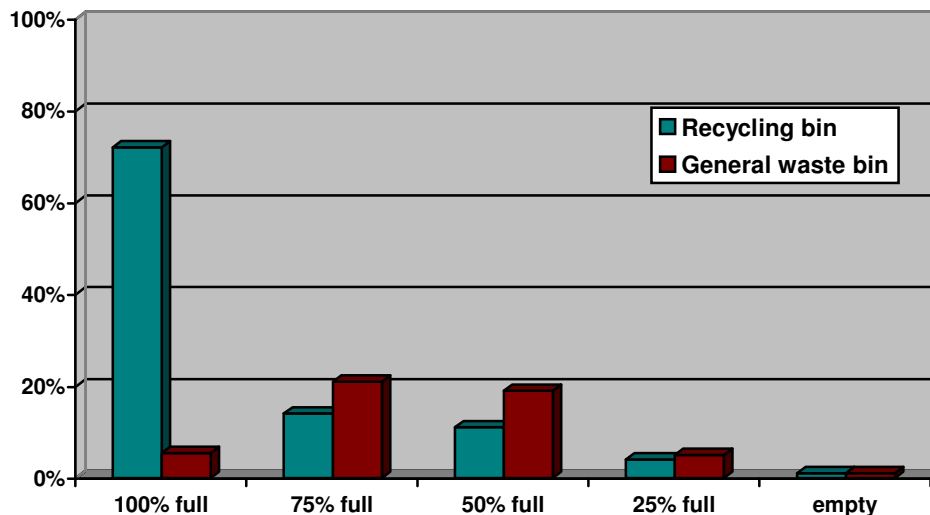
Behaviour before visit (base: n=954)

Overall householders have very high awareness levels regarding recycling but tend to be unaware of the re-use and reduce options to minimise waste. The recycling message is well established and reducing waste is not as popular. Waste bins are collected in Peterborough every fortnight alternating each week between the general waste bin, and both the recycling bin and the garden waste bin. However residents continue to complain about this and do not understand why at least the recycling bin is not collected weekly if the council wishes for them to recycle more.

Only 15% of residents home compost. Residents claim their gardens are too small to have a compost bin or in some cases do not think they would use the compost. Just over 50% of the participants try to buy products that are durable and/or have less packaging. A third of the participants use cloth shopping bags rather than carrier bags.

It has been a challenge for the project to educate residents on waste reduction issues but we have had very positive results. The graph below shows how full both the recycling bin and the general waste bin are reflecting the high proportion of recycling waste produced by residents.

**Fig. 7 How full the general waste and the recycling bins are when collected every fortnight
base: all participants n=954**



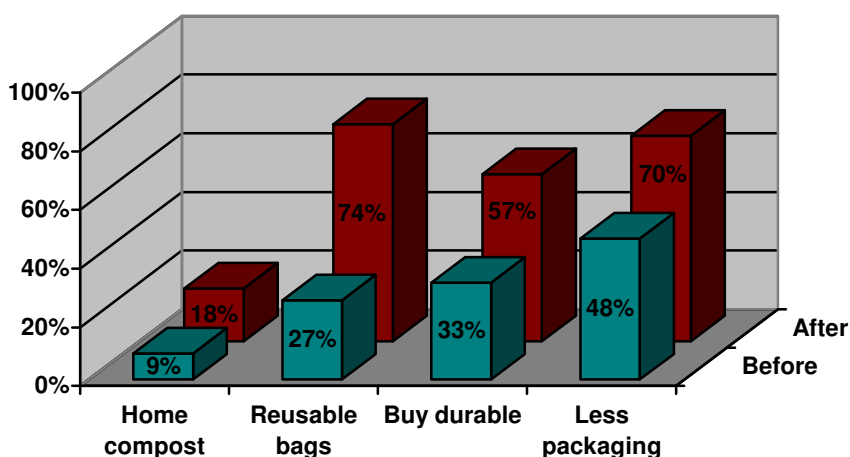
Behaviour change after visit (base n=288)

All waste minimisation behaviours increased after the project’s visit. The most outstanding is the **47% increase in the number of residents that now use reusable bags**. This is mostly due to the fact that we provide two, the jute welcome bag and a cloth bag. Residents have commented on how useful these bags are and how they have stopped using carrier bags completely. This is a very successful result which shows the strong impact that providing goods to residents has in their behaviour.

“We always take the bags now, everytime we go shopping. Sometimes I forget but then I feel very guilty!” K. Lawrence, Hampton

Home composting increased by 9% which, whilst not a high percentage, is still an excellent result due to the large positive impact of this change and the substantial commitment this represents from the residents. Even though it is still a small number of residents, **the amount of people composting has doubled**.

**Fig. 8 Changes in waste minimisation behaviours
base: followed up participants, n=288**



Additionally, a further 22% (n=288) of residents joined the Mail Preference Service and 71% of them (n=63) felt this considerably reduced the amount of junk mail they receive.

We can see the direct effects that the adoption of these measures is having in the amount of waste generated with **27% (n=288) of residents reducing the amount of waste in their general waste bins.**

3.1.6 Other findings

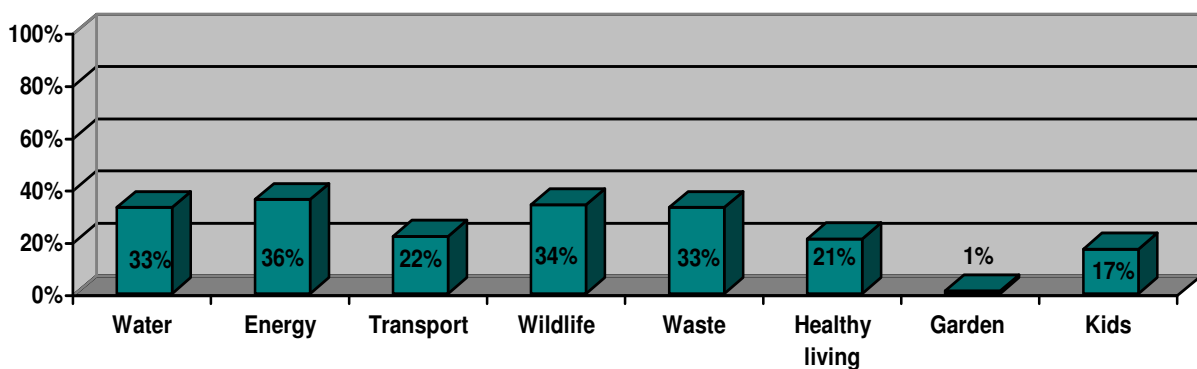
Behaviour change related to contents of the welcome bag

97% of residents followed up (n=288) looked at the information provided in the bag and as many as 43% found it very useful and 54% thought it was quite useful. The most popular folder section included in the bag was the Energy folder with 36% of residents (n=288) finding it very useful, followed closely by the Water, Wildlife and Waste folders (see figure 9).

The general opinion on the information provided in the bag is that it was too much and therefore either difficult to digest or not relevant. As a consequence, if the project continues, we will be providing a tailored community directory based on the responses given in the baseline survey. However there are still some residents who think the current information packs were very useful.

“The changes we implemented have been quite dramatic without affecting our day to day life. The approach was very good, the amount of information was just right and it gave food for thought for people to look into things in their own time and empower them” T. Mason, Hampton

**Fig. 9 Efficacy of folder sections in the welcome bag
base: participants followed up n=288**



The following table (table 1) shows how many residents from the follow up used the items in the bag and if they continued using them. Many of the behaviour changes that we have recorded originate from these goods. They allow for immediate incorporation of a new behaviour in people’s daily lifestyles which in most cases become long term patterns of behaviour.

“I was very impressed with the bag, I have a very busy lifestyle but it was presented in such a way that allowed me to implement easy changes I would not have bothered with before” Mrs. Bradshaw, Hampton

The two most popular items are the reusable shopping bags and the energy efficient light bulbs. From those who used the light bulbs (n=251), **78% used them to replace non energy efficient ones and 28% purchased more**. These are substantial percentages as it shows this is not just a one off behaviour change but it implies long term and deeper engagement from members of the community.

Table 1: Percentage of participants that have used goods provided in the bag and have continued to use them. Base: participants who were given the goods, n=varies

	% participants that used the product Base: followed up participants n=288	% participants that continued using the product Base: followed up participants n=288
Colouring pencils* n=178	44%	3%
Fat trap	60%	10%
Mouse mat	34%	10%
Reusable shopping bag	88%	57%
Ecover washing up liquid	77%	25%
Ecover washing powder	49%	
Bird seed* n= 128	59%	7%
Vegetable seeds* n=119	39%	5%
Light bulbs	87%	87%

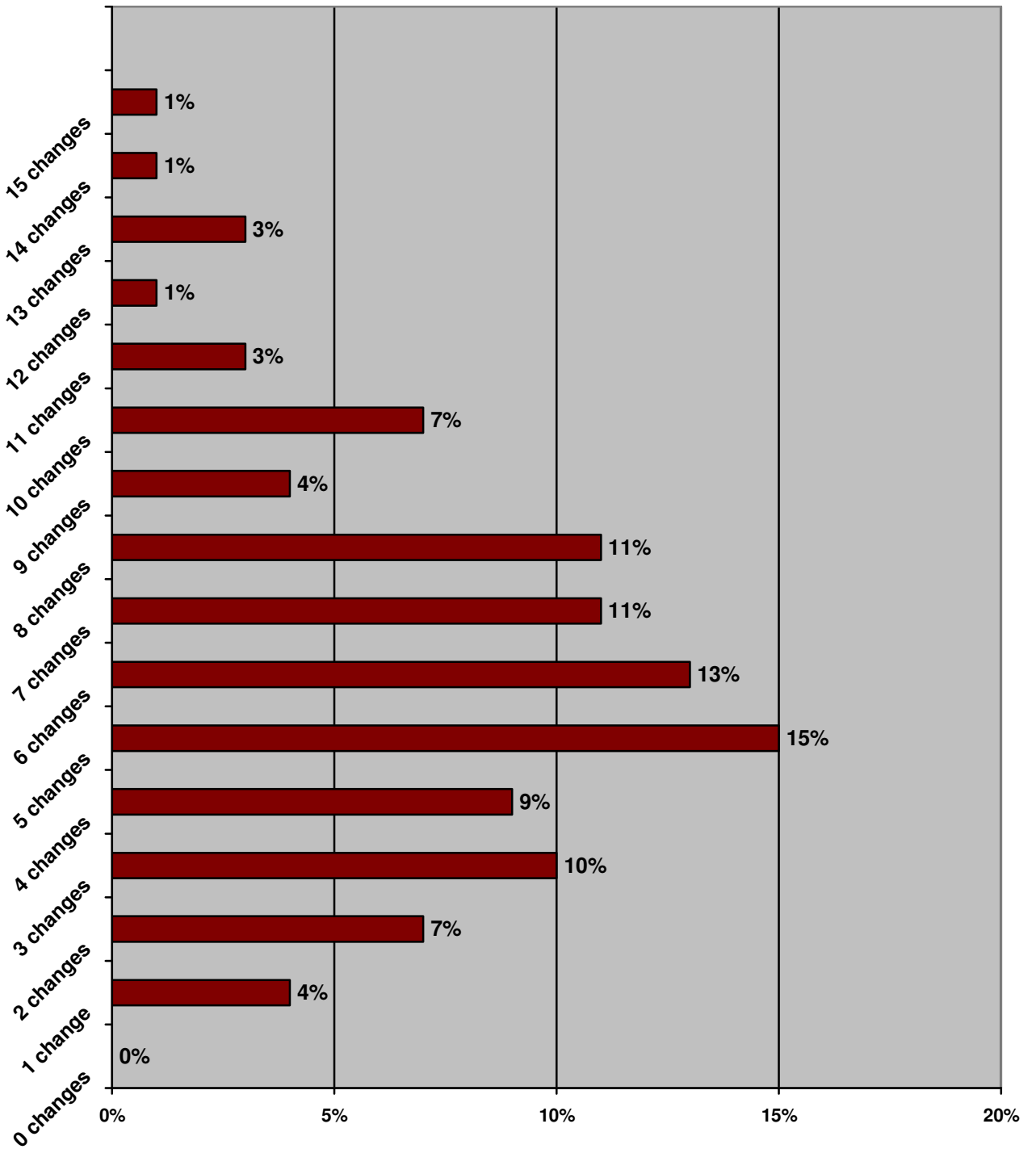
* items only available at certain times throughout the project due to stock limitations.

Percentages of those products that continued to be used is not based on the full sample; there is no data for this for year 1.

Another item from the bag is the community directory for Hampton residents. 41% (base: residents in Hampton that were followed up, n=192) of residents found it useful and a total of **8% (n=192) joined a club after our visit**. This is an important result in terms of facilitating community cohesion.

Finally the graph below shows the successful results for overall behaviour change from the project.

**Fig. 10 Percentage of residents undertaking a certain number of changes
base: followed up participants, n=288**



3.1.7 Brook Lyndhurst questions

In March 2007 we included the Brook Lyndhurst questions in our follow up survey. In consequence not all residents answered them, only those that were that were followed up in year 3 (most residents from year 2 and all from year 3 visits). These questions made the follow up survey longer and considering we did most of them over the phone some residents found it too long. We experienced other concerns as resident did not seem to understand question A2. They were answering these thinking not about the project itself but how important the factors were in general.

For example asked if they agreed with the statement that our project has “Given me new products and services so I can take action”, some residents said “not very”, whereas this was one of the main elements of the project. However when asking if the project had provided information on what government and business are doing, which our project had not done, some replied by saying “very important”. We tried to explain to residents the question and continuously reminded them they needed to think about our project when answering it. However, even though this worked for some people, we still felt the second part of the questions might not reflect the true aspects that make the project approach work.

Most participating residents, 63% (n=232), claimed to have started doing a bit more to reduce their environmental impact as a result of the visit. Those residents that are doing much more (21%) or a bit more than before (63%) to reduce their environmental impact were asked their views about why the project has helped them to reduce their environmental impact. The main factors that helped residents the most were that the project has: given me practical advice on what I can do to reduce my impact (61%); given me new products or services so I can take action to reduce my environmental impact (56%); and made me feel more strongly that environmental action is my personal responsibility, not someone else’s (54%).

The tables showing all the results for the Brook Lyndhurst questions can be found in Annex H.

3.2 In depth interviews results

The evaluation of the in depth interviews showed that the Seeding Sustainable Communities project has been successful in raising awareness and endorsing behaviour change. The resources provided in the bag, together with the bag were considered useful. The project has facilitated behaviour change by setting a good

example, increasing awareness, supplying information that is easy to understand and apply and providing the resources to implement changes.

The evaluation of the in depth interviews also highlighted motivators and barriers to behavioural change. Motivators to engage in pro-environmental behaviour were having an example to follow, an increased awareness and knowledge and access to resources. The main barrier to changing behaviour was identified as expense. Other barriers were a lack of facilities, convenience, space, and access to resources. For the full report see Annex H.

3.3 Measurement data from water champions

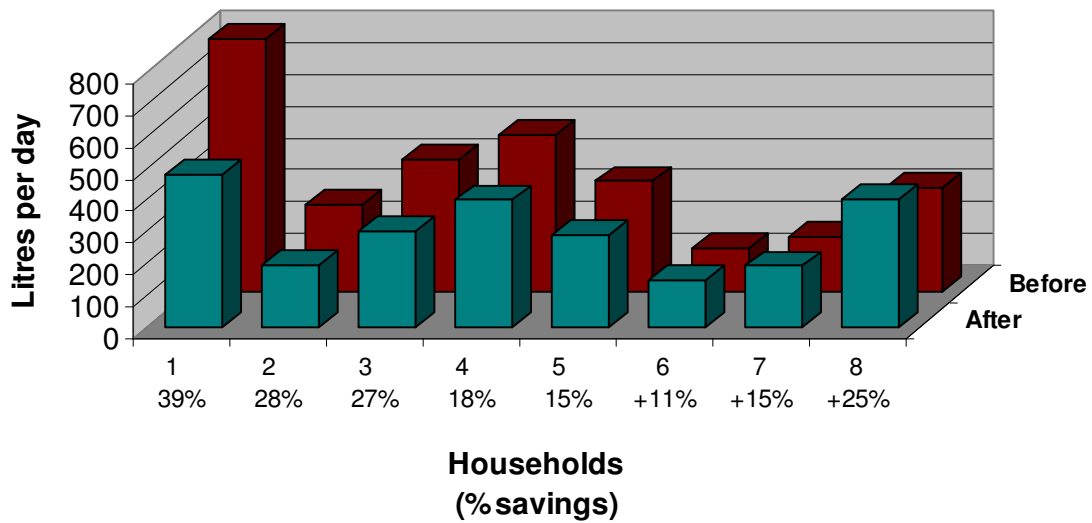
Seeding Sustainable Communities had been working closely with Anglian Water, one of our main partners, in order to achieve behavioural change and to evaluate if new houses are more or less water efficient than older houses (built 10+ years ago). The idea of recruiting members of the community as water champions to test water saving devices arose mainly from the fact that the water pressure in Hampton is extremely high with flow rates of up to 25 litres per minute. This leads to high water consumption.

Water saving devices were installed in 10 of the properties, 2 of which offered limited opportunities for retrofitting. Audits were carried at the other 8 houses prior to the installation of devices which included 14 shower limiters, 19 tap restrictors and 10 dual flush and 9 single flush WCs.

The graphs below show the results and the savings achieved by the households. Even though the aerated shower head showed variable effectiveness and three households increased their consumption, all residents participating were positive about the scheme. Some residents achieved outstanding **savings of as much as 39%** which also translate into monetary savings. For example, for the residents that achieved water savings of 39%, the potential cost savings were £256.76.

“I would definitely recommend the free water saving devices, I loved them, and they saved me money” Sarah Vaudrey, Hampton Hargate.

Fig. 11 Average Daily Consumption



It is difficult to tell how much of the savings were due to behavioural aspects and how much was due exclusively to the water saving devices. It is also important to look at the log and identify any circumstances that could have affected water consumption such as being away on holiday or having visitors. Overall this was a very successful experiment and as a consequence we are looking into expanding this to other sustainable living champions within Hampton.

4 Outputs

4.1 Project outputs for all three years

4.1.1 Project team development

Volunteers were an essential part of the project allowing for targets to be met. Additionally 2 of the permanent volunteers were recruited through the Richmond Fellowship for Employment and Training (RFET) whose main aim is to give experience to people who suffer mental illness to help them gain the confidence to get back to work.

A total of 34 volunteers (Year 1 - 13, Year 2 - 22, Year 3 - 16) helped deliver the project's outputs throughout the three years by carrying out baseline and follow up surveys, packing of bags and information, and helping with the delivery of events.

4.1.2 Website

The website was launched in August 2007 to provide further local and environmental information and as part of the exit strategy. The number of visitors has grown since then with an average of 1,550 visitors per month over the last year and a half (see Annex B).

An online forum was created at the beginning of year 3 to promote community participation and sharing of environmental and local information. However, due to some technical problems, residents were unable to post messages for a few months. This affected the number of items posted and people involved, despite this the forum attracted a total of 20 users discussing 19 topics.

4.1.3 Discounted environmental goods

Throughout the 3 years, the project team continued adding goods to the welcome bag. A total of 9 items were included: energy efficient light bulbs; fat trap; cloth shopping bag; Ecover washing up liquid and washing powder; bird seed; vegetable seeds; sustainable colouring pencils; recycled mouse mat; and wristbands for kids. There were a total of 8 folders with information on the main aspects of sustainable living.

The project also put together 5 different tailored bags in year 3 which were delivered to delegates at a series of events: grow your own vegetables training; sustainable living champions focus group; “Recycle Now” school visit; recycling workshops with social housing tenants; and re-useable nappy information sessions.

4.1.4 Household visits and follow up phone calls

A total of 954 visits and baseline surveys were carried out in the three years and 288 (year1 - 45, year - 150, year 3 - 93) follow up surveys were completed. As a result of the visits 100% of residents that were followed up implemented at least one change with 70% of residents implementing 5 or more changes (See figure 10). These changes were for example using the cloth shopping bag, energy efficient light bulbs or starting to home compost.

One of the aims of the project was to identify new developments where the project could expand. In total the project visited two new housing developments, Hampton and Riverside, but it was not possible to identify other new areas as they were still in the planning or early building stages. Hampton and Riverside were large enough developments to undertake all the project work planned.

The aim of visiting new housing developments was to ensure we would target residents that had recently moved in, as this is a good breakpoint at which to change behaviour. However, only 23% of residents had lived in the household for a year or less. Interestingly we found both groups benefited equally from the project and were showing the same levels of behaviour change.

4.1.5 Create a sustainable living champions network

A total of 20 champions were recruited through a series of schemes, the water saving devices, the zero waste challenge and the reusable nappy network champions. The focus group held in September 2007 with current and potential champions helped us find out more about their needs and how they would like to be further involved within their community.

It was not possible to have all champions writing on the online forum as initially planned due to the technical difficulties explained earlier. Nevertheless 4 of our champions posted messages on our forum about the zero waste challenge and reusable nappies.

4.1.6 Develop and deliver community sustainability seminars and events.

Events and seminars were a core part of this project as a way to ensure longer term engagement, increased awareness and understanding of environmental issues and to create community spirit. Event and seminar topics were selected in response to the needs and interests residents showed in the surveys.

A total of 47 events were organised in the 3 years (year 1 - 10, year 2 - 15, year 3 - 22). The project organised four very successful large scale events, the **Farmers' Market**, the **Woodston Ponds** nature reserve event, the **Apple Day** and the **SSC Conference**. All these events were organised in year 3 and had a fantastic turn out with over 1,000 people attending the Farmers' Market and the Apple Day. See Annex I. In line with the exit strategy an end of project conference was held with the aim of not only sharing best practice, but also to identify potential partners for expansion and continuation of the project.

For all other smaller workshops such as the **growing your own vegetables** training day, the **Materials Recycling Facility** visit and the **social housing recycling workshops**, the turn out was between 5 to 10 residents. Residents expressed positive feedback from all the workshops and were very interested in seeing more organised in their local area.

“The Materials Recycling Facility visit was very good. As a result there are now less things going into my bin” Mrs. Halstead, Riverside

4.1.7 Personalised energy and travel guides

Initially the idea was to identify residents in the target communities that wished to have a personalised travel plan as part of a series of personalised sustainable living guides. However an initiative was set up by Sustrans to do exactly this through their individualised travel marketing.

Rather than replicating what they were already doing, we joined forces with them in year 3. Details of residents we had visited and that wished to know more about sustainable travel were passed on to Sustrans, who would then visit them to offer a personalised travel guide. We did this in quarters 2 and 3 of year 3 and the response rate was 44.5% and 17% respectively.

In addition to this and working in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust (EST), we sent a Home Energy Check form to all the participants that had shown an interest in

knowing more about energy saving. Once completed and posted back to EST, residents receive a tailored report advising them on a series of options that would help them make their homes more energy efficient.

To ensure good response rates, residents would receive a free energy efficient light bulb and would also enter a draw prize for a wind up digital radio. This was done in Quarter 3 of year 2 and Quarters 1 and 4 of year 3. The response rates were 4%, 8% and 7% respectively.

4.2 Quarters 3 and 4 progress report

The following is a progress report for the last 6 months of the project, from October 2007 to March 2008 inclusive.

4.2.1 Objective 1: To maintain and update when necessary project resources

a. Project team development

In quarters 3 and 4 the project required a lower number of volunteers as the baseline surveys were mostly completed. However volunteers were still recruited to help with the packing of tailored bags, data input, follow up surveys and helping at events. Three volunteers continued helping on a regular basis, with a total of 11 volunteers involved during the last two quarters.

b. Website

The website has continued to be an essential tool to provide further environmental and community information. It was continuously updated with local services and news and it was used to promote and provide further information on events such as the Apple Day and the Seeding Sustainable Communities Conference.

The website experienced an average of 1,550 visits per month. The forum continued to experience technical problems. As a solution we decided to change the format and move it to a different host. This was not completed until mid February. Despite this obstacle, new topics such as reusable nappies, organic food and produce, and eating organic in a budget were posted by residents.

The table below shows how residents heard about the website.

Table 2 Percentages of visitors that heard about the website in different ways

Updated 04/11/07	Total	%
word of mouth	18	39.13043
Local press	3	6.521739
Poster/Advert	6	13.04348
Home Visit	2	4.347826
Web Search	9	19.56522
Other	8	17.3913
Total	46	100

c. Discounted environmental goods.

We continued to include the same goods in the welcome bag. We also delivered tailored bags at some of the events such as the “Recycle Now” workshops organised at the local schools and the two recycling workshops organised in partnership with the residential social landlord, Cross Keys Homes.

4.2.2 Objective 2: Household visits, follow up phone calls and deep interviews

a. Household visits and surveys

By the end of September we had finished 279 surveys and had 21 left to complete. 23 surveys were done in October and other 2 surveys were received by post in November, surpassing our target of 300 visits for year 3.

We continued to use calling cards when residents were not home with a response rate of 5%.

b. Follow up questionnaire

Having met the 150 follow up surveys for residents surveyed in year 2, the project started contacting residents visited in year 3 during quarters 3 and 4 to do a follow up survey. They were completed by the beginning of March. The results continued to be extremely positive with residents becoming more aware of sustainable issues and implementing long-term changes in their lifestyle.

c. In depth face to face interviews

Another 5 deep interviews were carried out in quarters 3 and 4 on top of the 2 carried out in September. Unfortunately due to the heavy workload we experienced, mainly from the end of project conference, we were unable to complete all 12 interviews.

d. Visit new development areas in Peterborough

We continued to visit residents in the newer areas in Hampton and it was not necessary to locate another new development in Peterborough. Even though we continued to work also in Riverside our main focus in these last two quarters was in Hampton due to the number of new houses being built there.

e. Visit householders recently moved into the area.

By visiting the newly built houses in Hampton, the project visited a higher number of recently moved residents. However the percentage of residents that had been living in the household for a year or less was only 23%.

Objective 3: To create a Sustainable Living Champion network.

Based on the results from the focus group held in September, efforts were made during Quarters 3 and 4 to recruit energy and water champions.

We contacted residents in November and we identified a group of 10 residents that were interested in becoming energy champions, with the aim of starting a scheme before Christmas. However closer to Christmas most residents contacted us and mentioned they would not be able to do it until after the holiday period. This delay meant we would not have enough time to get valuable energy saving data and therefore we were unable to undertake the energy champion scheme.

Further water champions were recruited by promoting this through existing water champions and the local Hampton Gazette. However we did not receive the water saving devices from Anglian Water in time and again, it was too late in the year to have residents measuring any valuable savings.

Objective 4: To develop and deliver community sustainability seminars and events

We continued organising a series of workshops and events throughout these two quarters. The main events organised for the second half of the year were Apple Day,

“Recycle Now” school workshops, a sustainably themed reading group and the Seeding Sustainable Communities Conference. See Annex I.

Objective 5: Personalised energy and travel guides.

Working in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust and Sustrans, residents surveyed were offered personalised energy and travel guides.

In quarter 3 Sustrans started visiting Riverside offering an itemised travel plan. The project provided Sustrans with the contact details of residents previously surveyed. The percentage of residents that requested a personalised travel plan was 17%, much lower than that achieved in Quarter 2.

In quarter 4, all those residents surveyed in year 3 who wished to have more information about energy, were sent a Home Energy Check. All those that sent this back to us entered a prize draw competition for a free wind up DAB digital radio. The response rate was 7% very similar to the one experienced in quarter 1.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Main achievements

- 100% of residents that completed the follow up implemented at least 1 behaviour change as a result of our project. 70% implemented 5 or more changes.
- The opportunity to interact with residents not only once but ongoing, longer-term engagement via the follow up surveys, events, forum and champions. Hearing directly from residents that our visit had a positive and lasting impact on their lifestyle: 47% more use reusable bags; 32% started to use the car less; and 33% made their garden more wildlife friendly.
- Community events such as the first Apple Day in Peterborough and a Farmers' Market in Hampton. Residents learnt more about their local environment and felt more engaged with their community.
- The high quality and number of workshop organised on topics such as growing vegetables or what happens to your recyclable waste in the materials recycling facility.
- The Seeding Sustainable Communities conference to share findings from our project, best practice and learn from others on how to create sustainable communities.
- Recruitment of 20 sustainable living champions who acted as good examples within their community, inspiring others towards a more sustainable lifestyle.
- The partners we have made through the 3 years of our project that have supported us not only financially but mainly by providing information, materials for the bag and the opportunity to share best practice.

5.2 Successes and areas for improvement

5.2.1 Approaches

The direct contact with residents proved to be very effective; the discussion that takes place at the doorstep is what inspires residents to implement changes, along with the welcome bag and the easy to implement tips. What is more, it is an effective

way to reach the non-converted as we visit them rather than waiting for them to come to us.

“Your approach, specially the direct contact, is a fabulous way to do things. Even though I had awareness I never did anything about it until this project opened my eyes. It is absolutely fantastic and I would love to be further involved” G. Beuld, Hampton.

Smaller, focused workshops work well with the already converted as they look at more challenging levels of sustainable behaviour change. In addition they ensure changes are further embedded and create community spirit.

“The day taught me that allotments don’t need to be uniform and a chore. They can be creative, naturalistic and beautiful places where you really want to spend time” Laura, Hampton

5.2.2 SCP areas

The easiest changes are those that relate to the goods we provide in the bag which means they can implement a change in their lifestyle almost immediately by, for example, using the energy efficient light bulbs or using the bag. In general changes that are perceived as easy or fun are the most popular ones.

Residents are more reticent to implement changes that are related to higher cost, such as purchasing Ecover products or Organic food. Also changes that initially seem to be more complicated or time consuming such as composting or getting a water butt, are undertaken less.

“I was very impressed with the bag. I have a very busy lifestyle but it was presented in such a way that allowed me to implement easy changes I would have not been bothered with before” Mrs. Bradshaw, Hampton

5.2.3 Project participants/audiences

When looking at the changes implemented versus the demographic groups, most changes came from the largest group in the community, 25-40 year olds. It is therefore difficult to say with this sample size how meaningful this is or if it is simply a reflection of the demographics of the group.

Some houses in Hampton were social housing and when working with this group, both during the visit and at events, the project team encountered new obstacles that

made it harder for the project to reach them. Environmental issues are not their main concerns and it is also perceived as expensive, so there was apathy when trying to engage with some of the social housing tenants. However within this group there were some very receptive residents that benefited immensely from the visit.

5.2.4 Replication

The simplicity of our approach and the high level of engagement with community members and partners make it a flexible project that can easily be adapted to the different needs that it addresses. After working with new residents, older residents and social housing tenants, and experiencing positive results from all these groups, the project has proven its capability to be replicated in different scenarios.

The main project audience were receptive to environmental messages. Issues such as language, socio cultural and socio economic differences can make it harder to engage with different audiences. The project will need to adapt to and involve and learn from different types of community.

If the project is replicated on a much larger scale, it could be adapted to reach a higher number of people in a cost effective way through reduced time spent in contact with residents. However this could affect the high quality approach of taking the time to talk in-depth with residents which has been so successful in achieving a high percentage of behaviour change.

“Having somebody coming around helps you rather than seeing an advert in the telly. It is more personal to you” Mrs. Bentley, Hampton

5.3 Recommendations

The experience over the last 3 years, the successes and the strong partnerships established along with the need that has been identified, are a strong base for a successful continuation of this project.

Taking into account the lessons learnt about what works and what does not and the need to adapt to the groups we are trying to reach, the project will continue the effective delivery of sustainable behaviour change. It will be necessary to reach a balance between quality and quantity if we are to make it appealing to new partners while also achieving behaviour change.

At the same time, it is very important that we continue working along with existing schemes rather than trying to reinvent the wheel to ensure effective use of resources

which will benefit not only SSC but all the parties involved.

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And finally thank to Defra and especially Kathryn Rathouse for their help with the evaluation process.

Annex A: Target communities' profile

- Target communities' profile

Annex B: Project materials

- Welcome bag
- Website
- Community forum

Annex C: Surveys

- Baseline survey
- Follow up survey

Annex D: Other materials

- Covering letter
- Calling card

Annex E: Topic guide

- Deep interview script

Annex F: Focus group

- Focus group report

Annex G: Water champions

- Water champions diary log instructions and template

Annex H: Results

- Results summary
- Brook Lyndhurst's questions results
- In depth interview results

Annex I: Project events

- Farmers' market
- Woodston Ponds nature reserve event
- Apple Day
- Recycle now
- Reading group
- Conference

Annex J: Marketing

- Newspaper articles