

Community Involvement and the Commonsides Community Development Trust

An Interactive Qualifying Project

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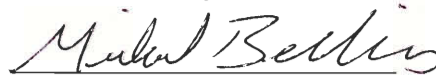
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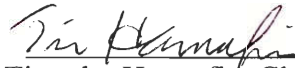
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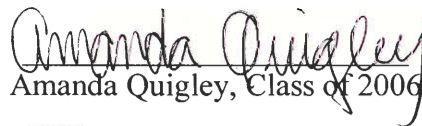
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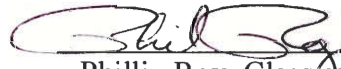
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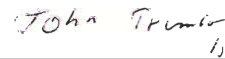


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Abstract

The Commonsides Trust is a non-profit community development organisation devoted to developing the Commonsides Area, located in the London borough of Merton. Because of limited staff, the Trust has been unable to devote resources to increase its volunteer base and community awareness of its programs. The purpose of this study was (1) to gather and present information to the Trust about attitudes towards volunteering, and (2) to provide technical support (a website review and a database) that will aid their efforts to increase volunteers and community involvement.

Executive Summary

The Commonsides Community Development Trust is a non-profit community development organisation located in the London Borough of Merton. Based in the ward of Pollards Hill, the Commonsides Trust serves the wards of Pollards Hill, Longthornton, and the Eastfields area of Figges Marsh. Because of limited staff and resources, the Commonsides Trust has been unable to devote the amount of time required to increase community awareness of the organisation and thus increase the numbers of volunteers to help with their programs.

The Commonsides Trust has organised and run many programs and events within the community over the past two years, such as support for single mothers, family fun days, and cultural and educational events. Even though the Commonsides Trust has had good attendance and success at their events, they seek to increase awareness of their organisation in the communities they serve as well as to attract volunteers who will aid them in their work.

The purpose of this study was to present the Commonsides Trust with information regarding the attitudes of the community towards volunteering and to provide technical support that will aid in their efforts to increase the number of volunteers in their organisation.

Our team provided technical support in two areas: first, we reviewed the Commonsides Trust's website and suggested ways that it could be improved in order to increase communication with the community. Secondly, we constructed an

organisational database so the staff can efficiently store, organize and search information about volunteers.

We expect that the data we collected and analysed will help the Commonsides Trust build up the capacity of their membership; that the database will allow them to manage and increase volunteers; and that their revised website will inform the community of the Commonsides Trust. Ultimately, we expect that our team's contributions will allow them to develop a better community.

Our background research focused on understanding different approaches towards community development. Several case studies and articles helped us develop an understanding of both the need for volunteers and the methods of community engagement. We learned from our research that each community development project presents a unique challenge and that there are multiple solutions. Therefore, in order to approach any situation regarding community development we must first develop a broad understanding of the many aspects of community involvement. To gain this understanding we discussed the issues extensively with our liaisons and we studied appropriate material on community development.

While working with the Commonsides Trust, we used two different methods to obtain information from the community: interviews and group discussions. We interviewed members of the board of trustees, as well as residents who volunteer and those who do not volunteer. We asked the residents questions that were relevant in respect to their involvement level with the Commonsides Trust. The group discussions were more informal than the interviews. We attended meetings with established community groups and talked to some of the members. In both the interviews and the

group discussions, we asked questions pertaining to the community's view of the Commonsense Trust and why the residents do or do not volunteer. From these interviews and group discussions we found repeated themes and reasons for why people do and do not volunteer. We discovered that people volunteer for social reasons, employment skills, enjoyment, and community knowledge. People do not volunteer, we found, because of apathy, and because of lack of time, lack of awareness of the Commonsense Trust, and a lack of a sense of community.

Since data management is important in volunteer organisations, we constructed a database using Microsoft Access to help the Commonsense Trust keep their contacts electronically organized. The database will allow them to obtain, store and retrieve information about their volunteers more efficiently than by using their current paper based system. The database can be easily searched using such search fields as name, address, ethnicity, age and even membership within the Trust. We also created a step by step instructional manual that accompanies the database which describes and that details how to add or edit new entries.

We reviewed the Commonsense Trust's website after we found that many residents do not know about the Commonsense Trust. Since many people use the internet daily to obtain information, we provided the Commonsense Trust with recommendations on how to improve their website. Amongst our recommendations were:

- to make the website easier for users to find information,
- to update it with greater frequency
- to include a section of lively photographs of the activities of the Commonsense Trust.

This project resulted in the collection of volunteer related information for the Commonsense Trust, as well as the recommendations for an improved website and the construction of an organisational database. We believe that our project has the potential to expand into many future project teams who can provide the Commonsense Trust with added resources to aid their future success.

Authorship

We believe that every member of this Interactive Qualifying Project contributed equally to all parts.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following people for their help, support, and guidance.

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1 Introduction

Community involvement is crucial to the success of any community regeneration effort. A community is often defined as a group of people located within a certain geographical area. Along with geographical location, a community can be any group of individuals with similarities such as interest, religion, ethnicity and age. When people become active in their community, they develop social relationships that can provide new opportunities for employment, entertainment, and personal growth.

The Commonsides Community Development Trust is a non-profit organisation managed by members of the community it serves. It describes its aim as working to build a better future for its community through partnerships with local residents and organizations (Commonsides Community Web Site).

The Commonsides Trust seeks to increase community awareness of its goals and programs; in particular it seeks the involvement of the people in the areas of Pollards Hill, Longthornton and the Eastfields area of Figges Marsh, which are referred to as the Commonsides area. Figure 1-1 highlights the Commonsides area. The map on the right is of all of greater London and has the borough of Merton outlined in red. The map on the left shows the borough of Merton with the location of the Commonsides area highlighted in brown. The Commonsides area is a socio-economically deprived area located in the Borough of Merton.

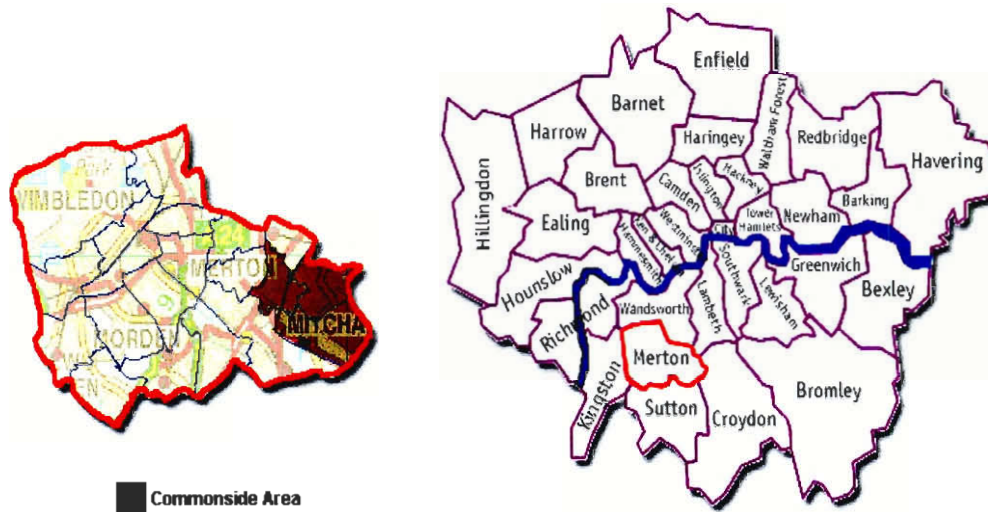


Figure 1-1: Map of Commonsides Area

A successful IQP addresses the interactions between humanity, society, and technology (see Appendix B for description of an IQP). The purpose of this project is to provide the Commonsides Trust with information regarding the attitudes of the local residents toward volunteering as well as provide them with technical support. Our team gathered information and presented it to Commonsides managers with the expectation that this information will help the organisation build up the capacity of their membership and ultimately develop a better community. To obtain the views of the community, we interviewed members and trustees of the Commonsides Trust along with residents of the Commonsides area. We also used group discussions to talk to previously established groups. At these interviews and group discussions, we were able to ask specific questions depending on the participant’s relationship with the Commonsides Trust and get their opinions on the Commonsides Trust and its involvement in the community.

The current membership of the Commonsides Trust represents only a small portion of the communities in the Commonsides area, primarily because the Commonsides Trust is

a young organisation and has not had the time or resources to recruit as many new members as they would like. The organisation wishes to attract volunteers to assist with the operation of the Trust with the organisation and management its programs. These programs include the Parent Gateway Project for single mothers, Summer Fun Days for children and their families, and cultural and educational events. Our team members believe that awareness of the Commonsides Trust and its programs within the community should increase community involvement. To increase knowledge of the Commonsides Trust within the community, we reviewed the organisation's website and provided recommendations for updating and improving its appeal. With a user friendly and regularly updated website, people will have easier time finding information about the Commonsides Trust, which could help to advertise and create awareness, leading to more volunteers.

Once the Commonsides Trust obtains more volunteers, they will need a way to efficiently manage them. We created a database that will allow them to both keep all their volunteer information together and search for volunteers who meet certain criteria. The electronic database is easier to search than their old method and therefore will save them time, which they can put into recruiting new volunteers.

2 Background

To form a basis for this project we conducted initial background research into the Commonsides area, other community development projects, and volunteering. For the background of this study, we performed case studies, conducted interviews, and read extensively in appropriate literature.

2.1 The Commonsides Area

The Commonsides Area is made up of the wards of Pollards Hill and Longthornton as well as the eastern part of Figges Marsh all of which are located in the London borough of Merton. According to historian E.N. Montague, up until the late 19th century this area was sparsely populated farmland. By the early part of the 20th century, the area had grown into a thriving suburb of London. However, at the end of World War Two the population exploded. The government, facing housing shortages for the returning veterans, constructed a number of prefabricated houses in the area. By the 1970s the Pollards Hill Estate had replaced these houses. A new library and a community centre were also built and are still there today (Montague 110-113).

The Commonsides area today is very diverse. The large government estate of Pollards Hill is a literal stones throw away from Longthornton, which are mostly owner-occupied houses. The people of the area, especially Pollards Hill, reflect this diversity. Of the more than 9,900 people of Pollards Hill, almost one third are from a minority background and more than twenty five percent are under the age of sixteen (2001 Census). Unfortunately, the diversity of shopping locales does not match that of the people. A small bank of shops across the street from the estate provides the only

opportunity for shopping in the area. Anything that cannot be bought at these shops must be purchased in Mitcham centre which is at least half an hour travel by bus.

2.2 Literature Review

This section includes summaries of a collection of noteworthy works which we have come across during our research. These articles have helped us formulate ideas about how community development works and why people volunteer.

2.2.1 What Motivates the Volunteer?

Albert Varner Jr., the president of a consulting firm and an active volunteer, discusses the question “Who Volunteers, and Why?” in this article published in *Non-profit World*. Every person has hierarchy of needs which governs how he or she prioritizes the needs he or she must meet for survival and fulfilment. Varner identifies five levels of need which are in order as follows: “food, clothing, and shelter; safety-security; sense of belonging/recognition; self esteem; and self realization/self actualization” (Varner 13). Once a person satisfies the first two levels of need, it is more likely that the person will begin to seek higher levels of satisfaction. Varner suggests that since people are often not able to obtain a level of satisfaction higher than a “sense of belonging” at work, they often turn to non-profit organisations to fulfil these needs (Varner 13).

Since most jobs today require previous experience Varner believes many women are turning to volunteering to help prepare them for paid jobs. If a woman has volunteered it may give her an advantage over someone with no prior job experience. In addition, women may use volunteering to explore different areas of future employment. Varner believes that “People are going into volunteer jobs to explore other areas of work,

to round out their job experience” (Varner 14). Volunteering is another outlet for someone who may be looking for a career change to try out the job beforehand (Varner 13-15).

People are motivated to volunteer for many different reasons. Varner says these reasons can range from a person wanting to become socially accepted to needing to demonstrate talent. However, these motivations can be different in each case. It is the job of the non-profit organisation staff to try to match the volunteer’s interests, abilities and motivation with the job most suited from them (Varner 12-15).

Knowing some of the reasons people volunteer helped us to start to formulate ideas on how to get non-volunteers involved. This article lists some of the many benefits volunteering provides. If the Commonsense Trust were to make non-volunteers more aware of the ways in which volunteering could benefit them, they would be more apt to volunteer.

2.2.2 Children in urban regeneration: foundations for sustainable participation

The author of “Children in urban regeneration: foundations for sustainable participation”, Suzanne Speak, seeks to answer the question of whether or not children can be active members of the community in which they live. A specific case study of the Cruddas Park estate in Newcastle, Britain is used as a reference to help define a child’s role in the community. The Cruddas Park estate had a very long list of concerns which were defined by people within the community. A plan of action was then designed to resolve each concern. However, adequate participation levels by community members could not be attained to carry out the designed plan of action. Speak outlines three

primary barriers to participation that were discovered roughly ten years after the start of the Cruddas Park regeneration program began.

- fragmentation of the 'community' – residents did not see themselves within the same framework of community as was perceived by the other members of the initiative
- territorialism – the 'community' was split by physical and geographical boundaries of streets, and small neighborhoods. Dominant families controlled the estate.
- low self esteem of residents and inability to communicate with or participate on equal terms with 'professionals' (Speak 33).

The conductors of the study believed that getting children involved with the community restoration would eliminate these barriers for future community regeneration projects.

The original studies of Cruddas Park did not incorporate the opinions of children within the community. However, in 1997, eight years after the commencement of the restoration program, children aged 5 to 11 were included in the study of the estate.

“Children produced a map of their 'best' and 'worst' places, it shows clearly that the children had better feeling about the green area surrounding the tower blocks, than they did about the low rise flats and terraced housing with gardens” (Speak 34). Children need a safe and encouraging place to play in order to keep them from engaging themselves in mischief and crime. This study also concluded that “...children from the age of five years were also aware of good and bad behavior” and not solely good and bad locations (Speak 34). If children are capable of analyzing their community with similar respects to the adults in the community, then why can't they become involved with community restoration? It is necessary to develop an interest in the community at a young age so that the barriers described above cannot play a significant role in the success of a community development program.

Are children capable of making decisions regarding community development and ultimately becoming active participants in their community? Speak says the answer is yes, children are capable of becoming active members of their community; however age does play a role regarding the depth in which decisions can be made (Speak 34-35). Speak researched this question by interviewing children of different ages within the community and asking them to describe the proper course of action for resolving problems and concerns in the community. Government policies can be quite involved and children may have trouble understanding proper procedure for contacting authorities about a change they would like to see made within their community. “Most children of 8 years old could understand the concept of committees and the idea that there was a need to have a structure and process to get the voices of the residents heard” (Speak 36). Knowledge of whom to contact and how to contact them only increases as children age, so it is quite apparent that children can be capable of creating change within their community in a limited spectrum of resolutions to problems. Children may not be as efficient or skilled as adults may be when dealing with community development. However, creating a sense of responsibility for their community at a young age will increase their potential for community involvement later in their life.

Since more than 25% of the population of Pollards Hill is under the age of 16, children represent a potentially very large and active volunteer base. This article shows that children are aware of problems with the community and are capable of making decisions regarding those problems. Therefore children, particularly younger teenagers, are a valid target group for volunteer recruitment in Pollards Hill. Involving children can

also be a gateway to involving their parents as is discussed in the Clark University case study (see section 2.3.2 on page 15).

2.2.3 The Policy Context

Marilyn Taylor explains how governmental policy regarding community development, has changed over the last half century in both the United States and Great Britain in the chapter “The Policy Context” from her book *Public Policy in the Community*. Pollards Hill, with its large government-built housing estate, suffers many of the problems discussed in this chapter. The Commonsides Trust, as a non-governmental community development organization, can trace its roots back to earlier organizations. They must not forget the lessons learned from the successes and failures of those organizations.

According to Taylor, After the Second World War, the United Kingdom set out to create housing fit for its veterans. In doing so, the government created social housing estates, such as Pollards Hill Estate (where the Commonsides Trust is located). However, the creation of these estates, and the movement of large number of citizens out of their established homes and into entirely new environments, surrounded by strangers, led to social isolation. Community work in the 1950s, when social housing was first implemented, focused mainly upon restoring social ties that were broken when people moved, reducing the resulting sense of isolation (Taylor 19-20).

However, Taylor states that the 1960s “brought with them urban unrest, racial tension and rising crime in the inner cities, which demanded a governmental response.” (Taylor 20) At least two schools of thought exist to explain the reason for this radical change in the urban environment. The first relies on explaining the community

breakdown because of the “loss of traditional ties” and the “fragmentation of society.” This reasoning traces the cause of the new social unrest back to the move of the citizenry in the 1950s to social housing from traditional, established social networks. The second reason, known as the “poverty cycle” or “cycles of deprivation” reasons that the behaviour of individuals, who do not wish to participate in traditional society, are the cause of the change in the environment, which in turn causes more people to not want to participate. Moreover, once the cycle has been started, it would take significant intervention to change the behaviour patterns of those individuals (Taylor 20).

Both of these explanations for the change in urban communities assume that the cause was a deficiency on one level or another. To correct these deficiencies, communities have undertaken community restoration projects since the 1960s. The deficiencies which they wish to correct include failures in the system, the social structure and economy, and government (Taylor 21-30).

Taylor suggests four outcomes for the success or failure of community restoration of development organizations. Two involve failure, either through the collapse of the organization itself, or because it was undermined by the government. A third involves the organization leading to governmental restructuring, referred to as “negotiated development.” The fourth, which describes the situation of the Commonside Trust, is when the organization receives independent funding and operates separately from the local government (Taylor 27). The Commonside Trust was formed out of the Single Regeneration Budget, or SRB, a program which was operated for five years by the Merton Council, fits into the last of the four possibilities.

2.3.4 Prescribing Community to the Poor

The chapter “Prescribing Community to the Poor”, also from Marilyn Taylor’s *Public Policy in the Community*, gives a brief history of community development in the United Kingdom. Understanding the history of community development organization in the United Kingdom is just as important as understanding the policies that have led to the social exclusion of housing estates. Over time, the terminology used to refer to the problem of estates has changed from terms such as ‘poverty’ and ‘disadvantaged’ to ‘social exclusion.’ This, in turn, has implied a shift of responsibility. Traditionally, in Anglo-Saxon societies, the responsibility for poverty has fallen upon the shoulders of the impoverished. However, it has become apparent that society itself is also responsible for poverty (Taylor 65-66).

Taylor states that the housing estates of the United Kingdom have generally become areas where one would not wish to live; people view them as areas of poverty and of high crime rates. These communities were not always like this. Rather, they developed this way in part due to governmental decisions. A cycle of social exclusion exists in these areas, including Pollards Hill and other areas included in the Commonsidge area. After the housing estates became partially privatized in 1980s, those who could afford to buy housing in nicer areas did so, gradually moving those who could not into less desirable areas. As the areas become less desirable, residents lose confidence and accept a sense of failure about the housing estate. Outsiders begin to view the housing estate as being dangerous or undesirable. Many residents leave the estates if the opportunity arises, causing public housing to become housing of a last resort. This cycle repeats itself, pulling the housing estates into a spiral of social exclusion (Taylor 74).

According to Taylor, in order for organizations like the Commonsense Trust to help the community, they must become involved. The eventual goal is to put them self out of business, to develop their community so that it no longer requires the Commonsense Trust's assistance. However, barriers exist to limit the Commonsense Trust's involvement specifically with encouraging the community to become involved. Amongst these barriers are such things as poverty, structural changes within the community, and the residents further excluding themselves from outside contact. The Commonsense Trust must overcome some of these barriers in order to successfully work with the community.

2.3 Case Studies

In preparation for this project, we looked at three different case studies to compare different methods of community involvement that may be helpful to the Commonsense Trust. We examined one case study in Roxbury, Massachusetts and two in Worcester, Massachusetts. These case studies served only as a guideline for how to proceed with the Commonsense Trust. Because every community is unique, it is impossible to have one model that applies to every one; however some ideas are valid in more than one case. These case studies gave us an idea of how other communities dealt with problems similar to those in Pollard Hill.

2.3.1 The Roxbury Master Plan: Roxbury, Massachusetts

The Roxbury Master Plan aimed to increase community involvement in one of the poorest neighbourhoods of Boston. The officials of the Roxbury Master Plan launched this plan in 1999 and completed it in 2003. The framework of the plan included five main points: frequent, open, and widely advertised meetings; opportunities for resident feedback regarding proposals; decision making after consultations with many individuals

and organisations working in the community; outreach and distribution of information; and partnership with a community organisation (Jennings 15).

This community plan established a set of principles that reflected the needs and concerns of the residents. These principles ensured the well being of the community through community participation and the surrounding businesses. It was critical that the residents of the community and the officials of the Roxbury Master Plan formed and agreed on principles before they started to implement the plan. This ensured that everyone was clear as to the goals of the project (Jennings 15-30).

Jennings formed two conclusions for community development and urban planning upon completion and analysis of the Roxbury Master Plan. The first conclusion is that urban communities are not always apathetic towards their community and its development. The Roxbury case study easily disproved the theory that urban communities are apathetic. Jennings states that “community participation is important in the design of local economic development strategies that are comprehensive and balanced in terms of meeting a range of needs.” (Jennings 30). In order to be successful, the organization had to implement the ideas of the community. Citizen input can assure that the focus does not become too involved with one area but instead includes all of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

This case study provided information that gave us some ideas about community development and involvement. The main points in this case study that we used during our project were the community involvement in final decision. In addition, it was important for us to realise that residents of deprived urban neighbourhoods are not always apathetic towards their community. This helped us to discover other reasons why they

may not be able to volunteer instead of focusing solely on apathy.

2.3.2 University Park Neighborhood Restoration Partnership Case Study: Worcester, Massachusetts

Physical and social deterioration of the community immediately surrounding Clark University prompted the creation of The University Park Neighbourhood Restoration Partnership (UPNRP). Jack Foley (see Appendix D for interview summary) of Clark University in Worcester Massachusetts initiated the UPNRP in 1995 with the purpose of the regeneration of the area surrounding the university. The initiative of community development began when parents and prospective students expressed concern for the school's surroundings, ultimately influencing their decision to attend the school. The vision of community development around Clark is rooted in the fundamentals of partnership and participation, not only of people within the community but also businesses, other community development organisations, schools and of state and federal agencies (University Park Partnership 4-5).

Clark University is not faced with the same dilemma of attracting volunteers as the Commonsides Trust is, because the school community provides the volunteers needed. However, Clark University offers benefits to encourage more people from within the school community to help the regeneration plan. For instance, Clark proposed an incentive to all faculty and staff members to inhabit University bought buildings, which immediately surround the campus. Faculty members who choose to live in one of the provided houses were also required to become active members of the Community Association (University Park Partnership 8). This particular incentive implemented by Clark University may not be as helpful to the Commonsides Trust, but the idea of offering

an incentive to draw out members from the community to help in the common goal of community regeneration should not be overlooked.

The next area of comparison between The Commonsides Trust and the UPNRP is education. Education should be used as a tool to teach children about such subjects as Math and English, but also about life and the community in which they live. Teaching children about their community will create a sense of ownership and from that will come respect. Clark University recognised this when they created the Accelerated Learning Laboratory (ALL). ALL is an academic based after school program that entertains the youth as well as educates them in personal field of interest (University Park Partnership 12). Children are very important to the future of the community as is described in Suzanne Speak's study of a British community, "Children in urban regeneration: foundations for sustainable participation", which is why educating children about their community is so important.

Clark University also focused on the economics of the community. Clark encouraged people who live in the community to also work within the community. Motivating people to work closer to home creates a more stable and self sufficient neighbourhood (University Park Partnership 14). However, economic stability can be established in many other ways including the use of Credit Unions instead of a typical bank. The idea of work incentives may not be an appropriate solution for The Commonsides Trust, but economic stability can be found elsewhere and is helpful in the regeneration of a community.

Recreational areas are the final source of comparison between the Commonsides Trust and The University Park Neighbourhood Restoration Partnership. A community

needs a safe recreation area in which children can play, activities can be held and residents can enjoy outdoors. A recreational area like this is essential to bring people of the community together and socialize. There is a considerably large recreation/common green in Pollards Hill; however it goes mostly unused by the residents of the area. If the Commonside Trust can create a sense of pride for this common area then people within the community may benefit from it more in the future. The Clark University Plan created this sense of pride and ownership by building new athletic fields and designing eye catching landscaping (University Park Partnership 16).

Clark University proposed a very thorough plan to rebuild the community surrounding the University. However, the plan could not have been accomplished without the cooperation and interest of people within the neighbourhood. A partnership between community members, businesses, schools and organizations is essential to the success of community development. The Clark University model has been used as a national model of community involvement and development.

2.3.3 The Piedmont Neighborhood Empowerment Institute Case Study: Worcester, Massachusetts

The Piedmont Neighborhood Empowerment Institute was developed in conjunction with Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Clark University, and several local organisations. The Piedmont Neighborhood Empowerment Institute proposal describes a method of “...developing organisation capacity and social capital for cooperative community development” (Piedmont 1).

The organisations involved with this plan are: Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Clark University, the Pleasant Street Neighbourhood Network Centre, the Regional Environmental Council, Weed & Seed, Worcester Common Ground and the Worcester

Youth Centre (Piedmont 22-24). Involving more than one organisation has shown to be beneficial in this case study. Each organisation's involvement brings a different set of priorities and skills which can be incorporated into the larger issue of improving a community.

Firstly, the Piedmont Neighborhood Empowerment Institute had to identify their main problems. They identified these problems using surveys, focus groups, interviews and information about Piedmont. The problems identified included crime, the educational status of the community, housing, and community upkeep (Piedmont 24-33). After they had a clear understanding of the problem, they were able to choose the methodology that would lead them to the most accurate answers.

They came up with methods to assist the development of the Piedmont community. The Commonsides Trust may be able to apply these methods to their organisation. The methods, as outlined by the report, included establishing a community advisory board made up of residents of the community to advise those involved with improving Piedmont on their concerns (Piedmont 35). This is similar to the Commonsides Trust's board of trustees.

On a less formal level, the report details a number of activities that were run within the community to increase awareness and involvement. More important than the activities themselves is the intent behind them. Their purpose was to engage residents in both discussion and activities that would benefit the community by increasing a sense of belonging to a community among the residents.

3 Methodology

Our goal was to learn why some people of the Commonside community volunteer and why others do not. Additionally, we set a goal to find out what would encourage those community members who do not volunteer to become active volunteers. We used a qualitative approach involving both sociological and technical aspects, which focused on interviews and group discussions to discover why some people volunteer and why others do not. Appendix D displays the list of generic questions we used to spark conversation in both the interviews and group discussions. In order to create a comfortable environment for the interview subjects, the interviews and group discussions were informal and did not follow a rigid schedule of questions. We did not limit ourselves to the list of questions but used them to enhance the conversation when necessary. Limited time and resources have restricted the current staff of the Commonside Trust to conduct this study themselves.

In addition to interviews and group discussions that we used to achieve the sociological aspects of our project, we also employed technical methods. We conducted a review of the Commonside Trust's website to provide them with feedback and recommendations of how to increase their appeal to the community. We also created a database to organise and manage contact information that will aid communication with the Commonside community.

3.1 Interviews

We interviewed key individuals within Pollards Hill, Longthornton and East Figges Marsh in order to discover why some community members volunteer for the Commonside Trust and why others do not. The interviews we conducted were very

informal and semi structured, resembling conversations rather than structured interviews. We created two categories of interview subjects, prior to conducting the interviews, which included those who are volunteers and those who are not volunteers at all. Each category had a set of questions constructed specifically for it, with specific set of questions designed to target the Commonsense Trust's Board of Trustees.

3.1.1 Volunteers

The category of volunteers included individuals who are active in the daily business of the Commonsense Trust and have contributed to the success of the organisation. The fifteen members on the Board of Trustees of the Commonsense Trust were also included within this category. The purpose for questioning this population within the Commonsense community was to help define the benefits and attractions of being a volunteer. Speaking to this population also helped us define any obstacles that they have overcome, making it possible for them to be active volunteers.

Asking the current volunteers of the Commonsense Trust why they volunteer and what benefits they have gained by volunteering has helped us identify how to encourage other people from the community to volunteer. Additionally, we asked the volunteers about their perception of the Commonsense community in order to help us understand more about it. Further questions addressed in conversation within the interviews include how they personally became involved with the Commonsense Trust as well as the contributions they have made for the Commonsense Trust.

3.1.2 Non-Volunteers

We conducted several interviews with local community members, who aren't active volunteers, to discover the factors that prevent them and others from volunteering

within the community. These community members may or may not be familiar with the Commonsides Trust, however none of them has any connection with or volunteered for the Trust. Our liaisons provided us with a contact list including community leaders who are constantly in contact with the local residents. For example, this list included community members such as the chair of the community centre and local pastor, and the librarian at the Pollards Hill Library. Our liaisons provided us with a contact list, which opened up a gateway for us to talk to people in the community.

When interviewing the non-volunteer population of Pollards Hill, Longthornton and East Figges Marsh we asked them why they think the people of the community have not been active with the Commonsides Trust. We also asked how they think local residents feel about the Commonsides Trust if they have even heard of it before. They personally may not have had exact answers to our questions but because they are members within the community, they could translate, interpret and describe the public's opinions. Certain people we interviewed were also able to direct us towards larger group discussions that are explained in the next section.

3.2 *Group Discussions*

As discussed in the previous section, interviews are a very powerful tool used in extracting information from a person including why he or she may or may not volunteer. Even if every resident of the Commonsides Area was willing and able to speak to us, it would be impossible to interview them all in seven weeks. We decided that a way to surpass these problems would be to have group discussions, to obtain the opinions of more residents than just interviews alone.

Our liaisons put us in contact with local community leaders who in turn agreed to let us speak with some established groups of local citizens. We chose to speak to established groups as opposed to assembling and polling focus groups for several reasons. First, our liaisons told us that focus groups had been attempted in the past and failed because no one was willing to participate in them. Second, we did not have enough contact with the community to be able to find people not associated with the Commonsense Trust for focus groups. Third, finding enough willing participants for several focus groups, scheduling them, then conducting each of the sessions would have been impossible in our limited amount of time. Instead of structured focus groups we conducted what we called “group discussions”. Because people the participants are familiar with and trust organized our group discussions, a sense of trust was created between us and the participants in the group discussion.

During these group discussions we gained a better understating of why the participants are volunteering for their specific organisations. We also found many people who were unfamiliar with the Commonsense Trust and its role in the community. We informed these people of the Commonsense Trust and the benefits of volunteering for it. We also let them know how to contact the Commonsense Trust if they want further information or are interested in volunteering.

3.3 *Website Review and Database*

The current Commonsense Trust website successfully conveys the information displayed upon it; however the Commonsense Trust asked us to evaluate it for possible additions and changes to the content. Since we are also quite familiar with popular approaches for displaying information on websites, we collectively reviewed the

Commonside Trust's website and formulated possible changes and additions that would enhance it. The goal of this website review was related to the goal of this project because an updated website will assist the Commonside Trust in attracting more members and volunteers.

Our liaisons brought to our attention that managing volunteers would be much easier with a digital database. We decided to help our sponsor by designing and implementing a Microsoft Access database. They can use this database to manage contacts of any kind, storing information such as volunteers' names, phone numbers, address, as well as several other pieces of information desired by our sponsor. This database will reduce the time and redundancy associated with the pen-and-paper method of organization previously employed. In addition to creating the database we wrote an easy to understand instruction manual on how to use it so that any one who comes to work with the Commonside Trust can be quickly trained in its use.

4 Analysis and Results

We interviewed fifteen representative members of the Commonsense Community.

We were able to use these interviews to discover many themes as to why people do or do not volunteer. We also implemented technology into our project through a database and website recommendations that will help the Commonsense Trust attract new volunteers.

4.1 *Reasons Why People Volunteer*

The reasons why people volunteer for the Commonsense Trust and other organisations within the Commonsense Area are as varied as the lives of those who are involved. However, we have seen through our interaction with members of the community several common themes. We have found that people tend to volunteer for social reasons, for assistance in preparing for future employment, for the satisfaction of volunteering and for knowledge of what is going on in the community. It is important for us to know this information for the simple reason that if we know why people do volunteer and why people do not volunteer, we can develop an understanding of what might motivate someone to become involved.

4.1.1 Volunteering for Social Reasons

The first of the recurring reasons for individuals to become involved in the Commonsense Area, that we have encountered, is because of a desire for social contact. SH, of the Merton Volunteer Bureau, told us that while there are many reasons why people choose to volunteer, one of the common themes is that they seek social interaction. Members of the community who have become involved with the Commonsense Trust have found that they have increased their confidence and met new

people. Their involvement has helped them network with their local community and develop a sense of belonging.

RK moved to Pollards Hill about three years ago and found herself in a new environment with no social contacts. She became involved with the Lone Parents scheme, through which she has not only met other lone parents whom she has befriended, but has found a way to get out of the house. Another lone parent, PB, although a resident of Pollards Hill for seven years, has met other single mothers through the Parent Gateway project and is currently involved with other single mothers organizing a coffee morning for the area's lone parents. As single mothers, they tended not to meet many members of the community in activities that were not directly associated with the care of their children. Each of these women has met people and gained new friends through their service with the Commonsides Trust.

JS said that she found herself in a rut before she began volunteering as an administrative assistant with the Commonsides Trust. The Merton Volunteer Bureau initially introduced her to the Commonsides Trust. Since then, she has found that it is easier for her to "get out of bed in the morning." She now finds that her life seems brighter and less bleak, and that she enjoys herself more. While her reason for volunteering is not as evident as volunteering for social reasons as in other examples, the fact that her life seems better because of her getting out of the house does show that there is a link between her activities within the community and her mental state.

SB, also of the Merton Volunteer Bureau, is involved with volunteers who have specific needs, usually involving mental health and illness. She explained how people are often but not always referred to her by medical personnel. Volunteering offers those

people outlets that not only allow them to gain confidence and meet people, but also to receive treatment. The social interaction achieved through service can benefit the health of those who volunteer, helping both the Commonsense Trust or other organisations and the volunteers themselves.

4.1.2 Volunteering for Employment

Residents of the Commonsense Area who have been unemployed for a period of time have found that they can increase their job skills and prepare themselves to re-enter the workforce through volunteer work. SH and SB expressed how learning job skills through volunteering are often the motivation of those who wish to seek employment in the near future. Similarly, many of the volunteers of the Commonsense Trust feel that they have gained skills that will help them when they seek employment again in the future.

PB, who has not worked for a few years, is a participant in and is beginning to help organise the Gateway Project's Coffee Mornings. She has also taken several courses through the Commonsense Trust. She feels confident that her experiences with the Parent Gateway Project, coupled with the courses she has taken, will allow her to successfully return to the job market with a better job than she had before.

JS, who has not done paid work in four years, feels that her experiences volunteering for the Commonsense Trust will enable her to seek better employment in the future. Her work as a volunteer has given her confidence in her own abilities. Additionally, since things have changed since she did paid work, volunteering has reintroduced her to the way things in an office are done, and has had an opportunity to learn how to do her job in a more efficient manner.

4.1.3 Volunteering for Self Actualisation

All volunteers do not become involved solely for the benefit of their social health or to improve their chances of finding employment. SH and SB explained to us that many volunteers, especially youth and retired people, will volunteer solely for the enjoyment they derive from it. Retired people volunteer to fill their time and to give them something to do that they enjoy.

GI, a long-time resident of the Commonsides Area, has been involved with the Commonsides Trust since 2002. He was the treasurer of the Single Regeneration Budget, and is in the process of retiring as the Commonsides Trust's Treasurer. He did not work as a volunteer until he retired from his career as an accountant. He worked as a volunteer helping students learn how to read. He eventually helped to expand the small program, posting ads in the local paper for more volunteers.

On the other end of the spectrum, PE, a local Anglican priest, has been involved in community work for the last two decades. As a priest, he sees it as his place to assist those in need. Having served in many deprived communities, he has an understanding of the problems that exist in communities similar to that of the Commonsides Area, and draws satisfaction from involving himself and improving the lives of the residents

4.1.4 The Usual Suspects

Being involved with the community, and knowing what is going on, is a motivation for members of the Commonsides Community. Typically, if a resident becomes involved in one group, they end up being involved in several more. According to AS, there are people on the Pollards Hill Estate who volunteer for everything, and who do so to know what is going on. She herself initially joined the resident association to learn what was going to happen in the estate that would affect her, and then later became

involved with the Commonsense Trust. The trend seems to be that once someone gets involved in one organisation, involvement in others follows shortly afterwards. These people may be called “the usual suspects”.

4.2 *Reasons Why People Do Not Volunteer*

Throughout our research we have interviewed many different residents and members of the Commonsense Trust and have received many different responses to why people do not volunteer. The responses can be categorized into four main themes: lack of awareness of the Commonsense Trust, apathy, lack of a sense of community and lack of time. In each of the following sections we will discuss the reason why people are not volunteering and make some suggestions how the Commonsense Trust can overcome these problems.

4.2.1 Problem: Lack of Awareness of the Commonsense Trust

Many of our participants have agreed that a large portion of Commonsense area residents are unaware of what the Commonsense Trust does or even that the organisation exists. RK told us that some of her friends who live a few roads away from the Commonsense Trust office have no idea of who the Commonsense Trust is or what they do.

The Commonsense Trust organizes and runs programs and events that the community can participate in. In the past, the programs have been very successful. However, these programs have not increased community awareness of the Commonsense Trust as much as the organisation would like. AH-2 suggested that many people who attend these events do not associate the Commonsense Trust with the event. For the large number of people who attend the Commonsense Trust events, the outcome of new volunteers and awareness of the Trust has been very minimal.

We attended a ‘Coffee Morning’ held at the Pollards Hill Library. It is a group of approximately thirty elderly people who meet a few times a month and socialize (see Appendix D for summary of Coffee Morning). After their meeting, we asked if any of them had ever heard of the Commonsides Trust and its programs. No one at the Coffee Morning knew what the Commonsides Trust was or what they did. The Pollards Hill Library is almost directly across the street from the Commonsides Trust Office and a group that meets at the Library had no idea that the Commonsides Trust existed.

At other interviews we discovered that a large majority of the people thought the Commonsides Trust was not well known. However, there were a few residents who thought the organisation is well recognized in the community. It is LT’s opinion that a “large part” of the community is aware of the Commonsides Trust and has at least an idea of what it does. LT and a few others feel there are other reasons why residents do not get more involved in the Commonsides Trust.

Suggestion for Overcoming Lack of Awareness

A marketing and advertising campaign could help to remedy the lack of awareness of the Commonsides Trust. For example, we have noticed the Commonsides Trust logo on flyers and posters around the community, but the logo appears without the name of the organisation printed anywhere. If the organisation’s name were to be added to the logo on the poster it would inform the reader that the Commonsides Trust is involved with that particular project. If someone is unfamiliar with the Commonsides Trust’s logo, that individual would not recognize it as such and would never know that the Commonsides Trust was ever involved with that particular event.

4.2.2 Problem: Apathy

Some active volunteers feel that apathy is a reason that people do not volunteer. AS believes that the main reason the Commonsense Trust is not getting any volunteers is because the residents are too apathetic towards their community. PB agrees with the theory of apathy. She told us that people in the area are generally content with their lives, and tend to not desire to get out and help themselves and others.

Many interviewees assume that people who are not involved in their community are apathetic. However, apathy was only mentioned by people who volunteer. Non volunteers did not say apathy or lack of interest were their reason for not volunteering. It is easy for volunteers to assume that others do not volunteer because they are uninterested or apathetic. It is hard to say for certain if apathy is a reason people do not volunteer because non volunteers would not be proud of avoiding volunteering out of apathy and would therefore not indicate apathy as a reason when asked.

During our interviews, many active volunteers said that a reason for lack of volunteering within the community was apathy. This may be true in the case of some residents but it is unfair to assume most residents are apathetic.

Suggestions for overcoming Apathy

The best way to get apathetic people to care is to have a program or cause that matters to them. It is important to spark interest in people to get them to volunteer. In addition, letting people know the benefits of volunteers that were mentioned in Section 4.1 would let people know what they can gain from volunteering. People are more apt to volunteer if they see what they personally can gain from it. Albert Varner Jr. says it is the job of the non profit organisation to find out what motivates their volunteers and to then provide them with jobs that most suit what they are interested in (Varner 12-15).

The Commonsides Trust should let the residents know the benefits of volunteering and then find a job that tailors to the volunteer's interests. They could let them know the benefits of volunteering through a specific section on their website.

In the community development at Clark University, incentives were offered to get residents to volunteer. These incentives included such things as discounted housing. Clark has more funding than the Commonsides Trust therefore they are able to offer expensive material goods for incentives. However, volunteering incentives could still be offered to the Commonsides area. An incentive to volunteer could be knowing the benefits of volunteering.

4.2.3 Problem: Lack of a Sense of Community

Another frequent theme that occurred in our interviews was a sense of community. The Commonsides Trust covers all of the Commonsides area. However, many people think that the Commonsides Trust is only for Pollards Hill. When we asked a woman at the Coffee Morning if she was from the area, she immediately answered 'No' and explained to us that she lived five minutes down the road. We have found that people who do not live directly in Pollards Hill do not want to be associated with living there even if they are from a few minutes down the road. Therefore, people from areas outside of Pollards Hill such as Longthornton and East Figges Marsh are less likely to volunteer because they do not associate the Commonsides Trust as helping the area they are from. The people we have talked to have a limited view on what the term community means. As we discussed in section 1, community can have many different meanings. The Commonsides Trust should help the residents realize that there is more than one definition of community.

KP has been a resident of Longthorton, one of the areas covered by the Commonsides Trust, for twenty-two years. At our interview, he stated that he was aware of the Commonsides Trust and its programs and events. Then he told us that there are very few community activities in his area. This shows that he does not associate the events the Commonsides Trust organizes with community activities near his home. He also mentioned that those who do know about it but reside outside of Pollards Hill feel that the Commonsides Trust does not involve them, as they do not live in social housing. If the Commonsides Trust is seen as an organisation only for Pollards Hill, a psychological barrier will be formed between the Commonsides Trust and the other areas that the Commonsides Trust cover.

LT, a Trustee of the Commonsides Trust, believes that members of the Commonsides area who do not live in Pollards Hill do not hear about the Trust as much. This is an issue of community and awareness. It is important to make sure that the communities surrounding Pollards Hill are not only aware of the programs that the Commonsides Trust offers but also that they are welcome and are encouraged to attend these events.

Suggestions for overcoming Lack of a Sense of Community

If people in the Commonsides area feel that the Commonsides Trust is not an organisation for them, the Trust must reach out and let them know they are for the whole area and should help them know the many different definitions of community. One way to do this would be to hold events in areas other than Pollards Hill. This way the residents of other areas will see a Commonsides event closer to home and realize that the Commonsides Trust is working for them too. In addition, the Commonsides Trust should

make an effort to advertise the Commonsense Trust in areas that are less familiar with the Trust. Getting citizen input from all areas of the community will insure that the focus does not become too involved with one area but instead includes all of the Commonsense area.

Another way to bridge the community gap is through the children. In her article “Children in urban regeneration: foundations for sustainable participation”, Suzanne Speaks identifies the terms ‘fragmentation’ and ‘territorialism’. Fragmentation of the community is when the residents “did not see themselves within the same framework of community as was perceived by the other members of the initiative” (Speak 33). The Commonsense Trust has brought together many different communities in their Commonsense area and need to make these areas work as one. Territorialism is when the community is “spilt by physical and geographical boundaries of streets, and small neighborhoods” (Speak 33). People who do not live on the Pollards Hill estate feel that they are from a different community than those who do. Speak suggests using children to bridge the gaps in the community. She believes that getting children from different areas involved in community development will bring them together and eventually lead to a merger of split communities. The UPNRP (see section 2.3.2) believe that teaching children about their community will lead to a sense of ownership and pride of their community. The Commonsense Trust could set up an after school program that would teach children about their community. This program could also include a leisure activity that the kids would enjoy. This would help to improve the sense of community by bringing children from all the Commonsense area together and teaching them about the community that they live in.

4.2.4 Problem: Lack of Time

The final theme that was encountered throughout our research was a lack of time. At the coffee morning, one woman told us that she was busy babysitting her grandchildren and did not have any spare time to volunteer within the community. Many people are focused on trying to put food on their table and cannot afford to spend time volunteering. In his article “What Motivates the Volunteer?” Albert Varner Jr. suggests there is a hierarchy of needs in life. These levels of need include “food, clothing, and shelter; safety-security; sense of belonging/recognition; self esteem; and self realization/self actualization” (Varner 13). He also says that before people can fulfil the higher levels, they must meet the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter and safety-security (Varner 13). If a person is working all day trying to earn money to support his or her family and then comes home to a house with children, it is hard to get out and volunteer.

Suggestions for overcoming Lack of Time

There are many different activities a person could be doing to not have enough time to volunteer, so there is not one solution to this problem. The Commonsense Trust should find out what is taking up the person’s time. If they come across one activity that is taking up time in a lot of people’s lives it might be worthwhile to try and find a solution to this problem. For example, if they find a lot of people are busy taking care of children, they might want to set up something with a local nursery or have events where the parents could bring their children and do volunteer work at the same time.

4.3 Other Suggestions for increasing volunteers

Our background research has enabled us to provide the Commonsense Trust with other suggestions that do not fit into one of our four main themes, but could still be

helpful to the Commonsense Trust. When reviewing the Clark University case study, we found that a recreation area helps to bring a community together. If there was a green area that was safe and attractive to children, then adults could go and socialize while children played. The Commonsense Trust could try and hold more events on the green space located in Pollards Hill. If residents see activities there regularly, they might start to use the green during their own leisure time. Improving the green would be a very visible project for the Commonsense Trust to be involved in and could help increase their awareness throughout the community.

The Roxbury Master Plan included five main points: frequent, open, and widely advertised meetings; opportunities for resident feedback regarding proposals; decision making after consultations with many individuals and organisations working in the community; outreach and distribution of information; and partnership with a community organisation (Jennings 15). The Commonsense Trust could use some of these points. Because they are an organisation for the community, it is important that they work with the community and listen to the residents.

4.4 Technology: Helping to Attract and Handle Volunteers

We also provided the Commonsense Trust with a database and suggestion to improve their website. The database will help them maintain, search and find volunteers and the website suggestions will help to make the Commonsense Trust more widely known.

4.3.1 Database

The database we built for the Commonsense Trust will allow them to store, organize, and view contacts quickly and efficiently. The database will allow them to better manage their volunteers and other contacts. The database is also able to create mailing lists and labels so that the Commonsense sponsored events can be published and volunteers notified. The database will allow the staff of the Commonsense Trust to search and find specific people for mailings about events or to locate specific volunteers for specific events.

The database is built in Microsoft Access that makes it easy to use and able to interface with other Microsoft Office such as Word and Excel. The database interface is driven by a single main menu that gives the user access to the different functions like searching or adding new entries. The user can search using any combination of criteria in any of the available fields including partial strings. The results of a search can then be compiled into a simple report showing each person's name, address, and phone number or a detailed report showing all the information available for that person. The user also has the option of exporting the search results to a number of file types, including an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet can be edited by the user to create a customized report and also can be automatically merged with a Word document to create customized letters drastically cutting the time spent on tedious repetitive work. We have provided the Commonsense Trust with a complete manual which provides the staff can do, see appendix H for complete database manual. We have included four screenshots from our database which show the capabilities and details of the database. Figure 4-1 shows the opening screen of the data base. From this screen the user can open the database to access all the entries, add a new entry, search for a specific field or exit the database.

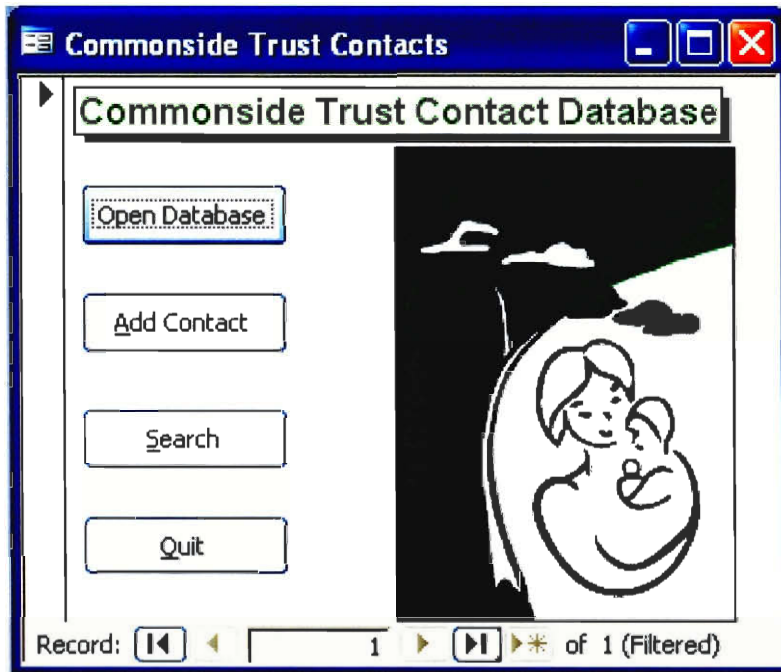


Figure 4-1: Database Opening Screen

Figure 4-2 shows the screen where a user can input a new entry. Basic fields such as name, address, phone and email are included. There is the Commonside Information section which includes the contacts position with the Commonside Trust and if and how they have paid their membership fee. The “Last Updated” field can help the Commonside Trust make sure their database is up to date.

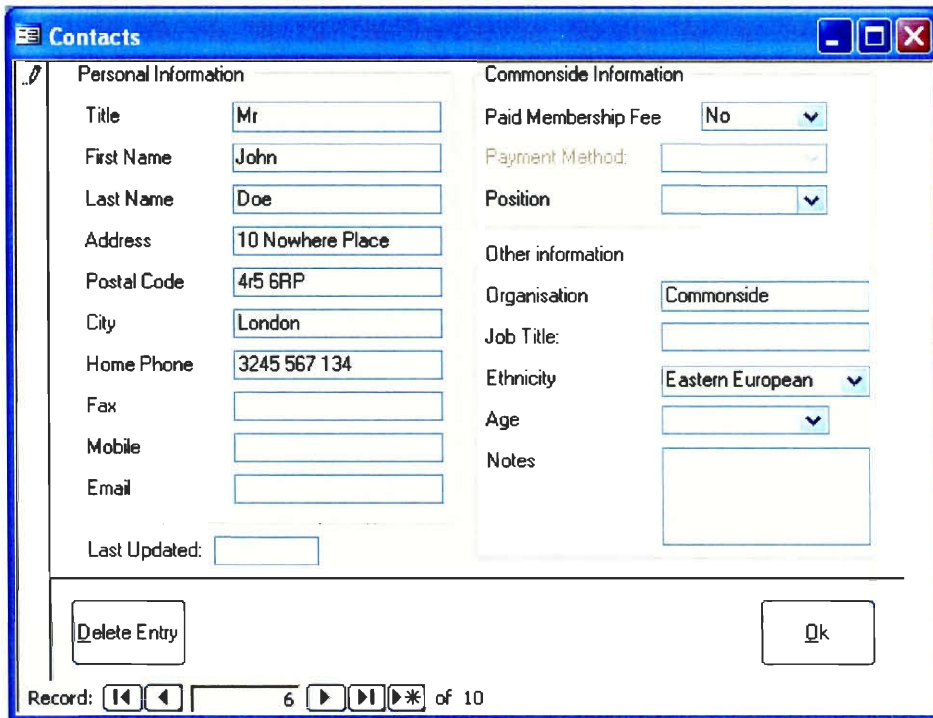


Figure 4-2: Database Add Entry Screen

Figure 4-3 shows a generic mailing screen. The user is then able to automatically personalize the mailing as shown in Figure 4-4.

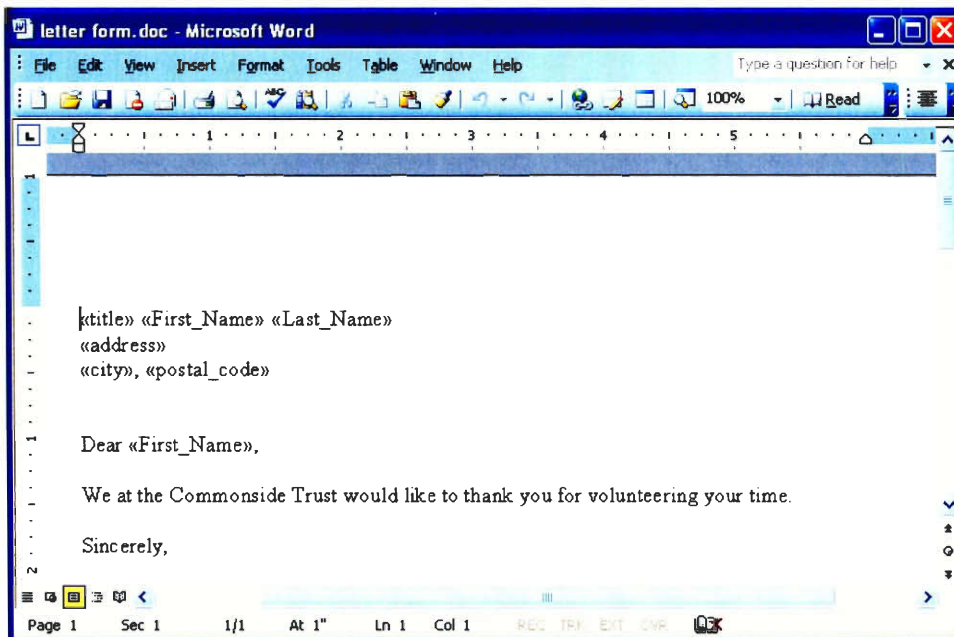


Figure 4-3: Database Generic Mailing Screen

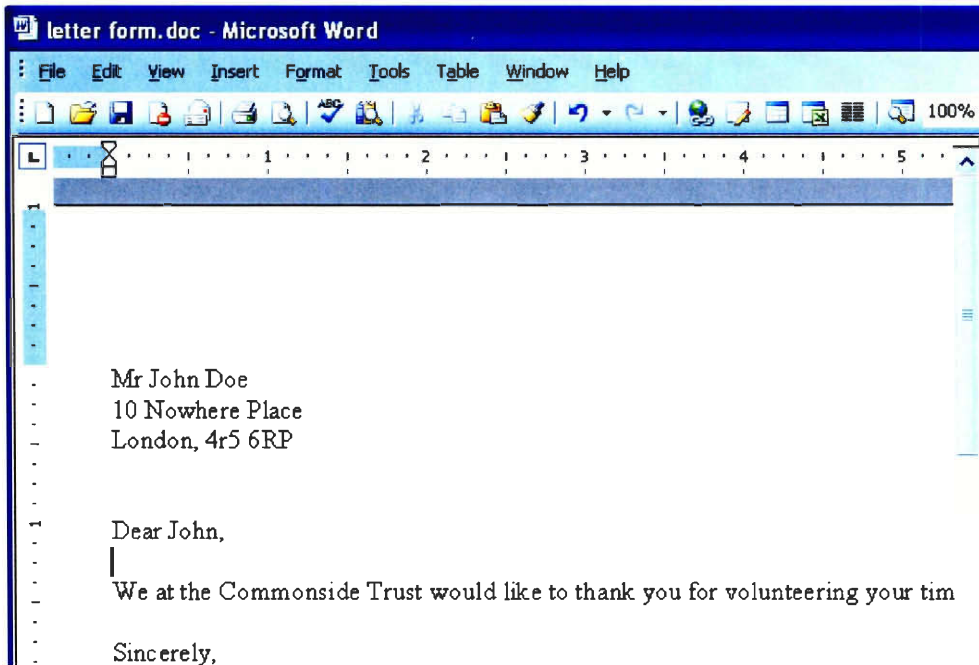


Figure 4-4: Database Personalized Mailing Screen

This database will help the Commonsidge Trust organize their contacts more efficiently. With this database they will also be able to quickly produce personalized letters and mailing labels.

4.3.2 Website

In the information age, an easy-to-use and up-to-date website is crucial for any small organisation wishing to increase awareness of it. A website is often the first point of contact between a person and an organisation and could make or break the person's desire to become involved with that organisation. The current Commonsidge Trust website is aesthetically pleasing; however, it is difficult to navigate and infrequently updated. Our liaisons with the Commonsidge Trust have indicated that if they had an easier interface for updating and maintaining their website, they would do so much more frequently.

We also have formulated a few suggestions for additions to the website that would make it a more effective tool for communication. We recommend adding

- a photos section
- an interactive calendar of events
- a community message board

First, a photos section might get more people involved with Commonsides events. Some people may feel more comfortable seeing what an event or programme is like before they actually attend. Second, a calendar of what events are happening on which days as far into the future as possible would allow people to schedule time to attend. In addition, if people find themselves with unexpected free time, they could easily look up what Commonsides-sponsored events are happening that day. Lastly, a message board would allow members of the community to post their thoughts on the website for anyone to read and anyone who wants to reply to do so. A community message board would not only be an efficient and effective way for the Commonsides Trust to communicate with the community, but also allow people who would not normally communicate to do so.

The members of our team expect that the database and website suggestions, along with the suggestions to increase volunteering, will help the Commonsides Trust increase its number of volunteers and thus fulfil its mission to aid the development of the Commonsides community.

5 Recommendations and Conclusions

The past fourteen weeks have been a period in our education during which we have grown as a team and as individuals. During our time with the Commonsides Trust, we have learned much about people and community that we did not know before and would not have learned had it not been for this experience. This has been one of the most difficult and enjoyable experiences in our education thus far, and we are proud of the project we have completed.

5.1 Recommendations

During our time in London, we have thought of many IQPs with the Commonsides Trust. These range from developing a Geographical Information System to completing projects similar to this, but on a smaller scale. We hope that WPI and the Commonsides Trust will work together in the future, and offer other students the same experience that we have had.

5.1.1 Geographical Information System

The Commonsides Trust has expressed an interest in a Geographic Information System (GIS). A GIS is a series of detailed, layered maps that display information about an area. A GIS could be helpful to the Commonsides Trust as a tool for identifying the geographical location of people and services. For example, a GIS mapping system could display the locations of bus stops, shopping areas, and schools. Therefore, we recommend that other students conduct a future IQP with the Commonsides Trust to develop a GIS of the Commonsides Area.

Through our interviews and group discussions, we found out that many areas outside of Pollards Hill that are not familiar with the Commonsides Trust. A GIS could

give the Commonsides Trust an idea of which areas are the most knowledgeable of the Commonsides Trust and those that are not. The map would display the location of all of the housing units in the area. The GIS could indicate whether the occupants of any one particular residence is involved with or has heard of the Commonsides Trust.

Additionally, a GIS would also allow the Commonsides Trust to see the diversity of people in different areas that would be useful in targeting specific ethnicities for involvement. Using this information, the Commonsides Trust could make contact with the areas that had the greatest number of people unfamiliar with it and spread the word about their organisation. Greater exposure of the Commonsides Trust would also help recruit new volunteers.

The GIS would aid the Commonsides Trust by identifying local services, such as public transportation. By including such things as bus stops in the GIS, the Commonsides Trust would be able to see if there is any connection between community involvement and an individual's proximity to a bus stop. For example, if they notice that all people who live far from a bus stop are not volunteering, they may wish to find a way to involve those without easy access to public transportation.

5.1.2 Targeted Community Involvement

Due to the fact that the Commonsides Trust has interests in three distinctly different wards of Merton, each containing individuals of widely varying backgrounds and experiences, this project has had a broad scope. Because of the location and current associates of the Commonsides Trust, much of our work is focused in and around Pollards Hill, with placing less emphasis upon Longthornton and Figges Marsh. Therefore, we recommend that future IQP projects to be conducted with the Commonsides Trust dealing

with the issue of community involvement. This would help the Commonsides Trust obtain the perspective of many different communities that we were unable to reach. These projects could be similar to the one we have conducted, and would be dealing with the same general questions that we were presented with, but would specifically focus on a defined group of people or geographic area.

5.1.3 Marketing

Through our interviews, we have learned that many people do not know about the Commonsides Trust. We feel that a marketing project could be a follow up for another IQP team. We have provided some suggested solutions to this problem in section 4.2.1. The IQP team could use our suggestions along with extensive research to provide the Commonsides Trust a marketing plan that will help them increase their number of volunteers.

5.1.4 Website

We have looked at the Commonsides Trust's website and found a few changes that could be made to make the website more appealing to visitors, see section 4.3.2 for our suggestions. Another IQP team could update the Commonsides Website using our suggestions along with their own ideas. A more appealing website could attract more people to volunteer for the Commonsides Trust.

5.2 Conclusions

The Commonsides Community Development Trust is a small non-profit organisation with limited resources operating in the London borough of Merton. As a small organisation based in the ward of Pollards Hill and serving the wards of Pollards Hill, Longthornton, and the Eastfields area of Figges Marsh, the Commonsides Trust does

not have the time and resources to determine the reasons why residents of the local area choose to become involved, or why they choose to not become involved, with their community. The goal of this project was to determine why some residents of the Commonside Area involve themselves with their community, why others do not, and what could encourage those who do not involve in becoming involved.

We spent seven weeks prior to our arrival in London researching the background of community involvement organisations in the United States, our focus being why people become involved with them. We performed additional background research while at the Commonside Trust, which provided us with a basis for our project. While in the Commonside Area, we conducted interviews and group discussions with local residents, in an effort to find out why they do or do not volunteer, their feelings on volunteering in their community, and their thoughts on their community.

We found that people volunteer for four main reasons: for the social benefits, for job skills, for enjoyment, or for knowledge of what is happening in their community. People did not become involved because of apathy, lack of time, lack of a sense of community, and lack of awareness. We have recommended that the Commonside Trust work to expand the number of residents who know about them and their programs, and to increase the appeal of their programs to people who do not live directly in Pollards Hill.

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Appendix A Commonside Community Development Trust Profile

The Commonside Community Development Trust is a non-profit community development organisation located in the United Kingdom, in the London Borough of Merton. Based in the Ward of Pollards Hill, the Commonside Trust is responsible for community development in the “Commside Ease” area, which includes the wards of Pollards Hill, Longthornton, and the Eastfields area of Figges Marsh.

The Commonside Trust was founded in 2002 as the exit strategy of the Single Regeneration Project (SRB). Since then, it has participated in and run many projects within the communities it serves. Twenty-eight members have paid their dues to the Commonside Trust. The Commonside Trust hopes to move from its current location into the Pollards Hill Community Centre in the near future.

Partial list of Commonside Community Development Trust Projects (2003-2005):

- Raw Talent
- Thai Kickboxing Project
- Parent Gateway
- Summer Funday 2003 & 2004
- Culture Day
- Africa Day
- Family Learning Week
- Bitesize Day
- Football Project
- Skills for Life Course

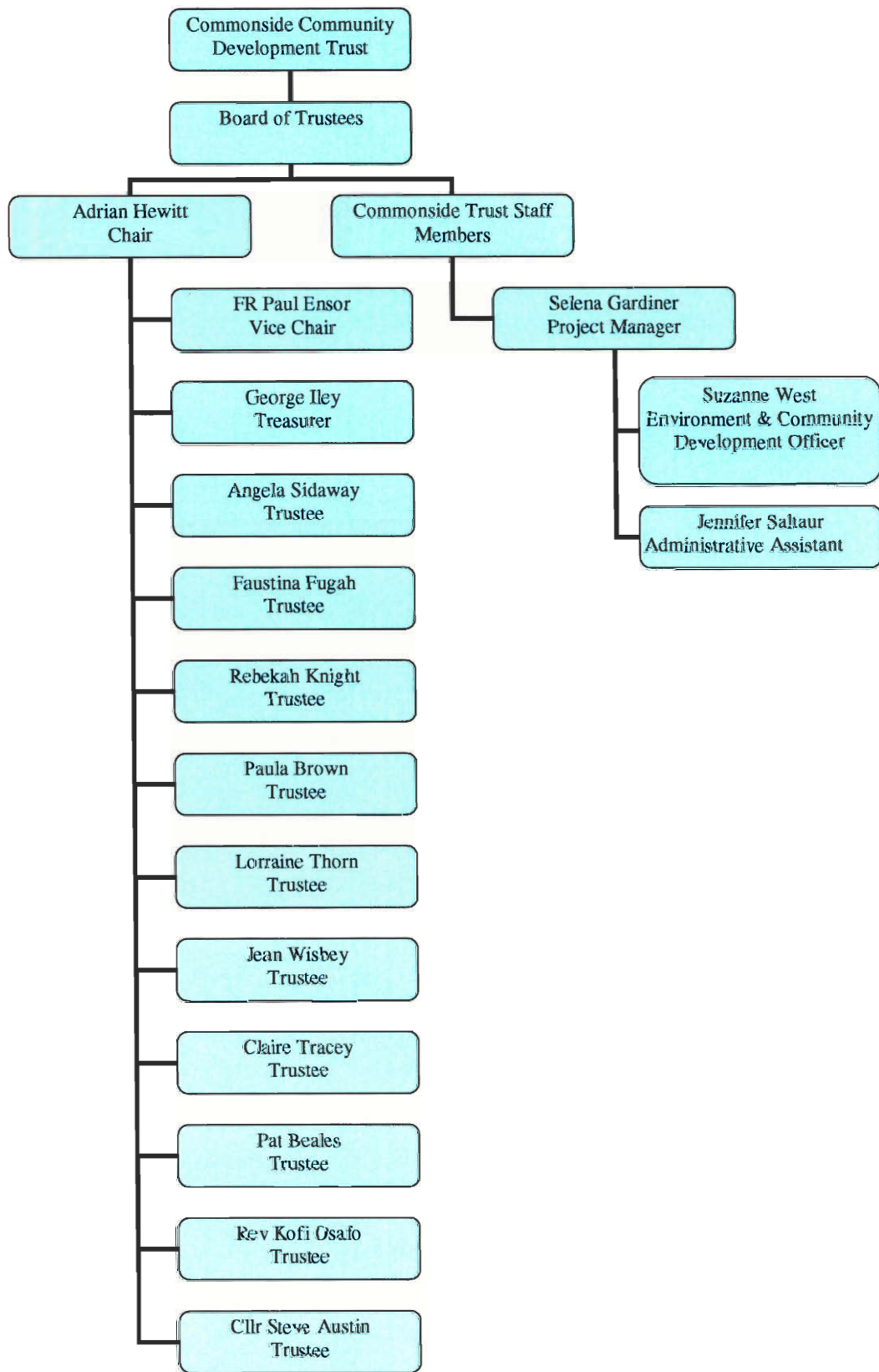


Figure A-1: Organizational Chart

Appendix B IQP

The Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) has been a part of the curriculum at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) since the early 1970s. A successful IQP addressed the interactions between humanity, society, and technology (Worcester Polytechnic Institute Website).

The Commonsides Trust, as a Community Development Trust, deals closely with both the people it seeks to help and the societal issues that it addresses. This project has dealt with both the needs of the individuals within the Commonsides Area and the societal issues that have been a factor in the establishment of a closely knit community. Technology has played a part of our methodology, as we have dealt both with analysing the Commonsides Trust's website and the construction of a volunteer database.

Appendix C Interview Summaries

Interview with AH-1
Thursday, 20 January 2005 1330-1415
Interviewer: Tim Hannafin
Secretary: Michael Belliss
Interview Location: Pollards Hill Library

AH-1 has worked for the Merton library system for the past sixteen years, spending the last five years at the Pollards Hill Library. The Pollards Hill Library is located across the street from the Commonsides Trust, and their geographic proximity leads to close interaction between the two organizations. The Commonsides Trust provides ideas and funding for some of the library's programs and helps to organize and run some of the library's activities, such as the Coffee Mornings. According to her, the Commonsides Trust is more helpful and supportive than her governmental support, the local housing authorities.

She dealt for a time with the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), the predecessor of the Commonsides Trust, before it was closed down. Without any outside intervention the Pollards Hill area has gradually become more and more depressed. While the SRB did improve things, after it disappeared, the situation in the Pollards Hill area rapidly declined. She noted that each additional community development failure will increase the community's feeling of discontent and lessen their willingness to become involved again. She feels that the Commonsides Trust is not a failure but represents small success within the community.

Due to the governmental setup in Merton, much of the funding for the Library's programs comes from nearby Sutton. When AH-1 transferred to the Pollards Hill Library, it was because the other two libraries in Merton were closed down. New

libraries opened in socio-economically depressed areas, in an effort by the Merton Counsel to save money.

In the library she previously worked for, AH-1 ran a coffee morning for eleven years, and has brought this idea to the Pollards Hill library. She organizes Coffee Mornings twice a week, Tuesday mornings for lone parents and Thursday mornings for the elderly and handicapped. The lone parents of the Commonside Trust will be organizing the Tuesday coffee morning themselves within the near future. AH-1 tries to arrange for guest speakers to come to an activity she arranges, such as a coffee morning, each month. This February the speaker will be a local Vicar.

In cooperation with the Commonside Trust, the Pollards Hill Library ran a 'Family Learning Week,' during which they organized a series of workshops for parents and children. The event was generally successful, with activities being attended by both parents and children. An example of the activities of that week was a series of small workshops arranged around the library, with families moving from one to another. They learned about a variety of issues, among them being healthy eating, home security, and child safety.

On a more regular basis, the library runs a homework tutoring session twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. These are well attended by a generally small group of young people, ranging from five to fifteen students. The sessions are run by teachers volunteering their time, and are generally better attended towards the beginning of each term than towards the end of it. Additionally, AH-1 helps run classes for those who speak English as their second language.

Her perspective of local volunteering is that most of the younger people are too busy with their own lives and concerns to want to take the extra time to give back to the community. She also perceives the older population to have a tendency of feeling that they have already done their fair share and do not need to contribute any further.

She personally has difficulties with the community's youth, many of whom loiter around the library after school. The large numbers of young people trying to use the computers and generally taking away from the quiet environment of the library is a problem, one which has led to police being called several times.

As per our request, AH-1 has agreed to introduce us to people from whom we could learn about the local communities, including Raoul, who works for the local housing authority, Anthony Hopkins, and Mark Hamilton. These people have varied experiences in dealing with Pollards Hill and the surrounding areas, which should give us a new perspective and new information regarding the attitudes, opinions, and issues regarding volunteering and community involvement in this Pollards Hill and nearby areas.

AH-1 has recommended that we place a short questionnaire in the library to gauge the community's knowledge of the Commonsides Trust and its activities. If the questionnaire is short and simple, it would be an easy matter for the circulation desk personnel to ask patrons of the library to fill it out on their way in or out of the building. Additionally, if a Commonsides Trust newsletter were to be distributed, she said that she would read it.

Interview with AH-2
Wednesday, 18 January 2005
Interviewer: Phillip Roy
Secretary: Amanda Quigley
Interview Location: Pollards Hill Community Centre

1500-1600

AH-2 first came to Pollards Hill in 1965. He tried to move out of the area, however, he was unable to sell his house in Mitcham. He explained that for a long time the area was thought of as a dumping ground. Now, the community is getting better, AH-2 described it as an “up-and-coming area”. However, the community is still living on its old reputation.

As far as the Commonsides trust is concerned, AH-2 would like to see the Commonsides Trust and the Community Centre working together as one unit. He plans on being more involved after the merger of the two organisations. He believes that within the area that is covered by the Commonsides Trust, only about 1% of the residents know who the Trust is and what they do. He feels that the Commonsides Trust needs a makeover that could be brought about by moving across the road into the new building. This move will help them to be more visible which he feels is currently a problem for them. He talked about the success of their events and programs but thinks that people don't see that the Commonsides Trust is responsible for those activities.

For marketing techniques, AH-2 suggests putting flyers in the Guardian, bus stop flyers or a newsletter. This would help to raise community awareness of the Commonsides Trust and its programs.

Interview with AS

Monday, 24 January 2005

1600-1700

Interviewer: Michael Belliss

Secretary: Amanda Quigley

Interview Location: Commonsides Trust Office

AS has lived in Pollards Hill for sixteen years. She is currently a member of the board of trustees for the Commonsides trust. She was planning on moving out of the area about six years ago, but because of personal reasons, she remained in the area. Once she realised that she would remain in the area, she joined the resident association to find out what was going on in her community. She has since gone on to volunteer for many other organisations in the Commonsides Area. She originally became involved with the Commonsides Trust through the residents association. During a meeting they were asking for members to join the Commonsides Trust and she volunteered. She has been a member of the board of trustees since the Commonsides Trust was originally developed.

AS feels that there are people on the estate that volunteer for everything. These people are typically board members and are really interested and involved in their community. On the other hand, there are people who do not volunteer for any organisations. She believes the main reason for this is apathy. In addition, she mentioned that only a small number of people have ever heard of the Commonsides Trust which is possibly a factor in the lack of volunteers. Because of residents' apathy she does not think a newsletter produced by the Commonsides Trust would be read.

Volunteering has taught AS a lot more confidence. She is also more aware of what is going on in her community and has made many new friends.

Interview with CT & FP
Monday, 24 January 2005
Interviewer: Phillip Roy
Secretary: Michael Belliss

1030-1100

Interview Location: Commonsides Trust Office

CT and FP are two young females living in Pollards Hill and Mitcham, respectively. As they are younger, they have showed us a slightly different view of the community than we have already seen.

The fact that older residents have a large influence on the community poses a problem, according to CT and FP. They described how the older generations do not understand the contemporary youth. The older generations try to improve the situation with ideas and programs that just do not address the local needs and do not appeal to younger people in the community. For example, under the SRB, a table tennis program was started, but no one participated, because the youth were interested in basketball.

There are forums for young people to express themselves. CT and FP are involved in the Borough Council for Young People, which is an open forum for young people to express what they see as needing to be addressed. Their thoughts are then brought to the Merton Council, with reasonable success.

Additionally, a problem exists in that teachers and adults whose position puts them in places to be role models for the youth are not of the same ethnic background as those they are in charge of. Since young people tend to look up to those of their own ethnicity, having an ethnically diverse group of mentors would help guide the youths and help the community.

From the view of CT and FP, the Commonsides Trust is relatively unknown to the area, because it is still young. To address this, they feel that the Commonsides Trust

should conduct some market research. They also feel that the Trust is directed mainly at younger generations.

Interview with DM
Thursday, 11 February 2005 1200-1230
Interviewer: Michael Belliss
Secretary: Amanda Quigley
Interview Location: Mitcham Hill Library

DM has lived in Mitcham for seven years, and has worked as the editor of *Sense* magazine for the past two years. In order to attract volunteers for *Sense* magazine, he has put up posters, spoken with school children, used questionnaires and word of mouth. The volunteers range in age from fourteen to twenty-four, with over eighty people being involved in the last two years. There are eight to twelve regularly involved volunteers.

Young people become involved mainly for career reasons, that is, they aspire to work in the media industry some day. DM came in contact with the Commonsense Trust about a year ago, at the 'Raw Talent' event. He has become more closely associated with them over the past few months, as he is in pursuit of funding to continue running *Sense*. He has found that most of the young people he works with are not at all familiar with the Commonsense Trust.

Interview with GI
Friday, 25 January 2005 1100-1145
Interviewer: Phillip Roy
Secretary: Michael Belliss
Interview Location: Interviewees Home

GI moved to Pollards hill twenty-one years ago in 1983. He has been involved with the Commonsides Trust since three to four months after its creation about two years ago. GI was even involved with the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) before the Commonsides Trust was formed. GI currently serves as the treasurer for the Commonsides Trust Board of Trustees but will be stepping down from that position shortly.

GI briefly described the SRB as a governmental effort of community development. Five million pounds was allocated towards the regeneration effort which must be used within a five year period. The exit strategy of the SRB program developed what is now known as the Commonsides Community Development Trust.

Shortly after retiring, GI began to volunteer within the community on a regular basis. One of the programs that he helped run was one in which volunteers would assist children in their reading at local schools. He described how he would find people who wanted to help, and show them how to become involved. He placed an advertisement in the local free paper, and interested individuals would respond. They would then volunteer, working at the school perhaps one day a week, and eventually they would find new volunteers to assist them. The program he ran was actually not centred on Pollards Hill, but was rather throughout the Borough of Merton.

GI also described how local church groups are deeply involved in the community. They never have a real shortage of volunteers, as they draw upon their congregation. All

of the programs put organised by churches are not exclusively for members of that religion, but are rather designed to be enjoyed by everyone.

GI's wife was also deeply involved with the community, especially the 'Every Woman's Club.' However, she has said that the club's membership has become increasingly elderly, and has become less interested in involving themselves in activities, community or otherwise. The 'Every woman's Club' was involved with activities amongst themselves, such as outings or community service, however she described them to currently be a lunch club where elderly women go to talk. She further commented on how the elderly do not want to become involved.

Interview with JS
Thursday, 24 January 2005 1230-1255
Interviewers: Michael Belliss & Timothy Hannafin
Interview Location: Commonsides Trust Offices

JS has been a Commonsides Trust volunteer and the office administration assistant for the past year. Additionally, she has worked as an administration assistant in the Merton Volunteer Bureau. JS has lived in Pollards Hill for the past two years, and lived in Mitcham before that.

JS was introduced to the Commonsides Trust by the Volunteer Bureau, and jumped at the opportunity of volunteering there. JS has been unemployed for four years. She said that her experiences as a volunteer have given her both confidence and reintroduced her to skills that will help her when she seeks employment again. Before she began volunteering, she said that it was hard to “get out of bed in the morning,” and life seemed bleaker than it is now.

She feels that others in the community might be feeling the same way. She feels that many others are as she was, stuck in a rut, and not sure how to get out of it. Some may not know about the Trust, although she feels that most of the community does. Most people feel that they can't be bothered with volunteering, want to be paid, or don't think that they can help.

Interview with KP
Thursday, 3 February 2005 1100-1130
Interviewer: Phillip Roy
Secretary: Michael Belliss
Interview Location: Commonsides Trust Office

KP was recommended to us by PE. He is a warden at PE's church, and has been a resident of Longthornton for approximately 22 years. As a warden of the church, his role in the community is centred on the church and the activities that take place within it. These include meetings of the local council and other groups. He has not volunteered with the Commonsides Trust before, and is not particularly interested in becoming involved, but he is familiar with the organization.

The area he resides in is nearly all owner occupied housing, making it very different from Pollards Hill, where the Commonsides Trust is based. However, there is still no sense of community in Longthornton, as nothing social ever happens after residents return from work. He does not know many of his neighbours, and feels that no one gets out and socializes.

On the topic of the Commonsides Trust, he feels that very few know of its existence. Those who do know about it but reside outside of Pollards Hill feel that it does not involve them, because they do not live in social housing. He said that the people of Longthornton do not feel they are the "obvious beneficiaries" of the programs, which creates a division between the two areas.

Longthornton is not perfect and has its own problems however most of the residents view Pollards Hill as an area with more problems than them. There is, he said, a problem with the "dismal primary care medical facilities," among other things. While

he feels that his neighbourhood is reasonably tolerant, they do not wish to invite those who live in the estate of Pollards Hill into their community. He also stated that people within his neighbourhood would certainly rather that all of the housing in Longthornton remain owner occupied.

There are very few community activities in Longthornton, and no one seems to want to take responsibility to start any new activities. KP stated that residents have a tendency to join together to stop change within the neighbourhood. An example of this tendency is the controversy of the installation of a mobile phone tower. Involvement has a direct relationship to interest, which is why people need to be made aware of the benefits of volunteering that appeal to their interests.

Interview with LT
Friday, 21 January 2005 1310-1330
Interviewer: Michael Belliss
Secretary: Timothy Hannafin
Interview Location: Commonsides Trust Office

LT has been a resident of Pollards Hill for ten years. She is a former employee of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), for whom she helped run a program similar to the Parent Gateway program run by the Commonsides Trust. After the SRB, she was involved with a local children's program in which she came into contact with the Commonsides Trust. In the period between the SRB and the Commonsides Trust, she noted a drop in the number of programs and the amount of community involvement in the area. She has been a member of the Commonsides Trust for the past two years, and a member of the Board of Trustees for one year. She feels that the events run by the Commonsides Trust encourage people to leave their houses and become involved with the community, all of which may help them eventually get a better job or education.

Through the Commonsides Trust, she has taken several courses and helped organise programs. She has termed herself a "walking advertisement" for the Commonsides Trust, and has invited several friends and acquaintances to its events. She has found that more people tend to participate in events where they know that there will be something free for them, such as food, without requiring them to bring anything to the event.

It is LT's opinion that a "large part" of the community is aware of the Commonsides Trust and has at least an idea of what it does. The publicity of the Commonsides Trust is largely centred on its location, near the Library and the Community Centre. Those members of the community who do not live nearby do not hear about it as

much. Her view of the attitude of the community towards the Commonsense Trust is that most people have a “lack of even wanting to” become involved, or that they can’t be bothered with the Commonsense Trust. In order to improve the views of the community, she feels that the apathetic residents must be shown what the Trust has to offer. To advertise the Commonsense Trust, she believes that there should be ‘leaflet drops’ around the community, spreading the word of the existence of the trust as well as information about what they do.

LT believes that many of the ethnic groups in the Commonsense area do not actively participate with the Commonsense Trust because they are busy amongst their own community groups. She also stated that these ethnic groups are largely based around faith based programs, which has a slightly different focus than the Commonsense Trust. Additionally, she feels younger people would rather stay in their own small groups than become involved with the community.

Interview with MJ

Wednesday, 21 January 2005

1000-1100

Interviewer: Timothy Hannafin

Secretary: Amanda Quigley

Interview Location: Pollard Hill Community Centre

MJ has been the Pastor of the local Angelic Church for two years. However, he has lived here his entire life. He holds service every Sunday morning at the Pollards Hill Community Centre. He is also the chair of the Community Centre. The Commonside Trust merger with the Community Centre is something MJ is looking forward to. He believes that some people see the Commonside Trust takeover as the Community Centre as solely a turnover of the Community Centre's money to the Commonside Trust.

MJ says that he thinks the two main reasons for people not volunteering in the Commonside area are a lack of time and lack of community feel. He also thinks that less than fifty percent of the residents are aware of the Commonside Trust's existence.

Since MJ has lived in Pollards Hill all his life, we asked him how the community has changed throughout the years. He said that main change was that in the last ten years there has been a lot of immigration and that the cultures have not mixed very well.

Interview with PB
Wednesday, 19 January 2005 1300-1330
Interviewer: Phillip Roy
Secretary: Michael Belliss
Interview Location: Commonsides Trust Office

PB, a Trustee of the Commonsides Trust, has lived in Pollards hill for approximately seven years. She is a single mother, with two daughters. The Commonsides Trust was recommended to PB by a friend. Her involvement with the Trust includes participation in several offered courses, one of which dealt with Project Management. Since she has become involved with the Commonsides Trust she has also become involved with the Parent Gateway project. The week following this interview, she will be hosting the first coffee morning which is a development of the Parent Gateway project. PB feels that it is her responsibility for a successful commencement of the coffee mornings so she has taken extra time to invite friends from around the community to participate. The Parent Gateway coffee mornings will be held in the Pollards Hill Library, and will be hosted by a new member of the Parent Gateway project each week.

PB feels that relatively few members of the community are aware that the Commonsides Trust and the programs it offers even exist. However, she stated that those who do come to activities organized by the Trust are impressed by what is offered and are thankful for such services and activities. She said that news is best spread by word of mouth, not by literature. She explained a personal experience where she distributed sixty to seventy leaflets, which resulted in a response of only two or three people.

According to PB, an important issue in the Pollards Hill area is pride. Residents of the area do not include 'Pollards Hill' when they write their address, as it is associated with a part of town where one would rather not live. Additionally, PB stated that members of Pollards Hill are generally content with their lives, and tend to not desire to get out and help themselves and others.

The young people of Pollards Hill contribute to the negative image of the area. Young people, including children as young as nine or ten, are often found on the streets at eleven or twelve o'clock at night. There are local gangs, and problems with violence among the youth. In her eyes, bad parenting is primarily to blame. Parents do not know where they're children are, and do not care what they are doing. Parents often make excuses defending their thought that they are doing the best they can, citing that they are 'single parents' or that they 'need to work.' Additionally, PB explained that school truancy is partially to blame. She will also be participating in a parenting class in the near future.

She is of the opinion that parenting plays a significant role in the struggles that the Pollards Hill area is experiencing. However, she said that the Commonsense Trust is genuinely trying to provide solutions through the courses and programs that it offers, however participation is not there. As a result of her involvement with the trust, she feels that she is more qualified to find a job when her children are older and she returns to the job market.

Interview with PE
Thursday, 27 January 2005 1215-1300
Interviewer: Phil Roy
Secretary: Michael Belliss
Interview Location: Commonsides Trust Offices

PE, a local Anglican priest, has been involved in community work for the past twenty years. Originally working in the advertising business, PE went back school, to Oxford University, and became a priest. He first was posted in Croydon and in Elephant and Castle, deprived areas of London where he worked mainly with youth and ‘latch-key kids,’ children who are locked out of their homes all day.

PE worked with a local community project when she lived in Croydon. Amongst the issues they dealt with were pollution, traffic, healthcare, and food. Good, healthy food, surprisingly, was hard to get in that area. Additionally, they established a local Credit Union.

From inner city London, Father PE moved to Suffolk, a rural area of Britain, where he served as the priest upon a large farm. This was a very different area for him to work in, as the farm was more inward looking than the city was. Additionally, while the residents of the farming region had problems, their problems were very much different than the problems of the regions of South London. Approximately ten years ago his sponsor, the Queen, invited him to serve in the same area of London that the Commonsides Trust operates in.

In a general sense, PE believes that the church should be involved in worthy work, wherever it may be. His experiences have led him to see the Commonsides Area as one not atypical amongst disadvantaged areas. Many residents live hand to mouth, and familial problems lead to disintegrating family life – which he sees as a crime against

future generations. Because of this, he sees the programs of the Commonsense Trust dealing with single parents as a good and necessary thing, as it prepares young parents to run a stable family. He sees advancement in small successes, and sees the Commonsense Trust as a successful group already. While they are ambitious and hopeful about their future, he does not think they have been unsuccessful.

As for community involvement, PE said that one must go out and draw people in. You cannot open the door and invite, you must go out and care for and attract the people to you. With the Commonsense Trust in a building now, and with the impending move to a larger facility, he feels that they must think of how they will go out and attract people to them.

Additionally, since management is seen as more of a 'middle class' occupation, he feels that an increased effort should be made to involve local residents in the running of the Commonsense Trust. Already there has been success in this area, with residents on the Board of Trustees, but he feels that an effort should be made to increase their stake in the Trust. Father PE has agreed to put us in contact with members of the community who he is familiar with.

Interview with RK
Friday, 21 January 2005 1015-1100
Interviewer: Michael Belliss
Secretary: Phillip Roy
Interview Location: Commonsides Trust Office

RK has lived in Pollards Hill for about three years now. She was born in Wimbledon but eventually moved to Pollards Hill due to personal circumstances. RK's social worker suggested that she become more involved in the community to overcome some personal barriers. The Commonsides Trust's Lone Parent program was recommended to her by Boel, who gave her a flyer. The flyer RK received, which described the Commonsides Community Development Trust, intimidated her because of the professional nature of the flyer and her timid attitude. However, once she became involved, she became more interested in the projects and goals of the Commonsides Trust.

When asked what she thinks of the Commonsides Trust, RK replied by saying that hardly anyone in the community has even heard of the Commonsides Trust. She believes that once the Commonsides Trust's name has been thoroughly distributed among the community only then will the Commonsides Trust have enough volunteers to rejuvenate the community. RK stated that some of her neighbours have lived three roads down from the Commonsides Trust office and still do not know what the Commonsides Trust does or that they even exist. When asked about how to create more awareness within the community, she stated that flyers would possibly work for some and others would require a verbal recommendation to encourage participation. RK also offered a solution which involved a Tennant Information Pack, which was given to her when she moved into the Pollards Hill area. She described this packet of information to include lists of facilities,

travel information, schools and education opportunities, medical information, solicitation, libraries, the community centre, and help-lines within the community. The Commonsides Trust was not mentioned anywhere in this packet of information, which may be worth pursuing to create more awareness. Similarly, she admitted that the Commonsides Trust is not heavily advertised when events and groups are organized. People may be quite interested in the event that they attend, but if they don't know who has organized it they can't possibly become involved and ultimately become a volunteer of the organization.

In summary, RK feels that an advertisement campaign will help the Commonsides Trust attract members and volunteers. She feels that the Commonsides Trust is run and designed to adequately improve the community, however the community awareness and participation of the Commonsides Trust will be the key to success.

Interview with SH and SB
Tuesday, 1 February 2005 1120-1215
Interviewer: Michael Belliss
Secretary: Timothy Hannafin
Interview Location: Merton Volunteer Bureau Offices

SH and SB both work for the Merton Volunteer Bureau, an organization dedicated to managing and allocating volunteers to various organizations across the borough. Essentially, people who wish to volunteer come to the volunteer bureau, which interviews them and helps them decide which organisation within the bureau they should volunteer with. One of the organisations that the Volunteer Bureau deals with is the Commonsense Trust.

SH and SB discussed their advertising efforts, touching upon how they targeted certain groups for involvement and then advertised to those groups. For example, they wish to involve younger people, so they put up posters and boards in places where younger people would go. Additionally, they use press releases to inform the community of what they do.

SB deals specifically with people with mental health or illness issues. Volunteering for them is often a way to gain confidence and oftentimes a part of their treatment recommended by doctors.

An important aspect of advertising is to inform the targeted audience of 'what is in it for them.' People who are busy often need to be shown the benefits of volunteering that they will gain with increased responsibilities. Often, volunteering is a step towards employment. The social contacts that come with volunteering can also be a benefit that some seek.

Interview with S
Thursday, 20 January 2005 1420 - 1450
Interviewer: Michael Belliss
Secretary: Timothy Hannafin
Interview Location: Pollards Hill Library

S has been a librarian at the Pollard Hill public library for almost two years.

Through her position she has extensive contact with the residents of the area. She said that she is “somewhat involved” with the Commonsides Trust, helping to set up activities when they are held in the library. When asked about the success of these activities she said that it was mixed, some were very successful while others were not. She attributes this mixed success to different times when the activities were held. Her advice was to hold activities geared toward the older population during the morning and activities for children and families during the late afternoon and school holidays. When asked about her perception of the Commonsides Trust S stated that she thought it was an agency geared mainly toward lone parents. She also believed that “quite a few” people know about the Commonsides Trust and their mission.

S’s largest concern about the community was the large groups of youths of the area. She stated that on several occasions large groups of youths had entered the library and caused enough trouble to warrant police intervention. She attributes the behaviour of the local youths to the lack of youth activities and facilities in the area. She felt that if the local youth centre were open more often it may help solve the problem. She talked about the library’s homework club, where trained teachers come in to help local children with their homework, and its moderate success. She thought that the Commonsides Trust should do more to engage the local youths.

Appendix D Interview Questions

Trustees

- How did you first hear about the Commonsides Trust?
- When did you first become involved with the Commonsides Trust?
- Describe your role with the Commonsides Trust. (How active are they?)
- Are you content with your role with the Commonsides Trust?
- What do you feel are the benefits of being a trustee?
- Do you have any new and unique ideas of how to create awareness of the Commonsides Trust?
- Would you be inclined to read a Commonsides Trust newsletter?

Current Volunteers

- How did you first hear about the Commonsides Trust?
- Why did you decide to become involved with the Commonsides Trust?
 - How long did you know about the Commonsides Trust before you decided to participate?
- How often do you volunteer in Commonsides Trust's community programs?
 - What programs are you most involved with?
- Do you enjoy volunteering for the Commonsides Trust? Why/Why not?
- Would you recommend volunteering for the Commonsides Trust to others in the community?
 - Have you referred anyone to the Commonsides Trust?
- What obstacles have you overcome in order to make it possible for you to volunteer with the Commonsides Trust? And what measures have you taken to do so?
- Are there any further contacts that you feel would help us understand volunteering and the Commonsides Trust?
- Do you find volunteering at the Commonsides Trust helpful in opening up new opportunities?
- Do you find the Commonsides Trust staff to be helpful?
- Would you be inclined to read a Commonsides Trust newsletter?

Non-Volunteers

- Have you ever heard of the Commonsides Trust?
 - if yes...
 - What is your perception of the Commonsides Trust and their activities?
 - Have you ever participated in an event/course/activities put on by the Commonsides Trust?

- Do you have any desire to become an active volunteer of the Commonsides Trust?
 - if yes... why have you not become an active volunteer and what obstacles must you overcome to offer your talents to the Commonsides Trust
 - if no... why?
- What is your perception of the Commonsides Trust?
 - if no...
 - give them a brief description of Commonsides Trust
- Are you familiar with the Single Regeneration Budget?
- How long have you been apart of Pollards Hill, Longthornton or east Figges Marsh communities?
- If you had the opportunity to change one aspect of your community, what would you improve?
- Would you be inclined to read a Commonsides Trust newsletter?

Appendix E Group Discussions

Group Discussion – Coffee Morning

Thursday, 27 January 2005

1000-1230

Attendants: Timothy Hannafin, Amanda Quigley

Interview Location: Pollards Hill Library

The Coffee Morning group meets once a month on a Thursday morning. The meeting we attended had approximately thirty participants, most of whom were elderly. After the meeting, we asked if anyone had heard of the Commonsides and if anyone would be willing to talk to us for a few minutes after their meeting. No one at the Coffee morning had heard of the Commonsides Trust even though they meet right across the road.

Three people volunteered to talk to us for a short while. Amanda met with two friends and talked to them about the community. They said they didn't know about the Commonsides Trust. When she asked them how long they lived in the community, they made sure to let her know that they were not from Pollard Hill; rather, they live five minutes down the road. They said they have been involved with the community for many years. Their involvement with the community only involves elderly woman's groups. They did not seem interested in joining the Commonsides Trust or any other organisations that involved people other than the elderly. They think the community being more diverse than when they first got here is a bad thing. In addition, they are unhappy with the current situation in the schools.

Tim met with another elderly woman. She believes that there isn't very much sense of community in the area because people are always moving in and out. She would

not be interested in volunteering for the Commonsense Trust because she does not have enough free time. Her main problem with living on the estate was the amount of noise. It's not the children playing that are making the noise, but there is loud music playing at all hours.

Appendix F Jack Foley Interview

Tuesday, 1 November 2004 1300 - 1400
Interviewer: Phil Roy
Secretary: Amanda Quigley
Interview Location: Clark University

Jack Foley is the head of the Worcester Main South, an organisation similar to the Commonsense Trust in Mitcham. His program has become a national model for community development throughout the United States. Their main focus is to approach the community through the children. He claims that because of his outreach to children "their parents will walk through walls for us [his organisation]" (Foley). Essentially, he is saying that parents will do anything for their children. Therefore, if the children are happy and involved in the programs the parents will be more apt to volunteer.

Jack Foley insisted that making people feel comfortable in an environment where they were free to speak their minds was essential. This is the only way to ensure that the residents are saying what they truly feel about their community.

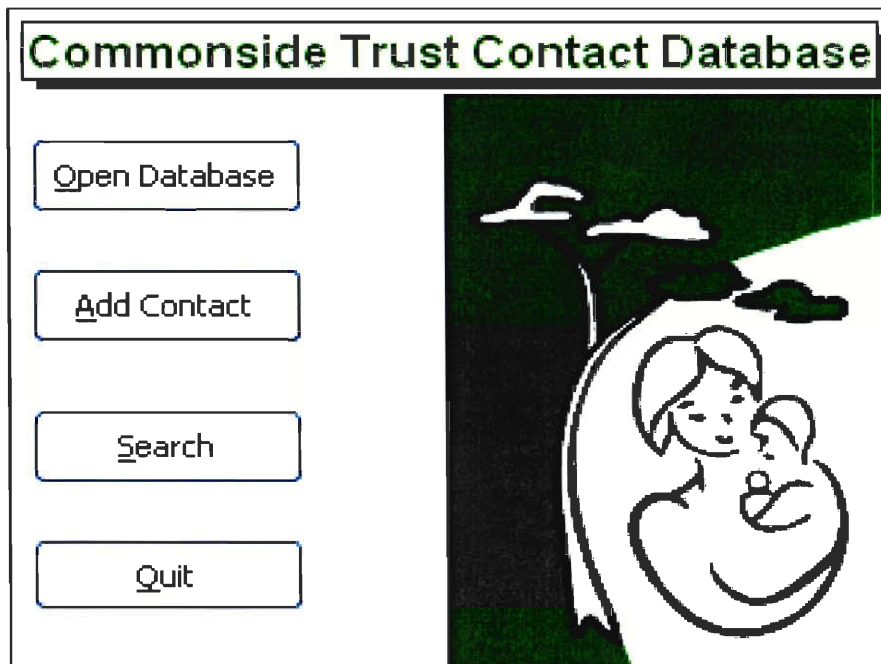
For the organisation to be successful, he suggests the design of strategic plan. This plan should be focused around a common goal. In addition, small successes early will reinforce to the community that their efforts are paying off and that they are making steps towards a better community.

Appendix G Database Manual

Commonside Trust Contact Database User Manual

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Introduction



Open Database:

Open the database for viewing or editing. This will let you view each entry one-by-one and edit or delete any entry (See "Navigating the Database").

Add Contact:

Add a contact to the database. This will bring up a blank Add Entry form (see "Adding a Contact").

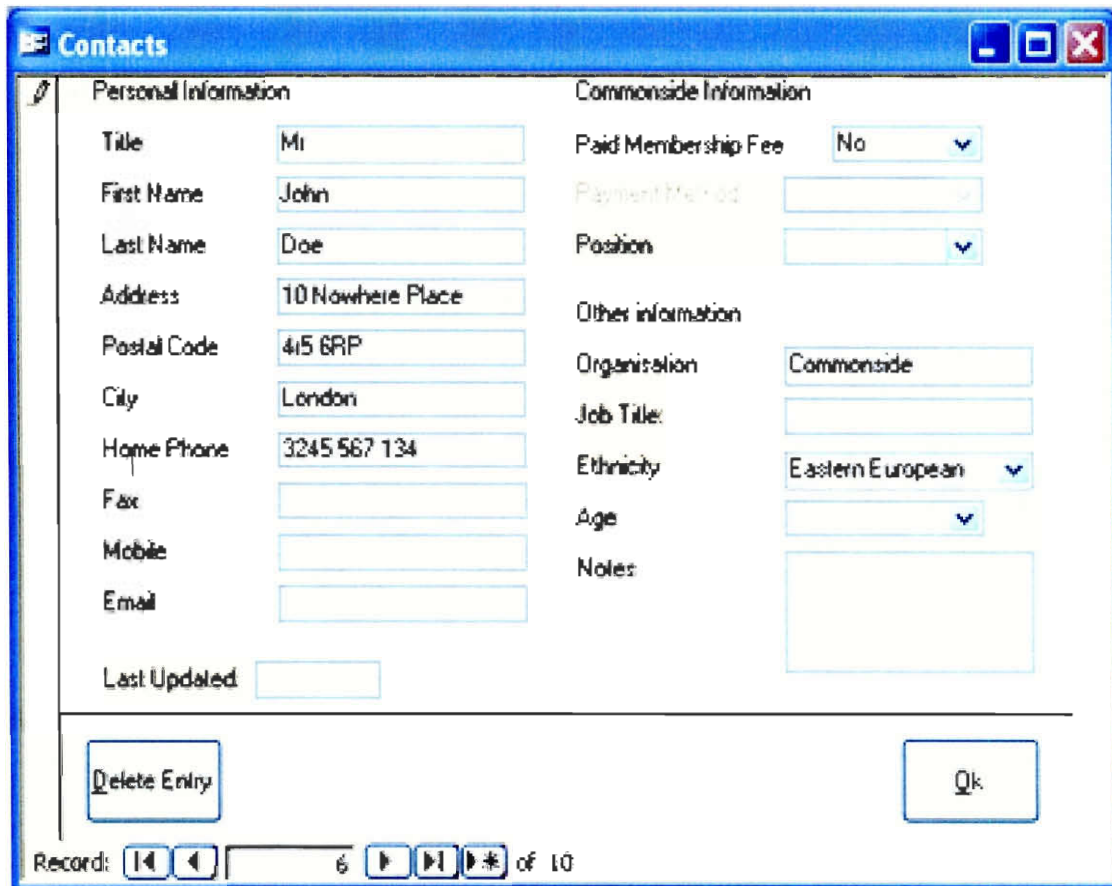
Search:

Search the database. This will bring up a blank Search form which will allow you to find any records which match the selected criteria (see "Searching").

Quit:

Exit the program.

Navigating the Database



The screenshot shows a window titled "Contacts" with a blue title bar. The window is divided into two main sections: "Personal Information" on the left and "Commonside Information" on the right. The "Personal Information" section includes fields for Title (Mi), First Name (John), Last Name (Doe), Address (10 Nowhere Place), Postal Code (415 6RP), City (London), Home Phone (3245 567 134), Fax, Mobile, and Email. The "Commonside Information" section includes fields for Paid Membership Fee (No), Payment Method, Position, Organisation (Commonside), Job Title, Ethnicity (Eastern European), Age, and Notes. At the bottom left, there is a "Delete Entry" button. At the bottom right, there is an "Ok" button. At the very bottom, there is a record navigation bar with the text "Record: 6 of 10" and several navigation icons (first, previous, next, last, and add new).

Personal Information		Commonside Information	
Title	Mi	Paid Membership Fee	No
First Name	John	Payment Method	
Last Name	Doe	Position	
Address	10 Nowhere Place	Other information	
Postal Code	415 6RP	Organisation	Commonside
City	London	Job Title	
Home Phone	3245 567 134	Ethnicity	Eastern European
Fax		Age	
Mobile		Notes	
Email			
Last Updated			

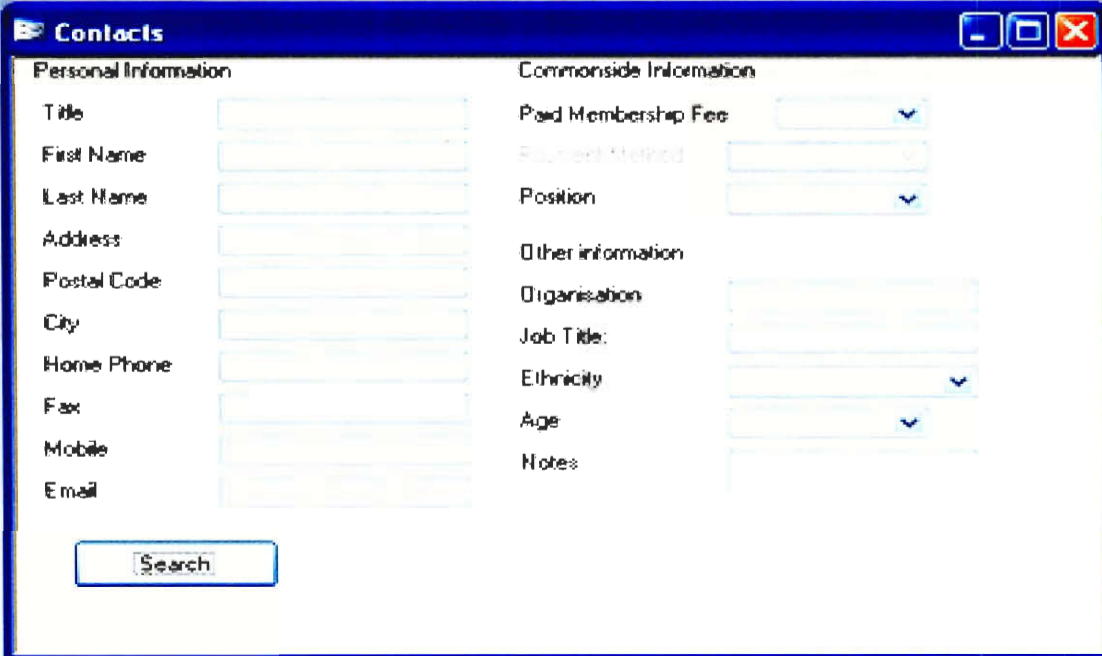
After clicking the **Open Database** button, a window similar to this will appear. You can see each of the fields associated with this entry. Any of the fields can be altered or filled in at any point. When you are done editing entries click the **Ok** button to return to the main menu. If you wish to remove an entry from the database you can use the delete button.

The small buttons at the very bottom of the window are used for record navigation. From left to right their functions are: go to first entry, go to previous entry, current entry index, go to last entry, and add new entry. They can be used to move from one record to another.

Add Contact

After clicking the **Add Contact** button on the main menu you will see the Add Contact window. This window is identical to the database navigation window except that all of the fields are blank. All you need to do to add a new contact is fill in at least one of the fields, then click **Ok**. If you fill in the fields and then decide not to add the entry, just click the **Delete Entry** button then close the window.

Searching



Personal Information	Commonside Information
Title	Paid Membership Fee
First Name	Equipment Method
Last Name	Position
Address	Other information
Postal Code	Organisation
City	Job Title
Home Phone	Ethnicity
Fax	Age
Mobile	Notes
Email	

Search

After clicking the **Search** button on the main menu, you will see this window. Here you can enter search criteria for the database. Any one or combination of the fields can be used to search. For example searching with “Mary” in the First Name field would give you everyone in the database named Mary, putting “Plumber” in the position field would give you all the plumbers, but putting both “Mary” in First Name and “Plumber” in position would give you all the plumbers named Mary. A search with all blank fields will return every entry in the database.

Searching Continued

The screenshot shows a window titled "Search Results" with a blue title bar. The window is divided into two main sections: "Personal Information" on the left and "Commside Information" on the right. Below these sections are four buttons: "Delete Entry", "New Search", "Reports", and "Ok". At the bottom, there is a record navigation bar showing "Record: 6 of 10".

Personal Information		Commside Information	
Title	Mr	Paid Membership Fee	No
First Name	John	Position	
Last Name	Doe	Other information	
Address	10 Nowhere Place	Organisation	Commside
Postal Code	4r5 6RP	Job Title	
City	London	Ethnicity	Eastern European
Home Phone	3245 567 134	Age	
Fax		Notes	
Mobile			
Email			
Last Updated			

The results of your search will show up in the Search Results window. The navigation buttons on the bottom of the window can be used to look through your search results in the same way as navigating the full database. **Delete Entry** and **Ok** work the same as in the navigation window. The only differences between this and the navigation window are the two new buttons **New Search** and **Reports**. The **New Search** button closes this window and returns you to the search window. The **Reports** button opens the reports menu which will allow you to produce a report from the results of your search. Making a report is explained in the next section.

Reports Menu



If you choose to produce a report from your search results click the **Reports** button in the Search Results window. This will bring you to the Report menu. From here you have several options: **Simple Report**, **Detailed Report**, and **Report to File**.

Simple Report – Shows each contact's title, first name, last name, address, postal code, city and home phone.

Detailed Report – Shows each contacts title, first name, last name, address, postal code, city, home phone, fax, mobile, ethnicity, organization, and position.

Report to File – Saves the report in any of several Microsoft Office formats, most importantly a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Saving the file to an Excel spreadsheet will allow you to customize your report by deleting, adding, or moving information. A spreadsheet can also be used as a source for a mail merge (see next section).

Mail Merge (Letter)

Mail merge will allow you to create customized mailing material for people in the database.

- 1) Conduct a search and export the results to an Excel file
- 2) Open the mail merge letter template and type your letter in the area indicated
- 3) In Word, go to the tools menu and select mail merge.
- 4) In the “Mail Merge Helper” menu click the “Get Data” button and select “Open Data Source” (Ignore “Create” and “Edit” buttons, if you are using the template it has already been done for you)
- 5) Select the spreadsheet you just saved (you may have to change the “Files of type” dropdown menu at the bottom of the window to “MS Excel Worksheets”)
- 6) Click ok on the next box that pops up
- 7) Click the merge button, then click the merge button on the next box that pops up
- 8) Print!

Mail Merge (Labels)

- 1) Open a new word document
- 2) In Word, go to the tools menu and select mail merge.
- 3) Click the “Create” button and select “Mailing Labels”
- 4) Click “Active window” on the next box that pops up
- 5) In the “Mail Merge Helper” menu click the “Get Data” button and select “Open Data Source
- 6) Select the spreadsheet you just saved (you may have to change the “Files of type” dropdown menu at the bottom of the window to “MS Excel Worksheets”)
- 7) Click ok on the next box that pops up
- 8) Click “Set Up Main Document” on the next box

- 9) Select the size and type of label you are printing to and click Ok
- 10) Now you will set up the template that each label will follow
 - a) Click “Insert Merge Field” and click title
 - b) Type a space then click “Insert Merge Field” again and select First_Name
 - c) Repeat this process for Last_Name, Address, City, and Postal_Code
 - d) Remember to insert spaces and new lines when appropriate
- 11) Click “Merge”, then “Merge” again on the next box
- 12) Print!

For support please email hannafit@wpi.edu