

Social Capital and New Localism: A Comparative Study of Two Parish Councils

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Abstract

The theme of devolution has been taken up by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition from May 2010. This study demonstrates the enduring nature of the problem of devolving responsibility. The primary concern is to make an original contribution to the literature on the development of new localism by focusing on two contrasting Kentish examples of networked community governance: Downswood Parish Council and Kings Hill Parish Council. Downswood Parish Council's structure of governance is representative of the sometimes difficult central-local relationship. At Kings Hill the dual struggle for power includes a third partner, the private service provider (developer of Kings Hill). The study seeks to show that traditional social capital theory provides few insights into citizens' motivations to invest in social capital as a public good. Theories of leadership and club goods are introduced to provide an explicit theoretical account of the links between social networks and individual motivations. It will be argued that these theories make it possible to depart from Robert Putnam's belief that social capital is a bottom-up initiative in governance. The main findings show that both models of parish governance are remarkably good at generating and mobilising/expanding social capital. But it has to be emphasised that it is not in the interest of those holding power to just give it up. Instead, once community activists have gained the residents' support it is up to them to take power, and at times be critical of government policy. This is exactly what the parish councillors did on several occasions.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| ACPS | American Citizen Participation Study |
| AGM | Annual general meeting |
| ASBOs | Antisocial behaviour orders |
| ASI | Adam Smith Institute |
| BV | Best Value |
| CC&Rs | Covenants, conditions and restrictions |
| CCT | Compulsory competitive tendering |
| CCTV | Closed-circuit television |
| CPTED | Crime prevention through environmental design |
| DCA | Downswood Community Association |
| DCC | Downswood Community Centre |
| DETR | Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1997-2001) |
| DOARA | Downswood and Otham Active Retirement Association |
| DPC | Downswood Parish Council |
| DTLR | Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (2001-02) |
| EMCs | Estate Maintenance Charges |
| GSS | General Social Survey |
| HQ | Head quarters |
| HOA | Homeowners Association |
| ICT | Information Communications Technology |
| IDeA | Improvement and Development Agency |
| INLOGOV | Institute of Local Government Studies |
| JRF | Joseph Rowntree Foundation |
| IPPR | Institute for Public Policy Research |
| KAPC | Kent Association of Parish Councils |
| KCC | Kent County Council |
| KHCH | Kings Hill Community Hall |
| KHPC | Kings Hill Parish Council |
| KHREMCL | Kings Hill Residential Estate Management Company Limited |
| LGA | Local Government Association |
| MBC | Maidstone Borough Council |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| MSSD | Most Similar Systems Design |
| NALC | National Association of Local Councils |
| NIMBY | Not in my back yard |
| NLGN | New Local Government Network |
| NPM | New Public Management |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OFSTED | Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills |
| PCSO | Police Community Support Officer |
| PTAs | Parent Teacher Associations |
| RCCs | Rural Community Councils |
| RK | Rouse Kent (the developer of Kings Hill) |
| RPI | Retail Price Index |
| RSPB | Royal Society for the Protection of Birds |
| SLCC | Society of Local Council Clerks |
| SMF | Social Market Foundation |
| SQ | Standard Question |
| T&MBC | Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council |
| TECs | Training and Enterprise Councils |
| WVS | World Values Surveys |

1 INTRODUCING PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

Like other advanced post-modern industrial democracies, Britain is learning how to cope with problems of social and political integration. Some observers point to the ethnic segregation of Britain's multicultural society.¹ Others criticise the state of public spaces, often perceived as unsafe, littered and characterised by uncivilised behaviour.² New Labour's 'respect agenda' from 1997 onwards is an expression of this concern. Whilst problems of social integration are not new, there is a growing concern that the traditional forms of social and political control are less successful in tackling such behaviour. Although modern states can draw on an extensive toolkit from increased electronic surveillance to the British Labour Party's antisocial behaviour orders, there is a limit to the extent to which democratic states can rely on centralised coercion. But the deference observed by Almond and Verba in their classic *Civic Culture* (1963) study, which underpinned state legitimacy, is no longer available to ensure widespread compliance with democratically set rules. Inglehart's (1997) 'intergenerational value change' theory argues that citizens' attitudes to state authority have changed.

In fact, there is a declining interest of citizens in Western democracies in the institutionalised forms of political participation, with the exception of non-election participation including protest politics (Curtice and Seyd 2003: 93-107). There has also been a drop in party membership (Rucht 2000: 95). The traditional engine of representative democracy responsible for party government is suffering from declining ties between the

¹ In 2002, Jagdish Gundara, head of the International Centre for Intercultural Studies said: 'Many multicultural educational policies implemented in Britain have not been successful, and their viability needs to be appraised. It is alleged that multicultural education programmes can stress difference, divergences and perhaps contribute to the lack of social cohesion', Proceedings of the Runnymede Conference of May 2002 held at the London School of Economics, *Cohesion, Community and Citizenship*, p. 12.

² 'As a society, our rights as individuals are based on the sense of responsibility we have towards others and to our families and communities. This means respecting each other's property, respecting the streets and public spaces we share and respecting our neighbours' right to live free from harassment and distress. It is the foundation of a civil society... The antisocial behaviour of a few, damages the lives of many. We should never underestimate its impact. We have seen the way communities spiral downwards once windows get broken and are not fixed, graffiti spreads and stays there, cars are left abandoned, streets get grimmer and dirtier, youths hang around street corners intimidating the elderly', Quotation from the *Anti-Social Behaviour White Paper*, 2003, Ministerial foreword by the then Home Secretary David Blunkett.

political parties and citizens (see, for example, Dalton 2002). The social control mechanisms of the family, religion and other traditional institutions are no longer effective (see, for example, Inglehart 1997: 39). Centralised welfare states, which maintained a degree of integration after the Second World War, are no longer successful in a global world focused on 'individualism' (Beck 1992). Market mechanisms, seen as the solution in the 1980s, have, it has been argued, increased social inequality, exclusion, segregation and alienated many from the benefits of economic prosperity (Imrie and Raco 2003: 3). In short, many of the traditional methods of social integration and control have become less effective in tackling the problems of law and order, such as the ones mentioned above. In Britain, as in other democracies, governments are turning to the private and voluntary sector 'civil society' to deal with problems that 'big government' has failed to solve. There is a belief that the trust lost in government that underpinned order in society must be rebuilt from below, from the grassroots at the local level.

David Cameron's 'big society' idea, like the former Labour government's 'new localism', reflects a concern to shift power and responsibility to the local level. However, the specific content of the big society remains unclear, and it also needs a framework on how it would be implemented. During these difficult times when the coalition government (hereafter simply 'the coalition') are looking for cut-backs, the hope is that the private and voluntary sector will step in. But volunteers need support and training, and this is not cost free. The big society is also unclear about the role of elected local authorities. Therefore, who would hold the power, the elected and accountable local authority, or a small powerful group who might be acting in self-interest, instead of the common good? The big society sounds appealing if people are told they are going to be set free from red tape, but if it is instead about micro-managing peoples' lives then it will damage personal responsibility. For example, if the coalition decides to impose a tax on fatty foods is it really the role of the state to tell people what they should or should not eat? This would go against the idea of rolling back the state and devolving responsibility. Furthermore, if the coalition want to make swift and dramatic changes to reforming the welfare state, as Iain Duncan Smith suggested at the Reform think-tank conference (30 June 2010), this could result in an expensive social disaster. The big society needs time to develop. It should be about a gradual cultural shift based on a strong ethic of people being encouraged to do good deeds for others, as well as for themselves. The operationalisation of the big society will not be addressed by this study, as our empirical research was undertaken after New Labour's second election victory. Nevertheless, the conclusions drawn from the parish council community governance this study has analysed,

will give a helpful understanding of how effective the big society could be, if power and responsibility are genuinely devolved.

This study examines political responses to the problems discussed above at the local level, and linked to them, three closely connected concepts: democracy, social capital and trust. The concept of trust is currently much discussed by academics and policymakers. Interest in this concept has generated a vast literature (see, for example, Fukuyama 1995; Myszal 1996; Warren 1999; O'Neill 2002). One reason for this increased interest in trust is that it is an important element of social capital theory. Social capital is defined as the social networks people form together and ideally the result of these collective activities is trust and reciprocity. Social capital is closely related to writings on civil society and communitarianism,³ and in an economic climate focused on reducing the welfare state without risking a sharp decline in social integration, it becomes a potentially powerful tool. To its proponents it is a way of linking the social with the economic and getting civil society to be less interested in rights and more interested in responsibilities. It is easier to understand the reason for valuing social capital and its desired outcome, trust, if trust is analysed in terms of its function. Basically, if people are trusting they will cooperate. So trust in the form of its function has the potential to create social order.

The aim of this study is to contribute to the study of local politics and 'new localism' in Britain, using social capital theory as an analytical framework and starting point. This follows a well-established research tradition going back to Robert Putnam's investigation of local and regional government in Italy, *Making Democracy Work* (1993) and in the United States of America (USA), *Bowling Alone* (2000), which a number of scholars have built on in the United Kingdom (UK) (Lowndes and Wilson 2001; Corry and Stoker 2002; Stoker and Wilson 2004; Stoker 2004). As social capital is about how people connect with one another and share common values, it has the potential to help explain developments in political participation at the local level.

Empirically, this study is based on non-participant observation of the decision-making process and outcomes of the meetings of two parish councils: Downswood Parish Council (DPC), a traditional model of local governance, and Kings Hill Parish Council (KHPC), a

³ Communitarianism has developed as a critique of liberalism. It highlights the damage done by placing emphasis on individual rights over the 'common good' of the community. Communitarian thinkers such as Etzioni and Giddens call for a revival of individual responsibility and social morality as a means of creating social cohesion. Critics of communitarianism argue it has conservative and authoritarian overtones see, for example, Simon Prideaux *Not So New Labour: A sociological critique of New Labour's policy and practice* (2005).

market model of local governance, both situated in the south east of England. The former is a traditional parish council because like other local councils (parish and town) it operates within an institutionalised legal framework. It is a corporate body with a legal existence of its own quite separate from its members (the parish councillors). The decisions it makes are the responsibility of the whole body. It has been granted powers by Parliament including the important power to raise money through taxation (the parish precept). The principal authorities (the higher tiers of local government) have a legal duty to provide services such as education, town and country planning, environmental health and social services. Local councils have a legal power to take action, but they have fewer duties and more freedom to decide what action they want to take.

Although KHPC is bound by the same institutional rules it is different. It is a property-rights based model of governance (see below). Basically, when the residents including the parish councillors purchased their properties at Kings Hill they signed an additional legal agreement which comes with covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs).⁴ This gives the developer additional powers and, as the empirical research will show, this complicates the traditional parish council decision-making process. It also puts at risk the basic democratic requirement of openness. This happens because it is not always in the interest of business to be completely open since this can place it at a competitive disadvantage. The situation is completely different for a local council. To gain greater credibility in the eyes of the local community a local council has to be accountable, visible, and represent the whole community. The benefit of studying local councils is that they are the closest level of government to the people and most dependent on voluntary involvement. They are the important institutions of local governance heralded by New Labour as vehicles for regeneration and social cohesion, including their role as local service providers. The latter role is important. It is about encouraging communities to develop their own services and funding initiatives to reduce reliance on central government.

Social capital theory will provide the general framework for this study, but it will be demonstrated in the thesis that its explanatory power is limited. It will be argued that 'club goods' derived from theories of collective action can be used to address some of the shortcomings of social capital theory. This combination of social capital theory with club goods theory will be one of the theoretical innovations of the thesis. Empirically this study will examine how successful these contrasting parish councils are at generating and/or

⁴ See Appendix 1 for a copy of the Schedule 3 Stipulations from the 'Schedule of Restrictive Covenants', which applies to property at Kings Hill built from 1998 onwards.

mobilising/expanding social capital; how they work in 'local partnerships' to provide local services; and investigate whether 'effective leadership' (which at times can be critical of government policy) is more important than Putnam, one of the most influential proponents of social capital in political science, suggests. The empirical research of the market model of local governance (KHPC) will make a contribution towards an understanding of how the private service provider (Rouse Kent) is developing in Britain. This will address some of the concerns raised in one of the research questions proposed in *Gated Cities of Tomorrow* by Chris Webster:

How is the market in gated schemes evolving in respect to a specialisation among developers; the emergence of professional estate-management firms; the scale of activity; diversification of the product; segmentation of the market; and so on? (Webster 2001: 166-167).

The background and motivation for this study

Studies on democracy and good governance go right back to Plato. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed several 'waves' of transition to democracy and 'reverse waves' of democratic breakdowns.⁵ But just as the global spread of liberal democracy seemed unstoppable in the last wave that started in 1974, attention in the established liberal democracies of Europe, North America and Japan shifted from what the democracies had achieved, to their common problems. In 1975 the Trilateral Commission report argued that Europe, North America and Japan were all facing a crisis of 'governability'. In the USA, Samuel Huntington argued that the American institutions of government were being overwhelmed by a 'democratic surge'. The people were making greater demands for equality and participation. The negative side of this democratic surge was political polarisation accompanied by decreased ability of the political parties and government to generate awareness, legitimacy and support for public policy. In Europe, Michael Crozier spoke of an increase in social mobilisation, the demise of traditional institutions and values, and a loss of social control with limited room for governments to manoeuvre. In Japan, Joji Watanuki

⁵ Samuel Huntington writing in the *Journal of Democracy* identified three waves of democracy. 'The first began in the early nineteenth century with the extension of the right to vote to a large proportion of the male population in the United States, and continued until the 1920s. During this period, some 29 democracies came into being. The ebb, or reversal, of this first wave began in 1922 with the accession of Mussolini to power in Italy and lasted until 1942, when the number of the world's democracies had been reduced to 12. A second wave began with the triumph of the Allies in World War II, cresting in 1962 when the number of democracies had risen to 36. The ebbing of the second wave between 1962 and the mid-1970s brought it back down to 30. Since 1974, however, democracy's third wave has added approximately 30 new democracies, doubling the number of such societies' www.usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem/whatdm13.htm

noted that the situation was different, since the country was an outlier. The traditional values remained in place, along with strong economic prosperity, and this prevented the people from demanding greater participation. It remained to be seen if the same problems would emerge later, in Japan (Pharr and Putnam 2000: 3). A sense of 'crisis' gained momentum in the late 1960s and early 1970s due to the riots over civil rights, the violent nationwide student protests over the Vietnam War, and the Watergate Affair. Added to this was the international economic recession caused by the OPEC oil shocks of 1973-74 and 1979-80 (Norris 1999: 3-4). The Trilateral democracies seemed to be trapped between rising demands from their citizens and limited resources to meet such demands (Pharr and Putnam 2000: 4).

These crisis theories, however, were no longer in vogue during the 1980s. Crisis theorists seemed to have underestimated the ability of the state to adapt. In the established democracies there was an increased drive for free-market forces led by Reagan and Thatcher, and this managed to lower public expectations at the same time as it reduced the level of public services.⁶ In some advanced industrial democracies new social movements such as the environmentalists became a part of the mainstream political process (Norris 1999: 4). The crisis thesis was also challenged by a group of academics who studied trends in the Eurobarometer Surveys from 1973 to 1990 (Klingemann and Fuchs 1995; Kaase and Newton 1995). They found little evidence of widespread increased malaise during these decades. The only trend which supported the crisis thesis, some argued, was the continued cross-national lack of support for political parties (Norris 1999: 5). But by the middle of the 1990s perceptions of crisis were back on the political and academic agenda. Voters were now said to be 'ready to revolt', 'angry', 'disgusted', and 'frustrated' (Tolchin 1996; Dionne 1991; Craig 1993). As one scholar commented, in the European countries and in America they seemed to have experienced '... a flight from politics, or what the Germans call *Politikverdrossenheit*: a weariness about its debates, disbelief about its claims, scepticism about its results, cynicism about its practitioners' (Maier 1994: 59). Indeed, many of the established democracies seemed to agree that confidence in government was declining, and

⁶ When Mrs Thatcher spoke to the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) in January 1981, she made it clear that the statutory welfare services should only support the voluntary movement. The Audit Commission's report, *Making a Reality of Community Care* (HMSO 1986), found that in ten years, 25,000 psychiatric beds had disappeared and only 9000 extra day care places had been provided. After many of these people were discharged no one knew what had happened to them. The NHS and Community Care Act 1990 was another drive to reduce state involvement in the welfare services. This Act gave a high priority to the provision of practical support for carers, emphasising the Government's intention that local authorities should promote and not undermine individual responsibility for caring for children and adult dependents (Stewart and Stoker 1995: 129-132).

there was a growing disconnection between the citizens and the state. In Britain the electorate had become even more sceptical. In Sweden surveys showed a continuing decline of trust in political leadership, similar to trends in the USA. In Italy and Japan widespread cynicism towards government fuelled pressure in the early 1990s for major reforms of the political systems in both of these countries (Norris 1999: 6).

These observations were not confined to a single country or specific periods. The symptoms of crisis seemed to be widespread. As a result the search for explanations quickly focused on some profound social and cultural changes all of these countries experienced.⁷ On the one hand, there is evidence of increased tolerance and diversity. On the other hand, the free-market has increased mobility and encouraged a more 'me-orientated' society, which has eroded traditional family values and community ties. In many cities, towns and even in rural areas there are signs of decay (Pharr and Putnam 2000: 5). This is believed to have led to a decline in social capital, which in turn has led to a change of civility⁸ and decline in voluntary compliance with policy decisions in many public spaces. This is where this study contributes to a wider discussion amongst social scientists and policymakers. It ties together broader discussions about declining social capital and changes of civility with practices of local government.

To be civilised is to be polite and good mannered and considerate towards others; clean and decent and hygienic in personal habits; human and gentle and kind, restrained and self-controlled and even-tempered; reluctant to use violence against others save in exceptional circumstances. To be a civilised person is to have learned a great deal since childhood... Above all, though to be civilised is to live with others in an orderly, well organised, just, predictable and calculably society (Mennell 1992: 29).

The above quotation offers examples of the ideal characteristics of civilised behaviour. Although the word civility⁹ has a complex history, contemporary manifestations of

⁷ For an explanation of the cultural changes which have transformed the advanced post-industrial societies from 'materialist' values (emphasising economic and physical security above all) to 'postmaterialist' values (emphasising self-expression and the quality of life) see (Inglehart 1997).

⁸ We talk of a change not a decline of civility since there is no point in history when a perfect measure of civility was reached. Throughout history there have been spurts and counter-spurts of civility. During Queen Victoria's reign there was a spurt of civility or passion for respectability. Not unlike New Labour's 'respect and responsibility' agenda, the Victorian philanthropists' main discourse focused on re-moralising and regulating the behaviour of the poor. The poignant examples of the counter-spurts of civility are the First and Second World Wars. After 1916 the home front thought war had created massive and mindless destruction and machine-like men (see Kingsley Kent 1999: 283).

⁹ For a full discussion of the historical development of civility, see Marvin B. Becker (1988) *Civility and Society in Western Europe 1300-1600*.

uncivilised behaviour include vandalism, fly-tipping, graffiti, alcoholism, drug abuse, bad language, road-rage, air-rage and even trolley-rage. Vandalism is not new and it has been going on throughout history. Fly-tipping has become a serious problem because it is expensive to dispose of waste legally, and if chemical waste is not properly disposed of it can seriously damage the environment. Graffiti is not easy to classify. To some it is a form of art sometimes called street art. At the Basilica of San Zeno, Verona, northern Italy, some of the frescos have names and dates inscribed into them. This makes them look as if they have suffered an attack of graffiti. But they were permissible inscriptions by the survivors of natural disasters: the earthquakes and floods which occurred during the different centuries (see Appendix 2). Nevertheless, excessive graffiti does spoil the appearance of the public realm, and like fly-tipping it is expensive for local authorities to remove. Drinking to excess and taking illegal drugs are not new types of antisocial behaviour. The difference is that alcoholism and drug abuse are no longer restricted to those from privileged social backgrounds, nor are they conducted in private. The latter four types of uncivilised behaviour are evidence that anger is no longer suppressed. It is displayed openly in public.

This divide between the private and public is an important theme of this study and will be returned to below. Changes of civility, in which at the macro-level trust in authority figures and political leadership is low, while at the local level there are antisocial behaviour problems, has serious implications for governments. On the positive side there are more freedoms. It means more women are free to have a career and be independent. It also means people are free to protest against unpopular government policy. In 1982, an impressive 30,000 women from the Greenham Common peace camp linked hands to 'Embrace the Base'. These women had an impact on the public psyche that conventional campaigning could not reach (Hinton 1989: 183). On the negative side there are more freedoms for people to abuse themselves, others and the public realm. It also means that although the majority of politicians are not self-motivated, rising levels of cynicism has resulted in many people no longer feeling they have a civic duty to turn out and vote at the elections. Continued decline in turnout will undermine democracy. Therefore, it is important to re-engage people to build-up trust.

Parish council governance

To get a clearer understanding of how the political problems discussed above develop and how they are dealt with, a good starting point is at the local level. Therefore, as noted, this study is based on a detailed analysis of politics at the level of two parish councils situated in

south east England, including non-participant observations of parish meetings over a period of two years (2003-2005). Parish councils have played an important role in British politics for many centuries. Originally the parish was the smallest unit of church organisation. Gradually it gained non-ecclesiastical functions, starting with highways in the fifteenth century and then care of the poor in 1601. For the common people the parish was the most important level of government because it had the most direct impact on their lives. The parish carried out its duties under the guidance of four unpaid officers: the church warden, the constable, the surveyor, and the overseer of the poor. The churchwarden was responsible for keeping the parish in good repair and collecting a rate to pay for any such works. The constable was responsible for keeping the peace and he took any offenders before the magistrates. The surveyor looked after the highways. The overseer of the poor imposed a rate on the local people to purchase materials for the poor to make goods, which were sold and then the money was given to relieve poverty (Richards 1978: 12-13).

Recently, parish councils have regained some of their former importance, which was taken away by the Thatcher government.¹⁰ Like the early parishes the parish councils of today are still represented by leading community figures, and based on the needs of the community. The parish council remains a conduit between the residents and the higher tiers of government. The empirical research will show that there are several positive outcomes if residents see their parish councillors have involved a Member of Parliament to help them on an issue of local importance, and if the MP lobbies Parliament on their behalf. First, the parish councillors learn how to rally the residents' support. Second, the residents will see the benefits of getting involved in their community, and this has the potential to get them involved in the electoral process. It may also enhance a sense of efficacy and responsiveness of the political and administrative system. Knowing how communities work and govern themselves is especially important in terms of regeneration projects, such as the massive Thames Gateway plans for North East Kent and South Essex. This is why studying these two parish councils will give a valuable insight into what works best at the local level of governance. This is where social capital theory has great explanatory power.

A further reason for studying parish councils is related to the following:

¹⁰ Elcock notes: 'This challenge to local government's usefulness and sometimes its very existence has been mounted on three fronts, the development of each which can be very roughly correlated with the beginning of Margaret Thatcher's three successive terms of office'. For an explanation of the 'Thatcher assault' on local government see (Elcock 1994: 9-12).

There is clearly a problem across the board of politics in Britain about attracting people to go into political activities of various kinds, and I don't think you can divorce any of this from the erosion of the major parties capacity to sign up members. I've no doubt that the government feels now, and has for some time that the bedrock of democracy in Britain is represented at the local level, and it is, and that if that is weak then it will weaken the whole democratic process.¹¹

This quotation suggests that the findings of this study are important for two reasons. First, it is about the grassroots voluntary participation that Tony Travers referred to as the 'bedrock of democracy'. As national politics is remote, this local approach is needed. The empirical chapters will show how citizens can effectively be brought into the political process. Second, there is a lacuna in the local government literature. There is no longitudinal empirical research of parish councils formulating policies and initiatives adjusted to suit both the preferences and needs of their residents. This study shows the 'local partnerships' that work and the ones that are not successful. It therefore provides an understanding of the community governing itself.

A literature review of parish governance

The main body of local government literature covers: central-local relations; the structure of local government; the reorganisation of local government; the role of local government councillors and officers; the financing of local government; the provision and delivery of services; and local government elections. To help understand the gap in knowledge that the present study aims to fill, we will now offer a systematic appraisal of what has been written about local councils. That is the parish and town councils, not the local authority (district, borough, county or unitary) level of governance, on which as noted, there is an extensive body of research (see, for example, Lowndes *et al.* (2001) *Trends in Public Participation: Part 1: Local Government Perspectives*). Parish councils have received minimal attention in the local government literature mainly because unlike the higher tiers of local government, and unlike local councils in other countries, their service-providing role is limited to the discretionary provision of very local services (Wilson and Game 1994: 36-37). The existing literature deals with four key themes: power, democracy, efficiency and participation.

¹¹ BBC Radio 4, The World at One News: Shaun Ley was speaking to Professor Michael Keith, Tony Travers and Ruth Kelly about the difficulties of getting people involved in local government (8 February 2007).

Three cheers for power to parish and town councils

When New Labour came into power in 1997 more academic interest was devoted to the local level and its associated institutions. New concepts such as 'democratic renewal' and 'capacity building' came into the local government lexicon to help describe a system of local governance more representative of the community governing itself, that is 'community governance' (see Chapter 3). It is therefore not surprising that after the Government's White Paper attempt to make local government more '*In Touch with the People*' (DETR 1998) the journal *Local Governance* published a special issue, in that same year. As we describe the articles within this journal, we will point out where some of the topics are discussed in this thesis.

In Andrew Coulson's contribution to this journal, he sets the scene by explaining the structure and functions of town, parish and community councils (see Chapter 2).¹² In his contribution, Laurie Howes offers a comparative study explaining the difference between the lowest tiers of local government in continental Europe, which have 'real powers' in comparison to their British counterparts.¹³ Robin Wendt suggests in his contribution, that as the 'purest' form of local democracy, local councils, need to use 'their powers and duties positively' so that they are taken seriously by ministers, civil servants, other levels of local government, the media, and academic institutions.¹⁴

In her contribution, Sheila Ellwood discusses the findings of the Aston Business School surveys of 1991 and 1997, undertaken on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). These surveys found great diversity in the way local councils raise and spend their income.¹⁵ Unlike principal authorities, local councils receive no direct financial support from central government. Their main source of income is usually the parish precept: a charge added to the council tax of every household within the parish. They can also receive an income from charges. For example, if the parish council hires out its community hall, it will receive rent from the hirers (see Chapter 7). They can also apply for a concurrent functions grant from the principal authority (see Chapter 2). Like all local authorities, local councils have to operate according to the law. If a local council acted beyond its powers it would be acting illegally – *ultra vires*. The *ultra vires* principle protects

¹² *Town, Parish and Community Councils: The Potential for Democracy and Decentralisation* (1998): 245-248.

¹³ *Local Councils: What we can Learn from France* (1998): 249-255.

¹⁴ *The Democratic Agenda* (1998): 257-261.

¹⁵ *Local Council Finance: An Overview* (1998): 263-274.

the parish from any possible tyranny. For example, local councillors have to ensure there is no misuse of public funds. Nevertheless, they have considerable freedom to decide what services they want to provide. Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides them with the power to spend up to £6.15 per elector, on activities not covered by a specific legal power.¹⁶ The Local Government and Rating Act 1997 provided new powers in areas such as community transport, traffic calming, and crime prevention. The empirical chapters will show how both DPC and KHPC used these powers (see Chapters 5 and 6). Returning to the White Paper (DETR 1998), although this gave principal authorities a discretionary power ‘to take steps which in their view will promote the well-being of their area and those who live, work and visit there’, parish and town councils continue to rely on section 137 to spend money on activities beyond their specific powers. At the time of the Aston Surveys the section 137 limit met the needs of most local councils (Ellwood 1998: 272), but there may come a time when it becomes too restrictive. This failure to develop the potential of local councils is said to be a ‘missed opportunity’ (see Ellwood *et al.* 2000).

In David Clark’s contribution, he gives a detailed analysis of the services provided by local councils. Most parish councils only provide a few very local services. The majority provide playing fields, cemeteries, notice boards and bus shelters.¹⁷ This thesis will show how important it is for KHPC (the market model of local governance), to provide high quality services. In her contribution, Mary Booth explains that the county associations offer local councillors and clerks training seminars, and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) acts as a conduit between the county associations and the national government.¹⁸ As the empirical chapters will show, both DPC and KHPC consult the Kent Association of Parish Councils (KAPC), mainly for legal advice (see, for example, Chapter 6). In Stephen Hopkins contribution, he writes about Parish Charters. These set down formally the principles that govern the relationship between the tiers of local government.¹⁹ For example, the Staffordshire Charter said:

¹⁶ Normally the annual cash limit would be raised by the percentage increase in the Retail Price Index (RPI) but it was negative this September (2010). This would lead to a reduction in the cash limit but as that is not permitted by the legislation (paragraph 3 (1) of Schedule 12B to the 1972 Act), the figure remains at £6.15, as per the limit for 2009-10. Source www.slcc.co.uk/news-item/-section-137-expenditure-limit

¹⁷ *Local Councils Delivering Services* (1998): 275-283.

¹⁸ *The County Associations: The Vital Link* (1998): 285-287.

¹⁹ *Creating Working Partnerships between County, District and Local Councils: The Charter Experience* (1998): 289-296.

The County Council will CONSULT local councils in a particular area before making any decisions which will affect the local community. Only in exceptional circumstances will such consultation not take place, in which case a written explanation will be given.

This thesis will show how out of frustration KHPC took the initiative and produced a similar document (see Chapter 6). In David Carden's contribution, he writes about the successful Burgess Hill Town Council 'One Stop Shop', which provides residents with new technologies including a video phone system, and surgery sessions provided by specialised staff. The final sentence says: A 'bottom-up' approach ensures that services can be tailored to meet local needs and as a local council we are proud of what has been achieved.²⁰ In her contribution, Frances Jones offers examples of the activities undertaken by parish councils for the benefit of their community. Towards the end of the article she says: 'Whether it is issuing a bus pass to a pensioner or trying to explain a planning application to a worried neighbour, we are the tier of local government nearest to the people'.²¹ In John Blackburn's contribution, he gives an honest description of the successes and failures of Cayton Parish Council. Its biggest success was the purchase of an old school to provide a hall for the community, which now provides a healthy income. One of the difficulties is getting the parish councillors to get involved in community activities. Many become parish councillors because they have a particular 'axe to grind', and if they cannot make a change they lose interest. Blackburn also noted, when there is a vacancy 'there is never a call for an election, but when we come to co-opt there often appears to be more than one candidate' so the parish council are making the decision not the community.²² This is an important criticism. This thesis will describe how DPC and KHPC fill their vacancies (see Chapter 8).

In Roger Greenwood's contribution, he argues that a parish council needs a skilful clerk with 'considerable influence' when dealing directly with officers and other councils. 'Instead of simply writing to the Planning Authority and dictating their direction, we have found it far more effective to inform and persuade'.²³ This thesis will analyse how the clerks with the parish councillors at both parish councils work to achieve successful outcomes (see Chapter 6). In her contribution, Alison Lewis stresses the importance of good communication between unitary authorities and the community councils, the Welsh equivalent to parish and town councils. Lewis argues that communication will be successful if all the tiers of government

²⁰ *Burgess Hill: A New Dimension in Partnership* (1998): 297-302.

²¹ *The Experience of a Parish Clerk* (1998): 303-305.

²² *Leading a Village* (1998): 307-313.

²³ *Working together at the Grass Roots* (1998): 315-317.

understand their roles, and work together to achieve what is best for those they serve. To ensure the consultation arrangements are effective an annual satisfaction survey is sent to the community councils to find out how they might be improved.²⁴

In his second contribution, Laurie Howes argues that enthusiastic local entrepreneurs 'are an important part of the backbone (social capital) of any community – and these virtues transfer easily to the local council world'. Nevertheless, local councils need people who are not only enthusiastic but also confident and skilled decision makers. However, 'a large part of the local council world' does not have a qualified clerk or skilled councillors. NALC reported that 'many' local councillors responsible for employing a clerk had 'very little idea' of their role, and many clerks have no job description or contract of employment. Consequently, planning officers will ignore any comments from local councils that demonstrate ignorance of the most basic planning procedures. Training is therefore the answer. The problem is that where training exists, it is 'county based, short term and basic'. For example, the county associations and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) offer short courses 'on the essentials of law, procedures, finance and land use planning'. More specialised training is provided by voluntary organisations and principal authorities. But this can reflect the agendas of the providers instead of the need of the local council. NALC and the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) at the University of Birmingham, provide advanced training courses. Courses are also provided at the University of Gloucestershire, which awards successful candidates with a Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education or Degree. The main drawback to training is a lack of resources: money and time. Many local councils 'have little idea of the true costs of training and are only prepared to pay token amounts towards its provision, if at all'. Many are too busy to spend time training, especially if it is not provided locally. Some see no need for training. 'Several of the most experienced providers thought this was the single most important reason' why councillors and clerks failed to take part in training.²⁵ DPC and KHPC were both members of the KAPC and took advantage of some of their training courses and legal advice (see Chapter 5).

To conclude, in the heading of this section it says three cheers, and there can be little doubt that the journal is praiseworthy because it provides us with a clear understanding of how local councils can expand their power. It could actually be called a handbook for local councils.

²⁴ *Consulting with Community and Town Councils in Swansea* (1998): 319-323.

²⁵ *Skills and Training for Local councils* (1998): 325-332.

The parish appraisal and its contentious role in local democracy

The parish appraisal sits 'neatly with a theory of rural development which stresses the individuality of localities' and 'the empowerment of local people' (see, Moseley 1997: 197). From the 1970s to the 1990s over 1,500 English, Welsh and to a lesser extent, Scottish rural communities have compiled their own parish appraisals. They provide a 'snapshot' of rural communities and a tool to make them better places to live (Ibid). It is not easy to define a parish appraisal because in practice they vary from place to place. They have also been given different names: parish or village or community appraisals, or profiles or audits. The main stages of producing an appraisal are: 'establishing local support for an appraisal; forming a steering group to decide 'what' and 'how'; planning the survey and drawing up the questionnaire; collecting the information from the parish's households and/or individuals; analysing the information; drafting an appraisal report including any recommendations; distributing it locally; local discussion to get a mandate for action; follow-up action; monitoring and evaluation'. All these stages are usually 'guided' and 'controlled' by the community with outside encouragement and support (Moseley 1997: 198).

Appraisals examine the parish, its people, and what they are doing. They explain the parish's demographics, housing, transport and accessibility, employment, services, leisure facilities, and so on. As well as presenting 'facts and figures' the better appraisals talk about people's hopes and fears, what they want and their dislikes. They also describe the parish's assets, resources, opportunities and constraints (Moseley 1997: 199). In short, the parish appraisal starts with a desire to 'undertake a study' and ends with a 'written report'. It is not always the parish council which takes the initiative to launch an appraisal. In England the county Rural Community Council (RCC) discourage them from being the sole driving force, because they think it is better for a community group such as 'a civic society' or 'village hall committee' to take the lead (ibid). Parish appraisals are valued for two reasons: First, they are a 'means to an end', that is a process which ends with some sort of 'action on the ground', or 'a statement' saying what needs to be done. Second, the process is the product, through taking part and forming relationships those taking part in the appraisal exercise (the whole community and/or many individual residents) will gain confidence and skills (Moseley 1997: 200).

There are no precise calculations of how many parish appraisals have been conducted across rural Britain. As noted, this is partly because of the different names given to them, and partly because of their 'bottom-up' character there has been no requirement to keep such a

record. However, some statistics have been calculated on which estimates have been made (Moseley 1997: 202). In England, much of the drive behind parish appraisals came from the Rural Community Councils (RCCs), which stressed the importance of fostering community development and voluntary action. Most of the RCCs have produced 'parish appraisal packs', which help to guide their local communities and some have 'village appraisal officers', in part funded by outside bodies such as the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), and/or higher tiers of local government. The officers support the launch, execution and any follow-up of these appraisals (Moseley 1997: 203). The article concludes with three suggested driving forces for the continued use of parish appraisals:

1. A mixture of sheer curiosity about one's local milieu and the welcome realisation that perhaps one can do something to protect or improve it rather than rely simply on outside agencies.
2. Growing evidence that practical benefits can and do ensue from the considerable effort involved – and 'if the neighbouring parish can do it, why can't we?'
3. The growing interest of statutory agencies in fostering appraisals as a cost-effective way of gathering information, releasing human resources and, it is hoped, gaining legitimacy for their own actions (Moseley 1997: 211).

To conclude, the article provides limited criticism of parish appraisals, none of which is discussed in the conclusion. It will therefore be helpful for us to highlight the most important criticisms here. If a community group decided to conduct an appraisal where the community already has a parish council, the community group could face a number of difficulties. First and foremost, do these community groups have the same legitimacy as that of directly elected parish councils who act for the community as a whole? Second, from the beginning of the process the community group will probably have less knowledge and expertise than the parish council. Therefore, if the community group has formed to galvanise local feelings against a specific planning decision, they may be doomed to failure due to the time it takes to gain the skills to take effective action. Third, the community group and the parish council might waste time and valuable resources competing for power. This risks factions within the community where conflict would predominate over consensus. Finally, the community group might have exaggerated expectations of what they can achieve. As the Chairman of Cayton Parish Council said above, if a parish councillor comes to the post with an 'axe to grind' and finds it is not possible to make a difference then s/he is likely to lose interest. The second important criticism is the danger that the community's own agenda is replaced by that of the statutory agencies. Related to this criticism is standardisation of the process where

communities are provided with ‘how to do it’ manuals, which can stifle innovation and local democracy.

On the positive side, the article argues that official support can provide financial and moral support. There is also a possibility that community activists who participate in parish appraisals in which there is a sense of achievement or positive outcome, will want to become more involved in local politics or stand for election to a parish council, thus enhancing local democracy. During the empirical research neither DPC nor KHPC discussed parish appraisals, probably because they are not rural parishes. At Kings Hill the ‘appraisal’ has been carried out by the developer as part of the overall development plan.

Twenty-first century parish politics and efficiency

Parish pump politics has been characterised as being essentially parochial and dealing with the details of community politics. This is in contrast to strategic partnerships that bring together the leadership of key organisations (the public, private and voluntary sectors) to form a coalition to shape the community (Skelcher 2003: 1). A new local governance lexicon speaks of ‘leveraging resources, outcome targets and networking’. Although the decisions which this coalition make have an important impact on the community, the decision making process is ‘often opaque to public view’ (Skelcher 2003: 2). Like this study, which has analysed the Downswood and Kings Hill parish councils’ official minutes and other relevant documents, Skelcher’s research included an examination of the historical minute books and associated documents of the Little Compton Parish Council, situated in southern Warwickshire. His aim was to show the importance of bringing two theories together to help understand local governance in the twenty-first century.

The theory developed by Sharpe (1970) sets out the traditional normative theory of local government. This is based on three values: participation – those who participate in local politics will develop into educated and responsive civic-minded people; efficiency – local government is nearest to the people so it can allocate services efficiently; and liberty – local political power can act as a check on an over-powerful centre.²⁶ This theory was ideal for understanding local government up until the 1980s and 1990s, after which a larger number of services were handed over to the control of quangos and the private sector. The motive for

²⁶ Sharpe made it clear that although local government can act as a check on an over-powerful centre, there are times when it works in the opposite direction whereby individuals representing local government can make ‘arbitrary’ and ‘inconsistent’ decisions (Skelcher 2003: 7). In Sharpe’s words, “Certainly if it [liberty] is to remain it must take a poor and dubious third to the other two values (Sharpe 1970: 158).

this change was driven by economic theory, a managerial culture, and politics (see Chapter 3). This is where public choice theory provides an explanation for government failure. It argued that politicians and bureaucrats were motivated by self-interest and this increased public expenditure. It was believed that local government was no longer capable of delivering allocative efficiency, and the process towards a market-orientated style of local governance was helped further by the low interest people took in local politics. This is where Skelcher sees a positive role for consociational theory of which Arend Lijphart (1968) is a key proponent. This theory makes it possible to understand how a system of governance can be established in which it is possible to achieve on one level power-sharing, and group autonomy on another. Essentially this consociational model is designed to cope with difference, and it creates the possibility for collective action. A weakness of this theory is related to the decision-making process. In Lijphart's original study of the Dutch political system, it was necessary for the decision makers to conduct their business in private so they could negotiate an outcome acceptable to all. It was also important for the 'grand elite' to use a technical language (which introduced complexity and confusion into the debate) to help the coalition reach agreement. These two theories are helpful for understanding how complex societies govern themselves. The former explains 'why' local government is necessary, while the latter explains 'how' to make it work.

To conclude, at the start of this article Skelcher portrayed parish politics in a derogatory manner. He takes us back to the past where the parish councillors are said to be 'small minded' and 'self-interested'. This is in contrast to strategic partnerships, which hold business-like meetings and deal with the 'big issues'. Clearly there has been a move away from traditional elected local councils providing a wide-range of services with clear lines of accountability, to a more fragmented system of strategic partnerships making democratic control and accountability less clear.²⁷ However, it was only Skelcher's historical portrayal of

²⁷ New deal for communities (NDC) is an example of a strategic partnership. It is one of New Labour's policies for regenerating run-down inner-city areas. Unlike the short-term single regeneration budget (SRB), the NDC programme is intended to transform areas over a 10-year period. The idea is to make improvements in the lives of people in education, employment, crime, health and housing. The key feature of the NDC programme is that 'the community' has to be at the heart of the partnership. The Luton Marsh Farm Estate NDC programme is an example where the strategic partnership was unsuccessful. The directors of the Trust were not able to get Luton Borough Council to give them accurate financial information. They knew that out of a £48 million regeneration grant £27 million had been spent. After a media investigation they have been promised full financial information (Radio, 4, Face the Facts NDC, 17 August 2007). Clearly, the community has not been at the heart of the partnership. Nevertheless, it was the community who contacted the media and now the other partners on the board of directors will be open to close scrutiny. They will have to follow the

parish politics that made this dichotomy between parish politics and strategic partnerships possible. In reality parish politics have changed; many, and especially the larger ones, are playing an important role in the partnership 'paradigm', as the empirical chapters in this study will show. Furthermore, as we know from what has been discussed above about new localism and now the big society, even more emphasis is placed on local self-government. This is inclusive of the need for those same civic-minded citizens to provide services to match the local preferences and needs of each locality. Therefore, Sharpe's efficiency value continues to be important as the provision of local services is handed back to the neighbourhood level. Nevertheless, the introduction of consociational theory does provide an understanding of the possibility of collective action.

Let us have more local participation please

It was the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, which enabled residents who live in an area without a local council (parish or town), to petition to set one up. In fact, residents at Kings Hill used this legislation to participate in local politics and create their own parish council in 1999. Bevan's research focused on a group of residents in the process of setting up a parish council in a deprived urban area, and compared this with the experience of residents in three other areas, also dealing with the effects of disadvantage and undergoing regeneration. Blakelaw and North Fenham is nearly three miles to the north west of the city centre of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Most of this area was built in the 1950s and 1960s, and it has a large proportion of council housing. The Headland Town Council is in Hartlepool. Approximately 60 percent of the housing in St Hilda Ward, which includes Headland, is owned by the council or registered social landlords. Offerton Estate Parish Council is in Stockport. It has a large proportion of council housing, with a small number of owner-occupied properties, and housing owned by registered social landlords. Bevan also reported on a campaign to set up a parish council at Headingley, Leeds. This area included a large student community living in private rented accommodation. Like this study of DPC and KHPC, a qualitative approach was utilised (see Chapter 2). Bevan conducted semi-structured interviews with the residents involved in campaigning for a parish council at Blakelaw and North Fenham. He repeated these interviews about eighteen months after the parish council had been set up. He also conducted interviews with the other two newly established local councils, and with a resident of the group campaigning for the local council in Headingley.

correct rules of governance and bring the community into the heart of the decision making process, thus creating a great improvement in democratic control and accountability.

Bevan's research provides us with some useful recommendations. He found that it was not easy for residents participating in a campaign group to become parish councillors. This was because very few of them had any experience of participating in this type of institution. Training was recommended to build-up confidence and to develop the skills to take on this new role. However, it has to be understood that capacity building costs money and is time consuming. This is obviously the same caveat for those who want to encourage participation in the big society. Bevan's research gave out a strong message that it would be helpful if new parish councillors could share their experiences with others in the same position. It was also felt that it should be acknowledged that there is a potential for conflict between the tiers of government, and it would be helpful if ways of mediating and resolving such tensions could be offered. The residents suggested it would be helpful if other service providers were made aware of the type of activities local councils could engage in to help raise their profile. The final recommendation suggested a need for further research to see what the residents who live in an area with a new local council think about this type of governance.

To conclude, Bevan's research gives us a helpful understanding of political participation in the process of setting up a new local council. His research also shows that these new local councils can be equally as successful at providing participatory community self-help as those in rural areas. The present research focused on Downswood and Kings Hill shows how residents have made the participatory transition to parish councillors. It also shows how the parish councillors have mobilised others to participate in either parish politics or community activities, and how the parish councillors have built-up skills and knowledge in a way that benefits them, and the communities they serve.

Downswood and Kings Hill: The parish councils

DPC was formed in 1987 and KHPC, as noted, came into existence in 1999. They are not like the early nineteenth century parish councils, which were closely connected to a parish church. They are the new forms of local governance heralded by New Labour as vehicles for regeneration and social cohesion. Therefore, their geographical boundaries are no longer as important in terms of parishioners with close ties to the church. In fact, neither has a church within its boundary. The parish councillors include business people who come together with a functional role. They have to find new ways of mobilising the residents and reinforcing social cohesion. They also have to work hard to provide services tailored to meet the preferences and needs of the residents.

Both parish councils were selected for observation because they suffered from a similar erosion of social capital, and yet they have employed different strategies to tackle these problems. Downswood is a small residential parish situated on the urban fringe. DPC's structure of local governance is representative of the sometimes problematic relationship between central and local government.²⁸ In short, because Britain is a unitary state DPC is constrained by central government policy. Consequently, DPC has limited power and funds, so they have to negotiate with the higher tiers of local government to achieve their goals. Kings Hill is different and it is hailed as a blueprint for a mixed-use sustainable development. People can live, work, and shop there. It has a huge business park with residential housing. Kings Hill's structure of governance is rather unusual in the way that the dual struggle for power between central-local relations has been extended to include a third partner – the private service provider – the developer (Rouse Kent). Therefore, KHPC's power is more constrained than DPC's. But once the developer leaves, KHPC will be able to take over the responsibility for collecting the estate maintenance charges (EMCs), and responsibility for the remaining open spaces. Then KHPC will have more power to make decisions.

William Rouse was co-founder of Rouse Kent (RK), now Liberty Property Trust, the developer at Kings Hill. Originally Rouse was a real estate enterprise from Philadelphia, USA. Kings Hill has most of the features of a gated community. This is why we have called it a quasi-gated community. In the UK gating is a recent phenomenon, especially on this scale. Developers have started to advertise gated properties, but the implications of gating are not fully understood by the majority of people who buy into these property agreements. In the UK, people who purchase properties in gated communities within cities buy into them with security in mind, to keep out unwelcome visitors. Those buying into gated communities like Kings Hill are motivated by the prestige of being a member of such an exclusive

²⁸ Rhodes (1981) argued that until recently debates took place between those who thought the relationship between central government and local government was one of 'partners', and those who thought it was one of 'agency'. The problem with the former is that partnership suggests working together to achieve the same goal, but there will be times when central government will disagree with local government. The latter suggests a principal-agent relationship where central government calls the shots, allowing the local authority no independence. Rhodes (1988) suggested the metaphors 'networks' and 'resource exchange' to describe the central-local relationship as one in which they both try to influence each other. The weakness of this description is it ignores the element of 'hierarchy' in the relationship. So if the local authority acts beyond its powers, a court may rule that its behaviour is *ultra vires*, that is, outside of the law. Basically, the central-local relationship is complex and it changes. Sometimes it can be one of 'conflict' and at other times it is one of 'cooperation' (Stewart 2000: 89-90). Central-local relations under New Labour are strained. On the one hand, it is 'top-down', there are national standards and executive leadership has been strengthened, while on the other hand, it is 'bottom-up' local learning, innovation and public participation are encouraged (Stoker and Wilson 2004: 9).

development.²⁹ Gated communities are very common in the USA. They have a mandatory homeowner association (HOA), which like a private government provides services and has the power to enforce the homeowners to conform to strict regulations. At Kings Hill this role of HOA is gradually being taken over by KHPC.

New Labour's interest in democratic renewal includes the need to provide the most efficient and cost effective services. What is not so clear is that this involves another debate among urban policymakers, academics, and professionals concerning the structure of local governance in the UK. This study will seek to contribute to this debate. The intellectual and ideological struggle with which this study is concerned is called the centraliser versus decentraliser debate.³⁰ Downswood has some of the characteristics of the centraliser model of local governance, while Kings Hill conversely has some of the features of the decentraliser model. When referring to the debate in the USA, McKenzie's (2003) table of urban restructuring shows that the two models differ over a number of issues:

Table 1.1: Urban restructuring in the USA:

| Advocacy coalition | The Centralisers | The Decentralisers |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Mainspring | Activist government | Private initiative |
| Sanctified value | Equality | Liberty |
| Choice mechanism | Collective choice | Individual choice |
| Legitimiser | Democracy | Contract |
| Faith in | Government | Markets |
| Buzzword | Smart growth | Voluntary city |
| Against what? | Anti-sprawl | Anti-government |
| Utopia | Regional government | Suburban autonomy |
| Preferred type of government | General purpose governments | Special districts and private gated communities |

In the UK similar urban restructuring is taking place. This includes the provision of additional housing.³¹ Table 1.2 below shows how we suggest this debate is unfolding here. It is striking that both sides of the debate have adopted the same 'buzzword': new localism. This first appeared as a concept in the UK in the New Local Government Network (NLGN) pamphlet.³² But the definition is not that clear and it is often used promiscuously.³³ Charles

²⁹ As will be discussed below, this is one of the reasons why 'club goods theory' appears to offer promising explanatory power to improve social capital theory.

³⁰ These concepts are from a paper written by Evan McKenzie entitled: *Private Gated Communities in the American Urban Fabric: Emerging Trends in their Production, Practices, and Regulation* (2003).

³¹ Thames Gateway and Ashford are just two examples.

³² Dan Corry and Gerry Stoker, *New Localism: refashioning the central-local relationship* (NLGN, London, 2002). The phrase entered the political lexicon in the USA much earlier see, for example, David Morris and Karl Hess (1975) *Neighbourhood Power: The New Localism* (Boston, Beacon).

³³ Janice Morphet (2004) *The New Localism*, *Town and Country Planning* 73 (10): 291-293.

Woodd, from the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit, defined it as one of two terms that the government is using quite frequently. He said:

One [term] is the new localism, which is a term that is particularly being used in the kind of regeneration context. If you want to put it in government department terms, which of course we shouldn't really, but the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister particularly is using the new localism. Another term that the Home Office Secretary has kind of reluctantly coined, I say reluctantly not because he doesn't believe in it, but because it seemed to be necessary to produce another term in order to give impetus. This is civil renewal. But they're in some ways they're sides of the same coin. I think to some extent new localism as I perceive it is about devolving power downwards. It's about pushing power and responsibility down for instance from central government to local government, and from local government to neighbourhoods. And civil renewal is to some extent is about empowering people to be engaged more at local level and above in governance and democracy. So I think they're two sides of the same coin.³⁴

The decentralisers are also proponents of new localism. They argue the beauty of devolved government is that it does what local people want, rather than sticking to rigid standards set by the centre. In short, one-size does not fit-all. It is about difference and choice. But for choice you need markets. It is not really surprising then that this concept has been utilised by both sides of the debate, since both place importance on citizens as customers.

Table 1.2: Urban Restructuring in the UK

| Stands for: | The Centralisers | The Decentralisers |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Authority | Democracy | Contract |
| Choice mechanism | Collective choice | Individual choice |
| Motive | State intervention | Private initiative |
| Value | Equality | Liberty |
| Faith in | Government | Markets |
| Buzzword | New localism | New localism |
| Against | Too much devolution | Government intervention |
| Ideal | Centre led Regional Government | Business led Regional Government |
| Preferred government | National, regional and local government | Gated/quasi-gated communities and BIDs ³⁵ |

³⁴ This quotation is from a transcript recorded with the permission of Charles Woodd's (Community Development Team Leader, Civil Renewal Unit, Home Office) presentation *The new localism and redefining democracy around delivery and local needs* given at the Fifth National Regeneration Convention held at UMIST, Manchester, on 15 July 2004.

³⁵ The idea of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) came from the USA. They allow local businesses to create a district and collect a non-domestic rate (assessment fee) from those within the boundaries of the district to pay for additional services (e.g., more frequent policing, removing graffiti, providing street lighting, tree planting) aimed at improving and promoting the business area without relying on limited public funds.

It is important to understand that since both parish councils have all the features of traditional parish councils (i.e. hold regular meetings, produce an agenda and minutes) and most important, both have to operate within an institutionalised legal framework, it will be possible to generalise from the findings (see Chapter 2). Nevertheless, as noted, Kings Hill is unique because it has a parish council within a quasi-gated community and the role of the developer is important. The developer has different incentives to that of KHPC. The developer's main incentive is to make profits, while like other parish councils KHPC's incentive is to create a strong sense of community. Therefore, in practice the Kings Hill model of governance contradicts McKenzie's decentraliser model of governance. It is not an 'ideal-type'.

The wider theoretical and political debate

At the theoretical level this study is a critical analysis of social capital theory. Putnam, one of the most influential proponents of social capital, sees it very positively. His main argument is that high levels of social capital allow bottom-up initiatives in governance. Others, however, have argued that social capital is about hidden power relations because it says it empowers people, but only if they stick to New Labour's values.³⁶ This is where Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical work is valuable. In *Reproduction*, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) constructed a theory of how culture is reproduced through social relations in a way that keeps the class system firmly in place. To describe how this operated Bourdieu used the metaphor 'cultural capital'. Nevertheless, this elite interpretation of social capital by Bourdieu does not mean the more community-focused elements in Putnam's work should be disregarded altogether. The latter is important because it can help us understand the change of civility that motivated this study, and help find answers to the lack of compliance with the social norms and rules.

The social capitalists have accepted that from the 1960s onwards the legitimacy of the hierarchical state has been challenged, and this decline in authority is closely linked to the weakening influence of the social institutions such as the church. The 'permissive society' came under attack by critics such as Lord Longford and Mary Whitehouse, but they failed to gain government support. Then in October 1987 Thatcher told *The Times* children 'need to be taught to respect traditional moral values', but there was no change to the liberal legislation of the 1960s (Black 2004: 114-115). On the other hand, as noted, there has been an increase

³⁶ New Labour's 'Third Way' politics supports the notion of self-help. The idea is to remove any barriers to self-help whether they are a lack of skills or a fear of crime. But this approach steers away from issues related to structural inequalities including the redistribution of power and resources (Kearns 2003: 52-54).

in state surveillance. Social capital is thought to hold some of the answers to these problems. This is because the social capitalists recognise the value of partnerships, and this includes the partnership between the state and civil society (see Chapter 3). The idea is to encourage public participation. But the result of citizens getting involved in politics and questioning authority figures is that it is not easy for the state to reach decisions. Therefore, social capital is helpful but it does not explain why some people are trusting, while others abuse other peoples' trust. In particular, it does not explain why rational people should invest in a 'collective good' like social capital. This is where club goods theory complements social capital theory. Belonging to a club addresses non-compliance and collective-action problems. A 'club' is a group in which its members have a common interest in sharing the costs and benefits of producing collective goods and most importantly, the club has clear boundaries of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' (see, for example, Buchanan 1965; Sandler and Tschirhart 1997; Ellickson *et al.* 1999).

Social capital theory is useful in the context of this study because New Labour's 'third way' politics sees a reduced role for the centralised welfare state. Its prime motto is no rights without responsibilities. This means for example, those claiming unemployment benefits have an obligation actively to look for work, and it is the role of national governments to make sure welfare systems do not discourage this active search (Giddens 1998: 65). But it is not possible to implement certain policies on the ground without accessing social capital. The reasoning behind this renewed interest in social capital theory by academics like Putnam and policymakers, is their belief that social capital has the potential to solve the political problems of low turnout at the local and general elections, a decline of trust in authority figures and their associated institutions, high crime rates, and widespread problems of non-compliance and public disorder.

Among all our public institutions councils have a special status and authority as local directly elected bodies. They are uniquely placed to provide a vision and leadership to their local communities. They are able to make things happen on the ground – where it really matters. People need councils which serve them well.

This is how John Prescott introduced the Government's White Paper, *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People* (DETR 1998). The agenda of the White Paper was to set out a plan for modernising local government. One of the most important aims was to strengthen the links between the councils and local people. The Prime Minister said:

We need a new – a different – local government to continue the task of modernising Britain. A new role for a new millennium. A role that challenges the sense of inevitable decline that has hung over local government for the past 20 years and provides local people and their representatives with new opportunities. At the heart of local government's new role is leadership – leadership that gives vision, partnership and quality of life to cities, towns and villages all over Britain. It will mean councils using their unique status and authority as directly elected bodies to: Develop a vision for their locality... Provide a focus for partnership... Guarantee quality of services for all... Revitalising local democracy is a big task (Blair 1998: 13-15).

These quotations are a clear indication that unlike Thatcher's government, New Labour saw an important role for local government. The White Paper's has three key proposals. The first was concerned with community leadership. The second was to encourage democratic renewal by introducing ways of making it easier for people to vote, and by introducing new initiatives to encourage people to take an interest in their local community. The third was the replacement of CCT with Best Value (see Chapter 3).

Original contribution to knowledge

This study aims to make an original theoretical and empirical contribution to knowledge. Theoretically it provides a critique of social capital theory and urban governance as New Labour saw it. Social capital theory tells us all about social networks, but it does not explain action and outcomes. For this other micro-level theories are needed to make the link between social networks and political behaviour explicit. It will be argued that 'club goods theory'³⁷ has the potential to improve social capital theory as it allows us to formulate more convincing hypotheses about solving collective-action problems in social networks.

Physical capital is generally considered to be a private good because property rights make it possible for the individual who invests in it to capture the benefits. Therefore, the incentive to invest in physical capital is not depressed. Human capital is similar an individual who invests time and resources in learning new skills will gain the benefits of a higher paid job. Social capital is not like this since it is a collective good. An individual who forms part of a social network does not necessarily gain the benefits from her/his efforts (Coleman 1994: 315-316). More importantly, the individual will have little incentive to bear the cost of investing in social capital, if free-riding is possible. As a result economic theories of collective action (Olson 1965) predict the under-provision of public goods, including social capital. The incentive to contribute to the network is depressed. This is where club good

³⁷ See Buchanan J (1965) *An economic theory of clubs* (Economica 32, February: 1-14).

theory is important. The incentive to join the club, remain in the club, and contribute to the running of the club is to gain access to the club goods with clear individual benefits.

The advantage of the notion of a 'club realm'³⁸ is that it can be applied directly to Downswood and Kings Hill. The parishes are the club and it is the aim of the parish councillors to provide (club) goods for themselves and the residents. But two major conditions have to be fulfilled for clubs to operate with optimal efficiency. First of all, exclusion or 'closure'³⁹ must be possible as this transforms public spaces and goods into excludable spaces and goods (i.e. it transforms 'public' to 'club' goods). The second condition is not so straightforward: the club membership margin must be determined. This is the size of the most desirable cost and consumption sharing arrangements. In everyday life it is possible to determine the optimal membership for most activities. This can be worked out according to economic factors. This is the price mechanism of supply and demand. In as far as non-exclusion is a characteristic of public goods the theory of clubs is of limited relevance, and yet it is possible to make public goods excludable. This is possible through property rights, which prevent outsiders from using the public space or public goods. Therefore, the theory of clubs can be a theory of optimal exclusion of both public and private realms and as such has the potential to stop free-riders. It can be applied to councillors and also ordinary citizens who have incentives to contribute to the production of social capital, if they feel a part of a 'club', a local community that offers these valuable benefits. Thus, one of the original contributions of this thesis is to investigate whether combining social capital theory with club goods theory will provide a better understanding of how parish councils resolve collective-action problems.

Second, this research is an original empirical investigation comparing two local communities, which address similar problems relating to social capital in different ways. The Kings Hill case study is a particularly interesting example of a quasi-gated community. As noted, it is a quasi-gated community because it has all the features of gating with the exception of a gate at the main entrance. It provides an opportunity to see how local policymakers deal with issues both positive and negative as they unfold in Britain, which have already been experienced in the USA.⁴⁰ The quasi-gatedness means there is the potential

³⁸ See Webster C (2002) *Property rights and the public realm: gates, green-belts and Gemeinschaft*, Environment and Planning B, Volume 29: 397-412.

³⁹ See Coleman J (2000) *Foundations of Social Theory*: 318-320.

⁴⁰ The negative aspects of gating: a) segregation – gates exclude so there is the potential to exacerbate social inequalities; b) limited access – utility providers, refuse collectors, and emergency services may find it difficult to gain entry; c) poor quality infrastructure – there is an opportunity for disreputable

to exclude those who do not contribute towards the cost of providing the club goods – unlike pure public goods, which are non-excludable. But this model of governance is not without teething problems. Some of the roads at Kings Hill are private while others have been adopted by the Local Authority so it is often unclear who (the developer or Kent Highway Services), is responsible for maintaining them. Two police community support officers (PCSO's) among their other duties monitor the traffic, but they have no powers to enforce restrictions on speeding motorists. These and other issues related to highways are often discussed at the parish meetings.⁴¹ Nevertheless, KHPC has discussed putting in place a plan for when the development is complete, which if implemented will result in them taking on the additional role of a HOA. This will in turn solve the free-rider problem. DPC are also concerned about non-compliance problems. However, they rely on Kent County Constabulary for law enforcement. They have debated the possibility of sharing a PCSO with nearby Bearsted Parish Council, but they do not feel they can justify an increase in the parish precept, which as noted they have the power to raise from the residents. They see it as a form of 'double taxation'. Kings Hill is different because the parish councillors and residents agreed on the purchase of their property to additional charges (see, for example, Appendix 1). Therefore, this 'club good' (policing) is supported with negligible concern about the cost. What has to be remembered is that although Kings Hill is a quasi-gated community, it is still a traditional parish council, and like Downswood it has to work within the confines of an institutionalised legal framework. As such it will be possible to provide generalisations from the findings.

developers to provide substandard highways and footpaths. The positive aspects of gating: a) segregation – gating encourages the wealthy back to the inner-city and although these neighbourhoods are not integrated, overall the city becomes more mixed. Not forgetting the additional council tax they bring, which can be used to improve public services for those outside the gates; b) limited access – gating can be used to protect the less wealthy and encourage them to take pride in their environment; c) high quality infrastructure – at no expense to the public purse.

⁴¹ Although there is no national policy with respect to gated developments, the Advanced Payment Code (APC) procedure as detailed in the Highways Act 1980 sets out policy concerning private roads and acceptable standards of adoption (see Section 219). However, the decision as to whether to allow developers to gate is discretionary. It is up to the local District Planning Authority (LDPA) to make this decision. In 2004 a report for the Highways Advisory Board was produced in response to developers who want to build private gated communities in Kent. This set out proposals for guidelines for 'small gated communities'. These proposals have been superseded by the Development Planning Guidance Practice Note – No. 1: Private Developments (refer to the primary sources).

Overview of the chapters

Like David Cameron's 'big society' idea as noted, when New Labour came into power in 1997 emphasis was placed on devolving power from central to local government and the neighbourhood level (see, for example, *Local Democracy and Community Leadership* (DETR 1998a); *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People* (DETR 1998b); *Local Leadership, Local Choice* (DETR 1999); *Strong Local Leadership: Quality Public Services* (DTLR 2001). This community-led governance is supported by new localism. The primary concern of this study is to make an original contribution to the literature on the development of new localism, by focusing on the decision-making practices of two examples of parish council networked community governance. Chapter 2 sets out the methodology for studying the two contrasting case studies. It explains how we will apply the same rigorous methods of data collection, analysis and presentation, as that of a quantitative study. In order to provide generalisations from the findings of the empirical research, Putnam's theoretical ideas from his Italian study (1993) have been utilised. Like Putnam's work this study is interested in how political institutions perform, and how civil society can be mobilised for the common good. From the perspective of 'new institutionalism' of which Putnam is a leading proponent, institutions can be thought of as arenas in which games are played, and the actors' behaviour is structured by the rules of the game (see Chapter 5). The actors in Putnam's Italian study are the regional councillors. In this study the actors are the parish councillors. The rules of the game are the procedures which govern collective decision-making, and political institutions like regional government and parish councils provide an arena within which conflicts can be expressed and sometimes resolved. Political institutions also get things done. The main data collection method was that of non-participant observation. This research method created a rare opportunity to gain direct information on how local policymakers interact with each other, their strategic partners, and the residents to solve collective-action problems (see Chapter 6). Thus by applying Putnam's theoretical ideas to DPC and KHPC it will be possible for us to generalise the findings to the wider population, that is, other parish councils.

Chapters 3 and 4 are the theoretical chapters. Chapter 3 argues why new localism is important. Its critics have provided two reasons why they are opposed to it. First, there is a danger that the decisions taken by communities are parochial and focused on self-interested individuals and this threatens the common good. Second, there is the equity or post-code lottery argument. It is argued a strong centre is needed to level the playing field so that

resource rich communities share with communities with limited resources. It is because of these concerns that the prefix of 'new' has been added to localism. It is about a wider system of multi-level governance. It is not suggesting local government should do everything. Instead the argument is that local government can do some things better. It is about a shift in the balance of governance in which there is more scope for local democracy. It is based on the idea that it is not always necessary to treat all communities the same because this can waste scarce resources. It involves tailoring solutions to meet specific needs. Chapter 3 also describes the CLEAR diagnostic tool, which has been developed to enhance public participation at the local level. CLEAR will be used to create a profile of political participation at Downswood and Kings Hill (see Chapter 7).

Chapter 4 argues that although social capital is a particularly useful concept for addressing some important problems of social integration and cooperation in modern societies, it has some theoretical gaps. We explore the possibility that theoretical approaches focusing on effective leadership and club goods, as means of overcoming collective-action problems, will complement the social capital theoretical framework. Chapter 4 provides two basic models, which have been constructed to illustrate the difference between the two governance systems (DPC and KHPC), in their attempts to solve collective-action problems at the local level. These models are particularly helpful for showing how theories of leadership and club goods can improve the social capital conceptual framework. Chapter 4 also offers definitions of how the key concepts of interest to this study (social capital, new localism, club goods, leadership, civility, and civil society) will be operationalised in the empirical chapters. Since this study will be assessing associational life at Downswood and Kings Hill (see Chapter 7), this chapter discusses the two sources of data, which can be used to tell us about membership size and what the different groups stand for: monographic studies and survey research. Monographic studies have been used by scholars to argue that there has been no decline in associational membership and social capital. These scholars suggest that it is just membership of the secondary associations which has declined, but we have witnessed an increase in the newer social movements. Survey research has been used by Putnam to argue that there has been a decline in associational membership and social capital. Finally, Chapter 4 discusses the difficulties surrounding the use of monographic studies and survey research.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are the empirical chapters. Like Putnam's Italian study this study is interested in exploring institutional performance. Chapter 5 presents quantitative indicators of the institutional performance of DPC and KHPC. Chapter 6 in some respects is the core of this study. It presents a comparative and detailed analysis of how the parish councillors have

worked in local partnerships with the higher tiers of local government (and at Kings Hill with the developer), and residents to implement their objectives. It describes how they have generated and/or mobilised/expanded social capital. Chapter 7, as noted, is a detailed analysis of associational life at both parishes. It provides statistical data and an analysis of how the parish councillors have generated social capital at their community hubs (Downswood Community Centre and Kings Hill Community Hall). This is the social capital (trust and reciprocity) they have generated with the residents.

Chapter 8 brings the theoretical reflections and findings of the empirical chapters together to re-emphasise where this thesis fits into the wider political debate. It also shows how important the findings are for understanding how local people can be motivated to get involved in 'self-organising' and 'self-governing' institutions: networked community governance supported by new localism (now referred to as the big society), to solve collective-action problems.

2 CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

It was decided at an early stage of the research that since this study is interested in neighbourhood self-government (i.e. new localism), one of the best ways of getting an understanding of why and how some members of a neighbourhood will get together to govern themselves, it would be a good idea to regularly attend a number of parish council meetings. As noted in the previous chapter, the two case studies selected for observation are: Downswood Parish Council (DPC) situated on the eastern edge of Maidstone, Kent and Kings Hill Parish Council (KHPC) situated near West Malling, Kent. These case studies were selected because: the former is a traditional parish model of governance, whilst the latter has corporate involvement so will be referred to as the market model of governance; both are rule-bound (since they have to comply with legislation set out in *Local Council Administration* it will be possible to generalise some of the findings to the wider population); both were created to serve new communities, DPC came into existence in 1987 and KHPC in 1999; both were built on previously developed land, Downswood was a quarry and Kings Hill was an airfield; both are not rural or urban, they are suburban in character. It is anticipated that the observations will provide an analytical prism through which we will be able to describe in detail, how the parish councillors build social capital in the context of local politics. First, we will discuss the structure and functions of parish councils. Then we will introduce the two case studies. Then we will explain what case study research is and argue how this study will provide generalisations equally as illuminating as those provided by experimental research. Finally, we will describe the analytical strategy utilised for studying the two parish councils.

The structure and functions of parish councils

Parish and town councils (collectively known as local councils) in England and community councils in Scotland and Wales, are forms of local governance that provide an opportunity for local people to have a say on decisions that have an impact on their lives. In this way they are the most democratic of local authorities. Furthermore, because they are usually small this allows easy access to the parish councillors, as well as openness in the way they conduct their business. The parish councillors are elected or co-opted and accountable to an annual parish

meeting. Local councils have to allow the public to attend their meetings, but some go further and include on their agenda time for the public to raise questions and join in discussions, but the public have no voting rights (see *Local Council Administration 2002: 97*).

Traditionally parish councils were associated with rural areas. The Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894 created a standardised system of elected local government in England and Wales. This included county councils, county boroughs in large urban areas, urban district councils in the smaller urban areas, and rural districts everywhere else. The rural districts were divided into parishes. The functions of the church and local administration were separated. Consequently parish councils have nothing to do with the administration of the church. The use of the word 'parish' council and 'parish' councillor still causes confusion today. The system remained much the same until the local government reorganisation in 1974, when 1,249 borough, urban and rural district councils were replaced with 333 district councils, 37 of which were in Wales. In 296 of the areas which lost their district councils, mainly in the rural districts, new parish and town councils were created. All of Wales was divided into 'communities' which have the right to elect community councils, but not all do so. Scotland was also divided into communities, but their councils are not local authorities because they do not have the right to raise taxes or any right to access public funds. Parish and community councils can call themselves town councils, but it is mainly the larger councils that use this name. It means they can call their leader 'mayor' instead of 'chairman'. Their geographical boundaries are rarely changed, which has resulted in some local councils having large populations, the largest has a population of more than 40,000, whilst the smallest parish has a population of about 100 (Coulson 1998: 245).

Moving onto finances and services, small parish councils find it difficult to pay for a part-time clerk, so it is not unusual for a clerk to work for two parish councils. At Downswood the clerk was also employed by Bearsted Parish Council and Otham Parish Council. The larger town councils have a full-time clerk and other staff. KHPC had a part-time clerk and more recently has two part-time clerks. Local councils have powers and rights, which have been laid down by Parliament to represent their communities and provide them with services. Although they have the power to provide an extensive range of services, nearly all of their functions are concurrent with those which are provided by principal authorities.¹ If the local council decides to provide a concurrent service, the principal authority will reimburse the

¹ A concurrent function is a function or service that can be carried out by two or more local authorities. The provision of resources for such services is contained in Section 136 of the Local Government Act 1972.

local council with a 'concurrent functions annual grant'. For example, DPC took over the maintenance of play equipment at Mallards open space and Foxden play area, and receives a concurrent functions grant from Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). For other services the local council can set a 'precept', which is a charge that is added to the council tax of households within the parish. Most parish councils provide only a few very local services. Those who provide more are usually the local councils with larger populations, higher incomes, and a full-time clerk. Local councils also have a right to be consulted about planning applications. DPC discourages residents from turning their garages into living spaces because the more cars that are parked on the road the more difficult it is for the emergency services to gain access. According to the Aston survey (1991) the four services that local councils are most likely to provide are cemeteries, playing fields, bus shelters, and notice-boards (Clark 1998: 275). DPC provides notice-boards and play equipment, does not provide allotments or a cemetery, but does devote time to discussing the bus services. KHPC provides allotments and notice-boards, but does not provide playing fields or a cemetery.

Finally, all local authorities have to conduct their business according to law. If a local council took action that was not sanctioned by law, as noted in Chapter 1, usually by an Act of Parliament, or if they act beyond their lawful powers they would be deemed to be acting *ultra vires*, that is, illegally. The aim of the principle of *ultra vires*, as noted, is to protect the community from any possible tyranny or inappropriate behaviour by the local councillors. Yet they have plenty of freedom to decide which services they want to provide. Section 137 of the local Government Act of 1972, as amended by Schedule 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act of 1989, gives a local authority the power to spend a limited amount of money on activities that it has no specific powers to provide, but feels 'will bring direct benefit to the area, or any part of it or some or all of its inhabitants'. The Rural White Paper of 1996 proposed the role of local councils should be strengthened by delegating powers from higher tier councils for services including the maintenance of sports facilities and refuse collection (Environment Committee, Third Report 1996: paragraph 137). The Local Government and Rating Act of 1997 extended the functions available to local councils to include the provision of public transport, traffic calming, and community safety (Ellwood *et al.* 2000: 8-9). As this study will show, both DPC and KHPC have taken advantage of this Act. To conclude, parish and town councils are not only about delivering services designed to suit local needs, they are also about democracy close to their residents. They gain legitimacy from the elections they hold, and they draw power from the services they deliver and the ones

they provide with higher tiers of local government or other agencies, and of course, as this study will also show, from mobilising their residents support.

Introducing Downswood and Kings Hill

Downswood is a typical large housing estate about two miles from Maidstone, the county town of Kent. To the north of Downswood flows the river Len. To the south is Otham Church, a beautiful old church with a Norman nave and a twelfth century tower. To the east is a Wealden hall house. This was a farmhouse built in about 1450. It was called the Owle Hole and more recently it has been incorporated into the Orchard Spot public house. The land Downswood was built on was farmland up until the 1930s. Then the area became a rag-stone quarry up until the 1970s. The housing estate was built in the 1980s, and Downswood Parish Council was created in 1987.² Downswood has a community centre, medical centre, and parade of shops. There are two main open spaces: Mallards next to the river Len and Foxden Drive play area. The property at Downswood is not as expensive as it is at Kings Hill, and according to a survey conducted by The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Kings Hill has one of the top 10 affluent populations in the southeast.³ At Downswood the incomes of the population are more mixed, and its close neighbours Shepway and Parkwood have large populations living in social housing. Dr Singh, the GP based at Downswood Medical Centre, explained that through good management the surgery has made progress in tackling health issues in vulnerable groups, such as lowering teenage pregnancy and better care for the elderly.⁴ Downswood has a total population of 2,225 (as of the 2001 Census), and a total electorate of 1,724 living in 988 properties (see Appendix 3).

The income of DPC from April 2004 to March 2005 was £32,941.86 of which £17,000.00 came from the parish precept collected by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), and £11,571.00 from MBC Concurrent Functions Scheme, thus leaving a total of £4,370.86 from other sources.⁵ DPC meets on the first Tuesday of every month. To work effectively DPC has ten committees: Planning, Open Spaces, Kent Association of Parish Councils, Police, Len Valley Action Group, Transport, Safer Rural Roads (formerly Quiet Lanes), Downswood Community Association, Social and the School Committee. These committees meet regularly. The parish meeting agendas are distributed to the parish councillors before the

² See DPC Website www.visionwebsite.co.uk

³ 'Proof that life's good if you live in Kings Hill' by Helen Greener, *Kent Messenger*, 14 October 2005 p. 9.

⁴ See DPC Annual Meeting Minutes 5 April 2005.

⁵ The finances will be discussed in Chapter 5.

meetings by email. They are available to the public on request. DPC produces a newsletter four times a year inviting members of the public to the parish meetings and various events. All the meetings are held at the Downswood Community Centre. DPC employs a part-time clerk and two other part-time members of staff, and has nine parish councillors.⁶

Kings Hill was part of Lord Falmouth's Mereworth Estate. In the 1930s it was used for flying and renamed West Malling Airfield and it was once an important RAF Station. In 1972 the Ministry of Defence declared it surplus. Kent County Council (KCC) acquired the site in two stages during 1973 and 1974. After detailed consideration KCC decided to develop the site into a high quality commercial development. In March 1988 Rouse Kent Limited was appointed as the development partner based on their experience in the development of 'low density business parks in the United States'.⁷ Therefore, Kings Hill is not typical since it has some features of a gated community. But more important, instead of the developer setting up some form of governance, the residents have formed a parish council. In the marketing literature Kings Hill is referred to as a mixed-use development. It is a high-tech business park with housing and supporting amenities. The entrance going into the housing development looks like a country house gateway. It is brick-built but there is no gate. There are about 100 businesses based at Kings Hill employing about 3,500 staff. It has 850 houses for around 2,500 residents. There are plans for a further 460 homes. It has its own golf club, supermarket, day nursery, primary school and public house.⁸ In the near future it will have its own surgery capable of serving up to 9,000 patients. This will be funded by a partnership with the West Malling Group Practice and Rouse Kent.⁹ More recently, as noted, a mental health survey carried out by The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy found that Kings Hill has nearly the lowest number of adults suffering from anxiety problems in the southeast. The survey said Kings Hill was amongst the top 10 areas with an affluent and privileged population. A spokesperson for the CSP said affluent areas, including Kings Hill, contain people who are more able to afford healthcare and take advantage of quality leisure

⁶ DPC employs Mrs Teresa Irving (part-time) clerk, Jim Noyce (part-time) litter picker and Alan Mason (part-time) gardener and handyman. There are nine parish councillors: Kate Barette, Robin Bevan (vice-chairman), Roz Cheesman (chairman), Geoffrey Davis, Jeff Davis, Jerry Falkingham (treasurer), Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, and Helen Williams. In this list the parish councillors are in alphabetical order, in the appendices they have been allocated numbers at random to protect their identity.

⁷ From the *Outline Planning Application for Mixed Use Development: Supporting Statement* (TM89/1655).

⁸ From *Kings Hill: An update on our plans for the future* by Rouse Kent Limited.

⁹ 'Kings Hill to get a new surgery', *KM Extra Maidstone*, 14 March 2003, p. 15.

facilities.¹⁰ Kings Hill has a total population of 3,500 (as of mid-2002 estimated by T&MBC), and a total electorate of 2,911 living in 1633 properties (see Appendix 4).

The income of KHPC from April 2004 to March 2005 was £82,396.21 of which £66,473.00 came from the parish precept collected by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (T&MBC), and £5,105.00 from T&MBC Section 136, thus leaving a total of £10,818.21 from other sources.¹¹ KHPC meets on the first Wednesday of every month. To work effectively KHPC has three large committees: Planning, Amenities, and the Community Hall Committee. These committees meet regularly. The parish meeting agendas are distributed to the parish councillors before the meetings by email. They are available to the public on request. KHPC produces a newsletter and this informs the residents of what is going on in the community. All the meetings are held at the Kings Hill Community Hall. KHPC employs a part-time clerk, pays 25 percent towards the cost of the two Police Community Support Officers, and has ten parish councillors.¹² The developer¹³ set up the Kings Hill Residential Estate Management Company Limited (KHREMCL), which looks after the open spaces at the development. Usually, it is the developer of the gated community who takes charge of the day-to-day governance of the community but as noted, at Kings Hill the community has a parish council and as Chapter 6 will show, this partnership is important and often difficult.

Downswood and Kings Hill as comparative case studies

As this study is interested in the similarities and differences between the two case studies a comparative design is appropriate. A most similar systems design (MSSD) will be used (see Table 2.1 below). The purpose of the MSSD is to select cases for comparison which are similar in most background features, but differ in one characteristic (independent variable) that is theoretically crucial for the study (traditional parish model of governance and the market model of governance). It will then be investigated whether, and to what extent, this key difference in the independent variables accounts for differences in political outcomes (the

¹⁰ 'Proof that life's good if you live in Kings Hill' by Helen Greener, *Kent Messenger*, 14 October 2005 p. 9.

¹¹ The finances will be discussed in Chapter 5.

¹² KHPC employs Mrs Jill Hodgson (part-time) clerk. There are ten parish councillors: Linda Allen, Colin Etheridge, Geoff Farge, Susan Farge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall (vice-chairman), Dave Murray (chairman), Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, and Graham Williams. In this list the parish councillors are in alphabetical order, in the appendices they have been allocated numbers at random to protect their identity.

¹³ Liberty Property Trust formerly Rouse Kent.

dependent variable: the ability of the parish councils to create durable stocks of social capital and deal with problems of incivility in their parish). Downswood and Kings Hill were chosen as explained in the first paragraph of this chapter, because they are very similar in most background characteristics. The main difference between them rests in the model of local governance (see the models above). The empirical question of this thesis is whether these two parish councils also differ in the extent to which they build stocks of social capital, and the extent to which this can be explained in a logically consistent way through the reliance on different models of local governance, rather than through differences in other relevant background factors.

Table 2.1: Most Similar Systems Design based on Mill's (1843) method of difference

| | Downswood Parish Council | Kings Hill Parish Council |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Background features | Situated in south east England | Situated in south east England |
| | Mainly a middle-class population | Mainly a middle-class population |
| | Low unemployment | Low unemployment |
| | Collects a parish precept | Collects a parish precept |
| | Has an income and expenses | Has an income and expenses |
| | Donates money to voluntary bodies | Donates money to voluntary bodies |
| Key explanatory factor(s) | Traditional parish model | Market parish model |
| Outcome to be explained | Success/lack of success of building social capital in a parish | |

Source: Adapted from Landman (2003: 30).

In other words, the advice of King, Keohane and Verba (1994) was followed in selecting the cases for a comparative study. These cases were selected because of their variation in the one key independent variable that is of interest to this study. Rather than selecting cases due to variations on the dependent variable, this method avoids the risk of formulating a 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. After all, it remains to be seen at the end of the empirical study whether the outcome that is to be explained (social capital and civility as dependent variables) is actually affected in the predicted way by the key independent variable holding all other relevant background variables constant.

The case study

A case study is not the same as case study research. Medical practitioners, social workers, detectives and lawyers, for example, deal with cases. However, it could be argued that case study research has been influenced by the way case studies have been used in other fields. Indeed, Becker (1968) said it originates from the field of medicine, while Platt (1981) said from the point of view of American sociology it can be traced back to the case work of social

workers. Although the practical treatment of cases has become distant from case study research, this is not always so. For example, Bromley (1986) talks of the case study in psychology as a type of clinical science, where the aim is not only to develop knowledge, but at the same time to seek a remedy to some problem in the case itself. A similar close relationship between case study research and ways of finding answers to practical problems can be found in other areas like management studies. The close ties between case study inquiry, and many types of occupational practice, have at times been condemned on the grounds that this type of research is not scientific. More recently, this criticism is much less widespread in light of increased public distrust of science, and doubts concerning whether it is possible to think of a science of social life. But just as important, more emphasis has been placed on the need for all research to be applied to practical activities. Despite these trends some case study researchers have not been discouraged from the scientific approach, interpreted in a number of ways. Thus the term case study has not been used in a very clear or precise manner (Gomm *et al.* 2000: 1-2).

Case study research

Since the term case study has been utilised in a number of ways, the next task is to explain what is meant by case study research. In a way all research involves the study of a case. Researchers will study either an individual unit or a set of units. But usually case study refers to a specific type of inquiry, in contrast to experiments and surveys. Although it is possible to use these contrasts to establish boundaries, there are also a range of dimensions that distinguish one inquiry from another. First, is related to the number of cases to be investigated. Second, is related to how much data is collected for each case study. The fewer cases the more data can be collected. Researchers who use the survey method usually only gather a small amount of information from each case. This is in contrast to where the researcher collects a large amount of data about one case. Therefore, generally case study means research based on a few cases, more often, that is, one in great detail. The number of case studies and the amount of data collected is not the only issue. Further to the definition of case study is the contrast with experimental research. While the former is concerned with the amount of information collected, the latter is about controlling variables. The researcher who uses experiments creates the case(s) to be studied, while the researcher who uses case studies will construct cases from empirical observations. In other words, with experiments situations are artificially generated specifically for the purpose of the research, whereas with case

studies things are studied as they happen naturally, without the researcher introducing any artificial changes or controls. The case exists in its natural setting before the research and should continue to exist after the research. In addition, the term case study has implications for the type of data which is collected and how it is analysed. Often it is unstructured data and qualitative data analysis. There is also an important issue related to the purpose of the research. The aim of case study research is often to seek out unique cases instead of using them to make generalisations, or for theoretical inference. And case study research is often based on the narrative approach, unlike experimental research which focuses on variable analysis. Finally, when thinking about objectivity the investigator has to think about the best way to conduct the research. When people are being observed is the aim to give them a voice, or use them as respondents or informants (Gomm *et al.* 2000: 2-3).

Table 2.2: Summary of what case study research emphasises

| Depth of study | instead of | Breadth of study |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| The particular | instead of | The general |
| Relationships and processes | instead of | Outcomes and end products |
| Holistic view | instead of | Isolated factors |
| Natural settings | instead of | Artificial settings |
| Multiple sources | instead of | One research method |

Source: Denscombe 2003: 32.

Case study research has not always been thought of as a desirable type of inquiry in comparison to experimental or survey research. Most of the criticism is based on the idea that they lack rigour. Case study investigators are accused of producing work which has not followed specified procedures, and has accommodated an element of bias which has influenced the findings and conclusions. It is also possible that case study research has been confused with case study teaching. For teaching purposes the case study material can be changed to make a point more effective. With case study research this is a forbidden practice. The researcher must provide accurate and fairly reported evidence. But what is often overlooked is that bias can be involved in the conduct of experiments and this can include the design of a questionnaire for a survey (Yin 2003: 10). For example, pre-coded questions can bias the findings towards the researcher's way of seeing things, instead of how the respondents see things (Denscombe 2003: 160). Another criticism: How is it possible to 'generalise' from a single case study? However, the same question can be asked of a single experiment. The point being, scientific facts are not usually based on single experiments. Generally they are based on a number of experiments which have replicated the same

phenomenon, but under different conditions. Yet another criticism of case studies is that they provide a massive collection of documents to analyse, so basically they take too long. This confuses case studies with the data collection methods of ethnography and participant observation. The former places emphasis on detail and usually necessitates that long periods of time are spent working in the field. Participant observation still requires lengthy field work, but it is not as demanding as the former. With case studies, depending on the topic under investigation, a high quality and valid case study can be produced without even leaving the library or by using a telephone or the internet. This means that case studies do not have to depend on data collected from ethnographic or participant observation research. Although the concerns about case study research can be remedied, as explained above, it is important to understand that it is far from easy to produce a good case study (Yin 2003: 10-11).

Generalisability is the characteristic that permits the results of research on a limited set of cases to be extended to the population from which those cases are drawn (Manheim and Rich 1994: 443).

For Stake (1978) case studies are the preferred method of research because they are often in tune with the reader's own experience. As such they are a natural basis for generalisation. But to make a case study useful for the reader, the researcher has to provide a thorough knowledge of the particular, and frame it in the same way as everyday experience through which people learn firsthand about the world.

Thus case studies provide vicarious experience. It is not scientific induction but naturalistic generalisation, which develops within a person through their experience. The problem with scientific generalisations is that they can provide false laws, or even true laws which take attention away from direct experience, and encourage people to see things more simplistically than they are (Stake 2000: 19-26). Lincoln and Guba (1979) are critical of the belief that the role of science is to make generalisations in the sense of discovering laws. They attribute the idea of seeking law-like generalisations to positivism. One of their criticisms is that it is not possible to produce knowledge, which is free of time and context. 'Generalisations decay. At one time a conclusion describes the existing situation well, at a later time it accounts for rather little variance, and ultimately it is valid *only as history*' (Lincoln *et al.* 2000: 31). For Lincoln and Guba it is not about trying to find general laws or studying the unique, it is about what lies in between these two extremes: 'the broad range of the *related*'. In short, there are ways of communicating the findings from studying one context which might hold in another. But more important than this is that case study research produces 'working hypotheses' and these can be utilised to understand other cases. By transferring the conclusions from one case

study to another enables the researcher to see if there are any similarities or 'fit' between the two (Lincoln *et al.* 2000: 27-44). However convincing naturalistic generalisations and transferability are they are not an alternative to scientific generalisations of the conventional kind. But it is possible for case study research to produce general conclusions (Gomm *et al.* 2000).

Generalising from the findings of Downswood and Kings Hill parish councils

The idea that case study research is incapable of providing empirical generalisation is often based on the mistaken belief that this type of generalisation requires statistical sampling. However, this is restrictive since it limits empirical generalisation to statistical techniques. Whilst statistical techniques are very good for making generalisations, they are not a necessity. As noted, everyone engages in making naturalistic generalisations, they are a part of everyday life, and as such they include empirical generalisation as well as informal theoretical inference. But what has to be understood is that the greater the heterogeneity there is in the population, the more difficult it is to make empirical generalisations based on one or a few cases. If the population was made up of identical units this would not be a problem. Thus case study researchers have to take into consideration heterogeneity within the population they are examining. There are two ways which are complementary by which this is possible. The researcher can utilise theoretical ideas and information about the case and the population they are analysing, and the researcher can select cases for study on the grounds of such ideas and information (Gomm *et al.* 2000:104-105).

To provide generalisations from the findings of this research Putnam's theoretical ideas explicated in his Italian study (1993) have been utilised. Like Putnam's work, this study is interested in how political institutions perform and how civil society can be encouraged to collaborate for the common good. For Putnam the Italian regional experiment of 1970 offered an opportunity to systematically study the birth and development of fifteen new institutions, and five special regions which were created earlier. From the perspective of 'new institutionalism' of which Putnam is a leading proponent, institutions can be thought of as arenas in which games are played, and the actors' behaviour is structured by the rules of the game. The actors in the Italian study are the regional councillors. In this study the actors are the parish councillors of Downswood and Kings Hill. The rules of the game are the procedures which govern collective decision-making, and political institutions like regional government and parish councils provide an arena within which conflicts can be expressed, and are sometimes resolved. Political institutions also get things done. For example, Italy's

regional governments create jobs, pay pensions, try to keep prices down, provide children with an education, stop crime, and promote family values, etc. The list of things DPC and KHPC do is not as exhaustive since as noted, the powers of parish councils are limited, but like regional government they also endeavour to stop crime and promote family values. As Putnam says, people will often not agree about what is most urgent or the best way to get things done or if things are worthwhile. But excluding the anarchists, most people agree that 'action' is required by government institutions some of the time and on some issues. Consequently, this determines the way people think concerning whether an institution is perceived as successful or as a failure. The conception of institutional performance for Putnam's Italian study is based on a simplistic model of governance: societal demands – political interaction – government – policy choice – implementation (Putnam 1993: 7-9). Thus by applying these theoretical ideas and information to DPC and KHPC, it will be possible to generalise the findings to the wider population, that is, other parish councils.

Crucial case studies

It was not until the last chapter of Putnam's Italian study (1993) that he provided a definition of social capital, and yet social capital theory is paramount to his research. For Putnam high levels of social capital allow bottom-up initiatives in governance, in other words he believes that it is spontaneous. But as the models in Chapter 4 illustrate, to build social capital in the parish requires effective leadership and some type of incentive. This is where club goods theory will be brought into the conceptual framework. It has to be emphasised, the developer has a different incentive to that of KHPC. The developer's incentive is to increase profits while KHPC and DPC's incentive is to promote a strong sense of community. Therefore, based on Eckstein's argument that case studies 'are valuable at all stages of the theory-building process, but most valuable at ... the stage at which candidate theories are 'tested'' (Eckstein 2000: 119), this research is based on two 'crucial case studies'. Crucial case studies 'offer circumstances which enable the analyst to reject some theoretical proposition or, which amounts to the same thing, to support it when the circumstances appear to be loaded against it' (Mitchell 2000: 174). The selection of a crucial case is not easy. It is based on the assumption that enough is known *a priori* about the phenomena so that its significance can be recognised by the analyst in the way that the proposition has been formulated (*ibid*). From the discussion above, enough is known about Putnam's Italian study therefore it will be possible

to relate the events from the data we have collected, to Putnam's theoretical propositions and test social capital theory throughout this thesis.

Analytical strategy for studying local councils

Even if explanation – connecting causes and effects – is the ultimate goal, description has a central role in all explanation, and it is fundamentally important in and of itself. It is not description versus explanation that distinguishes scientific research from other research; it is whether systematic inference is conducted according to valid procedures (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 34).

The point that King *et al*, are making is that whether the researcher is from an anti-foundationalist (qualitative) or positivist (quantitative) approach is not the issue. The main concern is that the data is systematically collected, analysed, and presented. In the case study research discussion above, the differences between these two research techniques was explained. All that needs to be said about these two approaches here is that the positivist epistemology takes the view that there is a 'real' world that exists independently of meaning. The focus is on identifying the 'causes' of social behaviour. Whilst the anti-foundationalist epistemology takes the view that the world is socially constructed. It emphasises the 'meaning' of behaviour. As this final part of this chapter unfolds it will become clear that the epistemological position of this research is based on the 'interpretive' approach. As such when providing an analysis of what is being observed it is important to interpret the meaning by which the agent(s) of the culture perceive of their own actions and relationships. Therefore social science is unavoidably hermeneutical (interpretive), and research based on objective facts, causal relationships, will only provide a limited understanding of reality.¹⁴ Interpreting action involves describing the cultural context and the state of mind of the agent so that his or her actions are intelligible. Once a description has been offered the researcher has to show that the agent's behaviour fits into a wider coherent cultural context. In short, the aim of the interpretivist is to observe individual actions and social practices, and describe them in a way that gives meaning to them.

The best way to soak up the atmosphere and experience the customs and practices of these parish council meetings is by direct observation. Apart from the analysis of documents, parish minutes and press reports, the bulk of the primary empirical information collected for the purpose of this study was obtained through non-participant observation of all the parish

¹⁴ See for example Clifford Geertz's (1973) analysis of Gilbert Ryle's discussion of the difference between a twitch and wink in King *et al*, 1994: 38-40.

meetings at Downswood and Kings Hill between 2003 and 2005. This involved attending a total of forty-two meetings. Merely relying on the minutes of such meetings would not have provided adequate information on the detail of the matters discussed, and would not have allowed us to understand the different ‘cultures’ in the two parish councils. To obtain an accurate record of the discussions (including personal interactions and cultural factors), extensive notes were taken and transcribed. The main advantage of this method of data collection is that it created a rare opportunity to gain direct information on novel events as they unfolded.

There are two approaches to direct observation. With the ‘obtrusive’ method the people under observation are aware they are being observed. With the ‘unobtrusive’ method the people are unaware they are being observed. The main advantage of the latter method is that since people are unaware they are being observed they will behave naturally. This increases the chances of obtaining valid data. The main disadvantage of this method is that it raises serious ethical issues. For example, if a researcher is investigating gangland culture and witnesses a stabbing, s/he will want to report the crime and the research project will come to an abrupt end. There are other times when the researcher tells people they are being observed, but deceives them about the purpose of the study. Deception is acceptable if: (1) the subjects are not harmed by the observation; (2) the subjects’ identity must be kept secret to prevent any embarrassment or harm; (3) the subjects would give their permission if they knew about the study, but cannot be asked beforehand as this would create ‘reactivity’; and (4) the advantages gained from the findings outweigh not informing the subjects about the research (Manheim and Rich 1994: 218). Both parish councils were aware they were being observed for the purpose of a PhD thesis.

The method of direct observations is extremely useful because it helped give this study an in-depth understanding of the political behaviour of the parish councillors. This included the relationships they decided to cultivate. By listening to their meetings it was possible to get closer to the reality of the benefits and frustrations the parish councillors experienced from working in partnerships. It was also possible to identify particular behaviours. Most of the parish councillors were over the age of forty or retired professionals. Their opinions reflected a conservative outlook on life and society. After the first observation and some background reading, there was an opportunity for some preliminary theorising about what was going on and the research design was refined. I decided to conduct further elite interviews and the observations would benefit if they became more structured, see below.

There was no need to seek permission to attend the parish meetings because they are open to the public. Before I attended the DPC meetings I went to one of their fundraising events. I sat next to one of the parish councillors and he introduced me to the chairman and the ward borough councillor. I explained that I was interested in local politics and would be attending their meetings to get an idea of the issues they were discussing. The first contact I made with KHPC was to send the chairman an email. I explained who I was and asked for some information about the estate maintenance charges imposed on the residents by the developer. At the end of the first KHPC meeting I attended the chairman asked if there were any questions from members of the public. The only other person sitting in the seats allocated for the public was the local reverend. As I was the only other member of the public the chairman asked if I had sent him the email. He said I could contact their clerk if I wanted any help. To minimise 'reactivity' on the rare occasions when I was asked a question I only gave a brief but polite answer with no further comments. This strategy paid off because I was not seen as a direct participant. I kept a low profile and blended into the background. This was helped further by my regular attendance at these meetings. I managed to build a relationship of trust over the research period. This was very apparent because both sets of parish councillors talked quite openly throughout their meetings in front of me. On the limited occasions when strangers came to their meetings they were definitely more guarded (see Chapter 6).

The field notes have provided this study with a high level of 'external validity' because I was observing the parish councillors actual behaviour, in the context in which it took place, not material written by others. One rule of direct observation is 'never take notes in the presence of those who are being observed' (Manheim and Rich 1994:204). However, for this study it was essential. First, it reduced 'reactivity' because I soon recognised which parish councillor was speaking. Then I could keep my head down and concentrate on my note taking. So there was no eye contact which prevented the parish councillors from gaining any clues concerning my thoughts about their discussions. On the occasions when the discussions got heated this lack of communication resulted in no one feeling embarrassed. Second, the parish council agendas covered plenty of items which kept them far too busy to worry about my note taking. As the field notes are detailed and they are what the parish councillors said, they have reduced any problems concerning 'subjectivity'. Another researcher could read them, look at the parish council minutes to verify what I have written, and decide how much confidence to place in them. They could also be used as a guide to conduct a similar study. Additionally, they have helped me to test theories including 'new localism'. Finally, and most important, as I built-up knowledge I learned about the parish councillors policymaking

important, as I built-up knowledge I learned about the parish councillors policymaking strategies. This helped me to produce two models (see Chapter 4) illustrating the difference in governance at DPC and KHPC, and help explain how theories of leadership and club goods can improve social capital theory.

A disadvantage of taking detailed field notes is that it is time consuming. On average the parish meetings took over three hours resulting in over ten pages of A4 notes to type up for analysis. I did this the following day so my memory of the events was clear. This was worthwhile because I could remember the items of discussion better than the parish councillors. This increased the speed at which I could take the notes at subsequent meetings. If I thought a particular agenda item was important I included some of my own comments in the field notes about the 'meaning' and importance of the discussion. This included comments about power relations and the personalities of the councillors. For example, DPC's chairman was a churchgoer, a clue as to why her leadership style was patient. She showed a genuine concern for others and their opinions. KHPC's chairman was a businessman. He ran the council like a business. He came up with ideas and expected everyone to agree with him. If they did not agree immediately he got a little impatient. In spite of these differences both chairmen's leadership skills came over clearly during these meetings.

Structured observation

The research design started with unstructured observations (the interpretive approach). Then I included structured observations to record objectively verifiable data about the meetings. For this purpose I designed a community organisation observation schedule to keep an accurate record of how often a particular behaviour occurred, making the research both descriptive and explanatory. For example, I recorded the number of parish councillors and residents who attended the meetings, and how many votes the parish councillors took (see Appendix 5). From the monthly field notes and the monthly community organisation observation schedules, I created more detailed data tables. The first data table contents are of all the topics (agenda items) discussed at Downswood. The second data table contents are of all the topics (agenda items) discussed at KHPC. The formal parish council agendas do not note all of the topics the parish councillors discuss, so to make these data tables I went through all the monthly field notes to make a list for each parish council. At the 20 DPC monthly meetings there was a total of 61 agenda items (see Appendix 6). At the 20 KHPC monthly meetings there was a total of 79 agenda items (see Appendix 7). These topic guides were particularly helpful for quick reference to see what the parish councillors discussed. They were also used

discussed, and if there was a successful outcome, or if the agenda item failed to reach fruition. However, although some of the agenda items were discussed regularly, this did not mean they were more important than those discussed less frequently. For example, at DPC the Mallards bank stabilisation agenda item was discussed at nearly every meeting. But these were progress reports, and more important, there was no resident involvement. The agenda items which I selected as case studies (at Downswood: the Church Road traffic calming initiative, the protest to keep Downswood post office from closure; at Kings Hill: the takeover of the Community Centre, the provision of a youth facility and skateboard park) were of great importance because they are the ones where residents are needed to protest to save local services, or campaign for additional ones. In other words, they are the agenda items which show how efficacious parish council governance is at building social capital, that is, bonds of trust and reciprocity with the higher tiers of local government and the residents.

The third data table contents are of the attendees at the DPC meetings (see Appendix 8). The fourth data table contents are of the attendees at the KHPC meetings (see Appendix 9). These were used to calculate the attendance statistics for Chapter 5. A combined data table was created with a coded outcome of the results of the voting at DPC and KHPC (see Appendix 10). The voting data was particularly useful since it shows the degree of consensual decision-making. Leadership theory says the leader's (chairman's) position would be untenable without effective leadership, and this is one important way of solving collective-action problems in the parish (see Chapter 4). Finally, a combined data table was created for comparison in which I coded the different types of antisocial behaviour and crime at Downswood and Kings Hill (see Appendix 11). These codes were subsequently checked by an ex-detective constable of the Metropolitan police force to ensure their validity. The crime data was particularly helpful to show the impact of corporate intervention in the market model of governance.

At a later stage of the research, because participation takes place in groups or organisations, a questionnaire was designed for investigating the social capital generated by DPC and KHPC at their community centres (see Chapter 7). To do this an internet search was carried out. Downswood Community Centre (DCC) is managed by Downswood Community Association (DCA) but as will be explained, DCA and DPC are closely connected. DPC has representatives on the DCA Committee and as such is involved in the management decisions of DCC. But also since local councils have duties regarding parochial charities (Charities Act 1993, section 79), as a registered charity it is in the interest of DCA to maintain this close

relationship since DPC provides DCA with funding.¹⁵ DPC has donated a considerable amount of money towards the decking, new curtains and play equipment at DCC. Although DPC does not directly manage DCC the above explanation provides adequate justification for using the activities provided at DCC to assess the connection between DPC and the residents. From the DCA website I accessed a list of the 13 clubs held at DCC. The list has the hirers' names and telephone numbers. At Kings Hill the situation is different. At the start of the observation Kings Hill Community Centre (KHCC) was managed by some of the residents who formed a management team. More recently, KHPC took over the management of KHCC, and because Kings Hill has several centres the name was changed to Kings Hill Community Hall (KHCH). To get a copy of the clubs I went to KHPC office at KHCH. There are 32 hirers and the list has their names, telephone number, or email address. The first task was to telephone the hirers on the lists (at Downswood and Kings Hill) whose email address was not included to request this information. The next task was to compile a questionnaire to email to all the hirers. At the start of the questionnaire I gave a brief explanation of the research. To increase the response rate I personalised the questionnaire by addressing them to the hirer (see below). The final question is open-ended in case anyone wanted to offer any thoughts. For those who I telephoned and did not get an answer, I delivered a questionnaire and self-addressed envelop to either DCC or KHCH. The questionnaire asked:

1. How long has the (Fellowship – Church Service on Sundays) been run at Kings Hill Community Hall?
2. Have you kept a record of how many adults and children attend each year?
3. If you have kept a record, how many adults and children attend each year?
4. If you have not kept a record, what is your membership for this year?
5. What would you estimate is the percentage of members living locally?
6. Would you like to make any comments?

Elite interviews were conducted (see Appendix 12). This research method has a number of benefits. First, it has the potential to provide the researcher with a large amount of technical or specialised information. Second, because the questions are flexible the respondent is free to explain what s/he thinks is important (see Appendix 13). The disadvantages of elite interviewing are that the respondent may unwittingly provide misleading information, or only information the respondent wants the researcher to know. To help guard against drawing

¹⁵ Local councils also have a duty to consider providing allotments if demand is unsatisfied (Smallholdings & Allotments Act 1908, section 23).

invalid conclusions from elite interviews, the researcher should learn enough about the subject to be able recognise incorrect statements. For the majority of the elite interviews I conducted, I used a tape recorder. The advantage of using a tape recorder is that the transcripts are verbatim, and they capture the way things are said. This means the tapes can be listened to by other researchers to validate the findings. Using a tape recorder also helps improve the researcher's interviewing techniques. As the researcher becomes more confident more information can be obtained from the respondent. The main disadvantage is that it takes time to transcribe the recordings. The respondents may feel inhibited because the tape recordings mean they cannot deny what they said.

In addition to all the above I have collected a variety of other documents. I have copies of the official parish agendas and minutes from the start to the finish of the observations. Although the parish minutes are not rich in detail they provide correct spellings of names, and they are formal confirmation of the parish councillors' decisions. I have a large number of media transcripts, mainly from BBC Radio 4. These provide reliable formal statements from leading political figures. The Parliamentary debates recorded in Hansard also complement the data. Like the media transcripts they give this study an understanding of the national-level policy debates, which help or constrain the parish councillors in their attempts to build social capital in their communities. I also transcribed presentations from the parish meetings and a number of conferences I attended (see Appendix 14). Finally, the national and local newspapers provide yet another useful source. All these sources will be examined and reflected on until 2009.

Conclusion

The interpretive approach has been particularly useful since it has enabled me to describe in detail the two case studies. But qualitative research must be subjected to the same tests of 'reliability' and 'validity' as that of quantitative research.¹⁶ By using a combination of research methods (direct observation, elite interviews, and the questionnaire), and explaining the research process as I have throughout this chapter, this will strengthen confidence in the findings. Cross-checking of the data is called 'triangulation'.

¹⁶ *Reliability*: if a researcher follows the correct procedure then s/he will be able to produce the same results as the original research. *Validity*: is not that easy to achieve in social science since the concepts, for example, democracy and power cannot be quantified as easy as measuring an individual's height and weight.

3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN BRITAIN

This chapter will argue that local governance has an important role to play in dealing with many of the political, economic, and social problems (see the introduction of this thesis), and not forgetting the environmental concerns facing our modern post-industrial democracies. Our aim is to analyse ‘new localism’ in the context of parish politics. New localism is a strategic approach that values devolution in a way that allows local communities to work alongside government(s) to get involved in decisions that have an impact on their lives (Corry and Stoker 2002). The first part of this chapter will argue why new localism is important. The second part of this chapter will argue that if new localism is to be a powerful driving-force for people to get involved in decision-making, we will need to examine the research which sets out the barriers to political participation and ways of overcoming them. Effective new localism encourages people to get involved, and is the basis of a new model of ‘networked community governance’. This model goes beyond the traditional public administration model of the welfare state and the new public management model of local governance in the way that it can provide services and encourage a variety of ‘stakeholders’ to engage in influencing the policymaking process. The final part of this chapter will provide a table to show how this new model of networked community governance is developing. This knowledge will be used in the empirical chapters to give an understanding of how the developments in governance either help or hinder the parish councillors of Downswood and Kings Hill in their attempts to implement their policy/initiatives to achieve successful outcomes.

New localism

Since New Labour’s second term in office, the pressure for the centre to drive improvements in service delivery has been accompanied by a move towards new localism. Ed Balls (then Chief Economic Advisor to the Treasury), gave a speech *The New Localism*, to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) annual conference, in which he said:

Today it is simply not possible either to run economic policy or deliver strong public services that meet public expectations using top-down one-size-fits-all solutions of the past. Because new information technologies, greater competition, a premium on skills and innovation, a wide-ranging media, increasingly demanding consumers, and varying local needs all work to expose the

contradictions of old-style centralisation and a command and control approach to deliver public services (Balls 2002).

In October 2002 he wrote the foreword to the New Local Government Network (NLGN) report *New Localism: Refashioning the Centre-Local Relationship* (Corry and Stoker 2002). In this new localism was characterised as devolving power and resources away from central government down to front-line managers, local councils, and local communities but within an agreed framework of national minimum standards.

Later, David Miliband said:

I want to set out why the reform of local government – the ‘double devolution’ of power from central government to local government, and from local government to citizens and communities – will take the partnership between the state and the third sector into a new phase (Miliband 2006).¹

In short, new localism is about a restructuring of central-local relations. As argued in the introduction of this thesis the concept has been used promiscuously. It has been included in speeches by frontbenchers from the three main political parties.² It has often been used by ministers to identify the changes that New Labour needs to make so they can deliver on their promise of public service reform. For some ministers new localism is about how to devolve services (like health and policing), which have been centrally controlled for decades. These ministers think of it as being about an elected body in which locally elected representatives are involved in the decision-making (see, for example, *Localising the National Health Service*, Reid 2003). For other ministers new localism is about empowering right down to the neighbourhood level (see, for example, *Active Citizens, Strong Communities – Progressing Civil Renewal*, Home Office 2003). The choice of how it should be institutionalised is not clear, but the commitment to new localism is clear. There are three reasons why it is important. First, it can respond to the complexity surrounding modern governance. Second, it gives a clearer understanding of the way democracy can operate in the twenty-first century. Third, it is about fostering trust, social capital, and active citizenship to help provide additional resources in the search to solve collective-action problems (Stoker and Wilson 2004: 252-253). The arguments in favour of new localism and those against will be set out below.

¹ From David Miliband’s speech to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations’ annual conference source: Full text of David Miliband’s speech, 21 February 2006 www.guardian.co.uk

² For examples of some of these speeches see Wilson and Game 2006: 379-381.

New localism responding to complexity

Not many of the problems confronting communities at the start of the twenty-first century have easy solutions. Creating a strong economy, providing healthcare, looking after the environment, and the fight against crime, all require action from the different levels of government and a variety of service providers. For example, at the Sixth National Regeneration Convention (6NRC) there was a debate entitled: *Ensuring a holistic approach to antisocial behaviour – balancing prevention with addressing the causes*. The team leader of East Manchester Neighbourhood Nuisance Team told the delegates about an Asian family on the receiving end of antisocial behaviour. It began when youths started hanging around outside the family's corner shop. The behaviour of the youths moved from abusive language to physical damage to the property. The family contacted the police more than ten times over a period of three months. Nothing could be done because the youths had gone by the time the police arrived. Then two Neighbourhood Wardens saw the youths and put the family in touch with the Team. The Team discussed the youth problem with the statutory bodies (police, schools and social services) to see if the youths had a history. With the diaries the family kept and the Wardens' statements, officers from the Team secured an ASBO against the ringleader, identified all the other troublemakers and issued them with warnings. The Team working in 'local partnership' with the statutory bodies successfully stopped this alarming criminal behaviour.

There is a need to find ways of living with complexity. This is where new localism can offer solutions. It is not about complete autonomy for local institutions; instead it is about a new form of central-local relations, which allows for a wide range of people to get involved in providing services and finding solutions to complex problems. It is not possible to avoid complexity because governments are involved in so many different policy areas. As a result many organisations are involved in delivery. This ranges from the formal levels of government at Westminster, to devolved parliaments, local authorities, right down to the parish councils and neighbourhoods. In addition, there is a vast array of quangos.

Complexity is also related to technical difficulties. It was challenging enough for governments to oversee the building of roads, schools, and hospitals and ensure a supply of gas, electricity and clean water. Nowadays it is more about making sure the economy grows so that it can meet the challenges of globalisation, encouraging healthy communities, and providing the right type of stimulation and environment so that children can grow and develop. Complexity is also related to the boundary problem. For example, who is

responsible for a healthy population? Should the state legislate against unhealthy food television advertisements? Should the supermarkets provide clearer systems of labelling to show what is a healthy food and one that is less healthy? Or is it down to the consumer who should not over-indulge in food or alcohol? Basically, complexity comes from the fact that the boundaries have become increasingly blurred. Understanding these challenges is what makes new localism attractive because it is about building-up local capacity within an national framework in order to find solutions to these complex problems (Stoker and Wilson 2004: 253-254).

New localism and democracy

Making a commitment to new localism means the policymakers have realised that the conventional understanding of democracy is limited. Protecting rights and the freedom to organise are obviously still important. But there is a need to find different answers to the questions: what can democracy be built on, and who should be accountable? Traditionally the nation state, Parliament and central government were the building blocks of democracy, and the elected representatives of government were held to account by the voters. However, this top-down presentation of democracy is outdated. The new localists are supportive of the ideas of the late Paul Hirst's work on associative democracy. From Hirst's work four points are important. First, associationalism acknowledges the fact that the institutions of representative democracy date back to the eighteenth century, when they were designed to govern mainly self-regulating societies in which the role of government was limited. Nowadays representative democracy is inadequate because central government plays a contradictory role; it provides public services at the same time as it has to be accountable for those services (Hirst 2000: 287). Second, modern societies should be based on 'self-governing communities of choice' where people join an association and decide what services they want. This would reduce central control. However, the idea is not to undermine the role of central government; it is to restore confidence in it (Hirst 2000: 290). Third, the provision of services must be pluralist. 'An associative welfare state would be based on the dual principles of competing voluntary self-governing providers chosen by citizens and formula-based entitlements from public funds received proportionate to membership' (Hirst 2000: 292). In short, a variety of organisations would be providing services and this would mean ordinary citizens could get involved. Finally, accountability would be a wider process. Those who have formed an association would be able to provide services, and others in the association would be able to

judge how well they are performing. This would strengthen community self-governance. But those providing the services would also be accountable to the centre because they would have to provide minimum standards set by central government (Hirst 2000: 293).

New localism developing trust, social capital and active citizenship

The ideas discussed above of what democracy can deliver are linked to trust, social capital, and active citizenship. These are the resources that make an important contribution towards tackling the complex service and policy issues confronting governments. However, there is a need to find ways among citizens in which these resources can be created and maintained. This is where new localism has a central role to play. We know that if people are part of a network there is a potential for them to create durable stocks of social capital, trust, and reciprocity. In a democracy of strangers these valuable resources will be lost. Where people trust one another and have a sense of citizenship they will go further in the search to solve collective-action problems. Social capitalists understand that the quality of social relations are important for achieving successful outcomes, when it comes to activities which involve coordination and a number of different actors. For example, to help reduce antisocial behaviour and non-compliance problems (as happened at Downswood and Kings Hill) requires an effective network in which the members share information and build social capital, trust and reciprocity. This is where ‘community governance’ can deliver and meet the challenge in a way that central governments have failed to deliver.

Social capital is driven by the values of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity. This is where Vivien Lowndes and David Wilson’s (2001) work on the impact of ‘institutional design’ is particularly informative. They argue that Putnam’s (1993) *Making Democracy Work* is too society-centred. ‘The role of social capital may be better understood in the context of a *two-way* relationship between civil society and government. Governments (particularly at the local level) shape the conditions in which voluntary associations – and social networks more generally – thrive (or do not)’ (Lowndes and Wilson 2001: 631). In short, it is up to governments to create social capital friendly institutions, which develop trust and reciprocity to achieve collective action. The strategy used by the Labour Government is ‘civil renewal’, which has been described as ‘a way to empower people in their communities to provide the answers to our contemporary social problems’ (Civil Renewal Unit 2003: 2). The findings of the Civil Renewal Unit said:

The successful promotion of civil renewal depends in the first instance on the existence of communities where social capital is strong, where relationships within groups and bridging across groups are well developed, where people are actively engaged in autonomous self-help activity. This 'horizontal involvement' provides a firm foundation for the 'vertical involvement' of people in governance structures and in engagement with civic institutions, though it is not automatic, and requires targeted support (Civil Renewal Unit 2004: 9).

Civil renewal is needed because globalisation and all of the technological changes have challenged the traditional types of political participation, and contributed to a more 'consumerist civic realm', which it has been said, has undermined the relationship between the state and its citizens (Stoker and Greasley 2004). The point is civil renewal is about giving people rights at the same time as requiring them to take on responsibilities (see Giddens 1998: 65-66). Therefore, within the community governance agenda the aim of civil renewal is more than just empowering people. It is about providing a new set of rules in which communities make decisions. It does not reject decision-making at higher levels, but it does mean more decisions can be taken at the local or even at the neighbourhood level.

Criticisms of new localism

The critics of new localism have provided two reasons why they do not think it is workable. First, they argue there is a danger that the decisions taken by communities are parochial and focused on self-interested individuals and this threatens the 'common good'. Behind the rhetoric of the caring community is the politics of 'not in my back yard' (NIMBY). 'The public tells pollsters they think refuse collection should be run locally and are divided about who should ensure older residents get home help. But imagine what populist public services might entail. Where the affluent old congregated, single mothers and children might get scant support... Communities, in other words, can be reactionary and mean' (Walker 2002: 28). Second, there is the equity argument. There is a need for central intervention to level the playing field so that resource rich communities share with communities with limited resources. 'What if local people (in well-resourced districts) do participate actively and then choose small government, low taxation and steadfastly oppose transfer from Kingston upon Thames to Kingston upon Hull?' (Walker 2002: 16). It is because of these concerns that the prefix of 'new' has been added to localism. The critics of new localism have missed the point. It is about a wider system of multi-level governance. It is not suggesting that local government should do everything and the centre nothing. Instead the argument is that local government can do some things better. It is about a shift in the balance of governance in

which there is more scope for local democracy. It is based on the idea that to meet the challenge of equity it is not always necessary to treat all communities the same, instead it involves tailoring solutions to meet specific needs (Stoker 2004: 224).

Developing community participation

To start with, although it may seem obvious, we need to set out what we mean by community participation. It is about engaging individuals and communities in the decisions that have an impact on their lives. Although there will be times when people do not want to be involved in decision-making, everyone should be given the opportunity if they want to be involved. But what is important to understand is that community participation is not the same as consultation. The former means that communities are playing an *active part and have the power to influence* [my emphasis] (Burns *et al.* 2004a: 2).

Now we need to think about some of the key reasons why community participation is important. To start with active participation improves democratic and service accountability. If a local authority did not have the support of its community it would not be able to act as an effective community leader. Governments at all levels should encourage people to be actively involved in decision-making, rather than expecting them to passively accept their policies. Good governance is about more than delivering an outcome. It is about how that outcome was achieved, and getting people actively involved is therefore important. By listening to what people say this enables policy to be relevant to the community. In this way it enhances effectiveness because it means that communities bring their understanding, knowledge and experience to the decision-making process. Furthermore, community definitions of needs, problems, and solutions are often different from those put forward by service planners and providers. Community participation adds economic value because volunteers can be mobilised to help in the delivery process, and if the socially excluded participate they will develop transferable skills, which will increase their employment opportunities. It also gives local residents an opportunity to develop the skills and networks that are required to address social exclusion. Finally, it promotes sustainability because it gives local people ownership of their communities and they can develop the confidence and skills to sustain development, especially once any 'extra' resources they may have been given have gone (ibid).

New Labour's policy proposals for developing community participation

Unlike the previous Conservative government the newly elected Labour Government said it was committed to renewing politics at the local level:

Local government's credentials to be community leaders are weakened by its poor base of popular support... It may be asking too much to expect local government to get people shouting from the rooftops. But it is not too much to expect most people to care enough to vote or to know who to praise or blame for what is going on in their locality. Revitalising local democracy is a big task... Every local authority should set itself targets for improving voter turnout and strengthening local participation in the government of their community (Blair 1998: 14-15).

This interest in democratic renewal along with a concern to continually improve service delivery, were both central to New Labour's modernisation agenda for local government. The Labour government's detailed policies for local government were set out in *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People* (DETR 1998a). This White Paper contained three key proposals. The first said 'community leadership is at the heart of the role of modern local government'. The government proposed 'to introduce legislation to place on councils a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas' (DETR 1998a: para. 8.8). This suggests that the government was proposing a system more representative of community governance. Instead of its traditional role of an agent delivering services on behalf of the centre, local government was to be given a wider role. The White Paper added: 'This new duty will provide an overarching framework for local government. It will enshrine in law a role of the council as the elected leader of their local community with the responsibility for the well-being and sustainable development of its area' (DETR 1998a: para. 8.9).

The second proposal was like that of the Commission for Local Democracy (1995) which said there was a need to revive local politics. But to legitimise this wider role it was necessary to address the problem of low turnout at the local elections. The White Paper proposed two ways to get people re-engaged in local politics. It proposed having more frequent elections and introducing easier ways for people to vote. The White Paper also proposed placing a duty on councils to consult with local people. It said: 'The Government wishes to see consultation and participation embedded into the culture of all councils, including parishes, and undertaken across a wide range of each council's responsibilities' (DETR 1998a: para. 4.6). Finally, to drive democratic renewal further there was a return to Michael Heseltine's proposal of directly elected mayors. The government argued that 'The traditional committee structures, still used by almost all councils, lead to inefficient and opaque decision making' and 'there is little clear political leadership' (DETR 1998a: para. 3.4). Legislation was

proposed to enable local authorities to have a choice between three new political structures: directly elected executive mayor with a cabinet; cabinet with a leader; directly elected mayor with council manager (DETR 1998a: para. 3.17). The third proposal was the replacement of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) with Best Value. The government said: 'The way in which a council conducts consultation will be one of the issues taken into account in assessing how far an authority is meeting its duty of best value or is fit to be a beacon council' (DETR 1998a: para. 4.7). Now we will examine how local authorities enhance public participation.

To engage people beyond the ballot box the government placed a duty on local authorities to consult with local people (refer back to the second key proposal in the 1998 White Paper above). Two census surveys were conducted in 1998 and 2002 (Lowndes *et al.* 2001a and b; Birch 2002) to find out what local authorities have been doing to enhance public participation. In the work published in 2001a the methods of consultation were divided into five categories:

1. **Consumerist methods** – forms of participation which are primarily customer-oriented in their purpose and are mainly concerned with aspects of service delivery. Key examples include complaints/suggestions schemes and service satisfaction surveys.
2. **Traditional methods** – methods which have a long history of use in local government and are traditionally associated with public participation. Key examples include public meetings, inviting co-optees onto local authority committees, and consultation documents sent out for comment.
3. **Forums** – activities which bring together users of particular services, residents of an area, individuals concerned with specific issues (for example, community safety) or those with a shared background or interest (for example, minority ethnic groups), on a regular basis. Key examples include the use of area neighbourhood committees or forums that bring together young people or ethnic minorities.
4. **Consultative innovations** – new methods which seek mainly to consult citizens on particular issues rather than to engage them in sustained dialogue. Key examples include interactive websites, focus groups, citizens' panels and referendums.
5. **Deliberative innovations** – new methods which encourage citizens to reflect upon issues affecting them and their communities through some form of deliberative process. Key

examples include citizens' juries, visioning exercise,³ community planning schemes and issue forums (Lowndes *et al.* 2001a: 207).

According to this research local authorities have taken on board the Conservatives consumer choice approach of the 1980s and early 1990s. Hence consumerist methods have become the most popular way of consulting with the public, with 92 percent of local authorities using a complaints/suggestions scheme and 88 percent using service satisfaction surveys. The traditional methods are also still in wide use, with over four-fifths of local authorities holding public meetings and sending out consultation documents during the census year (Lowndes *et al.* 2001a: 208). However, the increased use of some of the innovative and deliberative consultation methods is notable. In particular, focus groups, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, community planning, visioning exercises, and interactive websites have seen a sharp increase in use since New Labour came into power. Yet this increase in opportunities to participate is more than a response to the government's democratic renewal agenda. Instead it shows a sense of ownership within each local authority of the democratic possibilities that such initiatives hold for them and their willingness to develop them (Lowndes *et al.* 2001a: 214).⁴

The experience of local authorities indicates there are difficulties as well as advantages in enhancing public participation. When asked to rank the main problems they said a lack of resources and time prevented them from developing public participation. Justifying spending more on participation had to be weighed up against spending on specific services in need of resources. In addition, time constraints deterred them from experimenting with the different methods of consultation. The problem of 'when' and 'how' to spend on enhancing democracy or on service delivery remains an unresolved dilemma, which is central to the current process of democratic renewal (Lowndes *et al.* 2001a: 211-212). A further problem is that there is a perception among many local authorities of a 'lack of public interest' for enhanced public participation, especially among the groups who are traditionally excluded from the political process (Lowndes *et al.* 2001a: 215). Now that we have an understanding of what local

³ The purpose of this technique is to produce a vision among a group of residents about the kind of future they would like to create. A variety of techniques are usually combined in order to uncover people's preferences (Stoker 2004: 116).

⁴ This is indeed what happened at T&MBC. To increase participation at the Tonbridge Forum meetings council leaders decided that in future participants would be encouraged to discuss wider issues such as 'new hospital proposals, parking, public transport and how the town centre can develop' ('Forum survey low response signals apathy' by Katherine Jacques, *The Courier (Tonbridge)*, 21 November 2003, p. 9).

authorities have been doing to enhance public participation, we need to find out what drives citizens to participate, and what is likely to turn them off.

CLEAR: A tool to enhance public participation at the local level

The **CLEAR** tool has been developed to help local authorities and other organisations or groups to understand public participation in their localities. It argues people will participate when they **can**: when they have the resources and knowledge to participate. People will participate because they **like** to: when they have a sense of attachment that reinforces participation. People will participate when they are **enabled** to: and encouraged by an infrastructure of civic networks and organisations. People will participate when they have been **asked** for their opinions. Finally, people will participate if the system they are trying to influence is **responsive** (Lowndes *et al.* 2006: 281). Table 3.1 below sets out the CLEAR framework factors that drive participation, on the left hand side of the table it suggests some of the policy measures to enhance participation.

Table 3.1: Factors promoting participation; it's CLEAR

| Key Factor | How it works | Policy Target |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Can do | The individual resources that people have to mobilise and organise (speaking, writing and technical skills, and the confidence to use them) make a difference | Capacity building, training and support of volunteers, mentoring, leadership development |
| Like to | To commit to participation requires an identification with the public entity that is the focus of engagement | Civil renewal, citizenship, community development, neighbourhood governance, social capital |
| Enabled to | The civic infrastructure of groups and umbrella organisations makes a difference because it creates or blocks an opportunity structure for participation | Investing in civic infrastructure and community networks, improving channels of communication via compacts |
| Asked to | Mobilising people into participation by asking for their input can make a big difference | Public participation schemes that are diverse and reflexive |
| Responded to | When asked people say they will participate if they are listened to (not necessarily agreed with) and able to see a response | A public policy system that shows a capacity to respond – through specific outcomes, ongoing learning and feedback |

Source: Lowndes *et al.* 2006 p. 286.

The 'can do' factor is linked to the socio-economic arguments, which have traditionally dominated explanations for differences in the rates of local participation. It is based on the argument that if people have the appropriate skills and confidence they will be more able to

participate. It also includes access to resources that facilitate participation (for example, a photocopying machine and the internet). These skills and resources are usually found among the better educated and the employed. This is why the lowest level of participation tends to be in the most deprived areas. A policy response to encourage participation can be achieved by capacity building through community development, training and development and support through the provision of a community centre, and resources targeted at groups or communities who need help to voice their opinions (Lowndes *et al.* 2006: 286).

The 'like to' factor is linked to the importance of people feeling a sense of community. The argument says that if people feel a part of the community they are more likely to want to participate. This is related to the social capital debates. If people get involved in a network whether it is formal or informal, they will build trust and reciprocity and cooperate more effectively with each other. If a community has high levels of social capital the democratic institutions will then be more responsive. 'Civic engagement matters... citizens in civic communities expect better government, and (in part through their own efforts) they get it' (Putnam 2000: 346). A policy response is to build a sense of community. But first policymakers and practitioners need to take into account any loyalties and identities that are already present in the community. Instead of thinking these feelings can be changed it is better to encourage people to believe they are part of a wider civic identity. Promoting a sense of citizenship and solidarity can help to develop a positive environment for community participation. That is the intention of policies directed at civil renewal such as citizenship education, community development and engaging activists in governance and service delivery. A caveat for policymakers is to ensure that intervention does not damage existing stocks of social capital (Lowndes *et al.* 2006: 287). This happened in the urban development experiments of the past, where communities were destroyed when streets of terraced houses were knocked down and replaced by impersonal blocks of high rise flats.

The 'enabled to' factor is based on the research observation that most participation takes place in groups or organisations. Most of us can think of a number of groups and organisations whose activities have an impact on politics at the national or local level. They might be nationally known such as trade unions or the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) or small local groups trying to support a local service. There are two reasons why groups and organisations are important for participation. First, they can provide their members with information about policies that may affect them. Second, they can mobilise their members to take part in a protest or write to an MP (Parry *et al.* 1992: 85). A policy response is particularly important here given the demise of many of the traditional bases for

mobilisation (trade unions, mass political parties, and traditional women's organisations – the women's institute). There is a vital role for local authorities to develop compacts with the voluntary and community sectors to make sure they are involved in decision-making, instead of only seeing them as potential service providers. It is also a good idea for policymakers to keep in touch with 'umbrella' organisations (race equality councils, councils of voluntary service, tenants' federations and civic societies) as they can provide a point of access for decision-makers to get their opinions. In addition, it is important for policymakers to engage and support marginalised groups (Lowndes *et al.* 2006: 288).

The 'asked to' factor builds on the finding of much research, which says that mobilisation matters. People have a tendency to engage more often if they are asked to participate. People can be mobilised by a number of sources, but the most powerful is when decision-makers ask them to participate in the decision-making process. Some people will be happy to participate in a public meeting, while others will prefer to participate on-line. Some people will want to talk about their neighbourhood, while others will want to engage based on their experience of using a particular service. Participation can be mobilised by using incentives (honoraria) or by establishing a sense of obligation (jury duty). Who to target for participate is important. It could be a specific neighbourhood or a larger cross-authority population. The sustainability of participation is also important. If the local authority keeps asking the same residents to respond there is a danger they will get fed up. This problem is connected to the problem of who is being asked. If the local authority creates 'expert citizens' by continually asking them 'ordinary citizens' opinions will be overlooked. For the 'asked to' factor to be effective municipalities need to critically review and learn from their repertoire of initiatives to help them improve their participation strategy (Lowndes *et al.* 2006: 289).⁵

'Responded to' means that if people are asked to participate on a sustained basis they need to feel that their input is making a difference. Research shows that the biggest deterrent to participation was peoples' perception or their experience that the council would not respond to consultation (Lowndes *et al.* 2001b: 452). People were clear about what leads to effective participation. In their own words: (a) '*Has anything happened?*' (b) '*Has it been worth the money?*' (c) '*Have they [the council] carried on talking to the public?*' (Lowndes *et al.* 2001b: 454). The 'responded to' factor is at the same time the most obvious, but most

⁵ The Public Relations Officer of Swale Borough Council said: There is a danger of consultation overload. People get fed up if you keep asking them about service delivery for lots of different services. For Best Value there is a problem so we send out combined surveys where we bring together a lot of the services (Interview at Swale Borough Council on 21 January 2003).

difficult factor in the enhancement of participation. But it is also the factor, which is most open to influence by the policymakers. Leadership and decision-making arrangements (the institutional design) play an important role in determining which group gets access to those holding the power, if the decision-makers can respond to the groups demands, and whether certain groups opinions are considered above others in terms of the influence they hold (Lowndes and Wilson 2001). Meeting this challenge means asking local authorities how they use the data they have collected from their consultation or participation initiatives, against other inputs they have to take into consideration in the decision-making process. Being responsive is about making sure people get feedback. This is important even if the feedback is not positive in the sense of just accepting the views of those with the loudest voice. Feedback should include an explanation of how the decision was made and why. The point is people should be encouraged to participate, especially in local affairs which have an impact on their lives (Lowndes *et al.* 2006: 289).

The CLEAR diagnostic tool enables policymakers to ask questions about citizens and their sense of community, and the type of civic organisations present in the community. It also asks them to evaluate their organisational and decision-making structures to see whether they are listening to the messages they are receiving from civic participation. The aim of the CLEAR framework is to help policymakers and practitioners to think about their consultation and participation initiatives, the obstacles to engagement, and how they can be rectified. Getting people to participate is not easy. As noted, there are a number of blocks which prevent people from engaging. Basically, change is in the hands of the policymakers. If they respond more effectively to the responses they receive from their consultation and participation initiatives, people will be more inclined to engage (Lowndes *et al.* 2006: 290). The CLEAR diagnostic tool will be returned to in Chapter 7 to create a profile of participation at the two parishes (Downswood and Kings Hill).

The development of networked community governance

The role of local government is to help the community achieve its objectives. It does this by leading the debate, developing a vision, and ensuring that the community has the appropriate resources whether they are public or private. The political process to further local governance requires a subtle mixture of a leadership capacity and opportunities for wider political participation and involvement. As councils are elected bodies they are in a good position to provide this leadership role (Stoker 2004: 165-166). In the 2001 White Paper it said:

Thriving communities and strong democratic leadership go hand in hand. Such leadership helps to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities, boost the local economy, improve the environment, and contribute to the achievement of wider regional and national policy goals. Councils are uniquely placed to provide this leadership. The Government is committed to helping them to do so (DTLR 2001: paragraph 2.1).

This vision of local governance understands that services can be commissioned or even produced by others (i.e. the private and voluntary sectors or the community) instead of relying on the state. It also gives a much wider role to community leaders and citizens. Local government's role is to influence, but it is no longer directly responsible for providing services. It is there as a community leader. It is there to steer the governance of its locality. As the 2001 White Paper said:

Successful councils ensure that the voices of all get heard... They enable individuals, families and communities to find and develop solutions to their own problems, provide the resources and opportunities to help them to do so, and work with others to contribute to those solutions... (DTLR 2001: paragraph 2.7).

Communities are interdependent. Actions taken at sub-regional or regional level can have a profound effect on the development of local areas. Local activity contributes to the achievement of wider goals. Someone needs to champion their communities' interests at these wider levels, join up with neighbouring areas to identify and achieve common goals and take local action which promotes the wider economic and environmental interests of the region and beyond. Councils are the best placed local bodies to do this (DTLR 2001: paragraph 2.9).

At last the policymakers have moved closer to the old localists vision of 'community governance' (see Clarke and Stewart 1994; Stewart 1995; Stoker 1996). The table below (Table 3.2) sets out three models of governing local affairs in abstract form from the 1940s onwards. First, is the post-war welfare state model (also known as traditional public administration). In large parts of the developed world local government played its part in establishing the essential services of the welfare state. This model gave way under pressure from new public management (NPM). It started with the local government reorganisation of the 1970s, followed by the concept of the enabling authority.⁶ NPM was driven by a different

⁶ The concept of enabling occupied a central place in Conservative thinking in the 1980s and 1990s. Generally it is taken to mean that the role of the local authority has changed from that of a provider of services to an enabler. It is based on the idea of enabling communities to do things for themselves in the most effective way. The test is what is the most effective way? In practice enabling is a slippery concept (Pratchett and Wilson 1996: 3-4).

set of ideas about how the public services should be governed. The local authority was to become more like a private profit making organisation in which emphasis was placed on the '3Es' (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) and customer care. At the start of the twenty-first century we are moving towards another way of providing services. This vision of networked community governance seeks to provide a new role for local government (Stoker 2004: 10).

Table 3.2: Three periods of local governing

| | Welfare State Model (1940s-1970s) | New Public Management Model (1980s-1990s) | Networked Community Governance Model 2001 Onwards |
|--|---|---|--|
| Performance objectives | To deliver services in the context of a national welfare state | To ensure economy and responsive to consumers | To ensure the problems the public care about most are tackled |
| Dominant ideologies | Professionalism and party partisanship | Managerialism and consumerism | Managerialism and localism |
| Dominant model of accountability | Upwards through departments to politicians and through them to Parliament | Upwards through performance contracts; sometimes outwards to customers through market mechanisms | Elected leaders, managers and key stakeholders involved in search for solutions to community problems and effective delivery mechanisms. System in turn subject to challenge through elections, referendums, deliberative forums, and shifts in public opinion |
| Preferred system for service delivery | Hierarchical department or self-regulating profession | Private sector or tightly defined arm's-length public agency | Menu of alternatives selected pragmatically |
| Approach to public service ethos | Public sector has monopoly on service ethos, and all public bodies have it | Sceptical of public sector ethos (leads to inefficiency and empire building) – favours customer service | No one sector has a monopoly on ethos. Maintaining relationships through shared values is seen as essential |
| Role for public participation | Limited to voting in elections and pressure on elected representatives | Limited – apart from use of customer satisfaction surveys | Crucial – multi-faceted (customers, citizens, key stakeholders) |
| Relationship with 'higher' tiers of government | Partnership relationship with central government departments involved in service delivery | Upwards through performance contracts and service delivery against key performance indicators | Complex and multiple: regional, national, European. Negotiated and flexible |

Source: Adapted from Kelly, Mulgan, Muers (2002) and Stoker (2004)

The three models of local governing in the table above do not fit perfectly within the time frames. There is some overlap. The first two models became institutionalised ways of conducting public administration. The third model is a vision of how local government could operate more effectively. The three models also represent different mixes of ideological types, which have been commonplace to local politics for a long time. During the traditional

public administration period, professionalism and party partisanship were the central ideological creeds. The other main ideological creed was managerialism. A smaller role was given to the ideology localism. Managerialism was supported by treasurers. It was about the need to cut costs. Localism was supported by the less powerful councillors, and focused on the ward or neighbourhood level. Since the 1980s the former ideologies of professionalism and party partisanship in which officers and elected politicians had a major role to play in local government have given way to managerialism and localism (Stoker 2004: 12).

Under the welfare state model the key task for local government was to deliver the public services. It was not difficult to know what people wanted: better housing, schools, roads, sewerage, and welfare provision. The welfare state local government not only provided services, it also raised local taxes and managed grants from central government. The services were delivered largely in-house. Local government gained legitimacy for the actions it took through the local elections. Expert officers and elected politicians defined the needs of each locality so professionalism and party partisanship were at the forefront (Stoker 2004: 12-13).

The first attack on this model came from NPM. It started in the late 1960s with the concept of 'corporate management'. The main objective of corporate management was to improve coordination and efficiency by introducing a strong executive at the centre of the local authority to control the actions of the officials in the departments, and the councillors on the committees (Elcock 1994: 266). The legacy of corporate management was limited other than giving a stronger role to chief executives. The second phase of NPM had a greater impact. The idea was to keep the cost of providing the public services down by applying the management disciplines of seeking out efficiency savings, setting performance targets, and competition to find the cheapest provider. It was this 'new right' thinking which prompted the introduction of CCT. The local authority had to compare the costs of continuing to provide all of its services in-house, with those of private contractors who showed an interest in putting in a bid to provide a service. The award of a contract had to go to the most competitive bid. However, what must be emphasised is that it was the competitive tendering – the cost comparison – which was made compulsory, not the contracting-out.

The ideology behind CCT is important. Think-tanks of the new right such as the Adam Smith Institute (ASI) put forward a strong case for legislation on competitive tendering. They favoured individualism and choice as opposed to the 'dependency culture', which they felt the welfare state had encouraged. They had no difficulty in convincing Nicholas Ridley (then Environment Secretary), and CCT became a major policy tool for 'rolling back the state'. Reducing state involvement meant more involvement of private enterprise. A valid criticism

of CCT is that under the Local Government Act of 1988, councils were not entitled to specify the terms and conditions of employment by which those who won the contract operated. They could not take into consideration how competitors behaved when it came to sickness benefit, pensions, trade union rights, training and other aspects related to equal opportunities. In short, cost was considered more important than quality. Nevertheless, the introduction of competition forced local authorities to examine the way they delivered their services in a new way. To win contracts they had to become 'leaner and fitter' (Wilson and Game 1994: 338).

In the 1990s there was a move towards consumer choice. In the past local authorities tended to act as monopolistic service providers to the public, instead of for them and with them. It was understood that there was a need to develop a 'customer service culture'. The public were to be treated as customers: 'people able to make choices, with the right to the information on which to base those choices, the right of redress if dissatisfied with the service received, and the right to go to other providers' (Wilson and Game 1994: 18). To develop this consumer choice Prime Minister John Major introduced the Citizen's Charter. This policy was a continuation of the political programme of restructuring the public services, which had preoccupied the Thatcher years. But it marked a new phase of managerialism, characterised by a more positive view of the role of public services. During the Thatcher administration emphasis was placed on economy and efficiency. The idea was to reduce the 'burden' of the public sector on the citizen, instead of addressing the benefits they could gain from an effective public service. The Citizen's Charter represented a change in the Conservative government's attitude. It was not just a result of a change in political leadership, but from the continued use of managerialism for its ideas (Prior 1995: 86-87). Managerialism supported political leadership for providing direction, but beyond that it was considered inefficient. Politicians were there to establish the goals, but not to dictate how to achieve them. The main objective of managerialism was to allow managers to manage with a strictly 'hands-off' role for elected politicians (Hood 1991: 6).

From the perspective of NPM the welfare state is too expensive and too demanding on taxpayers. The main challenge is to improve service delivery. An exclusive public sector ethos is rejected in favour of competition between providers from different sectors (i.e. the private sector or the voluntary sector) to keep costs down, and encourage responsive users. The key to NPM is to meet the demands of consumers, form effective contractual relations between those who commission the services and those who provide them, and ensure service delivery is monitored effectively (Stoker 2004: 13-14).

The third model of a more complex system of community governance, as noted, was first developed from the mid-1990s by the old localists. It was inspired from the ideology of localism:

As the community governing itself, the local authority is entitled to take actions that are sought by that community. It need not search for specific powers, because the powers derive from the concept of local government itself... The identity of the authority does not derive from the services provided, but from the community (Stewart 1995: 252).

As we have learned from the CLEAR diagnostic tool discussed above, community governance can play an important role in identifying the issues people care about, and in the design of solutions to help produce positive outcomes. Community governance goes beyond service delivery. Its main goal is to meet the needs of the community, but within the context of a complex system of multi-level governance. In other words, it takes on the challenge and works across boundaries (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002) through a holistic approach (Perri 6 *et al.* 2002). This model of community governance recognises that the two extreme positions that the government should be responsible for all economic activity, or that the government should do nothing, is no longer sustainable. Instead it highlights the importance of a 'third way', which seeks to take on the best features of the market and bureaucratic designs (Jackson 2001: 6). It is about exploring the use of 'networks' as an alternative governing structure, which lies somewhere between markets and hierarchies. These network relationships are based on cooperation and participation instead of competition and control. To do this community governance understands that allocative efficiency is not just about 'waste elimination and cost containment' (Jackson 2001: 18). As such it is not about narrow efficiency gains, it is about a model of governance that produces the services that the users value, and in the quantity they prefer. In a democracy this value is defined by the public themselves, through the consultation and participatory initiatives described in the CLEAR framework.

To get an idea of how community governance is developing we will examine the replacement of CCT with the 'best value' initiative. Although this new regime owes a great deal to NPM and managerialism – it emphasises efficiency, value for money, increasing inspection and performance indicators, it is different from the past in three ways. First, there was a commitment to improving relations between central and local government and to getting support for 'BV principles' from others: local government, business, trade unions, and the voluntary and community sectors. Second, unlike the Conservatives whose instincts led

them to place the public sector under the direction of business, the Blair government decided to give a key community leadership and service delivery role to local authorities. Those who could show they had the capacity to improve and satisfy the demands of their residents. Third, while BV was piloted it accommodated a variety of different interpretations of the BV principles and approaches to emerge (Geddes and Martin 2000: 380).

On the less positive side, a number of local authority officers and local trade union representatives did not agree the policy process was participatory. They believed ministers had decided what they were going to do, but gave the impression of a consultation process just to win local support. There is some evidence to support this. It seems legislation did come before the BV pilots. Also a leading government adviser claimed 'we could have written the legislation in May 1997 but we knew that if we went public at that stage local government would oppose it' (Geddes and Martin 2000: 381). Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think BV was mainly developed by ministers and civil servants. Although it attracted suspicion from local government in a way it was self-imposed. Local authorities had an input especially as much of the framework is based on 'good practice' within the leading local authorities themselves. The Local Government Association (LGA) was also closely involved in shaping the legislation, and deciding when it would be appropriate for the Secretary of State to intervene, where either the local authority or service was deemed to have failed (ibid). Furthermore, the government also supported the idea of 'capacity building'. Within the local government ministry a modernisation team was established to give councils support and advice. The government also actively supported the creation by the LGA of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). This organisation was designed to help local authorities gain the skills to provide local community leadership and deliver high quality services (Martin 2000: 214).

Conclusion

There are two narratives concerning the condition of local government. One says local government has been transformed. As discussed above, the local authority has become an 'enabler' and as such it is no longer the primary focus of local democracy and the main service provider. The advent of local governance has brought governmental agencies and non-governmental agencies together to work in partnership. This transformation is also evident in the changed language of local government. For example, great emphasis is placed on democratic renewal, community leadership, and capacity building. The other narrative says local government is much the same. Despite all the new legislation and partnership

arrangements local government is still larger than its European counterparts, lacking in any real power, and constrained by the traditional way of doing things (Lowndes 2004: 230-246). Whether you believe local government has been transformed or remains much the same, it cannot be denied that under the Labour government it has opened up an opportunity for neighbourhoods to play an important role in the democratic process. Therefore, we should be far more optimistic. Clearly there is a role for networked community governance supported by new localism. However, it has to be understood that it is not in the interest of those holding power to just give it up. Instead once community activists have gained the support of local residents it is up to them to take power, I repeat take power, which as the empirical chapters will show, is exactly what the parish councillors at Downswood and Kings Hill did on several occasions.

4 SOCIAL CAPITAL AND OVERCOMING COLLECTIVE ACTION PROBLEMS

Social capital is a particularly useful concept for understanding questions of social integration in contemporary societies. Its presence can help improve the efficacy of policymaking and as a consequence it is good for democracy (see Putnam 1993; 2000). Putnam in particular, shows (or seeks to show) how social networks and capital can improve the performance of political institutions. Irrespective of the empirical veracity of his claims, he offers a highly suitable framework for the analysis of state-civil society relations, which has become an important way in which policymakers understand and describe problems of governance in modern democracies. In Britain, like other democracies, the concept has gained some prominence in policy documents of the Blair government (refer back to the two Civil Renewal documents mentioned in Chapter 3)¹ and, more recently, in policy discussions with Cameron's Conservative Party (see, amongst others: *Why Conservative social policy delivers progressive ends*, Michael Gove MP, 4 August 2008).²

In the first part of this chapter we will introduce the concept of social capital and highlight some of its key dimensions. We will then introduce three main approaches to the theoretical debate on social capital: Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) neo-Marxist approach, the rational choice approach developed by James Coleman (1988) and others, and Robert Putnam's (1993) institutional approach. Although, it will be argued, social capital addresses some important problems of social integration and cooperation in modern societies, it also has some theoretical gaps. Most importantly, in the context of this thesis, it fails to account for the incentives for people to get involved in the production of social capital, and it overlooks leadership issues. The aim of this chapter is to show that social capital is not as spontaneous as many prominent theorists suggests. It requires 'effective leadership' and to get people to participate there is clearly a need for incentives. In the second part of this chapter we will argue that theoretical approaches focusing on 'effective leadership' and 'club goods', as

¹ As a member of Community Development Xchange I took part in the consultation process, and at the Fifth National Regeneration Convention (2004) Charles Woodd explained the key outcome of new localism and civil renewal as: social capital and cohesion, community self-help, participatory governance, and sustainable involvement.

² www.conservatives.com – search social capital.

means of overcoming collective-action problems, complement the social capital theoretical framework and address some of its shortcomings. In the final part of this chapter we will set out how the key concepts of interest to this thesis will be operationalised in the empirical chapters, followed by a discussion of the difficulties surrounding the measurement of social capital.

Social capital theory

The easiest way to understand the meaning of social capital is to think about your own social capital. What social networks and associations do you belong to? You may be lucky and have some good friends. You may have some work colleagues. You might belong to a professional association, sports and leisure club, arts and crafts club, or bridge club. You might also belong to a political party or a pressure group or some other good cause. Then think about where you live. Are you part of a family? Do you have neighbours? Are you a member of a church? These networks and the social customs and bonds which keep them together are social capital.

What is social capital?

social capital – generally defined as the information, trust and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's social networks (Woolcock 1998: 153).

Social capital has three basic elements: Networks – the relationships we form with others. Norms – the informal and formal 'rules' which set out how the members of the network behave towards each other. Sanctions – punishments which ensure the network members obey the rules.

Social capital can also be broken down into three sub-types: Bonding social capital – is the stronger ties between family members or ethnic groups. We are in need of this type of social capital especially when we are young and when we get old. The strength of interpersonal ties can be identified by the amount of time people spend together (the longer the stronger the tie), the emotional intensity of their relationships (relatives are generally more loyal than strangers), the intimacy of their relationships (mutual confiding), and reciprocity (if you do that for me I will reciprocate). On a rough intuitive basis we can say whether a tie is strong, weak, or non-existent (Granovetter 1973: 1361). The ties between the parish councillors at Downswood and Kings Hill are strong. They spend time together at the monthly meetings

and often socialise with each other. Some of the parish councillors are related (husband and wife). They confide in one another and do favours for each other.

Bridging social capital – is the weaker, less dense, cross-cutting ties between heterogeneous groups such as those we have with business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic groups, all of which enable us to ‘get by’ (see Granovetter 1973). We need this type of social capital especially when looking for employment opportunities. As noted in Chapter 2, the non-participant observations of the DPC and KHPC meetings gave us an opportunity to identify particular behaviours. We found that most of the parish councillors were over the age of forty or retired professionals. Their opinions reflected a conservative outlook on life and society. At Downswood the socio/economic background of some of the residents who participated in the case study activities is significantly different from the parish councillors. Indeed, it would be fair to say that Downswood has a more mixed population than Kings Hill (see Chapter 2). At Kings Hill the socio/economic background of some of the residents who participated in the case study activities is similar to the parish councillors, with the exception of those living in the social housing, who obviously have less financial capital.

The parish councillors at Downswood and Kings Hill use their weak ties (bridging social capital) to gain access to those beyond their strong ties (bonding social capital). This means those to whom the parish councillors are weakly tied (the residents) are more likely to move in different circles, and provide access to information (or resources) different from that received from their strong ties. However, there are two points that must be considered. First, we have posited weak ties with bridging social capital and strong ties with bonding social capital, but this could be disputed. Although we are bonded to a distant relative the infrequency of our interactions and physical distance would suggest the relationship is more of a ‘weak’ tie (Halpern 2005: 327). Second, if we are only interested in the strength of ties, we open up our work to criticism that we are trying to make social relations too clear-cut. In the real world the context in which interaction takes place is important. Therefore, the case studies in Chapter 6 will provide a unique opportunity to observe different contexts in which social capital is generated and/or mobilised/expanded. But it has to be understood that there is a difference between generating and mobilising/expanding social capital. To generate social capital the parish councillors would be forming new bonds of trust and reciprocity, whereas to mobilise/expand they would be renewing bonds of trust and reciprocity with those who regularly participate. The data in the transcripts (see Appendices 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22) provide some detail, but they do not typically indicate whether the bonds of trust and reciprocity are new or old. This is not a problem because all we need to know is that these

bonds exist. However, the Kings Hill skateboard park initiative case study is an explicit example of generated social capital (see Chapter 6).

Linking social capital – is the connections between those with different levels of power or those from different classes, such as the links between the political elite and the general public. This type of social capital was first proposed by Woolcock (2001) and will help with our understanding of the different partnerships the parish councillors at Downswood and Kings Hill endeavour to build with the higher tiers of local government. This sub-type of social capital leads to a question linked to Portes (1998) criticism (see below) of the vague definition given to social capital. Should we distinguish between the resources and the network in which the resources are produced? The size of an individual's network might not be as important as the resources that a particular network can provide. For example, if we compare the network of KHPC with that of the developer, both have extensive networks, but the developer provides more access to resources (especially financial capital). This is why we are arguing for Bourdieu's approach to be brought back into the social capital theoretical framework. When resources are not equally distributed among the population, the interests of the well resourced are more likely to be addressed.

The quality of our relationships and the maintenance of order has, been of great interest to social and political theorists for a long time. In 1831 Alexis de Tocqueville was sent to America by the French government to study the American prison system. He was especially impressed with the many voluntary associations he encountered which, in his view, helped to bond American society together. This was very different from the formal bonds of status and obligation found in Europe (Griffith 1998: xi). Then in the 1890s, Emile Durkheim, the French sociologist wrote about the meaning and order of relationships. He was interested in the 'mechanical solidarity' of pre-industrial societies and the 'organic solidarity' of the industrial societies. In the former people shared the same beliefs and values and this united them. Consequently, obedience to authority was habitual and unquestioning. In the latter people live with strangers but they will connect for a purpose (Haralambos and Holborn 1995: 184). This is similar to Tönnies' distinction between 'purposive association' for which he used the German word *Gemeinschaft* and 'instrumental association', which he called *Gesellschaft* (1957).

Max Weber had similar concerns. It was his belief that modern societies are continually striving to order what in its 'natural' state is not ordered. 'Weber realised that the organisation of thought and action into regimented forms had virtually replaced religion as the unquestioned, motivating creed across much of "advanced civilisation". And while he

recognised in these developments admirable achievements, particularly in the production of material goods, he saw as well those seedbeds of pathology that affected individuals as much as the societies in which they struggled, vainly he thought, to maintain their individuality and freedom' (Turner 2000: 42). While the classical thinkers above focused on the meaning and quality of social relationships, Karl Marx was more interested in large-scale structures. His theory of historical materialism was preoccupied with the relationship between the classes, not the ties that bind people together. The family was not held in high esteem. At best it was seen in terms of reproduction. At worst it was recognised for controlling its members (McLellan 1987: 162). To conclude, although there is a connection between social capital and the perspectives of Durkheim, Weber and Marx, the concept has opened up new questions. However, the outstanding value of social capital is its explanatory power whereby it can link the micro (individual), meso (family and community groups), and macro-levels (state) together (see, for example, Halpern 2005: 13-19).

Now that we have discussed classical social theory we need to understand how social networks operate. Institutions are governed by rules and procedures and these allow the members to make and renegotiate decisions. If a member wants to change a collective decision s/he will have to go through the correct procedure. But there are times when formal procedures are ignored. For example, if an employer is looking for an employee or a parent is looking for a good school, it is often easier to rely on people they know. Therefore social networks are a valuable resource, as the cliché says: It's not always what you know, but who you know that matters. But just knowing people is not enough if there is no obligation involved. People have to feel good about helping. They have to have something in common. If they share the same values they are more inclined to cooperate on a voluntary basis. Formal systems also have rules to control the problem of excessive informal cooperation, as this can lead to discrimination against outsiders. In the 'old boy network' which is said to have dominated parts of the government and business in Britain, insiders cooperate with one another, at the expense of outsiders. So social networks have the capacity to exclude or include. Consequently, people are sometimes prevented from getting resources if they do not have the right connections. At other times people will use their connections to free themselves from an obligation. Or they will use their social capital to maintain their claims over others who are trying to get the same resources. In short, being a member of a social network with a set of shared values is central to the concept of social capital (Field 2003: 2-3).

Our next task is to explain why there is a renewed interest in social capital. Some politicians have lamented the decline of community. Aneurin Bevan and Bill Clinton both harked back to a golden age of community, where allegedly everybody knew who was who in their neighbourhood (Minton 2002: 20). Tied to this explanation is another view which says the interest in social capital is linked to life cycles. What we are witnessing is yet another turn of the wheel. Social theorists have just re-packaged ideas that never really went away (Baron *et al.* 2000: 13). The collapse of communism and the difficulties of re-establishing civil society have also played a part in bringing attention to the concept (Foley and Edwards 1996). Related to this is another explanation. The idea is to reintroduce a social dimension into analyses of capitalism after a long period of its harsh dismissal once communism was discredited. Huge losses of trust in day-to-day relationships are sometimes said to have generated a need to focus attention on the quality of these relationships, and social capital is seen as an effective tool for doing this (Putnam 1993; 2000; 2003).

As with most concepts, social capital has its critics. Margit Mayer (2003: 123) explains how the state has devolved many of its former responsibilities to the local level, the private and/or voluntary sector. In terms of policy, competitiveness is the mantra, and this tends to be all governments in the advanced post-industrial countries are interested in. But the consequences of deregulation do not seem to matter to the capitalists, even though they have important effects on civic engagement. As devolution and privatisation have intensified competition, disagreements between different groups are not necessarily helping democracy. Local mobilisation tends to include self-interested groups who do not contribute to the common good, even though the members are producing social capital. This shows how the concept does not address the conflicts between competing groups. For example, social movements seeking to protect their environment from development, the so-called Nimby's³ who protest against social housing are frequently representing the middle-class seeking to maintain the status-quo, resulting in a poor neighbourhood with limited social capital not being able to mobilise in favour of social housing (Mayer 2003: 123).

This is quite a serious criticism and shows that in this particular context social capital is problematic in normative terms. But it does not undermine the case for using the concept as a heuristic research tool. In fact local government does help those with limited social capital by giving planning permission to developers for new housing on the condition they provide a

³ NIMBY refers to not-in-my-back-yard. A group of residents might get together to stop for example, a by-pass being build anywhere near their properties, even if it means relieving traffic from a nearby heavily congested village. This is called Nimbyism.

percentage of social housing. This was made possible under Section 52 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1971), now superseded by Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990), whereby a planning agreement can be reached between the developer and the local authority to obtain planning gain, now called planning obligations (Rydin 2003: 219). In this context the Nimby's are no longer the strongest social movement. It is also misleading of Mayer to conflate devolution with privatisation. Devolution is about devolving powers and this typically enhances democracy, while privatisation is about reducing state involvement which is not necessarily democracy enhancing. Mayer's criticisms imply she is rejecting the concept on the grounds that it has no usefulness. Her argument is that it is a neo-liberal project being used to provide local welfare at a reduced cost to the state (see Mayer 2003: 126). Chris Pickvance is also critical of the use of the concept. In an interview he said:

This says something about the bias or selectivity in the approach. It is a concept that is being used to study certain things but not others. The dark side is ignored and quite how the light side is kept separate from the dark side or whether they can transform these things from one to another is not discussed. If you get a business, if you get social networks in business, it seems to me that those transformations must be quite rapid in firms like Enron. When clearly that one moment probably quite a normal firm and then the next moment the social relations are just the same, and yet it has taken a quite different turn. So social capital is not a very differentiated concept. It doesn't focus on those differences.⁴

Pickvance is placing his criticism of the concept as many of its critics do, in the binary nature of the debate (Baron *et al.* 2000: 22). He sees it as a negative or positive social phenomenon instead of seeing it has advantages and disadvantages, and the balance between these varies from context to context, as illustrated above.

These criticisms concerning the use of social capital as a conceptual tool are quite serious. But the fact that in some contexts the criticisms are valid does not undermine the case for using it altogether. This does not necessarily mean the concept's weaknesses can be overcome by more rigorous application, although in some cases this may help. It means that a concept which can be used in so many different contexts cannot possibly be perfect for every situation. This raises some questions related to what we know about those criticising it. Do they want to subject it to more rigorous application so it is discredited or so it survives in a better form? These criticisms should be acknowledged, but on balance the concept is valuable since it has the potential to open up new avenues of research (Baron *et al.* 2000: 23).

⁴ Interview with Professor Chris Pickvance at the University of Kent at Canterbury on 28 March 2003.

Therefore, it is important to know those who are trying to develop its potential and those like Mayer, who seem to be suggesting it has no utility. Finally, many of the problems are related to the complexities of social relations, not social capital itself (Baron *et al.* 2000: 24). Now we will examine the three most important theoretical approaches to the concept.

Bourdieu's neo-Marxist approach

The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu took an interest in the durability of the class system and other forms of institutionalised inequality. In his 1960s study of Algerian tribal people he described how structured sets of values and ways of thinking formed what he called the 'habitus'. The idea Bourdieu developed from this concept is that it provided a bridge between the subjective (agency), and objective (structure). From this Bourdieu was able to show how groups use cultural symbols to distinguish themselves from each other, and signal their place in the social structure. To describe this he used the metaphor 'cultural capital' (see Bourdieu 1986).

Bourdieu defined social capital as:

A capital of social relationships which will provide, if necessary, useful 'supports': a capital of honourability and respectability which is often indispensable if one desires to attract clients in socially important positions, and which may serve as currency, for instance in a political career (Bourdieu 1977: 503).

Later, he refined this definition:

Social capital is the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119).

Another important book is *Reproduction*, Bourdieu wrote this with Jean-Claude Passeron. The first part of this book sets out the theory. It discusses three main theoretical propositions: pedagogic action (*PA*), pedagogic authority (*PAu*), and pedagogic work (*PW*). To explain these it will be helpful to compare them to Norbert Elias's description of the 'civilising process'. The parent(s) or school teacher(s) are the *PAu*. They socialise the child and after the acceptable standards of behaviour have been handed down by the ruling class, the *PA* has been internalised and the child will self-regulate her/his behaviour. Basically, once the child has learned it will be punished if it deviates it will avoid behaviours leading to punishment, so shame or in some cases fear acts like a self-regulating mechanism (Elias 2000: 109). The various agencies of 'symbolic violence': the family and school are extremely powerful. There

are some who seek further self-regulating or self-controlling mechanisms. In this respect, 'total institutions' such as prisons, asylums, convents, army barracks, and boarding schools demonstrate the 'deculturating' and 'reculturating' techniques required by *PW*, that seek to produce a 'habitus' similar to the one produced in early childhood (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977: 44). However, the main theoretical proposition of *Reproduction* is that the ruling class in every age reinforces its own norms, and like the civilising process it is a top-down process. But how is this possible? The following quotation from *The Social Contract* (Rousseau) is helpful:

The legislator, being unable to appeal either to force or to reason, must resort to an authority of a different order, capable of constraining without violence and persuading without convincing. This is what has, in all ages, compelled the fathers of nations to have recourse to divine intervention (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977:2).

This means that in most cases those who exercise power require some justification or legitimisation, which creates *misrecognition* of their arbitrary character. Misrecognition is a key concept for Bourdieu. It is like Marx's idea of 'false consciousness' (Swartz 1997: 89). The idea is to disguise whose economic and political interests are being met. Obviously these are the interests of the ruling class.

Although some (Portes 1998: 3; Fine 2001: 53-64) have suggested Bourdieu's theory is by far the most convincing, his work suffers from the same weaknesses as the Marxism he tried to move away from. There can be little doubt that he saw social capital as the exclusive property of elites, designed to secure their positions of power (see, for example, Bourdieu 1984: 374). He also gave little consideration to collective actors, and yet social capital can belong to groups, and as such, it is a product of collective interaction. In Bourdieu's eyes social capital is an asset of the privileged. Consequently, his theory neglected the less privileged and the way they could benefit from their social networks. In other respects Bourdieu falls into the same trap as Coleman and Putnam (see below). He tends to focus on the 'positive' side of social capital, with limited interest in its 'dark side'. This is because his theory is mainly concerned with how elites manipulate their connections to suit their own interests. His use of the word capital is to show how social connections function as an investment strategy. However, he does make allowances for possible 'embezzlement or misappropriation' of social capital, especially within institutionalised relationships. For example, power delegated to the head of the family can be used against other family members, and aristocrats can benefit from their institutionalised connections to nobility: 'the

old boy network' (Bourdieu 1986: 251). Basically, his theory is based on studies of the French upper middle class in the 1960s and 1970s, therefore it is somewhat dated. But his analysis of power relationships will continue to be important.

The rational choice approach

James Coleman was a renowned American sociologist whose work had a significant impact on educationalists and policymakers. In a number of studies on educational attainment in American ghettos, he showed that social capital was not only a resource for the powerful but could also provide benefits for the disadvantaged (see, for example, Coleman *et al.* 1966). Coleman expanded his interest in social capital in a paper that is often quoted: *Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital* (1988). In this article Coleman explains how sociology and economics have serious defects but together they can complement one another. Sociology was seen as flawed because in Coleman's view the actor has no 'engine of action', while economics made no allowance for the social context in the functioning of the economy (Coleman 1988: 96).

To explain how social capital can help with understanding collective-action problems, Coleman used the conventional economic distinction between public and private goods. Put simply, physical capital and human capital are private goods because they are owned and generate a return for the individual. However, social capital is a public good because the individual who helped produce it does not necessarily get the benefits, at least not exclusively. If produced at all they go to the community of which the individual is a part (Coleman 1988: 116). The point in economic theories of collective action is that cooperation for the production of public goods is the exception to the rule. If individuals do cooperate it is because it is in their individual interest. Coleman offered an example to explain how relationships can generate obligations and expectations and this in turn leads to trust. In the wholesale diamond market a merchant will allow another merchant to take the diamonds away with him to examine them in private. The amount of trust placed in the merchant reveals certain attributes in the social structure. The merchant community is close and these close ties provide the insurance necessary to allow such trust between the merchants. If a merchant did substitute a replica for one of the diamonds he would be shunned by the community (Coleman 1988: 98-99). In short, the relationship between the merchants involves norms that endorse good behaviour and cooperation and impose sanctions on those who disobey the rules or try to free-ride.

There can be no doubt that Coleman thought of social capital as a resource. He said:

Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence (Coleman 1994: 302).

But how do you get rational actors to pay for the costs involved in producing this valuable resource? For Coleman this involves two elements: 'the level of trustworthiness of the social environment, which means that obligations will be repaid, and the actual extent of obligations held' (Coleman 1994: 306). For example, in a rotating credit association the members contribute to a central fund, which is given in turn to one member of the group. But if one member draws a payment and drops out of the group the other members will lose out. A rotating credit association would not be suitable in urban areas with high levels of 'social disorganisation' (ibid). The two elements depend on the context and differences in the social structures.

Coleman said social capital might be shaped by:

The general level of trustworthiness that leads obligations to be repaid, the actual need that persons have for help, the existence of other sources of aid (such as government welfare services), the degree of affluence (which reduces the amount of aid needed from others), cultural differences in the tendency to lend aid and ask for aid, the degree of closure of social networks, the logistics of social contacts, and other factors (Coleman 1994: 307).

This suggests Coleman had introduced a list of ways of furthering or undermining social capital (Field 2003: 25). The factors which favour social capital are network closure and the way that in some cultures people offer and receive aid. For example, the Biraderi hidden clan network helped Pakistanis settle in Britain over 40-years-ago. Members work together for the good of the family. In good and bad times there is always somebody there to give support (Akhtar 2003). The factors said to undermine social capital are welfare systems and affluence.

Colman's approach has been criticised for being framed in conservative ideology. He believed that if parents provide for their children they should look after their parents in their old age. For Coleman this 'mutual dependency' has been undermined by the welfare state (Coleman 1994: 548). He also tended to idealised the family and pay no attention to its 'dark side'. By arguing that the decline of the family has added to an erosion of social capital this opens up his theory to criticism from feminists, on the grounds he had failed to mention more

damaging family relationships. For example, some families are dysfunctional and incapable of bringing up well-adjusted children (see Gross 1992: 951-964).

As noted, Alejandro Portes criticised Coleman for giving social capital a vague definition. It is important to distinguish between the resources and the social networks in which the resources are produced. For example, if one student has social capital because his parents can afford his tuition fees, but another student does not because her parents cannot afford her tuition fees, this does not mean that the girl's parents would not like to help her. It just means they lack the resources. Therefore, defining social capital in this way is like saying only the successful will succeed (Portes 1998: 5). Nevertheless, Coleman's contribution to social capital theory is important. In contrast to Bourdieu who showed how elites use their social capital to reproduce their privileged positions, Coleman showed how it could be used to help disadvantaged groups.

Putnam's approach

Since *Bowling Alone* was published in 2000, Putnam has stood out as a leading authority on social capital theory. Whilst Bourdieu and Coleman's interest in social capital was grounded within a sociological perspective, Putnam has placed it in the field of political science. Putnam's first groundbreaking study was based on fieldwork conducted in Italy (1993). He set out to discover the importance of civic engagement in the creation of political stability and economic prosperity. In Britain, Putnam's work has influenced executive thinking on community renewal.⁵ His recent book *Better Together* (2003) is an account of twelve community-building projects. It is his belief that these examples would benefit Britain:

There is nothing uniquely American about how a community can regenerate itself. I'm aware of the debate going on in Britain right now, about decentralisation and devolution... You've got to make the decision to seriously decentralise; if you don't, you are never going to raise the level of citizen engagement. Decentralisation strengthens the civic muscles of all the people who are involved.⁶

We will now examine these three books in publication order. The research for the book *Making Democracy Work* (1993) started in 1970, the same time as the Italian government decided to devolve powers to regional governments (Putnam 1993: 5). This provided Putnam with an opportunity to examine how these institutions would develop. He wanted to identify

⁵ See, for example, *Sticking together: Social capital and local government: The results and implications of the Camden social capital survey 2002 and 2005*, edited by Halima Khan and Rick Muir.

⁶ 'A very civic servant', *Society Guardian*, 1 October 2003: 6-7.

and explain the differences between the regional administrations in southern and northern Italy. The main idea was empirically to examine this 'regional experiment' and make a contribution to two fundamental themes: how 'institutions shape politics', and how 'institutions are shaped by history' (Putnam 1993: 7-8). He concluded that Italy's northern regions were more successful because they were richer in social capital. This he traced back to the legacies of medieval Italy. At this time two distinct political systems evolved. In northern Italy the government and civil society worked together, whereas in southern Italy an autocratic state allegedly created a culture of fear, obstructing institutional reform (Putnam 1993: 121-122). The concept of social capital was not defined until the final chapter. Putnam said:

Social capital here refers to features of social organisation, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of *society* by facilitating coordinated actions (Putnam 1993: 167).

The use of social capital in this book was similar to Coleman's. Both looked at it broadly from a rational choice perspective (see Putnam 2003: 7). But Putnam paid more attention to the weak ties and less emphasis on the family.

Putnam's generalisation that northern Italy is more civic than southern Italy is not without criticism (see Tarrow 1996). While agreeing with his findings on the inadequacy of its regional governments, Tarrow says Putnam has misinterpreted the southern culture. Putnam argued that southern Italy is doomed because it has a long tradition of incivility dating back to medieval times, which has been 'path dependency' reproduced therefore holding back future choices (Putnam 1993: 178-181). Tarrow argues Putnam has neglected the role of the Italian state, which has not helped a civic culture to develop in southern Italy. For example, Putnam describes the *trasformismo*⁷ which linked the south after unification to national politics, but fails to say much about how the region was governed:

about prefects who bought elections for the government's candidates; about how they often arrested unfriendly candidates and closed down local governments which displeased them (Tarrow 1996: 394).

Furthermore, Putnam's explanation for the lack of a civic culture in southern Italy is based on 'amoral familism', which he argues permeates southern Italy (Putnam 1993: 88). This concept was borrowed from the political scientist, Edward Banfield who argued in a local

⁷ After the elections of 1876, *trasformismo* meant opposition deputies would support the government in power for favours. Now it refers to clientelism, corruption, and the politics of exchange (see Tarrow 1996: 394).

study that the village of Chiaromonte was economically backward because of its ethos of amoral familism. Banfield summarised this ethos in the formula: ‘Maximise the material short-run advantage of the nuclear family; assume that all others will do likewise’ (Banfield 1958: 83). This it was said produces a culture of mistrust which stops citizens from cooperating. Sabetti (1996) argued it is wrong to identify southern Italy with amoral familism. He explains how Putnam’s analysis was based on the orthodox historical literature of the eighteenth century onwards. If Putnam had gone beyond this generic he would have found a variety of archival documents showing cities, towns and villages in southern Italy with ‘dense patterns of social civic assets involving collaboration, mutual assistance, civic obligation, and trust’ (Sabetti 1996: 25). This civic tradition is inclusive of Chiaromonte, the village that Banfield came to the opposite conclusion (Sabetti 1996: 43).

In *Bowling Alone* (2000) Putnam sets out to find out why America’s social capital is in a state of decline and the culprits for its demise. Like Bourdieu’s cultural capital ‘bowling alone’ served as a metaphor for a type of associational activity that brings people together, not just for leisure but to help society. This study’s detailed collection of statistical data is impressive. In Putnam’s examination of attitudes and behaviour ranging from chatting with neighbours, to taking an active role in politics, he uncovers a decline in levels of social capital. This trend has taken place in spite of rising standards in education, usually positively linked to civic involvement. Putnam places the blame on television believing that Americans spend too much time watching it, diverting them away from building stocks of social capital.

Turning to the definition of social capital in the article he wrote for *The American Prospect* ‘The Strange Disappearance of Civic America’ he said:

By “social capital,” I mean features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable *participants* to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam 1996: 34).

The three elements: *networks*, *norms* and *trust*, had not changed since the definition he gave in 1993. What had changed was his identification of ‘participants’ instead of ‘society’ as those who benefit from social capital. Then in *Bowling Alone*, Putnam states that:

By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital – tools and training that enhance individual productivity – the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value. Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups (Putnam 2000: 18-19).

Unlike Coleman, Putnam argues that social capital is both a private and public good. It is defined as:

social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (Putnam 2000: 19).

Notice how the definition has been refined. Only two elements of the concept *networks* and *norms* are left, trust has been presented with reciprocity (Field 2003: 32). Putnam also introduces bridging (inclusive) and bonding (exclusive) social capital. Bonding social capital, as we have seen, helps reinforce solidarity and reciprocity, while bridging social capital is useful for gaining external resources (Putnam 2000: 22).

In response to Putnam's argument that television is responsible for the decline of civic engagement, Norris said it is to do with 'what' and 'how much' you watch (Norris 2000: 232). Those who regularly watch news and documentaries are keeping informed. They are not necessarily uninterested in civic affairs. This is in contrast to those who continually watch soap programmes, designed for entertainment. In *Making Democracy Work*, Putnam places emphasis on 'path dependency'. He argued southern Italy is doomed because it has a long tradition of incivility dating back to medieval times. In *Bowling Alone*, the decline has happened over a much shorter period. Putnam also places too much emphasis on the need for civil society to make the changes. This is where Hall's (1999) study is helpful because he is not entirely dependent on the role of citizens in re-(creating) social capital. He brings in the role of the state and this is important. There is also a problem with not seeing the 'dark side' of Putnam's bonding social capital. If one group is included another is often excluded. Nevertheless, social networks with tight 'closure' are best suited for collective action because the members have face-to-face contact. This can establish desirable codes of behaviour and act as a restraint on free-riders.

Jean Cohen argues Putnam has unintentionally played into the hands of those who want to dismantle the welfare state (Cohen 1999: 228). There is certainly a hint of communitarianism in his work (see, for example, Putnam 2000: 287). Connected to this criticism, Putnam like Bourdieu has been accused of adopting a functionalist approach.⁸ Consequently, he has failed to address issues related to power and conflict. Putnam rejects this criticism arguing social capital is compatible with egalitarian policies. He acknowledges tensions between bonding

⁸ If civil society is encouraged to build social capital in order to dismantle the welfare state then it could be argued it has a function.

and bridging social capital, but believes bridges can be built between heterogeneous groups and although these can be fragile, they can foster social inclusion (Putnam 2000: 22-23).

Putnam devotes only two pages to discuss another cause for the decline of civic engagement, the power of big businesses. He argues that market capitalism was just as hegemonic in America when civic engagement was at its peak, therefore it cannot provide the main reason for this decline. In short, 'a constant can't explain a variable' (Putnam 2000: 282). He acknowledges that the trend towards globalisation has reduced the civic commitment of business leaders (Putnam 2000: 238). But market capitalism has moved on. The connection between civic engagement and corporate power is important, especially as most Western democracies are committed to further privatisation and deregulation. The problem is not with privatisation or deregulation *per se*, it is if people experience or perceive that the bodies set up to regulate the activities of business are weak and ineffective.

In *Better Together* (2003) Putnam provides a handbook of successful examples, which he suggests should serve as models to help re-create lost social connections. Unlike *Bowling Alone* it is not based on backing up hypotheses with quantitative data. The main emphasis is on storytelling. The idea is that organising is about transforming an individual story of a painful experience, into a shared vision of collective action. In this way the storyteller is making public vulnerabilities and this creates empathy from the listeners to motivate the group to take action. The value of storytelling is it involves face-to-face interaction, essential for trust and reciprocity. The twelve case studies are impressive. Putnam explains how bonds and bridges between people are created. However, the case studies play down the role of the charismatic leaders (see Putnam 2003: 274). This is like his 1993 study of Italian regional government, where he over-looked the role of the state in the process of regionalism. The Saddleback mega-church will be discussed since Putnam emphasised this case study.

At a time when church attendance in Britain is at an all time low, a new phenomenon has taken off in America. Every weekend thousands of worshippers attend the Saddleback mega-church in Lake Forest, California. It started in a small way. In 1980 Rick Warren held Bible meetings in his home. Then he distributed leaflets and this increased the number of worshippers. Many years later the congregation has swollen to include thousands. This raises an important question. What is the attraction? It could be because many of the worshippers live in isolated suburbs, while others live in gated communities where there is an ethos of community, but limited commitment to civic life. However, the mega-churches are not all the same. Some no longer base the service around a sermon. Instead they provide the congregation with Christian dramas and music. At Saddleback the pastor's message is at the

centre of the service, but it is not like a traditional sermon (Putnam 2003: 119-121). We could argue that mega-churches are based on entertainment instead of worship. People have become consumers with none of the pressures of trying to be good Christians. There are two ways of looking at these mega-churches. They are either an extreme version of consumerism high-jacking religion, or they are a way of re-introducing religion back into peoples' lives (Putnam 2003: 124).

Putnam sees mega-churches as a way of restoring community, but they are not consistent with his belief that 'small is beautiful'. In answer to this criticism Putnam says:

There's no reason at all why the Rotary Club or the TimeBank should not try to draw the structural lesson from Saddleback, which is: nested organisations, within federal structures, work best when it comes to the larger scale. I can imagine making a big block grant to some national organisation, saying: On the condition that you follow a strategy in which you create lots of small groups, that you don't syphon off 50% of the grant just to support staffing in London or Manhattan, or whatever, the purpose of this grant is to get local affiliates and to work with local affiliates all over the country.⁹

Nevertheless, the small groups are not spontaneous. They are 'obligatory' (Putnam 2003: 129). They are designed to encourage obedience. The idea is for people to move from 'attendees to *army*' (Putnam 2003: 132). Mega-churches have a dark side. The use of the word *army* is revealing. This is where Bourdieu's essentially neo-Marxist approach can help in understanding the dynamics of power relations in this type of social capital. Saddleback brings like-minded people together. It is an example of Coleman's constructed social capital. But it is a total institution. Like the army its techniques include deculturating behaviours deemed unacceptable and reculturating conformist habitual behaviour. Its pedagogic work in the small group meetings is a process of inculcation that lasts long enough to produce a thorough training, a *habitus*, in which church leadership imposes meaning to its message by concealing power relations, which are at the root of its force. This creates misrecognition of its authority over the congregation. In short, the dominated accept as legitimate their domination. Furthermore:

The proclamation of the Christian gospel is organised around *certainty*, not ambiguity. That is undeniably true of Saddleback, where the message is a confident assertion of truth, not an exploration of hopeful possibilities. And the message is delivered with unflagging consistency. Minister of Development Forrest Reinhardt says that Saddleback no longer has guest pastors at its

⁹ A very civic servant, *The Guardian, Society Guardian*, 1 October 2003: 6-7.

services because their message might be incompatible with the church's theology [*Italics my emphasis*] (Putnam 2003: 131)

If followers believe the message is *certain* then Saddleback leadership has created a sense of security and followers have been reduced to a state of naïve or blind trust and obedience. It could be argued that charismatic leadership may be important and social capital may depend on a top-down process as for example Coleman (1994: 231) suggested, rather than being created spontaneously.

Overcoming collective-action problems

There are two effective ways of *overcoming* collective-action problems, through effective leadership and through club goods. In the first part of this section we will discuss why leadership is important. In the second part we will discuss the theory of leadership. Then we will discuss the chairman of the parish council as the agent, agenda-setter and entrepreneur. The chairman's entrepreneurial role is most important since it can be used to seize opportunities to solve collective-action problems. As this discussion develops it will become clear that it is relevant and helpful to all parish councils, policymakers and others interested in community governance, not just the two (Downswood and Kings Hill), which this study is based on. In the third part of this section we will examine the theory of club goods. We will explain what pure public goods and pure private goods are. Then show how Chris Webster's (2002) theory of 'club realms' is helpful for understanding why Downswood parish, is as much a club realm as Kings Hill quasi-gated community, in the way that it can also impose exclusionary mechanisms to encourage collective action, and stop free-riders.

Leadership

In a paper published by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in 1998 Prime Minister Blair set out why 'leadership' is important:

At the heart of local government's new role is leadership – leadership that gives vision... It will mean councils using their unique status and authority as directly elected bodies to: Develop a vision for their locality... Provide a focus for partnership... Guarantee quality services for all... (Blair 1998: 13)

This message was developed in the government papers – *Modernising Local Government: Local Democracy and Community Leadership* (DETR 1998a); *Modernising Local Government: In Touch with the People* (DETR 1998b); and in *Local Leadership, Local*

Choice (DETR 1999). As discussed in the previous chapter, *In Touch with the People* offered local authorities three possible options for modernising the way they constructed their decision-making (a directly elected mayor with a cabinet; a cabinet with a leader; and a directly elected mayor with a council manager). The intention was to move away from a system without a formal political leader to one in which there would be a 'separation of powers' between the executive and the councillors operating through a system of overview and scrutiny committees and general meetings, which could be attended by the whole council. These new political management arrangements, it was argued, will amount to one of the most important changes to the way in which local authorities conduct their business since the local government reorganisation of 1974 (Davis and Geddes 2000: 15). This change to a system of 'strong' leadership goes back to earlier ideas. As noted in the previous chapter, Michael Heseltine when Secretary of State in the early 1990s was an advocate of elected mayors. In the consultation paper *Local Leadership, Local Choice* it said:

This committee system, designed over a century ago, does not work today. It is inefficient, opaque and weakens local accountability. It is no system for the modern council which needs to give effective leadership to its local community, and to take decisions in a fast moving world to deliver quality local services. People are not well served by it (DETR 1999: para. 1.10).

The pre-reform committee system was considered unsuitable because it was too focused on party control. Research conducted for the Widdicombe Committee (1989) found that the party with a majority took control of the committees and the councillors were expected to vote as a unified block. Consequently, 'many voters are said to have little effective voice' because councillors were placing loyalty to the party above loyalty to those they were supposed to represent (Davis and Geddes 2000: 15). In the words of *Local Leadership, Local Choice*:

In short, the traditional committee system, designed to provide an open public framework for decision taking, has grown into an opaque system with real action off-stage. People lose confidence in their council's decisions, individual councillors become disillusioned with their ability to influence local decisions, and people are discouraged from standing for election (DETR 1999: para. 1.14).

The driving force behind this reform was to improve and speed up decision-making and provide people with a more open and accountable system. To increase political participation

including encouraging turnout at the local elections, it helps if people know who to praise or blame, and who to contact if they have any problems (see Blair 1998: 14).

Although leadership plays an important role in the Labour government's modernisation agenda it is often referred to without a definition. It can be analysed at two levels. First, leadership can be analysed as the leader acting alone. For example, as noted, the proposal that an elected mayor will give 'strong' leadership is based on this. At the second level of analysis the local council itself is the unit of analysis. For example, when we say community leadership we are referring to the local council as a whole, working with its partners, and with the responsibility for giving voice to and addressing the needs of those living within the local community. This approach is inclusive of the role of individuals, but as part of the functioning local council.

The general subject of leadership has been widely studied in psychology, history, organisational behaviour as well as in political science. But what is leadership? To answer this question it will help if we discuss the difference between the person, the position, and processes. In practice however, these may co-exist. The person – this focuses on the personal characteristic of leaders. It takes an interest in their personality, behaviours, skills, and style of leadership. It tries to identify their role in shaping events and circumstances. A criticism of this narrow approach is that it assumes leaders are all powerful in shaping events. It ignores the input of others and it ignores community and organisational constraints. The position – this focuses on the leader's formal position in the organisation. For example: the chairman of a parish council, a chief executive, or a ceremonial mayor. Such formal positions give authority but they do not always give leadership as in the latter example. The processes – this focuses on a set of processes or dynamics that take place between individuals and organisations. Through leadership the leader has to motivate and influence people, and shape and achieve outcomes. The leader has to have the ability to create and build commitment to achieving goals. The leader has to challenge established ways of thinking and doing things. In this way leadership is about envisioning, energising and enabling (Hartley and Allison 2000: 36).

In *Better Together* (2003) Putnam plays down the role of leadership. His main argument is that high levels of social capital allow bottom-up initiatives in governance. However, political leadership is important, as noted it is one way of addressing collective-action problems. The leaders in this present study are the chairman of DPC and the chairman of KHPC. The followers are the parish councillors and the residents. Now we will discuss the chairman of the parish council as the agent, agenda setter and entrepreneur.

The leader (chairman) has to gain the support and cooperation of the followers. This is essential if the chairman wants to accomplish the various objectives of the followers, and remain in office. The chairman is the agent and the followers are the principals. This means that for continued incumbency the chairman is there to serve the principals, and her/his position is performance-based. In addition, the reward structure of leadership links ambition (to remain as chairman until the next election and thereafter) to performance (in the present period). Therefore, as long as the chairman needs the principals to cooperate they have some hold over her/him. The chairman is relied on by the principals because s/he will be more skilled in achieving an outcome than the principals. The chairman will be relied on to coordinate their actions, to provide rewards and punishments, to gain any allies, and defeat any opponents.

In general leaders are chosen because they have special skills - they can reason, inspire, rally, mediate, persuade, intimidate, bully etc.¹⁰ The problem is the special skills that make an agent attractive to the principals are the skills with which the agent can exploit the followers for personal gain. Nevertheless, the chairman can be controlled through 'before-the-fact' and 'after-the-fact' mechanisms. This is because the chairman has her/his reputation to think about. Followers will take the chairman's reputation into account when they are deciding whether the chairman is suitable to lead them. Therefore, reputation is important. Reputation serves as a before-the-fact predictor of performance. It is also an asset highly valued by the chairman. The chairman will place her/his reputation on the line, and according to performance this can be enhanced or tarnished. Because the chairman will care about her/his reputation, whether to stay as chairman, or gain another position, followers will have some control over the chairman's performance. Therefore, reputation is an after-the-fact control mechanism as well. For example, others will be waiting to take their turn to be chairman so the incumbent chairman realises s/he is not indispensable. The chairman may act like s/he is in charge, s/he may give orders and instructions, but all of these behaviours are planned to gain the followers support, not in order to bully them (Shepsle and Bonchek 1997:381-384).

Moving to the chairman as the agenda-setter, once the chairman is chosen the parish councillors will turn their thoughts to what they want to achieve together. Obviously they will not be able to do everything. They will have to prioritise and take account of scarce

¹⁰ A good leader would not have to intimidate or bully. S/he should rely on their skills of reasoning and persuasion.

resources. In addition, some of the things they do will be mandated by others.¹¹ Basically, choices will have to be made and this is the role of the chairman. The choices of the followers about what they want or need are highly influenced by the chairman. The chairman may be lobbied by the followers, but it is the chairman's input which is important because authority rests with the chairman. Even if the followers are not happy with all the decisions the chairman makes on their behalf, delegation of authority to the chairman to set the agenda, is the most efficient way of getting things done in the parish. The chairman will have to decide whether to steer the agenda in the direction of her/his preferences, or take account of the wishes of the followers. If the followers are unhappy with the chairman's agenda it might get out-voted. If this happened often it would become difficult for the agent to convince the principals that s/he has their best interests at heart. Deciding whether to exercise an after-the-fact control mechanism like out-voting the chairman, the followers will have to decide how much damage this will cause to the chairman's reputation. In the end the chairman will be able to extract some agenda advantages, but s/he must be realistic not bullish. Finally, an important resource of all chairmen is their 'procedural discretion'. If the chairman followed all rules right down to the last detail s/he would be impotent. Therefore, the chairman is in the position to make a well-informed suggestion or compromise (Shepsle and Bonchek 1997: 386-392).

Moving to the chairman as the entrepreneur, these are leaders who either put themselves forward to perform a task, or are appointed by a group (club) to accomplish a collective purpose. The entrepreneur does not have to be a member of the club. The club may not even exist. Rather it may come into existence because of the entrepreneur's actions. In fact, this is how DPC came into existence. The agent created a principal. Usually it is the principal who hires the agent. Political entrepreneurs are one 'solution' to the collective-action problem. The entrepreneur seizes opportunities. At Downswood the entrepreneur got together other residents and formed the Downswood Community Association (DCA). Together they put pressure on the developer (Wimpey) to provide a community centre designed to meet their needs. Political entrepreneurs focus on things they care about. Then they seize leadership and mobilise others to join together to form a club to get other club goods. Some play the entrepreneur game as an investment strategy to gain a career or further their career. This allows them to build a 'can do' reputation, which can lead to valuable contacts. The political

¹¹ For example: A local council must meet annually... In addition a parish, but not a community council must meet on at least three other occasions during the year and may hold as many further meetings as it pleases (Arnold-Baker 2002: 53).

entrepreneur has to be prepared to take risks. Agenda-setting, agency, and entrepreneurship are all different aspect of leadership. What distinguishes one from the other is the way they are exercised. With agenda-setting there is room for the chairman to display some flair, but it is really a structured activity within set institutional boundaries. Agency activities are a little broader. As noted, a skilful chairman can reason and persuade the parish councillors and residents. Entrepreneurship is even broader (Shepsle and Bonchek 1997: 392-395). As noted, the entrepreneur at Downswood helped create a structure, DCA, and went on to lead DPC. Now we will discuss the importance of reputation.

Every politician leader faces the problem of how most effectively to sanction uncooperative behaviour by followers. Sanctions may be costly, but for the most successful leaders the mere threat of such sanctions is usually sufficient (see Sheple and Bonchek 1997: 397).

Leaders of any political organisation will have to make tradeoffs. A leader (chairman) is appointed to help solve a number of collective-action problems. The members of the parish council (club) may have a lot in common, but they do not always reach agreement (see the voting data in Chapter 5). Whatever is achieved will make the parish (club) better off, but some will be happier than others. Those who are not so happy might be tempted to abstain from voting or vote against the motion. To prevent this from happening too often the chairman must try to persuade the parish councillors why they should support the motion. For coordinating the parish council (club) activities, and reaching compromises, the chairman receives 'compensation'.¹² The chairman must ensure s/he maintains a minimal level of support because there is always someone who is waiting to take on the role of chairman. Therefore, any sanctions imposed on the club members are costly because they are imposed on those whose support is desired by the chairman. For example, if the parish councillors impose too many restrictions on the youths their parents will not support the parish council. The chairman will have to balance the benefits against the costs. The benefits the chairman gains (in terms of achieving club goods for the members and any private reward) the cost of sanctions, and bearing any risks, is information only known to the chairman. In other words, only the chairman knows the benefits and costs, the parish councillors will have some idea, while the residents will have no idea. Therefore, by encouraging this uncertainty the chairman can make the residents and troublesome youths believe if they commit an act of antisocial behaviour they will be punished. Even in cases where punishment is 'too costly',

¹² For example, the approval of the other parish councillors, the support of the residents, and the possibility of a good press report.

sanctions such as getting the police to have a word, will mislead the culprit(s) into believing that the costs to the chairman are lower than they are. Basically, uncertainty about the benefits and costs allows the chairman to bluff. This is how reputations are made and upheld (Shepsle and Bonchek 1997: 397-399).

Club goods

In two important papers Paul Samuelson (1954; 1955) explained the distinction between pure public goods, and pure private goods. Public goods are those which benefit the whole community. But they can have external effects. For example, national defence is a pure public good because once a government provides it everyone benefits from it equally. It makes no difference if one is a pacifist or if one is a militarist both will receive the same amount of national security. Private goods are not like this, they can be divided up with no external costs or benefits to others. For example, if an individual purchases private healthcare the individual alone will stand to benefit during an episode of ill health.

This study is interested in the distinction between traditional residential communities, where the goods and services are financed mainly by the public purse, and private residential communities (proprietary or entrepreneurial communities 'entrecoms'), where the goods and services are financed mainly by the private sector. In the former model once the development is complete the communal infrastructure: roads, footpaths and open spaces are handed over to the local authority, which collects a local tax (council tax/parish precept), from the residents to maintain it and provide additional goods/services. The problem with this model is congestion (over-use). This is the free-rider problem which arises if the public goods are non-excludable. In the latter model the communal infrastructure is privately owned and gating prevents outsiders from using it. A charge is levied on the residents who, on the purchase of their property, freely sign an additional contract agreeing to pay an annual maintenance charge. This goes towards the upkeep of the communal infrastructure. The incentive to pay this charge is to exclude free-riders from using the high quality communal infrastructure.

Downswood is representative of the former model, while Kings Hill is similar to the latter. But the distinction between the public realm and the private realm is not straightforward. Urban spaces are part of the public realm as they are jointly consumed, whereas the private realm is consumed privately. However, not many urban spaces actually provide benefits for everyone. The majority of open spaces only give enjoyment to those who live near them. This is especially true of the public spaces in neighbourhoods. The public spaces in city centres and country parks are also of more utility to those who have greater access to them. In short,

exclusion is also a feature of the public realm. In addition, open space is only one type of urban facility. Other public realms like health and education facilities impose greater exclusion mechanisms. For example, if a school has a good reputation then parents will opt to send their children there. To prevent congestion the school will operate a policy only accepting children living within a short distance from the school. Basically, the more likely the facility/service is to suffer congestion then there is more likelihood of exclusion. So the public realm is not that different from the private realm in the way some will be included, whilst others will be excluded. Therefore, 'club realms' are a better way of describing the public realm. This means both types of community (traditional and entrepreneurial), have club-like characteristics, which include the use of exclusion mechanisms (Webster 2002).

This is why, although Downswood is a traditional residential community, it is possible to refer to the parish as the club realm. The club members are the parish councillors and the residents. The exclusion mechanism used at Downswood to protect the club realm from antisocial drivers is a strong sense of community, helped by traffic policy (road signs that say 'slow down' or 'stop', speed humps, and speed cameras, etc). One of the reasons DPC wanted traffic calming at the Church Road junction was to stop (exclude) free-riders (outsiders) from using Downswood as a short-cut. The exclusion mechanism can also be applied to the Downswood post office. This is because although some services are available to the general public, others are not; they have been made excludable. For example, you would not be able to go into any post office to collect your unemployment benefit, child benefit, or state pension. The recipient of any of these benefits has to fill in a form specifying a post office where it is convenient for that person to collect her/his benefit. Obviously old people, young mothers, or the unemployed, often those without transport or those without bank accounts, will select a post office near to where they live. This is why we can refer to the Downswood post office as a valuable club good, which can and does exclude outsiders.

Two models illustrating the difference between DPC and KHPC

Two basic models (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2 below) have been constructed to illustrate the difference between the two governance systems in their attempts to solve collective-action problems at the local level. The models also help us to see how theories of leadership and club goods can improve the social capital conceptual framework. The collective-action problems that were of importance to DPC during the period of observation were: preventing drivers from speeding and having accidents at the junction of Church Road; and the protest to keep Downswood post office from closure. The collective-action problems that were of

importance to KHPC during the period of observation were: taking over the management of Kings Hill Community Hall (KHCH); and providing the bored youths with activities: youth facility and a skateboard park.

Figure 4.1: The main partners of Downswood Parish Council

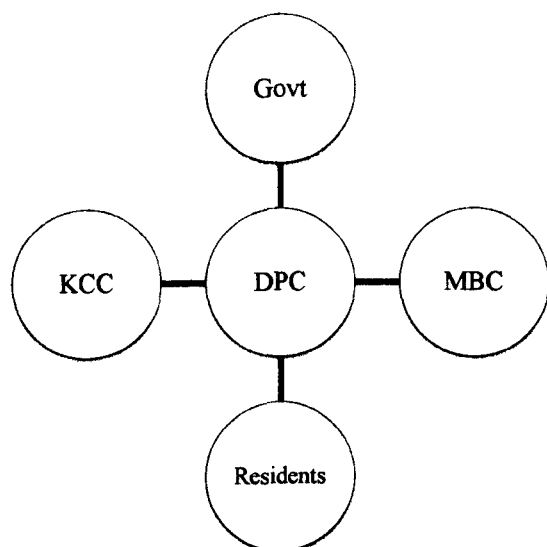
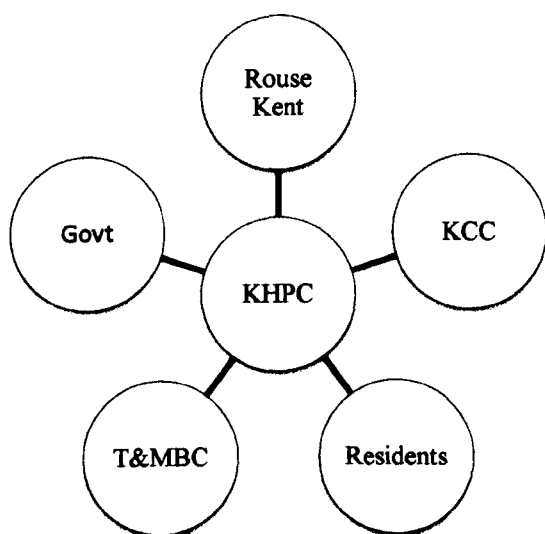


Figure 4.2: The main partners of Kings Hill Parish Council



Notice that the circles within both of the figures conveniently emphasize a sense of ‘closure’. This is a necessary feature of a club because ‘closure’ of the social network allows its members to establish norms of trust and reciprocity, and impose sanctions against outsiders who abuse the club realm.¹³ In both models the parish council is strategically placed at the centre. This is the position that feeds to all the main partners. At Downswood because DPC is representative of the traditional parish model of governance, the government is positioned at

¹³ See (Coleman 1994: 318-320).

the top of the model and the residents are positioned at the bottom (see Figure 4.1). At Kings Hill because KHPC is representative of the parish market model of governance, the private service provider (the developer) is positioned at the top of this model (see Figure 4.2). The government is to the left side of the developer and KCC is to the right side of the developer. The government must be included as a partner because KHPC like DPC is subject to central government regulation. However, as the models for KHPC develop we will notice that unlike the DPC models, the government has no direct involvement. The residents are positioned with T&MBC, the lower tier of local government, at the bottom of the model. The residents are at the bottom of both models because they are not involved in the decision-making. However, their role in local politics is important because they are needed to help the parish councillors' protest to protect services and campaign to provide additional service.

Figure 4.3: Model 1: DPC Church Road traffic calming initiative

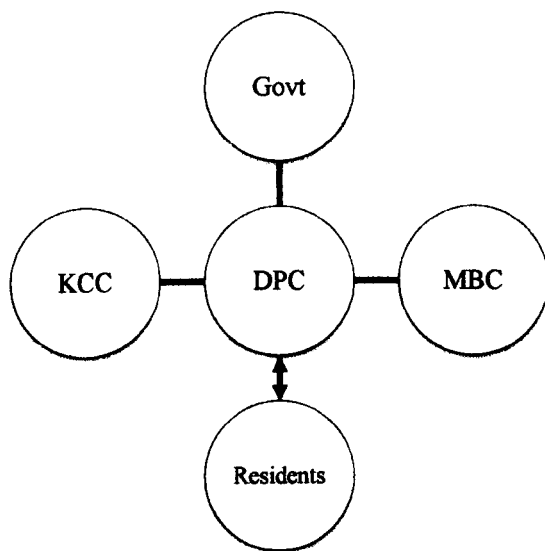


Figure 4.3 represents the partnership between the actors in the decision to provide traffic calming. The bridge between DPC and the residents is a two-way link with arrows going in both directions. DPC is reaching out to the residents and they are feeding back to DPC. The weakness of this particular model, with reference to causality, is that it does not explain if the residents complained about the number of accidents at the black spot to DPC, or whether DPC brought it to the attention of the residents. However, DPC highlighted the problem to the higher tiers of local government that they intended to get this non-compliance problem solved. In other words, the model does not explain the sequence in which action was taken. What is clear, and more important however, is that the chairman of DPC has taken on the role of effective leadership.

Figure 4.4: Model 2: DPC Church Road traffic calming initiative

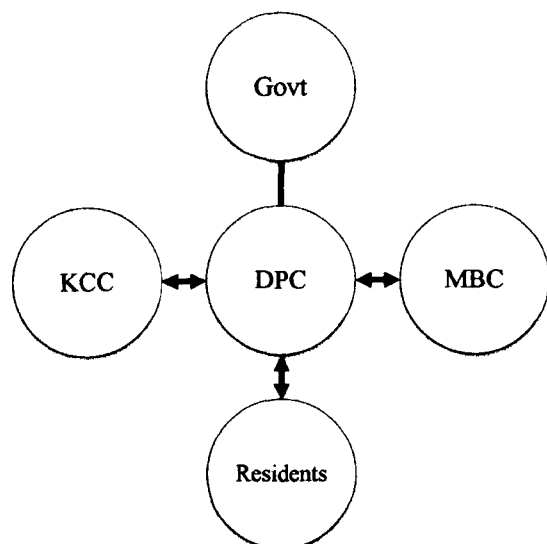


Figure 4.4 represents the outcome. There are three two-way links with arrows going in both directions. The two essential bridges are with KCC and MBC. There is no need for a bridge to and from the government. This is due to the fact that the government has no direct control in local highway issues. The Highways Authority (KCC) at the time of this initiative, were in partnership with MBC. This partnership was subsequently terminated and all highways powers were returned to KCC. This model shows DPC's initiative to provide traffic calming reached fruition. The traffic calming is an initiative which forces antisocial drivers to stop speeding and has reduced the number of accidents in the parish.

Figure 4.5: Model 1: DPC protest to save Downswood post office

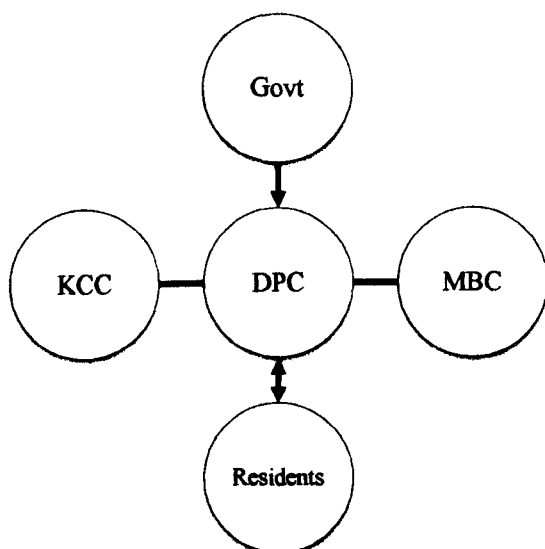


Figure 4.5 represents the partnership between the actors in the protest to save Downswood post office. The bridge between DPC and the residents is a two-way link with arrows going in

both directions. The bridge going from the government is a one-way link with the arrow going towards DPC. Figure 4.6 shows the importance of this one-way link.

Figure 4.6: Model 2: DPC protest to save Downswood post office

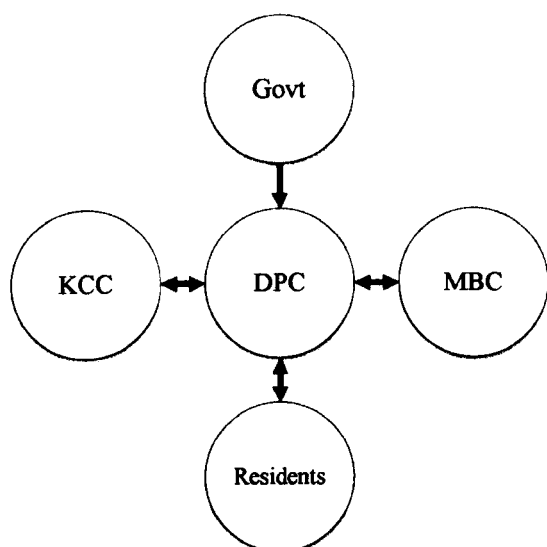


Figure 4.6 represents the outcome. There are three two-way links with arrows going in both directions. The two essential bridges with KCC and MBC are present. Returning to the bridge from the government to DPC, this is important since it shows that government policy had a negative impact on DPC's efforts to keep Downswood post office. Basically, the government decided they could no longer subsidise unprofitable post offices with taxpayers' money. As a result of government policy which offered a generous redundancy package to postmasters/mistresses, Downswood lost their post office. On the positive side, the chairman of DPC took control and has gained real leadership skills in the way she, and the parish councillors, managed to mobilise an impressive number of residents to get involved and campaign to try and save this local service.

Figure 4.7: Model 1: KHPC takeover of the KHCH

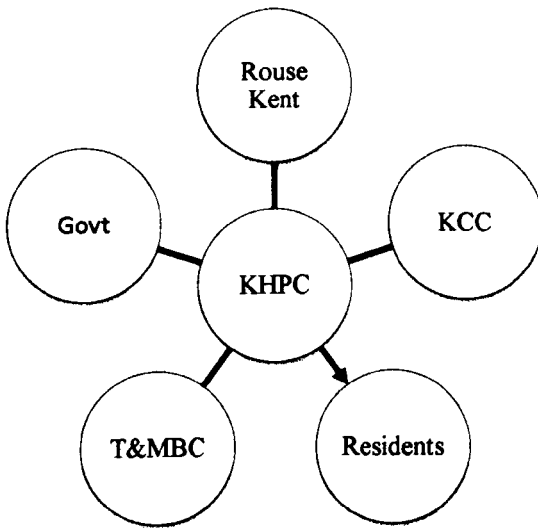


Figure 4.7 represents the partnership between the actors involved in the takeover of the management of KHCH. There was an initial breakdown in the bridge between KHPC and the residents. The link only goes one-way. The arrow goes towards the residents but does not feedback to KHPC. KHPC decided to takeover the management of KHCH because the finances were not being run effectively. Some residents were on the old management team and they were unhappy KHPC dissolved this team. However, the parish minutes (4 February 2004) indicate the takeover was necessary to ensure the finances are transparent (refer to the primary sources). It did not take long before most of the old management team joined the new KHCH committee (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8: Model 2: KHPC takeover of the KHCH

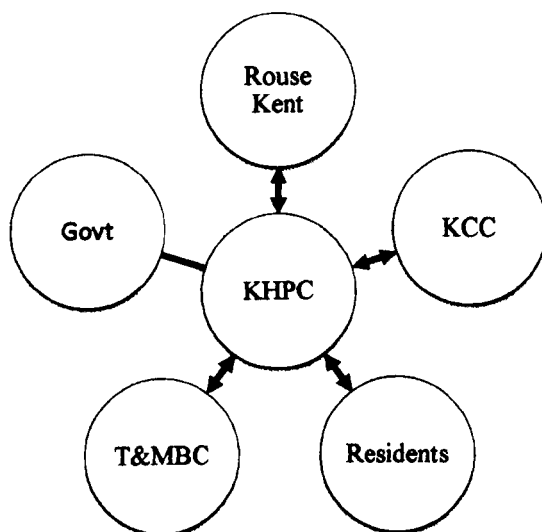


Figure 4.8 represents the outcome. The bridge between KHPC and the residents is now a two-way link with arrows going in both directions. The residents are back on board concerning KHPC's decision to takeover the management of KHCH. Since the government had no involvement in this takeover there is no link in either direction. The other three bridges are two-way links. Therefore, this model shows that KHPC's takeover of this valued club good (KHCH) was successful.

It is important to note that if KHPC want to introduce an initiative that involves land all three main partners (excluding the government) must be consulted. However, the negotiations are complex because Kings Hill is a quasi-gated community. The land that belonged to KCC was handed over to the developer and although the developer works in partnership with KCC and T&MBC (the Planning Authority), it is the developer who makes the final decisions. In short, the developer holds the power. Nevertheless, KHPC gained control of KHCH, and they are making plans to takeover responsibility for the EMCs and remaining open spaces, when the development is completed and the developer moves to another project. Then KHPC will have power, like that of an American HOA. This is why even at this stage KHPC's decision-making process is representative of McKenzie's decentraliser model of governance.

Figure 4.9: Model 1: KHPC youth facility initiative

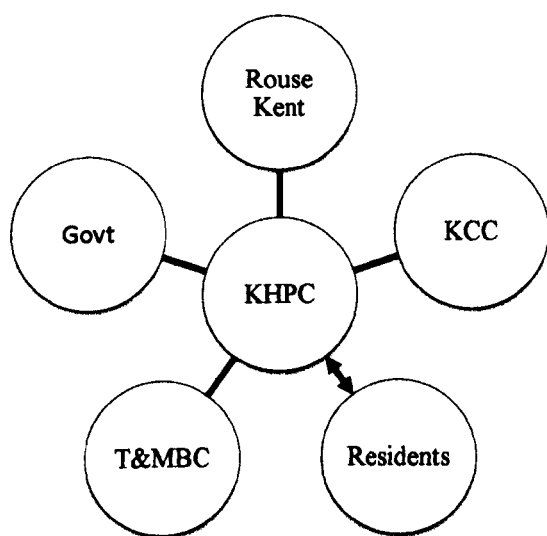


Figure 4.9 represents the partnership between the actors involved in the campaign for the youth facility. An intentional act of disbanding the old management team and setting up a new KHCH committee will result in a 'by product' – the youth facility. The bridge between KHPC and the residents is a two-way link with arrows going in both directions. KHPC is

reaching out to the residents and they are feeding back to KHPC. Both are supportive of this club good.

Figure 4.10: Model 2: KHPC youth facility initiative

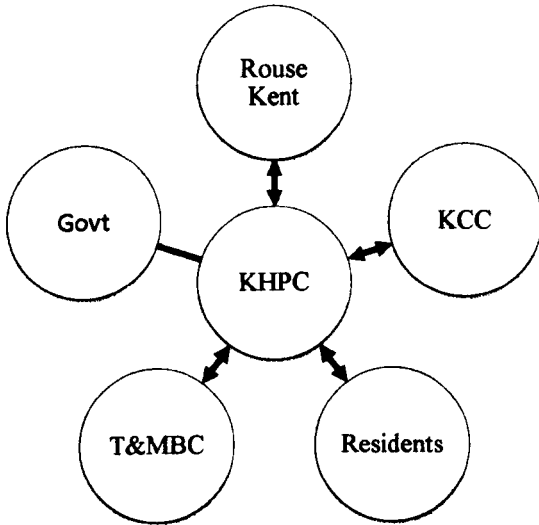


Figure 4.10 is not the outcome because the negotiations to provide the youth facility are ongoing. But the model does illustrate that all four partners (excluding the government) support the idea of having this club good. All four bridges are two-way links with arrows going in both directions. Like Figure 4.8, this is the equilibrium model, where the demand of the residents and KHPC, meets the supply of all the other partners. The civic-minded parish councillors guided by strong and effective leadership (the chairman) have managed to develop norms of trust and reciprocity, which have facilitated collective-action.

Figure 4.11: Model 1: KHPC skateboard park initiative

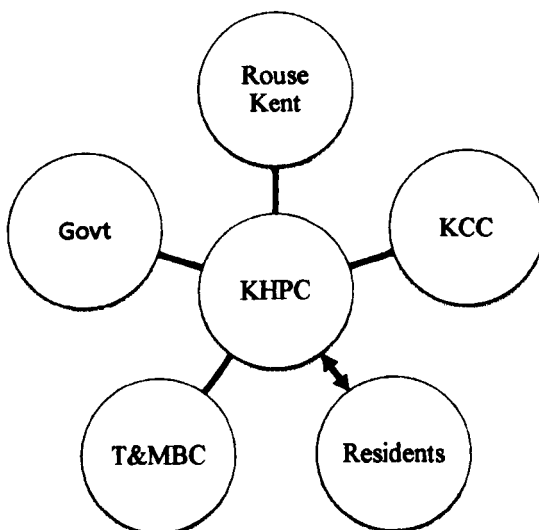


Figure 4.11 represents the partnership between the actors in the decision to provide a skateboard park. The bridge between KHPC and the residents is a two-way link with arrows going in both directions. KHPC is reaching out to the residents and they are feeding back to KHPC. The weakness of this particular model, with reference to causality, is that like Figure 4.3, it fails to show which partner made the first move. It does not show if the residents asked KHPC for a skateboard park or whether KHPC set the agenda. In other words, the model does not explain the sequence in which action was taken. What is clear, and more important, is that the chairman of KHPC has taken on the role of effective leadership. He and the parish councillors decided the skateboard park would be a valuable club good, which has the potential to keep the bored youths out of trouble, thus reducing antisocial behaviour. KHPC is trying to bring the youths in and reward them with a youth facility (club good) rather than punish them and relying on coercive measures, ASBOs.

Figure 4.12: Model 2: KHPC skateboard park initiative

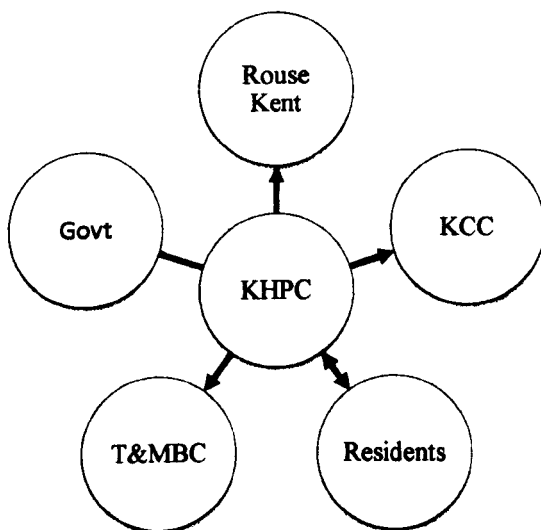


Figure 4.12 represents the outcome. The only effective bridge is the original bridge between KHPC and the residents. All three bridges with the other partners (excluding the government) are one-way links. They go in one direction, outwards. There is no feedback to KHPC. This model shows there has been a breakdown in negotiations. The developer decided not to support KHPC's initiative to provide this club good. As noted, the developer holds the power and this is why this initiative failed to reach fruition. However, this is only a temporary setback, once the developer leaves KHPC's decision-making powers will increase.

Definitions and measurement

The first task is to provide a working definition of the key concepts: social capital and new localism, and the other concepts of relevance to this study. This will give a clearer understanding of how the empirical data has been analysed and interpreted.

Social capital is 'the norms and networks that facilitate collective action' (Woolcock 2001). But as it is mainly a public good there is clearly a need to provide an incentive to get people to contribute to its production. This is where club goods theory is a valuable addition to the social capital conceptual framework. Thus, social capital is the norms, networks and incentives that facilitate collective action. However, it is important to understand that participation is a before and after mechanism of social capital. People participate to create the social network. Then the participants produce the collective action and that is an outcome of membership in the social network. In other words, the participants produce social capital and they can benefit from its production.

New localism is about a restructuring of central-local relations. It is about devolving power and resources away from central government down to local government, and other local stakeholders inclusive of civil society, but within a negotiated framework of national minimum standards. The aim is not to undermine the role of central government instead it is to restore confidence in it.

Club goods are resources (services, infrastructure) provided by the club (parish council). In order for the club to work with optimal efficiency club goods are not for the consumption of the wider community. They are purely for the consumption of the club members.

Leadership is the role of a leader who has chosen or been chosen (elected) to lead others based on enabling collective action. But obedience to the leader 'cannot be simply given as an order, as in hierarchy, or bought, as in a market' (Haus and Sweeting 2006: 270). It has to be gained through agreement and trust (bonding social capital). Leadership works with optimal efficiency if both the leader and the followers hold the same values, and if the followers believe that the leader has placed their interest (or the interest of the local community) over and above self-interest.

Civility can be defined as a quality and as an institution. As a quality being civil signifies more than law-abiding, it is expressive of an underlying moral respect for others which binds us all together in civil association. It is about the civic virtues of fairness, tolerance, humanity, moderation and morality. It is not about dogmatic obedience or deference. As an institution it provides us with the rules of just conduct – most acquiesce to the rule 'thou shall

not kill' and the practical rule which says stop at the traffic lights when they are red. Without such rules life would be as Hobbes said, poor, nasty, brutish and short. To have mastered the practice of civility our obligation to the law will be of free choice in the sense of being an intelligent recognition of its practical conditions (Auspitz 1976). It has to be repeated that this contemporary definition has nothing to do with deference to authority figures. Instead it sees the practice of civility as common sense and good for all members of every society.

Civil society refers to the arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power (Centre for Civil Society).¹⁴ This definition has been given for two reasons. First, it helps us to see why civil society is interchangeable with social capital (see for example, Cohen 1999). Second, although parish councils are the lowest tier of local government they fit into the civil society category because the members are volunteers.

Measuring social capital

It is widely understood that measuring social capital is no easy task (see, for example, Schuller 2000; Field 2003; Halpern 2005). This is because it has no precise definition and different researchers use very different measures. If we summarise the approaches discussed above, this will remind us that among its early proponents there are some major differences in the way it has been defined. Bourdieu and Coleman introduced a social structural understanding of the concept. Bourdieu placed emphasis on the material benefits individuals gain from membership in their social networks. He defined social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group' (Bourdieu 1986: 248). Coleman (1990) placed emphasis on the level of trustworthiness which is determined by the level of trustworthiness in the 'social environment'. If there are high levels of trust then 'obligations' will be repaid. The relationships Coleman draws attention to are the rational calculations of individuals acting in self-interest, whereas Bourdieu was more interested in individual identities and strategies. To start with Putnam (1993) presented a definition of social capital based on the 'civic culture'

¹⁴ See: www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm.

argument in which attitudes and the norms of trust and reciprocity were important along with social networks. Later (2003) he provided a narrower definition focusing more on social networks.

This raises the question: if it is so difficult to measure, why bother? The answer is that nowadays, in most cases, policymakers will only invest scarce resources in activities that can be measured. Therefore, if we can measure it at all levels (micro-level, meso-level and macro-level) and in all of its forms and types and relate these findings to specific economic, social and other outcomes, it becomes an effective tool for influencing policymakers and those who provide funds (Field 2003: 124). But even leading economists acknowledge the difficulties: ‘In a critique of Fukuyama (1995), Solow (1995) argues that if social capital is to be more than a “buzzword” its stock “should somehow be measurable, even inexactly,” but “measurement seems very far away.” In this study, we use survey indicators that are no doubt inexact – due to translation difficulties, sampling errors, and response bias – but which produce values that are consistent with data from independent sources’ (Knack and Keefer 1997: 1255). As briefly summed up by the OECD: ‘Measurement of social capital is difficult’ (OECD 2001: 43). Most of the existing research is based on measurements that have been imported from research conducted in America, with limited alterations (see, for example, Baumgartner and Walker 1988; Glaeser *et al.* 2000).¹⁵

The point is the relationships people form and the values they hold originate within local circumstances. This suggests context matters. As the OECD says: ‘Much of what is relevant to social capital is tacit and relational, defying easy measurement or codification’ (OECD 2001: 43). At best the indicators that we do have are only proxies that do not directly measure social capital. One of the difficulties is the number of different indicators which have been utilised. For example, in *Bowling Alone*, Putnam provided a list of fourteen measures of formal and informal associational activities and levels of trust (Putnam 2000). In the words of Schuller: ‘Social capital has, in a short space of time, prompted a number of studies which cover very diverse fields, and use different measures, sometimes based on a single index, sometimes on a composite one, and sometimes on several separate indices. None of this is necessarily invalid, but where simplistic choice of measure is combined with highly complex statistical analysis, there is a serious imbalance at work. If this is not carefully signalled, it may, gradually or rapidly, corrupt a potentially fruitful concept’ (Schuller 2000: 31).

¹⁵ The former has researched the measurement of associational membership, while the later has researched the measurement of trust.

For the OECD, 'trust may be an acceptable proxy for social capital in the absence of a wider and more comprehensive set of indicators' (OECD 2001: 45). From 1981 onwards the World Values Survey (WVS) has been used to test if respondents are willing to place their trust in others. The question respondents were asked: 'Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?' The problem is that responses to this question are not easy to interpret. It is not clear if the respondents interpret the meaning of 'trust' or 'most people' in the same way. For example, there is a difference between an individual's propensity to trust people they know intimately in comparison to acquaintances or strangers (OECD 2001: 44). In addition, as Knack and Keefer said above, because the question has to be translated so that it can be asked to other than English speaking countries, this creates problems for those trying to interpret the responses. For example, *Vertrauen* means both trust and confidence, but in the English WVS it asks questions about both (Field 2003: 125).

Since this study is interested in the associational life at Downswood and Kings Hill, the final part of this chapter will discuss the difficulties of measuring associational membership. There are two sources of data, which can be used to tell us about membership size and what the different groups stand for: monographic studies and survey research. The former have been used by scholars to argue that there has been no decline in associational membership and social capital. These scholars suggest that it is just membership of the secondary associations which has declined, but we have witnessed a growth in the 'new professionally led advocacy groups' some of which 'seek to shape public opinion' (see, for example, Skocpol 2002: 103-136). The latter, survey research, has been used by Putnam to argue that there has been a decline in associational membership and social capital. As noted, Putnam introduced associational membership as one of the main indicators of social capital. This 'attitudinal approach' to social capital has made associational membership along with social trust, an important component of the empirical measurement of social capital (De Ulzurrun 2002: 498).

A criticism of the monographic studies is that interest groups have a tendency to inflate their estimates of the size of their membership. Therefore, their reports should not be accepted without question. But there is plenty of evidence which shows that a number of large groups came into existence from the late 1950s onwards, to address a number of diverse issues such as consumer rights, and conservation of the environment (see, for example, Skocpol 2002). Indeed, scholarly studies of these movements provide plenty of information about an explosion in the growth of the numbers of organisations formed, and the number of

people who participated in these group activities. However, we need to understand that monographic studies only analysed specific parts of society, so there is a possibility that memberships have declined in other areas which were not reported. Nevertheless, many of the monographic studies provide strong circumstantial evidence that there has been an increase in the growth of involvement in interest groups since the Second World War (Baumgartner and Walker 1988: 909). Although Putnam used the attitudinal approach as noted, he said: 'In some respects organisational records are the firmest indicators, for through them we can directly compare the civic involvement of Americans in the 1950s, the 1970s, and the 1990s... Moreover, because organisations keep records over long periods, our comparisons can extend back decades or even centuries, giving us a longer perspective on recent events' (Putnam 2000: 415).

The second source is the large amount of survey research, which has been conducted during the last century on associational membership. Since the 1950s surveys of national samples have been conducted regularly. We should be pleased that there are so many surveys for us to use, but there is one major difficulty. The findings of these national surveys, notably the data from the 1970s and 1980s, tend to contradict the circumstantial evidence reported in the monographic studies (Baumgartner and Walker 1988: 910-911). This raises the question: why do the monographic studies not agree with the findings of the survey research? The answer is not straightforward. As we will now discover, it is related to the wording of the questions and the administrative methods, which have resulted in a significant underestimation of involvement of the public in associational life (ibid: 912).

From the late 1960s, researchers who wanted to collect data on associational memberships often relied on a question that Verba and Nie developed for their 1967 survey. Respondents were asked: 'Do you happen to belong to any groups or organisations in the community here? If *yes*, which ones? Any others?' Table 1.4 below shows how the coding system has developed from the Middletown study to the Verba and Nie study. The coding system used for the Elmira study used categories like those used for the Middletown study. Trade unions were not included on the Elmira list because respondents were asked a separate battery of questions about this category. A category was added for political groups and service clubs (ibid: 913-914).

Table 4.1: The Evolution of a Group Typology, 1924-67.

| 1924 Middletown | 1948 Elmira | 1967 Verba and Nie |
|---|--|--|
| Athletic Benevolent Business, Professional Church Affiliated Literary, Music, Study Military, Patriotic Social Civic Juvenile Club Trade Union | Sports, Hobby, Recreational Lodge, Fraternal Economic, Occupational, Professional Church Affiliated Cultural Military, Patriotic, Veterans Neighbourhood, Card Clubs, Discussion Civic - - Political, Political Party Service | Sports Fraternal Professional, Academic Church Affiliated Literary, Art, Discussion, Study Veterans Hobby, Garden - Youth Club Labour Union Political Service Farm Organisation Nationality Groups School Fraternities, Sororities School Service |

Source: Baumgartner and Walker 1988: 913.

Verba and Nie modified the Elmira question. They dropped the words ‘in the community here’ so that respondents could refer to national memberships. They also added five more categories to their membership list to aid recall and bring their research up-to-date. To improve data collection and the coding process, respondents were shown a card of the categories and then they were asked: ‘Here is a list of various kinds of organisations. Could you tell me whether or not you are a member of each type?’ The categories and method of administration of the Standard Question (SQ) have not changed since Verba and Nie’s study of 1967. The SQ has been consistently used for the General Social Survey (GSS) from 1971 up to 1984.

Although the SQ was appropriate for the 1960s, like the discussion above about the trust question and its problems, the SQ became less of an accurate indicator of associational memberships. This was because of the accepted practice by survey researchers when collecting time series data, to avoid changing the wording of the questions. As the years passed, the SQ developed three major problems. First, the cards with the categories, the probes, shown to respondents were not changed, so researchers were not able to record the increase in the number of affiliations in the new groups. On close examination of the coding system we can see it does not make it possible to identify categories for the civil rights, environmental and consumer groups, all of which came into existence in the mid-1960s. It

also does not provide categories for the elderly, mentally ill, handicapped, and other disadvantaged groups. In addition, it does not provide a category for charities such as the Red Cross. This is especially troubling as these are the organisations that keep in touch with people and lobby government.

Second, the computer technology of the mid-1960s could only record one affiliation within each category, so the explosive growth in the number of groups within each category was not recorded. This omission of data meant that for example, within the sports category a respondent could belong to three separate groups such as a tennis, hockey and netball club. Consequently, this prevented researchers from recording multiple memberships, which are especially important for stocks of social capital. In the words of De Ulzurrun: 'one important argument of the social capital school is that the more numerous face-to-face contacts and the wider the networks are, the greater the capital stocks citizens produce and have at their disposition' (De Ulzurrun 2002: 507). Third, affiliation failed to include making a financial contribution without being a formal member of the organisation. This form of affiliation became increasingly common among the American population. By the mid-1980s these errors resulted in some serious inaccuracies in the data of group memberships presented in the surveys (Baumgartner and Walker 1988: 914-916).

Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter we discussed the concept of social capital and argued why it is a valuable tool for studying questions of governance, public behaviour and civility, in spite of the criticism it has attracted. The most important lesson from the discussion of criticisms of the concept is that social capital can contribute to good governance, but context really matters. The example given by Mayer (2003) illustrated this. Mayer said the middle-class use their social capital and mobilise to protect their environment from social housing, at the expense of those not able to mobilise in favour of it. This is just one context. In another, more general context, local government can and will enforce planning obligations to get developers to provide a mutually agreed proportion of social housing.¹⁶ Mutually agreed is inclusive of residents who find it difficult to mobilise.

Then we discussed the three most frequently cited theoretical approaches to the concept. Bourdieu's essentially neo-Marxist approach has slipped into the background. There are

¹⁶ This is what happened at Kings Hill. The parish councillors used their social capital to seek out information about planning gain. Then they put pressure on the higher tiers of local government and the developer to get additional infrastructure, namely the youth facility.

several reasons for this. One being that in a climate amenable to the free-market this is the approach, which offers a critique of neo-liberalism (see Fine 2001: 54). Nevertheless, as this chapter has argued this approach helps us understand hierarchical relationships. Therefore, it would be beneficial to bring this perspective back into the theoretical debate. It will also help if the rational choice approach is brought back in as this gives a clearer understanding of the collective-action problems than Bourdieu's or Putnam's work.

In the second part of this chapter we discussed how unlike the Thatcher government, which reduced the power of local government, the Labour government's modernisation agenda is about a system of community leadership in which power is devolved to local decision-makers. Then we discussed leadership theory. First, we found that although it is not necessary for the parish councillors to agree on every proposal (see Chapter 5), if the chairman wants to solve collective-action problems s/he has to make sure the parish councillors reach a compromise. If the chairman fails to maintain a minimal level of support, there is always someone who is waiting to take on the role of chairman. Second, we found that the chairman's reputation is important. The chairman has to establish a reputation that sanctions will be imposed on those who fail to cooperate. This is helped further if the chairman can maintain some uncertainty about the cost of imposing sanctions. This places the chairman in a position to build a reputation that if the parish council get any complaints about non-compliance with the rules, they will inform the police who will take the appropriate action. In short, political leadership (the chairman) can solve a number of collective-action problems that the parish council faces when trying to pursue common objectives.

Then we discussed club goods theory. We found that by utilising Webster's (2003) theory it is possible to refer to both Downswood and Kings Hill parishes as club realms. This enables us to understand how club goods theory can improve social capital theory. As the models above demonstrate, it allows us to show how collective-action problems can be solved in social networks.

The third part of the chapter discussed how the key concepts, social capital and new localism, and the other relevant concepts to this study will be operationalised in the empirical chapters. We then discussed the difficulties of measuring social capital. Although this discussion has highlighted the difficulties of survey research, we have to acknowledge that surveys provide plenty of highly useful data on the values people hold and changing attitudes (see, for example, Inglehart 1997; Dalton 2002). Nevertheless, it also has to be remembered that one of the main difficulties with survey research, is the wording of the question. It is not unusual to find that respondents have not understood the question. But from what we have

learned from the discussion, modifying the question is fraught with difficulties. If collecting time-series data for comparison with surveys of different populations, small changes to the question will make the measure unreliable in terms of longitudinal analysis. This is why researchers are reluctant to make any modifications to the wording of the survey questions.

Now to make some comments about the lists of associations: First, the recognised lists of associations have been criticised for being male-centred. Both Putnam and Hall have failed fully to acknowledge women's important contribution to social capital (Lowndes 2000). Second, the groups may not be comparable if we are doing cross-national comparisons. For example, 'there is no equivalent of the (American) National Rifle Association in Britain, and similarly no equivalent of the (British) National Trust in the USA' (Halpern 2005: 36). The monographic studies have their weaknesses too. First, there is the potential for interest groups to inflate their membership. Second, if the research is focused on a local voluntary organisation (e.g., Len Valley Action Group: Downswood) it will not be possible to make any generalisations. Finally, although social trust provides a 'rough and ready' indicator of social capital at the national level, Putnam's associational membership measure tends to only tell us about social capital at the meso-level (Halpern 2005: 31-37). Obviously, it is not possible to rely on national surveys to tell us about associational life at Downswood and Kings Hill. Therefore, in Chapter 7 we will discuss the findings from the questionnaire we designed (see Chapter 2) to make an assessment of social capital at the local level.

The social capital approaches discussed in this chapter will be utilised and referred to at every stage of the argument in the empirical chapters. This will help us understand an under-researched local level of parish decision-making. These conceptual tools will help show when and how the parish councils generate, and/or mobilise/expand social capital. They will also be used to reinforce the key argument that effective leadership and other ways of overcoming collective-action problems in producing social capital as a public good (e.g., theories focusing on 'club goods'), is more important than the most recent proponent of social capital, Robert Putnam suggests.

5 ASSESSING INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

In Putnam's 1993 Italian study of regional government he devised twelve indicators of institutional performance (see Putnam 1993: 67-73). Although as noted in Chapter 2, most parish councils only provide a few very local services, and as the definition of civil society in Chapter 4 has shown, parish councillors are volunteers not 'seasoned politicians with long experience in local government and party affairs' (ibid: 27), parish councils are nevertheless political institutions. Therefore we will adapt Putnam's measures of institutional performance to assess the performance of Downswood Parish Council (DPC) and Kings Hill Parish Council (KHPC). For each regional government, Putnam evaluated (1) policy processes; (2) policy pronouncements; and (3) policy implementation (ibid: 65). This chapter will start with policy processes. Policy pronouncements will not be analysed because parish councils only have the power to make byelaws.¹ Neither DPC nor KHPC made any byelaws during the empirical observations. In Chapter 6 we will discuss policy implementation.

Policy processes

This measure seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the institution (regional government or parish council). We need to know how well the institution manages its internal affairs. The performance indicators Putnam used were: cabinet stability; budget promptness; statistical and information services. This family of measures asks: is the institution conducting its crucial internal operations with efficiency? We will assess the stability of both of the parish councils' decision-making apparatus: their attendance records; their financial competence; their voting procedure; and their strategy for reducing crime in their respective parishes.

Attendance of the parish councillors

The attendance statistics below are impressive considering that parish councillors are volunteers. They have to balance their time between their family and work commitments and serving the parish. But if a councillor fails to attend a meeting for six consecutive months

¹ Model byelaws have been issued by the Home Office on public bathing (VIII), baths and washhouses (IX), pleasure grounds (X), Pleasure boats (XII), cemeteries (XIV), and mortuaries (XV) (Arnold-Baker 2002: 219).

s/he ceases automatically to be a member. The exception to this rule is if s/he has a 'statutory excuse', or if her/his reason for non-attendance has been approved by the parish council, or if s/he represents the parish council at another meeting 'such as a county association of local councils'. The countdown for automatic disqualification starts from the date of the last meeting attended (Arnold-Baker 2002: 57). If members only turn up occasionally, it would not be possible to form a quorum, and this is essential for voting purposes. 'The quorum is three or one-third of the total membership, whichever is the greater' (ibid: 56). Regularly attending meetings is especially important for building 'bonding' social capital, (i.e., the trust and reciprocity between the members) which is essential for efficient and effective decision-making.

Table 5.1: Number (%) of Downswood parish councillors attending the meetings from December 2003 to July 2005

| Month | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|-----------|----------|----------|---------|
| January | | (8) 89% | (7) 78% |
| February | | (6) 67% | (7) 78% |
| March | | (6) 67% | (8) 89% |
| April | | (9) 100% | (7) 78% |
| May | | (7) 78% | (7) 78% |
| June | | (6) 67% | (6) 67% |
| June* | | | (7) 78% |
| July | | (7) 78% | (8) 89% |
| August | | | |
| September | | (7) 78% | |
| October | | (6) 67% | |
| November | | (7) 78% | |
| December | (9) 100% | (6) 67% | |

Note: No parish meetings were held in August. June* was an extraordinary meeting which was held to elect the officers. Source: Darien 2006.

Table 5.2: Number (%) of Kings Hill parish councillors attending the meetings from December 2003 to June 2005

| Month | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|-----------|---------|---------|-----------|
| January | | (6) 60% | (10) 100% |
| February | | (6) 60% | (8) 80% |
| March | | (7) 70% | (6) 60% |
| April | | (6) 60% | (9) 90% |
| May | | (6) 60% | (9) 90% |
| May* | | (6) 60% | (4) 40% |
| June | | (6) 60% | (8) 80% |
| July | | (7) 70% | |
| August | | (5) 50% | |
| September | | (7) 70% | |
| October | | (8) 80% | |
| November | | (6) 60% | |
| December | (7) 70% | (9) 90% | |

Note: May* represents the annual parish council meetings, these are held separately from the parish meeting. Source: Darien 2006.

Attendance of members of the public

The attendance statistics (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4) are disappointing, but when the meeting is about something of interest to members of the public they will attend see, for example, Table 5.3 July 2004. This meeting was about the proposal to close Downswood post office. DPC was reaching out to the residents for their support. This is a powerful example of ‘bridging’ social capital. In this context the parish councillors of Downswood successfully created strong bonds of trust and reciprocity with the residents.

Table 5.3: Number (%) of members of the public attending the DPC meetings from December 2003 to July 2005

| Month | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| January | | | |
| February | | | |
| March | | | |
| April | | (3) 0.17% | (7) 0.41% |
| May | | (2) 0.12% | |
| June | | | |
| June* | | | |
| July | | (17) 0.99% | (1) 0.06% |
| August | | | |
| September | | (4) 0.23% | |
| October | | | |
| November | | | |
| December | (1) 0.06% | | |

Note: No parish meetings were held in August. The data in the above table are calculated from the total number of the electorate (1,724) living at Downswood. June* was an extraordinary meeting held to elect the officers. No members of the public attended this meeting as it was arranged after the June 2005 meeting and it was not advertised. Source: Darien 2006.

Table 5.4: Number (%) of members of the public attending the KHPC meetings from December 2003 to June 2005

| Month | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| January | | (5) 0.17% | |
| February | | (3) 0.10% | (2) 0.07% |
| March | | (3) 0.10% | (2) 0.07% |
| April | | (2) 0.07% | (2) 0.07% |
| May | | (3) 0.10% | |
| May* | | (5) 0.17% | (3) 0.10% |
| June | | (6) 0.21% | (1) 0.03% |
| July | | (2) 0.07% | |
| August | | | |
| September | | (4) 0.14% | |
| October | | | |
| November | | (1) 0.03% | |
| December | (1) 0.03% | (2) 0.07% | |

Note: May* represents the annual parish council meetings, these are held separately from the parish meeting. The data in the above table are calculated from the total of the electorate (2,911) living at Kings Hill. Source: Darien 2006.

The highest turnout at Downswood, as noted, was at the July 2004 meeting when 17 attended to hear about the proposal to close their post office. The highest turnout at Kings Hill was at the June 2004 meeting when 6 attended. Two residents came to apply for the advertised vacancy to be a parish councillor. An Asda representative came to volunteer to help find activities for the youths in their spare time, and three residents from the same family came to ask if the play area could be fenced off to stop youths from using it, and part of their front garden as a football pitch. The arithmetic mean of the number of parish councillors who attended the 20 DPC meetings under observation was 7.05, and at Kings Hill it was the same 7.05. The arithmetic mean of the number of members of the public who attended the same 20 meetings was 1.75 at Downswood, and 2.35 at Kings Hill.²

Financial competence of DPC

The income for providing the service from the start of the financial year April 2004 to the end of the financial year March 2005 is budgeted at £32,941.86, and the details are set out below.

Table 5.5: Income of DPC (April 2004 to March 2005)

| Source of Income | Income (£) |
|--|------------------|
| 1. DCA/Litter Picking Contribution | 312.50 |
| 2. MBC/Precept 2004-2005 | 17,000.00 |
| 3. HM Customs and Exercise | 1,571.23 |
| 4. Caxtons/Litter Picking Contribution | 728.00 |
| 5. MBC/Concurrent Functions Scheme | 11,571.00 |
| 6. Nat Savings Bank/Interest 2004 | 179.13 |
| 7. Newsletter Advertising Charge | 80.00 |
| 8. MBC Devolved Budget | 1,500.00 |
| Total | 32,941.86 |

Source: Own calculations from the financial accounts recorded in the DPC Minutes.

² Altogether 42 parish meetings were observed (see Appendices 8 and 9). To work out the average calculations because DPC held no meetings in August two of KHPC's meetings were omitted from the calculations to make the number of meetings even: the meeting held in August 2004 (was a one-off meeting held at short notice to discuss the finances) and the first Community Centre Committee meeting held on 4 February 2004.

Table 5.6: Breakdown of the income of DPC per month

| | April | May | June | July | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | Total |
|---|-------|----------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|--------|-----|--------|---------|-----------------|
| 1 | | 62.50 | | 62.50 | | 62.50 | | 62.50 | | | 62.50 | 312.50 |
| 2 | | 17000.00 | | | | | | | | | | 17000.00 |
| 3 | | | 1571.23 | | | | | | | | | 1571.23 |
| 4 | | | | | 364.00 | | 182.00 | 182.00 | | | | 728.00 |
| 5 | | | | | 5785.50 | | 5785.50 | | | | | 11571.00 |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | 179.13 | | 179.13 |
| 7 | | | | | | | | | | 80.00 | | 80.00 |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | | 1500.00 | 1500.00 |
| * | Nil | 17062.50 | 1571.23 | 62.50 | 6149.50 | 62.50 | 5967.50 | 244.50 | | 259.13 | 1562.50 | 32941.86 |

*Total

Note: The numbers in the first column represent the source of income (see Table 6.1 above). Source: Own calculations from the financial accounts recorded in the DPC Minutes.

The cost of providing the service from the start of the financial year April 2004 to the end of the financial year March 2005 is budgeted at £14,812.95 and the details are set out below.

Table 5.7: Expenditure of DPC (April 2004 to March 2005)

| Source of Expenditure | Expenditure (£) |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Clerks Salary and Expenses | 6,362.57 |
| 2. Litter Picking | 1,675.00 |
| 3. Newsletter Production Costs | 596.50 |
| 4. Donations | 2,575.00 |
| 5. KAPC Subscription | 472.29 |
| 6. Handyman | 287.44 |
| 7. Audit Commission | 347.21 |
| 8. Newsletter Delivery | 140.00 |
| 9. Chairs Expenses | 152.30 |
| 10. Hire of Hall | 167.90 |
| 11. Insurance | 288.75 |
| 12. Internal Audit | 117.50 |
| 13. Chalkgate Ltd/Rubbish Sacks, etc | 107.61 |
| 14. Wood for PO Closure Notices | 6.75 |
| 15. Website | 235.00 |
| 16. KAPC/Good Councillors Guide | 5.00 |
| 17. Best Kept Garden Vouchers | 45.00 |
| 18. Inland Revenue/NI Contrib. re Clerk | 6.43 |
| 19. KAPC Councillors attendance AGM | 7.50 |
| 20. Santa Costume | 36.45 |
| 21. Christmas Lights | 1,080.13 |
| 22. Honours Board | 25.00 |
| 23. Publicity Photographs | 70.00 |
| 24. KCC/Stationery | 2.70 |
| 25. DCA/Affiliation Fee | 50.00 |
| 26. Cllr Williams/Xmas Refreshments | 52.92 |
| Total | 14,912.95 |

Source: Own calculations from the financial accounts recorded in the DPC Minutes.

Table 5.7 shows what DPC does with its income. The highest expenditure is the clerk's salary and expenses at £6,362.57. DPC also donates quite a large sum of money £2,575.00 to

voluntary organisations.³ The litter picking expenditure is also quite high at £1,675.00. The councillors walk around the club realm noting any broken street lights, overgrown vegetation, graffiti, dumped cars, bicycles, or shopping trolleys etc. The incentive is to keep the club standards high by making it a pleasant environment and preventing the estate from falling into a state of decay, which would ultimately result in a devaluation of the property prices. The Borough Councillor was asked about antisocial behaviour and property prices, he said:

I think it's perfectly legitimate for residents to be concerned about their property values. Property values are not a planning criteria, they're not allowed to be taken into account when you're looking at a planning application. But nevertheless if you're saying you want to reduce antisocial activity. If you're saying you want to improve the environment. Then you're doing it for the people and if you're doing it for the people, you're doing it also for their property values because that affects the people.⁴

Table 5.8: Breakdown of the monthly costs for running the DPC service

| | April | May | June | July | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | Total |
|----|----------|--------|--------|----------|----------|--------|--------|----------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | 479.19 | 398.29 | 459.86 | 402.76 | 1,023.10 | 462.56 | 441.96 | 419.90 | | 1,276.67 | 998.28 | 6,362.57 |
| 2 | 240.00 | 150.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 270.00 | 150.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 145.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 1,675.00 |
| 3 | 100.10 | | 103.40 | | 147.60 | | 120.00 | 125.40 | | | | 596.50 |
| 4 | 35.00 | 50.00 | | 20.00 | | | | 520.00 | 300.00 | 1,500.00 | 150.00 | 2,575.00 |
| 5 | 472.29 | | | | | | | | | | | 472.29 |
| 6 | | 63.00 | | | | | | 119.44 | | | 105.00 | 287.44 |
| 7 | | 206.21 | | | 141.00 | | | | | | | 347.21 |
| 8 | | 35.00 | | | 35.00 | | 35.00 | | | | 35.00 | 140.00 |
| 9 | | | 26.22 | | 7.90 | 56.20 | | | | 61.98 | | 152.30 |
| 10 | | | | 66.63 | 10.66 | | | 79.95 | | | 10.66 | 167.90 |
| 11 | | | | 288.75 | | | | | | | | 288.75 |
| 12 | | | | 117.50 | | | | | | | | 117.50 |
| 13 | | | | | 29.04 | 16.46 | | 49.20 | | 12.91 | | 107.61 |
| 14 | | | | | 6.75 | | | | | | | 6.75 |
| 15 | | | | | 235.00 | | | | | | | 235.00 |
| 16 | | | | | 5.00 | | | | | | | 5.00 |
| 17 | | | | | 45.00 | | | | | | | 45.00 |
| 18 | | | | | | 6.43 | | | | | | 6.43 |
| 19 | | | | | | | | 7.50 | | | | 7.50 |
| 20 | | | | | | | | 36.45 | | | | 36.45 |
| 21 | | | | | | | | 1,080.13 | | | | 1,080.13 |
| 22 | | | | | | | | 25.00 | | | | 25.00 |
| 23 | | | | | | | | 70.00 | | | | 70.00 |
| 24 | | | | | | | | | 2.70 | | | 2.70 |
| 25 | | | | | | | | | 50.00 | | | 50.00 |
| 26 | | | | | | | | | | | 52.92 | 52.92 |
| * | 1,326.58 | 902.50 | 709.48 | 1,015.64 | 1,956.05 | 691.65 | 716.96 | 2,652.97 | 497.70 | 2,971.56 | 1,471.86 | 14,912.95 |

* Total

Note: The numbers in the first column represent the source of expenditure (see Table 5.7 above).
Source: Own calculations from the financial accounts recorded in the DPC Minutes.

³ Parish and Town Councils have duties regarding parochial charities (Charities Act 1993, s. 79).

⁴ Interview with Borough Councillor Winckless, at Maidstone, Kent, on 17 November 2003.

Financial competence of KHPC

The income for providing the service from the start of the financial year April 2004 to the end of the financial year March 2005 is budgeted at £82,396.21 and the details are set out below.

Table 5.9 Income of KHPC (April 2004 to March 2005)

| Source of Income | Income (£) |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. KH Management Com/Close Bank Ac | 2,373.68 |
| 2. T&MBC Precept 50% | 66,473.00 |
| 3. Scott House Web Advert | 36.00 |
| 4. The Swan West Malling/Website | 80.00 |
| 5. KH Recruitment/Website | 56.00 |
| 6. Rouse Kent Ltd (Refund) | 873.65 |
| 7. T&MBC Section 136 | 5,105.00 |
| 8. K2 Flooring/Website | 20.00 |
| 9. Allotment Tenancy Fees | 17.00 |
| 10. VAT Refund | 7,361.88 |
| Total | 82,396.21 |

Source: Own calculations from KHPC financial accounts.

Table 5.10: Breakdown of the income of KHPC per month

| | April | May | June | July | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | Total |
|----------|-------|----------|---------|-------|------|----------|---------|---------|-----|-----|-------|-----------------|
| 1 | | 2373.68 | | | | | | | | | | 2373.68 |
| 2 | | 33236.50 | | | | 33236.50 | | | | | | 66473.00 |
| 3 | | 36.00 | | | | | | | | | | 36.00 |
| 4 | | | 40.00 | | | | 40.00 | | | | | 80.00 |
| 5 | | | 26.00 | | | | | 30.00 | | | | 56.00 |
| 6 | | | 873.65 | | | | | | | | | 873.65 |
| 7 | | | 2553.00 | | | | | 2552.00 | | | | 5105.00 |
| 8 | | | | 10.00 | | | 10.00 | | | | | 20.00 |
| 9 | | | | | | | 17.00 | | | | | 17.00 |
| 10 | | | | | | | 7361.88 | | | | | 7361.88 |
| * | Nil | 35646.18 | 3492.65 | 10.00 | Nil | 33236.50 | 7428.88 | 2582.00 | Nil | Nil | Nil | 82396.21 |

*Total

Note: The numbers in the first column represent the source of income (see Table 5.9 above). Source: Own calculations from KHPC financial accounts.

The cost for providing the service from the start of the financial year April 2004 to the end of the financial year March 2005 is budgeted at £29,075.22 and the details are set out below.

Table 5.11: Expenditure of KHPC (April 2004 to March 2005)

| Source of Expenditure | Expenditure (£) |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Clerks Salary and Expenses | 8,837.25 |
| 2. Employers NI/Inland Revenue | 64.77 |
| 3. British Telecom | 964.60 |
| 4. Councillors Expenses | 250.39 |
| 5. PCSO 25% Contribution/Kent Police | 8,680.13 |
| 6. Hire of Meeting Room | 1,505.00 |
| 7. Stamps | 33.93 |
| 8. KAPC/Annual Subscription | 454.05 |
| 9. KAPC | 20.00 |
| 10. Website | 104.03 |
| 11. Viking Direct/Stationery | 435.80 |
| 12. Audit Fees/Audit Commission | 1,527.50 |
| 13. Donations | 1,600.00 |
| 14. PAYE & NI Contributions | 2,626.56 |
| 15. Stationery | 44.22 |
| 16. Training | 352.50 |
| 17. Beverages for Meetings | 12.89 |
| 18. CPRE Subscription | 25.00 |
| 19. Newsletter Delivery Costs | 80.00 |
| 20. KRW/Footpath Alterations/T&MBC | 211.50 |
| 21. Allotments | 358.88 |
| 22. Clock/Payee KCC (KCS) | 20.95 |
| 23. Summer Playscheme Contribution 04 | 175.00 |
| 24. Rural Youth Conference 2 x Cllrs | 50.00 |
| 25. KHPC Insurance Renewal/Zurich | 303.26 |
| 26. SERPA/Annual Contribution | 20.00 |
| 27. Additions to Hall PC/Cllr Williams | 176.01 |
| 28. Advertising/Youth Flyers | 141.00 |
| Total | 29,075.22 |

Source: Own calculations from KHPC financial accounts.

Table 5.11 shows what KHPC does with its income. Like DPC the highest expenditure was the clerk's salary and expenses. At DPC it was £6,362.57 at KHPC it was £8,837.25. The next highest expenditure was KHPC's contribution to the PCSO's £8,680.13. DPC makes no contribution out of their income to policing costs. DPC policing is paid for out of the council tax. Considering the size of their income £82,396.21 KHPC's donations £1,600.00 were not as generous as DPC whose income was £32,941.86 and donations were £2,575.00. At Downswood the parish council pays for litter picking £1,675.00. At Kings Hill the developer collects an annual charge from the residents to maintain the upkeep of the development. Finally, at DPC their 'internal audit' cost £117.50 and they paid the Audit Commission £347.21 which is a total of £464.71. At KHPC their 'audit fees/audit commission' was £1,527.50. The expenses reflect the fact that DPC is a traditional parish council whereas at Kings Hill the developer has imposed estate maintenance charges (EMCs) on the residents. This is a characteristic of the market model of governance.

Table 5.12: Breakdown of the monthly costs for running the KHPC service

| | April | May | June | July | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | Total |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 753.07 | 772.34 | 757.90 | 873.67 | 821.61 | 940.99 | 610.16 | 764.20 | 1,066.29 | 687.02 | 790.00 | 8837.25 |
| 2 | 64.77 | | | | | | | | | | | 64.77 |
| 3 | 206.54 | 204.17 | 117.59 | | | 86.72 | 105.71 | 66.36 | | 105.71 | 71.80 | 964.60 |
| 4 | 30.45 | | 215.00 | | | | | 4.94 | | | | 250.39 |
| 5 | 827.16 | 833.04 | 857.81 | 848.16 | 859.87 | 891.28 | 891.50 | 890.43 | | 1,780.88 | | 8680.13 |
| 6 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 90.00 | 255.00 | 180.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 140.00 | 1505.00 |
| 7 | 7.20 | | 7.56 | | | 19.17 | | | | | | 33.93 |
| 8 | 454.05 | | | | | | | | | | | 454.05 |
| 9 | 12.50 | | | | | | | 7.50 | | | | 20.00 |
| 10 | 74.99 | | | | | | | | | 29.04 | | 104.03 |
| 11 | 115.38 | 45.80 | 62.13 | 36.86 | 58.38 | 43.59 | | | 73.66 | | | 435.80 |
| 12 | | 763.75 | | | | | | 763.75 | | | | 1527.50 |
| 13 | | 500.00 | 300.00 | | | 200.00 | | | 100.00 | 500.00 | | 1600.00 |
| 14 | | 371.74 | 195.17 | 294.14 | 257.96 | 91.39 | 393.30 | 206.22 | 278.91 | 312.53 | 225.20 | 2626.56 |
| 15 | | 4.99 | | | | | | 39.23 | | | | 44.22 |
| 16 | | 47.00 | 70.50 | 141.00 | | | | | | 47.00 | 47.00 | 352.50 |
| 17 | | | 12.89 | | | | | | | | | 12.89 |
| 18 | | | | 25.00 | | | | | | | | 25.00 |
| 19 | | | | 80.00 | | | | | | | | 80.00 |
| 20 | | | | 211.50 | | | | | | | | 211.50 |
| 21 | | | | 350.00 | 8.88 | | | | | | | 358.88 |
| 22 | | | | 20.95 | | | | | | | | 20.95 |
| 23 | | | | | 175.00 | | | | | | | 175.00 |
| 24 | | | | | | 50.00 | | | | | | 50.00 |
| 25 | | | | | | | 303.26 | | | | | 303.26 |
| 26 | | | | | | | | | 20.00 | | | 20.00 |
| 27 | | | | | | | | | 176.01 | | | 176.01 |
| 28 | | | | | | | | | | | 141.00 | 141.00 |
| Total | 2666.11 | 3662.83 | 2716.55 | 3001.28 | 2271.70 | 2578.14 | 2483.93 | 2862.63 | 1834.87 | 3582.18 | 1415.00 | 29075.22 |

Note: The numbers in the first column represent the Source of Expenditure (see Table 8.3 above).
Source: Own calculations from KHPC financial accounts.

Table 5.13: DPC and KHPC finances compared

| Parish Council | Income (£) | Running Costs (£) | Surplus (£) |
|----------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|
| DPC | 32,941.86 | 14,912.95 | 18,028.91 |
| KHPC | 82,396.21 | 29,075.22 | 53,320.99 |

All of the data tables above are proof that both parish councils are financially competent.

Voting data for DPC and KHPC

Although parish councillors are volunteers, there are rules they have to obey and this includes following certain procedures when they want to take a vote on a proposal. First, we will discuss the difference between formal and informal rules. Then we will discuss the rules of local council administration. This knowledge will give us a better understanding of the voting data below, and the decision-making process in Chapter 6. In Chapter 2, we argued that institutions can be thought of as arenas in which games are played, and actors' behaviour is structured by 'the rules of the game'. Indeed, new institutionalists like Putman, are not only interested in detailed descriptions of national constitutions, they also take an interest in the informal conventions of political behaviour. This raises an interesting question linked to the

definition of the term institution: what do we include in the concept of rules? Do we mean formal or informal rules? Most of the time people follow pre-defined rules of behaviour, most of which are not formal rules. They include habits, routines, customs, social norms, conventions and even culture. Formal rules are those which 'are consciously designed and clearly specified – as in the case of written constitutions, contractual agreements, property rights, the terms of reference and standing orders of committees' (Lowndes 1996: 193). At Kings Hill, for example, residents who purchased their property after 1998 have to abide by the Schedule of Restrictive Covenants (see Appendix 1).

Clearly, culture and norms are not explicit and nor are they formalised. The dilemma is where to draw the line. Should we think of political institutions as some kind of repetitive behaviour, which influences political processes or outcomes? Or are political institutions formal rules? If we include habits and culture we can incorporate nearly anything which guides individual behaviour. Then institution as a concept will mean everything but nothing (Rothstein 1996:145). This is what has been called 'conceptual stretching' (Sartori 1970: 1034). However, if we only consider the formal rules we will miss the rules that are 'taken-for-granted', those which determine behaviour and exist in any political organisation. A way of solving this problem is to acknowledge a third type of rule. In public administration this is referred to as 'standard operating procedures'. The idea is for researchers to identify the rules that are agreed and followed by the agents, even if they have not been written down or decided formally (Rothstein 1996: 146). For example, in a UK Parliamentary Select Committee the style and form of questioning might not be set out in writing, but it can be identified as a standard operating procedure in the way that it structures political behaviour, and allows the researcher to understand power relationships and how values are expressed (Lowndes 2002: 103-104). Mark Sproule-Jones (1993) refers to these as the 'rules-in-use'.⁵

We will now discuss the rules of local council administration. The local council must meet annually. In an election year the annual meeting must be held on the day when the councillors take office, or within 14 days of them taking office. In non-election years the annual meeting can be held on any day in May. Also a parish or town council, but not a community council, must hold at least three other meetings during the year. Meetings must not be held at a licensed premise unless there is no other suitable meeting place available, which is free of charge or at a reasonable cost. Three days before the council meeting a notice of the time and place of the meeting must be advertised somewhere in the locality where it can be seen. In

⁵ For a review of his work on rule configurations see Elinor Ostrom, 'New Horizons in Institutional Analysis,' *American Political Science Review*, 89 (1) 1995: 174-178.

addition, in a similar period before the meeting a summons, known as the agenda, signed by the clerk must be distributed to all of the members.⁶ The agenda sets out the business to be transacted. The councillors cannot lawfully vote on any matter unless it has been included on the agenda. Some parish councils conclude with an agenda item 'Any Other Business'. As this does not state the business the parish councillors might wish to discuss, it is not lawful to make any decisions under this agenda item, that is, unless the parish council has passed a standing order at a meeting beforehand permitting business, which has been left over from a previous meeting being discussed again under this item.⁷

The meetings must be open to members of the public and the press. But there are times when the public and press will be asked to leave the meeting room. This is when the councillors are discussing confidential business: (a) when employing a new clerk, or when an employee is being disciplined or dismissed; (b) when discussing tenders for work or negotiating contracts; (c) when a case is being prepared for legal proceedings; and (d) in the early stages of a dispute. Every decision, with the exception of the appointment of an honorary freeman, must be made by a majority of the members present and voting at the meeting. As long as there is a quorum at the meeting (three or one-third of the total membership, whichever is greater) it is immaterial for a quorum of the members to take part in the voting. Therefore a motion may be carried by a single voter if no one votes against her/him. The chairman may vote even if this creates an equality of votes. If there is an equality of votes, the chairman has a second or the casting vote. Votes are taken by a show of hands unless the standing orders say different. If a member wants to know how the members voted on a particular proposal, this must be recorded in the minutes, and if a member wants a vote to be recorded s/he may demand this before or after the vote has been taken. The minutes of business discussed by the council and its various committees must be kept. At the start of each meeting the minutes of the previous meeting are circulated to the members, and after they have all agreed that they are accurate, the chairman will sign them. The minutes are the formal records of the decisions taken at the council meetings. They are not reports, nor

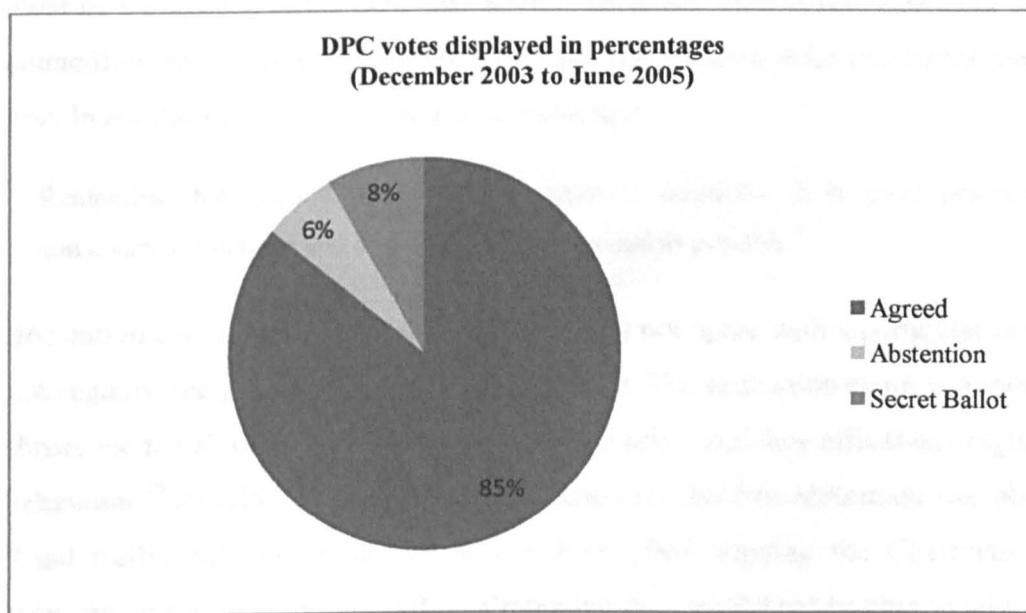
⁶ See Appendix 15 for a template of DPC's agenda.

⁷ A council may make standing orders to regulate its business and proceedings, and may vary or revoke them. Models are published by HM Stationery Office and by the NALC. It is usually not necessary for very small councils to have standing orders, but it is always desirable for every council to possess a copy of one of the recognised models, so that in a difficulty the chairman can give a decision based upon an established precedent. Standing orders must obviously not conflict with the law, and the Secretary of State may by regulation require or forbid particular standing orders (Arnold-Baker, 2002: 60).

are they verbatim reports of what the councillors have said. If the minutes are kept short and accurate they will be less likely to be defamatory (Arnold-Baker, 2002: 53-64).

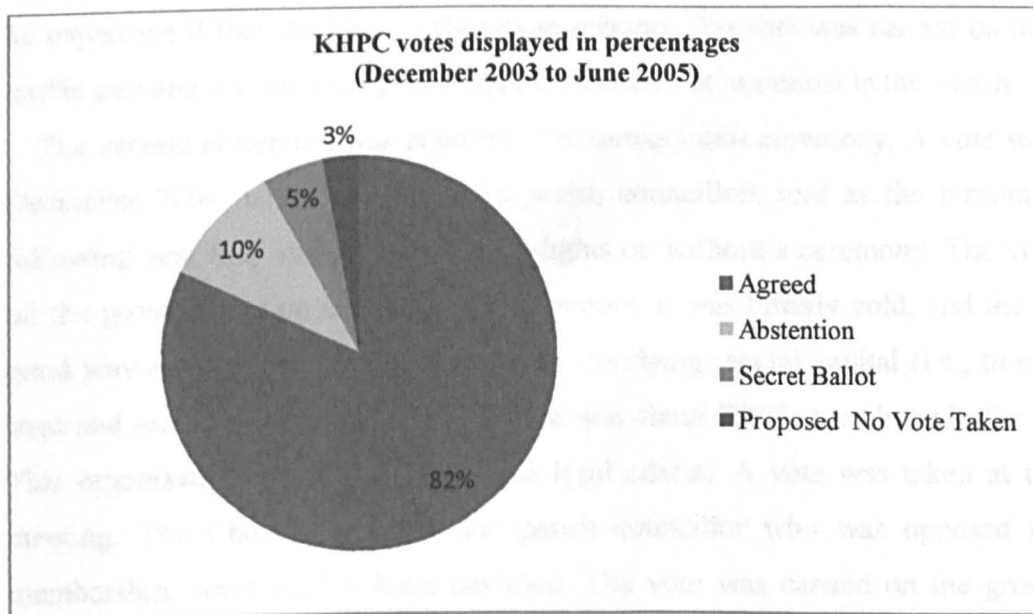
As the attendance of members of the public at Downswood and Kings Hill parish meetings was low during the observation period, it is important to show that the parish councillors were not making arbitrary decisions. The arithmetic mean of members of the public who attended the 20 meetings under observation was 1.75 at DPC and 2.35 at KHPC. The arithmetic mean of parish councillors who attended the same 20 meetings, as we have noted, was 7.05 at both parish councils. The members' attendance score is higher than the residents score because as noted, although the parish councillors are volunteers, they have a statutory duty to attend these meetings. The voting data will show that the parish councillors followed the rules from the legislative guide *Local Council Administration*. It will also show that the decision-making process was democratic and transparent. The two pie charts (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 below) show the votes taken by DPC and KHPC at their meetings. The number of votes taken by DPC was 48 for the period December 2003 to June 2005, and the number of votes taken by KHPC was 61 for the same period (see Appendix 10). The votes have been placed into four categories: Agreed, Abstention, Secret Ballot, and Proposed No Vote Taken.

Figure 5.1: Votes taken at Downswood parish council meetings⁸



Source: Not all of the votes taken at the parish meetings were recorded in the minutes. The votes taken at the parish meetings but not recorded in the minutes are from the field notes organisation schedules.

Figure 5.2: Votes taken at Kings Hill parish council meetings



Source: Not all of the votes taken at the parish meetings were recorded in the minutes. The votes taken at the parish meetings but not recorded in the minutes are from the field notes organisation schedules.

⁸ It has not been possible to round up the calculations to 100%.

Agreed Category: This score shows that there was a high level of agreement in support of most of the agenda items DPC and KHPC voted on. This is not surprising since the parish councillors have a common interest, to make the parish a safer and better place in which to live. In addition *The good councillor's guide* says:

Remember that council decisions are corporate decisions. It is good practice to search for constructive solutions and as much common ground as possible.⁹

Abstention Category: If a parish councillor does not agree with a particular proposal s/he can vote against the proposal or abstain from voting. The abstention score is important because it shows the parish councillors were aware of the rules, and they effectively regulated their own behaviour.¹⁰ At DPC there were three abstentions. The first abstention was about the Church Road traffic calming initiative. At the June 2004 meeting the Chairman said they had received an estimate for the traffic calming but they would not be able to take a vote until the next meeting, as it was not on the agenda. At the July 2004 meeting one of the parish councillors proposed the whole traffic calming scheme should be carried out. This proposal was seconded. But one of the parish councillors was not totally convinced the work was necessary on the grounds that he used the junction daily, without any problems, and it would be expensive if they decided on the whole scheme. The vote was carried on the grounds that traffic calming was necessary, to reduce the number of accidents in the parish.

The second abstention was about the Christmas lights ceremony. A vote was taken at the December 2004 meeting. One of the parish councillors said as the turnout was low, the following year they should just turn the lights on without a ceremony. The vote was carried on the grounds that on the day of the ceremony it was bitterly cold, and the ceremony is a good way of bringing in the community – ‘bridging’ social capital (i.e., to create bonds of trust and reciprocity). The final abstention was about DPC’s membership fee for the KAPC. This organisation provides training and legal advice. A vote was taken at the April 2005 meeting. The Chairman said to the parish councillor who was opposed to paying this membership, sorry you’ve been outvoted. The vote was carried on the grounds that their former clerk had a degree in local government administration, whereas the present clerk was still learning the legalities, and because it is the clerk’s role to advise the parish council, it was felt that it would be unwise not to remain a member.

⁹ *The good councillors guide: Essential guidance for town and parish councillors* The Countryside Agency, 2003, p. 45.

¹⁰ See Appendix 16 for extracts of the agenda items recorded in the minutes of DPC and KHPC referring to the abstentions.

At KHPC there were seven abstentions. The first abstention was about a disagreement concerning the minutes. One of the parish councillors held his own surgeries, and residents had written to him asking him for information about the controversial EMCs. As noted, these charges are only enforceable on the owners of property built from 1998 onwards. The disagreement was discussed at three consecutive parish meetings (April 2004; May 2004; June 2004). The parish councillor had taken it upon himself to write to RK for information, and he also wrote to T&MBC for information about planning issues. The Chairman informed this parish councillor that any letters he received from residents should have been passed to the clerk. A vote was taken and it was agreed that the minutes are not verbatim, but they did reflect what was discussed. One of the parish councillors abstained from voting because he was not present at the meeting concerned. In the minutes it said the standing orders state that councillors must not act as individuals (see Appendix 16).

The Chairman's intervention had two purposes. First, the parish councillor had broken the rules by acting as an individual. Second, as the April 2004 minutes noted, the parish council had only started discussions about these charges with RK, so they were not in a position to tell the residents anything. If the parish council had given out inaccurate information, this would have damaged the Chairman's reputation, and the residents would have lost trust in the parish council. Trust takes a long time to build, but one act of betrayal to destroy it, probably forever (see, for example, Misztal 1996: 173).

The second abstentions were about a donation. A vote was taken at the June 2004 meeting, and it was agreed that KHPC would not give a donation to Town Malling Day, but would reconsider the request the following year. At the next meeting (July 2004), the Chairman was away so a parish councillor stood in as chairman, and the donation was discussed again under 'Matters Arising'. It was decided that since a park and ride facility was provided, KHPC should give a donation. A vote was taken, 4 were in favour, with 3 abstentions. At the next meeting (September 2004) the parish councillor who stood in for the Chairman apologised for bringing up the donation under 'Matters Arising'. A further vote was taken in which 2 were against, 4 were in favour, and there was 1 abstention. It was finally agreed that KHPC would donate £200 to Town Malling Day.

The third abstentions were about a donation towards the ICT suite at the Kings Hill School. The Chairman said he and one of the parish councillors had to declare an interest so they would have to abstain from voting. One of the parish councillors proposed they donate £500. This was seconded. By a show of hands there were 3 votes for, and 3 against. Usually the chairman has the casting vote as this was not possible there was a second proposal to reduce

the donation to £400. This was seconded. By a show of hands there were 3 votes for, and 3 against. To resolve the voting problem the Chairman suggested they donate £300, as a gesture of good will. This proposal was seconded. By a show of hands there were 5 votes for, and 1 against. It was recorded in the minutes of June 2005 (05/231) that there were two proposals before the third vote was carried (see Appendix 16).

Secret Ballots: At DPC the 'secret ballot' score was only 8%, while at KHPC it was lower at only 5%. As noted, parish councils are legally entitled to discuss some business in private. At DPC the Chairman requested all members of the public leave the meeting room on four occasions (March 2004; July 2004; December 2004; January 2005). On the first three occasions the parish councillors were discussing the co-option of new members. On the last occasion they were discussing the employment of a new clerk. At Kings Hill there were three secret ballots (April 2004; June 2004; December 2004). On all three occasions the parish councillors were discussing the co-option of new members. But unlike Downswood, it was only those who applied to fill the vacancies that were asked to leave the meeting room. The fact that members of the public were only excluded on discussions concerning personnel issues should be seen positively. Whether the parish councillors discussed confidential business at their meetings because few members of the public attended these meetings is a possibility. Something only the parish councillors could answer. Nevertheless, discussions concerning financial business, which could have been kept private, were discussed openly at both parish meetings and accurately recorded in their minutes. It is this openness which helps build trust at the local level. If residents had been opposed to the parish council making decisions on their behalf, more of them would have attended the meetings to complain.¹¹

Proposed No Vote Taken: This score only applied to KHPC, at the June 2005 meeting the parish councillors were asked by the KAPC, to discuss and agree two motions presented for inclusion at their AGM:

Motion 1: At the discretion of the case officer of the ODPM, there should be a need for all parties relating public concern at a Public Inquiry to have the benefit of legal counsel.

Motion 2: That KAPC in supporting the future for allotments concept calls for the government to ensure that Local Government Authorities should be held legally responsible to enforce their legal responsibilities in the provision and in the administration of allotments.

¹¹ Throughout the empirical research only one resident came to complain. This gentleman was opposed to KHPC's proposal for a youth facility and their proposal for a skateboard park but on the grounds of Nimbyism (see Appendices 21 and 22).

The Chairman informed the meeting that if they needed legal representation, they would have to pay for it, and he saw no need to support the first motion. The proposal to support the first motion was put to the parish councillors. It fell because it was not seconded. The Chairman informed the meeting that KHPC fulfils its legal obligation to provide allotments so there was no need for them to support the second motion. The proposal was put to the parish councillors. Like the first motion it fell because it was not seconded.

DPC and KHPC strategy for crime reduction

Policing the parish at Downswood is significantly different to that of Kings Hill. DPC relies on a strong sense of community. A parish newsletter is delivered to the residents four times a year. In this residents are requested to report any crime to the parish clerk, who in turn informs the local police officer. At the start of the empirical research the police constable responsible for Downswood read out a police report at every parish meeting. He policed a large area, mainly to the north of Maidstone. The problem of having only one police officer patrolling more than one area is that s/he can be called away at anytime, whereas a PCSO patrols a specified area. The policing at Downswood did change. At the April 2005 meeting the Chairman introduced the new neighbourhood beat officer. His role was one of 'high profile policing'. He patrolled on foot or bicycle so he could get to know people. Although the number of parishes he patrolled was reduced he could still be called away from Downswood to cover other duties. Kings Hill has widespread 24-hour CCTV policing; two PCSO's funded by KHPC, the developer, and the government; plus a public funded police officer; and Kings Hill Security Guards. The crime data for both parishes is displayed in Table 5.14 below. It will show us whether the amount of crime at Downswood (less policed parish), is higher or lower than that of Kings Hill (more policed parish).

Table 5.14: Crime at Downswood and Kings Hill (December 2003 to June 2005)

| Category | Downswood | Kings Hill |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Antisocial Behaviour | 7.64 | 11.70 |
| Break In | 1.80 | 1.30 |
| Theft | 10.80 | 9.60 |
| Criminal Damage | 9.44 | 1.70 |
| Domestic Violence | 0.45 | 1.91 |
| Road Traffic Accident | 0.45 | 1.10 |
| Arson | 0.45 | 0.42 |
| Traffic Offence | 0.45 | 3.83 |
| Un-Coded Offence | 0.45 | 0.21 |
| Fraud | 0.00 | 0.21 |

Note: Rate of crime per 1000 head of population.

Source: Own calculations. Not all of the crime discussed at the parish meetings was recorded in the minutes. The crime discussed at the parish council meetings, but not recorded in the minutes, is from the field notes.¹²

The amount of crime at Downswood is similar to that of Kings Hill with the exception of three categories: antisocial behaviour, criminal damage, and traffic offences. Antisocial behaviour is particularly high at Kings Hill 11.70 in comparison to Downswood 7.64. This could be because Downswood is a smaller close-knit community where more people know one another and police each others behaviour and this reduces this category. On the other hand, it could be that Kings Hill is less tolerant of antisocial behaviour and this increases reporting. Criminal damage at Downswood 9.44 is significantly higher than at Kings Hill 1.70. This could be because during the day most people are out at Downswood so there is an opportunity for this type of crime to be committed. Traffic offences are higher at Kings Hill 3.83 in comparison to Downswood 0.45. This could be related to the high visibility policing at Kings Hill, which includes widespread 24/7 CCTV policing. To find out if any of these assumptions are accurate, the crime data was taken to the Kent Police HQ Neighbourhood Policing Team. This is an extract from what one of the team members said:

The criminal damage at Downswood may well be related to the parade of shops. This may be where criminal damage takes place. Fear of crime amongst the public can be disproportionate when compared to the actual crime that occurs. But at the two parishes you have chosen for your research the type of incidents the PCSO's are dealing with are around quality of life for those within the community. Considering the crime data covers nearly two years the amount of crime in both parishes is not that high. The Kent Crime and Victimisation Surveys (KCVS) are monitoring the fear of crime around Kent to gauge this. The fear of crime is generally higher than the actual crime, which is generally lower. The antisocial behaviour at Kings Hill is interesting. I'm surprised there

¹² For a list of all the crime and how it has been categorised see Appendix 11.

seems to be so much there. At Kings Hill you say there is more security and crime has been designed out. If I remember right this estate was built in the 90s, whereas Downswood was built in the 80s. Maybe during that time there would have been a number of differences in how the developers design estates. I mean with security in mind. Developers consult the police on crime reduction measures these days. Going back to the antisocial behaviour, as I said, I'm surprised it's higher at Kings Hill. It could be the fact that a lower level of criminality and disorder is accepted more in one area than the other. It could be the case that at Downswood families have been there for a long time, and so there is a feeling of social belonging, and people monitoring what's going on. The traffic offences, well at Kings Hill you have a major road unlike Downswood. I would think this is why this category is higher at Kings Hill.¹³

Conclusion

The first performance indicator is the attendance statistics of the parish councillors. These statistics are impressive considering parish councillors are volunteers. However, it must be remembered that they have a statutory duty to attend these meetings. The parish councillors' attendance statistics are especially important for building 'bonding' social capital (i.e., the trust and reciprocity between the parish councillors), which is essential for efficient and effective decision-making. As noted, in Chapter 4, the parish councillors not only meet socially, at Kings Hills there are two married couples.

The second performance indicator is the attendance statistics of members of the public. These statistics are disappointing but when the meeting is about something of interest to members of the public, they will attend. An unusually high number attended the meeting about the proposal to close Downswood post office. DPC were reaching out to the residents for their support. This is a powerful example of 'bridging' social capital. In this context the parish councillors of Downswood successfully created strong bonds of trust and reciprocity with the residents. As we know weak ties (bridging social capital) to acquaintances from different socio-economic backgrounds often provide access to more information (and resources) than we receive from strong ties (bonding social capital) to those we meet on a regular face-to-face basis (see Granovetter 1973). As this meeting is about how the parish council successfully generated and/or mobilised/expanded stocks of social capital, this case study will be analysed in Chapter 6.

¹³ These are the thoughts (permission to quote given) of Sergeant Alan Willett and they do not reflect upon Kent Police. The interview took place at Kent Police HQ, Sutton Road, Maidstone, Kent, on 30 January 2008.

The third performance indicator is the financial competence of the parish councils. This shows both parish councils were very successful at raising income. Downswood Borough Councillor's comments suggest that property values are an incentive to keep the parish in good order. In fact, at both parishes a considerable amount of money is spent on keeping the club realm in good order. At Kings Hill, the market model of local governance, even more emphasis is placed on maintaining the infrastructure to the highest standards possible by KHREMCL, set up by the developer. The Labour government and Conservative party are both supportive of building stocks of social capital and devolving powers to the local level: new localism. This includes finding ways of raising funds to provide additional services. All of the data tables are proof that both parish councils are financially competent.

The fourth performance indicator is the voting data. This is important because it shows there was a high degree of consensual decision-making at the parish meetings. If the parish councillors continually voted against the motions put forward by the chairman, as the leadership theory discussed in Chapter 4 said, the chairman's leadership position would become untenable. With parish politics a strong and effective chairman is one way of solving collective-action problems.

The final performance indicator is the crime data. This is particularly interesting when considering the different models of governance. Clearly at Kings Hill much more money is spent on crime prevention. There is 24/7 CCTV coverage plus two PCSO's who patrol the parish most of the time. However, it is not easy to explain the differences in the crime data without more detailed information. At Downswood it would be helpful to know when the criminal damage was committed. If it was during the day when most people are out, then it would be wise to police the parish throughout the day, like Kings Hill, to reduce this category. Nevertheless, the police officer from Kent Police HQ said the crime levels are low in both parishes. This suggests effective leadership is important. Both DPC and KHPC work hard to prevent criminality. Finally, by combining social capital theory with theories of leadership and club goods, this chapter has provided us with a better understanding of how the parish councillors can build and mobilise stocks of social capital to resolve collective-action problems.

6 INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE: QUALITATIVE

In Chapter 1 a copy of McKenzie's table of urban restructuring in the USA was displayed. In this table he sets out the differences between the two competing models of governance: centralisers versus decentralisers. Although both Downswood Parish Council (DPC) and Kings Hill Parish Council (KHPC) have all the features of traditional parish councils, Kings Hill is unique. It is a parish council within a quasi-gated community and the role of the developer is important because like McKenzie's decentraliser model of governance, the developer is involved in the governance of Kings Hill. Therefore, as this chapter unfolds it will be possible to make some comparisons between McKenzie's decentraliser model of governance and KHPC, the market model of local governance. Obviously, as both DPC and KHPC have all the features of traditional parish councils they will also have characteristics of the centraliser model of governance (see Table 1.2: Urban restructuring in the UK). However, the main purpose of this chapter, as noted in Chapter 5, is to focus on policy implementation. We will analyse how successful DPC and KHPC are as problem-solvers and service providers. Unlike Putnam's quantitative indicators, we will describe in detail how the parish councillors have worked in partnerships to implement their objectives, and how they generate and/or mobilise/expand social capital.

Parish councils working in partnerships providing services and mobilising social capital

First, we will argue why DPC has to work in partnership with the higher tiers of local government, Kent County Council (KCC) and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to achieve its objectives. To address the argument two case studies will be analysed: Church Road traffic calming initiative, and the protest to save Downswood post office. The justification for selecting the first case study is because open spaces can be linked to controlling antisocial behaviour. The justification for selecting the second case study is because it is also a public space and a hub of social capital. Young mothers and the elderly are often the vulnerable members in society, and having a post office in the community means they can go there at least once a week to collect their family benefits/pensions. This in turn leads to familiarity, trust and reciprocity, the very essence of social capital that helps create a strong and cohesive society.

Second, we will argue why KHPC has to work in partnership with the higher tiers of local government, Kent County Council (KCC), Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (T&MBC), and the developer (Rouse Kent) to achieve its objectives. To address the argument three case studies will be analysed: the takeover of Kings Hill community centre, the youth facility and skateboard park initiatives. The justification for the first case study is because it is a public space where residents meet and form strong bonds. Like the Downswood post office, it is a hub of social capital. The other two case studies are linked to the takeover of the community centre. As these two case study discussions unfold they will show how both club goods can be linked to controlling antisocial behaviour.

Keeping in mind Putnam's warning not to give governments credit or blame for matters they have no control over (Putnam 1993: 65), at the end of this chapter a table will be provided to assess how long each objective has taken DPC and KHPC to reach an outcome. How open spaces are managed, as the case studies above have indicated, is one of the interests of this study so before we introduce the case studies of Downswood and Kings Hill we need to discuss open spaces.

At the Urban Summit in October 2002, John Prescott, then Deputy Prime Minister, spoke about the selective regeneration projects in Europe and the USA, as being integral to urban renaissance in Britain. He said that it is about 'defining a new vision – what the Americans call a new urbanism' (Prescott 2002: 1). New urbanism is supportive of ideals most would agree with: mixed-use communities where people are encouraged to walk about; the integration of public transport; and the importance of bringing in civic institutions. The new urbanists do not attempt to solve urban problems of deprivation related to the fair distribution of wealth. Instead they see a greater role for the market in making these types of adjustments (Raco 2003: 243). Properties can be sold at a premium through successful marketing. Kings Hill website says if one is purchasing one of the properties on the development, one will be buying into a certain 'lifestyle'. As noted in Chapter 1, Kings Hill is a mixed-use development where people, can live, work and shop. Marketing like this works on people's emotions and desires that they too can live in an old-fashioned and safe community, where neighbours look out for one another. Whether there ever was a golden age where people lived

in such harmony is not the point. The vision has another side to it. It is about the restructuring of open spaces.¹ In this sense open spaces have taken on a new meaning of importance:

People want clean streets and open spaces free from antisocial behaviour. Green spaces are important since they're at the heart of it. The idea is to make desirable places that people choose to live in and remain in. The quality of public spaces is critical. The ODPM has a commitment to make a difference. In 2002 the Government said we need to look at public spaces and improve co-ordination across government with local government and communities. Aligning goals and delivering. And community outcomes are important. There are many community green spaces across the country. There is a lot of litter and rubbish and fly-tipping around and people are saying this is a problem. There has also been the problem of abandoned cars, but we're getting on top of that. To look at the quality of our neighbourhoods the ODPM and local authorities have conducted assessments. They looked at how satisfied people are living in their area and whether their area meets basic standards. The focus was on the neighbourhood level. Among the questions asked was: How can we give people more of a say? What are the neighbourhood priorities? Current work is being undertaken on giving people a greater say and engaging them. Some have said they want to see their bins emptied every week. And they want to see the services responding to their concerns. Public spaces are also about the journeys people make to their place of work and how they socialise. Also we meet people in our neighbourhoods. There is a need to make greater use of our open spaces. There is also a need to hold forums on the priorities of individual neighbourhoods because one-size doesn't fit-all.²

Notice in this extract from a presentation given to delegates at the Sixth National Regeneration Convention, there is more than a hint of the new localism described in Chapter 3. The presentation is about giving people at the neighbourhood level a say and engaging them so they can help provide quality open spaces for themselves. But as with all concepts we need to define what open spaces are. Madanipour (1999) defined public spaces as areas within towns, cities and the countryside, which everyone can access, where strangers and citizens alike have entry with limited restrictions. Shonfield (1998) defined public space in its broad sense as 'any place that people use when not at work or at home', while (Holmes 1997;

¹ For a full explanation of urban restructuring of the public realm see: Chris Webster 'Property rights and the public realm: gates, green belts, and Gemeinschaft,' *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 29, 2002: 397-412.

² Presentation by Tim Pope (Head of Branch in Liveability and Sustainable Communities) given at the National Regeneration Convention 2005.

Crang 2000) defined it in its broadest sense as ‘cyberspace’. Figure 6.1 below was constructed to help define open space in the absence of national guidelines and legislation.³

Figure 6.1: Typology of open space

| Open Space | |
|---|--|
| Any land which has not been built on within the boundary of a village, town or city which provides, or has the potential to provide, environmental, social and/or economic benefits to communities, whether direct or indirect. | |
| Green Space A subset of open space, consisting of any vegetated land or structure, water or geological feature within urban areas. | Civic Space A subset of open space, consisting of urban squares, market places and other paved or hard landscaped areas with a civic function. |
| Parks and gardens Amenity green space Children’s play areas Sports facilities Natural/semi-natural green space Other functional green space | Civic squares Market places Pedestrian streets Promenades and sea fronts |

Source: Kit Campbell Associates (2001)

Designing antisocial behaviour out of open spaces

The design of housing and its accompanying infrastructure is important for successful open spaces. There are two schools of thought related to this. One view suggests making the public realm more secure and protected from crime. It argues crime is directly related to design (Newman, 1972; Coleman 1990). The idea is to protect the public realm and make it more hospitable by creating cul-de-sacs and segregated neighbourhoods free from strangers. But there is no evidence design is a major factor in creating or reducing crime, and yet it might have an impact on the fear of crime (Smith 1987; Poyner 1983; Poyner and Webb 1991). On the other hand, by making space more secure this makes it more of a target, especially if areas are not overlooked by the public. This view (Hillier and Hanson 1984; Hillier 1996) is more supportive of neighbourhoods where strangers and residents mingle together. Safety comes from the knowledge people on the streets are monitoring what is going on in the public realm.⁴ The Chairman of DPC said:

The problems of antisocial behaviour at Downswood are related to the way the development has been designed. Most of the trouble takes place behind the shops. Before the rest of the development was built there was outline planning permission for a small parade of shops and a medical centre. In

³*Literature Review of Public Space and Local Environments for the Cross Cutting Review*, Katie Williams and Stephen Green, November 2001 www.communities.gov.uk

⁴ *ibid.*

the original plan the shops were facing the community centre, but instead they were built facing the main road. The developer decided to build the shops with flats above them and a separate medical centre. The residents of Downswood had to fight the developer and in the end they agreed to lower the level of the flats to one storey. But behind the flats where the medical centre is situated is where the 'yobs' congregate, and because this area is not visible from the main road, they can misbehave without being disturbed. The main road, which runs through the parish, is also badly planned. The residents applied for central reservations to make it a safe place for people to cross the road. The main road has a winding spine and in the initial part of the development there were no houses fronting this road. If there'd been houses with their front gardens overlooking this main road, then there would've been more pedestrians walking about and this helps lower the speed of the traffic. Nowadays roads aren't built like this. The residents also had concerns about the road surface. There've been incidents where cars have taken the bend too fast and gone through rear garden fences. There's an ancient road called Spot Lane and this has been pedestrianised. But once again this road isn't overlooked and the 'yobs' meet there and consume alcohol and dump their empty beer cans and cigarette ends.⁵

These comments are based on the Chairman's experience. They support the latter view that crime prevention is enhanced by the positive features of housing and infrastructure design where pedestrians wander about freely, and monitor what is going on in the public realm. This is not surprising since Downswood is a traditional parish. The method by which crime is reduced and controlled in gated communities is called Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). This involves physical surveillance such as: increasing outside lighting, reducing the blind spots, and installing CCTV cameras. But the main emphasis is on influencing social behaviour. The idea is that any physical changes are made to promote a 'defensible space', which is based on three propositions: (1) territoriality – people are more inclined to defend territory if they identify it as theirs; (2) natural surveillance – if it is easy to see what is going on and others are also observing what is going on, then criminals will be deterred; and (3) image – the visual characteristics can prevent or encourage crime, for example, Neighbourhood Watch signs and swiftly clearing up graffiti indicates crime and antisocial behaviour are not tolerated (Blakely and Snyder 1997: 162-163). What this is really saying is the method of crime prevention preferred by developers of gating is social capital. It is the social capital described in Chapter 4 that Coleman identified in his example of the wholesale diamond market. The relationship between the merchants

⁵ Telephone interview with Roz Cheesman (Chairman of DPC): 14 July 2003.

involves norms that endorse good behaviour and cooperation. Rouse Kent's marketing managers said:

Kings Hill isn't a gated community. We employ security guards for patrolling the offices but they don't patrol the housing estate unless this is requested of them. Kings Hill has been arranged, for example the parking areas and the lighting make it security by design instead of security by police. We don't like the gated community idea. We prefer to call it a community settlement because it's not contained.⁶

When it was suggested that gating has positive aspects especially if it makes people feel safe, Rouse Kent's marketing manager replied:

Yes, but we see gated communities as elitist.⁷

Kings Hill is representative of the former view, which believes that the public realm should be made more secure and protected from crime: segregated neighbourhoods free from strangers. Although as noted in Chapter 1, there is no gate on the main entrance to Kings Hill, parts of this 'community settlement' has flats and houses which are behind gates (see Appendix 17). A further distinguishing characteristic of this market model of governance is that the developer set up Kings Hill Residential Estate Management Company Limited (KHREMCL) to collect an annual charge from residents living in the houses built from 1998 onwards.⁸ In America as noted in Chapter 1, a common feature of the gated community is the mandatory homeowner association (HOA). This association is a private body which can make its own rules. The problem is that they are not always communal or democratic. In some of them each household is given just one vote instead of one for each adult. In others the number of votes is determined by the value of the property (Blakely and Snyder 1997: 21). KHREMCL has only one resident on its board. We will return to this troubling feature below. In short, Kings Hill is an example of the new urbanism described above.

⁶ Extract from an interview with Caroline Binns (Rouse Kent's marketing manager) at the development marketing office on 17 April 2003.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ There is a residents association but their members are mostly from the 'old' part of Kings Hill who do not pay the charge. The estate maintenance charge is somewhat divisive. The charge was introduced by the developer when it became apparent that they were unable to sell enough land for business use (to help finance the estate management of the residential area) and that the residential area was going to be much larger than originally planned. Rouse Kent were unable to impose the charge retrospectively and therefore the charge levied on all new dwellings built after a certain date. The developer has agreed to continue to finance their estate management activities on the 'old' part until their departure when the development is complete. After that; who knows? (This extract is from an email sent by the Chairman of KHPC on 21 November 2003).

Why is trust so important?

Now that we have a better understanding of the differences and similarities between McKenzie's models of governance and DPC and KHPC, we must address our main task which is to analyse how the two parish councils have generated and/or mobilised/expanded social capital. To do this first we need to discuss the concepts of trust and reciprocity, and then the difference between 'thin' and 'thick' trust. As we know social capital has three elements (a) norms and values, (b) social networks, and (c) outcomes. The first element consists of subjective values and attitudes. The values people hold tell them what is important to them and society, and they help people to make decisions. Especially important are the values and attitudes related to trust and reciprocity. This is because they are crucial for social and political cooperation and stability. Social capital is based on the values and attitudes which involve cooperation, trust, and the ability to empathise so that people will treat others as fellow citizens, instead of strangers or even enemies. In this way social capital is a powerful driving force because it has the ability to transform individuals from being self-seeking rational actors with limited social conscience, into civic actors with a shared sense of the common good. Reciprocity is not about rational choice theory and tit-for-tat calculations in which actors are sure that a good deed will be repaid immediately. With generalised reciprocity it is assumed that a good deed today will be repaid in the future, and not necessarily by the recipient of the good deed. It could be repaid by a complete stranger. So reciprocity involves uncertainty and risk. Put another way, every day we have to place some trust in others, and social capital is responsible for changing Hobbes state of nature where life is nasty, brutish, and short, into something more desirable (Newton 2001: 225-226).

Thick trust is paramount for small-scale face-to-face communities where there is mechanical solidarity, which has been generated by daily interaction between people, whom are often from the same tribe, ethnic background, or class. These communities are usually homogeneous and exclusive and impose strict social sanctions on their members, which are necessary to enforce thick trust. In the West thick trust is formed in total institutions (see Chapter 4). These total institutions have a tendency to generate thick internal trust and distrust of outsiders. Thick trust of small closely integrated groups is associated with simple forms of 'primary' democracy involving direct political participation. Parish councils can generate thick trust, but as we know they are part of a much larger governance structure. Modern society however, is based on the thin trust associated with the organic solidarity of looser secondary relations. Especially important are the social networks of voluntary

association. Thin trust according to Granovetter (1973) is the product of weak ties that form a long-lasting and powerful basis for social integration in large-scale society. For Tocqueville and Putnam, face-to-face interaction in voluntary associations is vital for the generation of democratic norms. In these associations people learn the civic virtues of trust and reciprocity. These are called the internal effects. There are also external effects. Externally, there are numerous and overlapping groups and these create the cross-cutting ties that bind society together (Newton 2001: 228-229). Now that we understand why trust is so important we can start the case studies.

Downswood policy objectives

The detailed transcripts for each case study have been placed in the appendices. Each case study will provide information on whether associational membership in the parish council brings the parish councillors (hereafter simply 'the members') into contact with the wider society. If the parish council association is not narrowly constituted, it should be effective in promoting generalised trust and reciprocity.

Church Road traffic calming initiative: analysis of the decision-making process

The members discussed this initiative at the January 2004 parish meeting (hereafter simply 'the meeting'). It was discussed at a further ten meetings. At the twelfth meeting (June 2005), the transcripts record the traffic calming is in operation (see Appendix 18). To implement this initiative the members had to form a partnership with Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and Kent County Council (KCC). It would not have been possible for them to work in isolation because: First, the developer (Wimpey) handed over the responsibility of the roads to the Highways Authority, which is a part of KCC. Second, the proposal for traffic calming had to be approved by both higher tiers of local government. This changed during the planning stage when KCC took control of all highway functions from MBC. Third, MBC and KCC could have provided funding but they did not consider traffic calming at this junction to be a high priority. This is why DPC decided to fund this initiative. But DPC still could not act independently because KCC had to provide the design and contractor to carry out the work, and undertake all the safety audits. Finally, DPC could not change the signage in the parish ('give way' sign to 'stop'). This was not because of any constraints imposed on DPC by the higher tiers of government. It was because of the Highways Act of 1980. In short, the traditional parish model of local governance is constrained because it has no statutory authority over the highways.

Although DPC was constrained by the higher tiers of local government, the transcripts indicate that the partnership between DPC and the Borough Councillor was important. He attended nearly all their meetings. In an interview he was asked what motivated him to spend time helping Downswood community:

What motivates me? That's rather interesting. I find that difficult to answer because I've been in political life most of my, most of my adult life has been involved in politics, starting when I was twenty-five, and right up to now. And therefore I have a strong belief in well, I have a strong belief, well how can I put it, it's very difficult. In working for the community I get satisfaction out of achieving things for the community. So therefore, it's a two-way effort. I'm giving, but I'm getting, because I get great kudos out of what I might achieve and I don't always achieve things, but when I do. So I think that's one of the greatest motivations. And of course I get recognised for it. That's being honest with you.⁹

In this quotation a 'two-way effort' is described, but it is about more than giving and receiving, it is about a relationship of trust and reciprocity between these two partners. Over the years DPC have known this Borough Councillor they know he is not only a strong supporter of local democracy, but also trustworthy and will go out of his way to help them. It cannot be denied that the linking social capital DPC formed with this Borough Councillor was especially important. His experience and knowledge of his ward and borough council procedures helped them on many occasion. He often used his social capital to put them in contact with the right people who could help them. At the October 2004 meeting he said:

I'll get the highways engineer to come and show me what she means. I'll get in touch with her personally. Email is good but not like a face-to-face discussion.

The traffic calming initiative is an excellent example of local democracy in action. For the size of the parish this initiative was and is still a major success. The danger was highlighted by DPC and the residents were brought into the political process (see Appendix 18). It would be wrong to say the residents of Downswood are apathetic. They are interested in getting involved in local politics and no doubt this is the case in other neighbourhoods. This could be related to the fact that DPC is not distant like national politicians. They are in close contact with the residents. They invite them to get involved and keep them informed through the parish council newsletter. Today the government looks at opinion polls and focus groups but

⁹ Extract from an interview with Maidstone Borough Councillor Winckless at Maidstone, Kent on 10 November 2003 (see Appendix 13).

this does not bring people into local politics like DPC has and still does. This is the bridging social capital community leaders should aim for. This tier of local governance is not about following the party line. DPC is not trying to score political points. Their meetings are consensual not adversarial. This type of local politics is not about power struggles, it is about representing the needs of the community. This case study has provided us with evidence that this association brings its members into contact with the wider society, which consists of people from varied socio-economic backgrounds. It is therefore, not narrowly constituted, so it is effective in promoting generalised trust and reciprocity. Nevertheless, there has to be an incentive to get DPC and the residents involved. The incentive was the provision of a club good, traffic calming, resulting in a safe open space for the whole community.

Campaign to save Downswood post office: analysis of the decision-making process

The members discussed this campaign at the July 2004 parish meeting. It was discussed at a further three meetings. At the fifth meeting (November 2004), the transcripts record the closure date of the Downswood post office had been received (see Appendix 19). Like the traffic calming initiative, DPC made use of their Borough Councillor's expertise to guide them through the process. At the protest 'special meeting' he said:

There hasn't been proper consultation. Giving them (Downswood and Bearsted Parish Councils) information and telling them what they're going to do is not consultation. This Committee, this Parliamentary Committee did say in fact that the local people, the borough councils and the local communities, the parish councils should be involved in the planning, and we haven't been involved in the planning.

This is a serious criticism which on the one hand only further reduces trust in national government, while on the other hand it increases trust in local government. More than 150 people attended the protest 'special meeting' to gain support from their local politicians. There are several factors why local post offices have been closing. Most important of all, they are not competitive. Therefore, the government decided not to subsidise them with the amount of taxpayers' money, which would be required to keep them all open. It could be argued that the situation was not helped when in 2003 the government started to pay benefits into bank accounts electronically. However, in fairness, many of the services once provided by post offices are now available elsewhere. For example, stamps can be purchased in supermarkets; parcels can be delivered by private courier; direct debit means people no longer have to go to their local post office to pay for their television licence etc.; and emails

and texts have reduced the necessity for people to write letters. Basically, people have been voting with their feet and going to supermarkets for stamps and stationery instead of using their local post offices. Therefore, the post office closure is a paradoxical situation because the people who want it to remain open are the same people who have been using competing services, which have contributed to the demise of the local post office.

The campaign to save the Downswood post office in a sense failed, and Downswood lost this local service (club good). On the other hand, it is actually a success story. The parish meetings were informative and DPC successfully mobilised the residents to get involved. The protest 'special meeting' was skilfully organised, especially as it was held at such short notice. An impressive list of guest speakers, were invited to give expert advice (see Appendix 19). The petition was also successful, since it was signed by no fewer than 1,530 members of the public. The community came together and formed a powerful local partnership. DPC has developed a powerful tool, it has learned how to build bridges (bridging social capital) and mobilise the residents. Like the traffic calming initiative, this case study has provided us with evidence that this association brings its members into contact with the wider society, which consists of people from varied socio-economic backgrounds. It is therefore, not narrowly constituted, so it is effective in promoting generalised trust and reciprocity. In the words of the Chairman:

The very mixed community at Downswood alone includes many without private transport and many who are elderly. They do not have the luxury of choice.

The incentive for political participation was to turnout to try and save this local service (club good). Although DPC has built up a strong relationship of trust and reciprocity with the residents, it is important to remember that incentives are also a powerful driving force. As the transcripts recorded, the government offered postmasters and postmistresses generous 'compensation packages' to give up their post offices (see Appendix 19).

Finally, at the November 2004 meeting the Chairman summed up the reason why local shops are important:

I feel sorry for the pensioners living here, and it's a social thing for meeting somebody from your neighbourhood. It's a way of checking people living alone are safe. If a regular customer is missing the local shops notice and can get someone to check on that old person. We put this in our petition we sent to Post Office Limited.

This suggests Coleman's theory is correct. As discussed in Chapter 4, if individuals do cooperate, it is because it is in their individual interest to do so. The shop keeper wants the residents business so it is in his interest to take an interest in their well-being. In this way relationships can generate obligations and expectations, and this in turn leads to trust and reciprocity.

Kings Hill policy objectives

To maintain uniformity, we will follow the same pattern of analysis as we did for the DPC case studies above. The transcripts for the three case studies, which have been analysed below, clearly show that Kings Hill is very different from Downswood. We are referring here to the impact of the developer at Kings Hill. We will be able to understand how variations in the organisational characteristics of the policymaking structure at Kings Hill, affect the production of social capital.

Takeover of Kings Hill Community Centre: analysis of the decision-making process

Although as the parish councillors said residents of properties built from 1998 onwards agreed to the estate maintenance charges (EMCs) imposed on them by Rouse Kent (RK), because residents of the 'old' part of Kings Hill (known as the 'first village') do not have to pay this charge, property owners of the newer part of the development feel resentful that they have to pay. In short, owners of properties at the older part of Kings Hill are perceived to be free-riders.¹⁰ It is not necessary for us to discuss the significance of the free-rider problem here, we will return to this important design feature of the club realm in the concluding chapter.

KHPC discussed the EMCs at the March 2004 meeting with a view of taking this over when RK leaves. Then as noted, KHPC will be more like an American homeowner association (HOA). To understand why who controls the EMCs is important we will describe one of the key features of gating, that is the HOA and its underlying system of governance. In gated communities entry to the club is the purchase of the property which comes with CC&Rs (covenants, conditions, and restrictions) as part of the deed. Unlike traditional parishes, as discussed in Chapter 4, where the maintenance and control of the communal

¹⁰ The facilities at Kings Hill are available for use by all residents. The maintenance costs of the facilities and common areas in the "first village" are apportioned so that an appropriate amount is paid for by Rouse Kent (Residential) Ltd. Therefore the residents paying a fee in accordance with their Deed of Covenant are NOT subsidising the "first village" residents. See Frequently Asked Questions www.kings-hill.com/living-in-kings-hill/residential-estate-management

infrastructure is transferred over to the local authority, in gated communities each property owner shares legal ownership of the roads, paths and other club goods. The developer will set up a HOA, which can enforce the CC&Rs and collect EMCs (annual club membership fee) from the residents. The developer can use CC&Rs to protect property values by making sure there is uniformity in the development. This can include not allowing homeowners to change the design of the windows, or colour of the paintwork, right down to insisting the grass is not allowed to grow beyond a given height (see Appendix 1). Basically, the HOA is a private entity which can make and enforce its own rules (Blakely and Snyder, 1997: 20-21). At Kings Hill, RK set up a company to collect the EMCs, Kings Hill Residential Estate Management Company Limited (KHREMCL). KHPC is a legal entity and it could takeover the role of a HOA. If KHPC takes over the responsibility for collecting the EMCs, it will have removed constraints held over it by the developer. This is why even at this stage KHPC is not unlike McKenzie's decentraliser model of governance.

The takeover of Kings Hill Community Centre (KHCC) was decided at the December 2003 meeting (see Appendix 20). A letter was sent to the management team (MT) to inform them of the January 2004 meeting, in which they would be invited to discuss and join the new management committee (MC). The Chairman said:

We've consulted our solicitor who has informed us of the procedure. Once we've taken it over we'll be responsible for all the losses. We'll need to set up a new committee and work out items of employment. We hope to retain the centre manager.

At the January 2004 meeting four residents came to witness the dissolution of their MT. One of the parish councillors said:

We need a positive spirit. Although we have to follow the legal umbrella of voting we must treat all the members as equals. It shouldn't be huge issues they have to vote on. We normally get to reach a consensus so whether the members are co-opted or parish councillors, they'll all have an equal say and equal workload. It's just a theoretical problem. I feel it's possible to do that. It's a spirit of cooperation I'm promoting.

One of the members from the MT replied:

You say it's a theoretical problem it's nevertheless a voting problem... We haven't had support in the past. It's about an element of trust if you're trying to bring together two halves.

The Chairman replied:

I feel you're being negative. I think for nearly five years we've been going and we've had only one vote where it went fifty-fifty, and the chairman had the casting vote... If a member of the public made a suggestion I've no doubt it would be carried. Whilst I understand the principle is relevant, we're looking forward to a good community centre spirit.

It was agreed that any disagreements between the 'two halves' would be recorded in the minutes. The Chairman said:

Yes it'll be recorded in the minutes. But like we've already said it's about a positive spirit coming up with ideas together, and it'll be transparent. I strongly believe it's going to work.

At the February 2004 meeting the EMCs were discussed. The parish councillors were worried about the accounts of the MT. The Chairman said:

We need a database of suppliers and according to our 'standing orders' we need to get three quotes for any work. This is why it was a good idea for us to takeover the centre finances. I'm going to a meeting with RK. I'll ask about the EMCs.

At the March 2004 meeting the vacancy for a new parish councillor was discussed. It was agreed that someone from the former MT should be considered so they could vote on decisions. At the April 2004 meeting the Chairman said:

The good news is we have a former member of the MT on board and others are considering joining us.

The takeover of KHCC is a success story. The finances were not being run effectively. Once KHPC took control of the finances they had to be run in accordance with the rules of local council administration. Bourdieu's theory, as we noted in Chapter 4, is concerned with power relationships and can help us understand the takeover of the centre in a positive light. Although it started off as a power struggle between the residents and KHPC, it did not take long before members of the MT came back on board. This case study is an example of where formal rules, which make the decision-making process fair and transparent, and KHPC's concern to treat all the members as 'equals', have both helped to generate social capital and trust. This case study also helps us to address an under-examined empirical question in the social capital debate: Do social networks generate trust or does widespread trust make the development of the social network possible in the first place? In this context the social network (parish council) has generated trust. Nevertheless, there must have been trust and

reciprocity between the parish councillors in the first place, when they got together to create KHPC.

Youth facility initiative: analysis of the decision-making process

As we know from the case study above, KHPC took control of KHCC finances on 1 January 2004. An intentional action of disbanding the former MT and setting up a new MC will result in a 'by product', the youth facility. The benefits this club good provides will be available to the wider community. The youths are being involved in the planning process, and they will take part in the activities once it has opened. This will result in a 'structure of obligations and expectations, responsibility and authority, and norms (or rules) and sanctions which will bring about an effectively functioning organisation' (Coleman, 1994: 313). The idea of the youth facility is to keep the troublesome youths out of mischief. There is a realisation that widespread CCTV coverage and antisocial behaviour orders, coercive methods, do not deter antisocial behaviour.¹¹ This is where KHPC is forward thinking. Instead of punishing the youths by moving them on when they gather, KHPC has decided to bring them in. The youth facility is actually about rewarding good behaviour with a club good through community involvement (see Appendix 21).

There are two reasons why KHPC had to work in partnership with the higher tiers of local government to provide the youth facility. First, the land on which it is to be built belongs to KCC. Second, T&MBC is the local planning authority. They are empowered to enforce or vary any of the s106 agreements attached to the various planning permissions for the development of land at Kings Hill. If KHPC had formed a local partnership with either of the borough councillors representing Kings Hill, as DPC did with their borough councillor, they would have found it easier to gain information about what KCC and RK were proposing for the future of Kings Hill. In short, the borough councillors would have been a powerful conduit between the parish council and T&MBC. But as the transcripts show, the borough councillors had no input in the parish meeting discussions about the youth facility, and KHPC's partnership with RK was somewhat difficult (see Appendix 21). The latter partnership is an example where KHPC failed to generate linking social capital with RK and because of this there was no trust. Consequently, there were no feelings of obligation or

¹¹ Britain has more CCTV cameras in its public spaces than in any other advanced capitalist nation, but their effects on recorded crime vary (Fyfe and Bannister 1998: 257). Phillips found that, 'CCTV can be effective in deterring property crime, but the findings are more mixed in relation to personal crime, public order offences, and fear of crime' (Williams and Green 2001: 16).

reciprocity on the part of RK. This is one of the ‘pitfalls’ of partnerships: an unequal power balance. ‘It is a very real problem for citizens’ representatives to get their voices heard alongside experts and business people who know how to ‘play the game’, possessing superior technical knowledge, confidence and negotiating skills’ (Lowndes and Sullivan 2004: 61). Furthermore, RK had no mandatory obligation to bring KHPC into the negotiations of the s106 agreement. Although the s106 was about the provision of leisure facilities for Kings Hill that were of interest to KHPC, the original agreement to develop the airfield (Kings Hill) was between KCC and RK. This was before KHPC came into existence.

The June 2004 transcript is interesting, notice like DPC’s July 2004 meeting about the post office closure, KHPC did not encourage members of the public to stay and listen to the rest of the meeting (see my italics). Although it is normal practice not to expect people to sit through the meeting, it happened again more explicitly at the February 2005 meeting (see my italics). Due to the potentially controversial nature of the issues discussed at this meeting, KHPC decided to implement a policy of bringing questions from members of the public to the start of the meeting (see my italics). If the parish councillors are elected and following the rules of local council administration, then doing this is not a problem. But if they are co-opted and not following the rules this would be a problem. However, the voting data discussion in Chapter 5 shows that both DPC and KHPC followed the rules of local council administration. KHPC’s policy to bring questions from members of the public to the start of the meeting is connected to their difficult relationship with the developer, not their relationship with the residents. This is yet another example of the key difference between the two parish council policymaking structures. As we know from all of these case studies, residents at both parishes are encouraged and needed to get involved in their communities. The resident who attended the April 2005 meeting was opposed to the youth facility on the grounds of Nimbyism.¹² KHPC dealt with the resident’s opposition in a professional manner.

The June 2005 transcript is connected to the youth facility, since land allocated for a place of worship was involved. Kings Hill is a large and growing development so there should be a demand for a place of worship to conduct ceremonies. However, the reverend’s comments could be wrongly interpreted. They suggest a reflection of a secular society, and yet he attends the parish meetings to establish a local partnership in the hope that KHPC will support him. In Chapter 4, we discussed the Saddleback mega-church. This started in the same way as at Kings Hill with a preacher holding meetings in his home. Therefore, at this

¹² NIMBY stands for not-in-my-back-yard.

stage it would be foolish to underestimate the potential of this partnership, in terms of its capacity for building social capital, trust and reciprocity between KHPC and the church worshippers at Kings Hill. Finally, there can be no doubt that KHPC were trying to generate and mobilise/expand social capital, refer back to the January 2005 meeting. The Chairman said:

We want to encourage as much interest as possible, it's important because we're investing a lot of money, and we want to get it right... The flyer says young people but we need to say it's open to all the residents.

Skateboard park initiative: analysis of the decision-making process

The skateboard park (SP) initiative was unsuccessful (see Appendix 22). The outcome of the SP proposal was the subject of a press report, but it fails to explain the full situation.¹³ It gives the impression T&MBC are to blame when in fact they have only followed planning policy. The Chairman is quoted as saying:

We are very disappointed that the borough council has failed the parish council, as indeed have our borough council representatives.

The way the planning system works is often criticised because it is not always easy to understand. KHPC were hoping RK would provide a SP under the terms of the section 106 agreement. However, RK has no obligation to do this, but is obliged to provide two tennis courts to replace the two older courts at Churchill Square. The Local Planning Authority (T&MBC) has granted RK planning permission but with informatives. These are notes aimed at giving guidance to the applicant (RK), concerning matters the Local Planning Authority would find acceptable.¹⁴ One of the two informatives says:

Discuss local leisure needs with KHPC to allow KHPC to review its position in light of this grant of planning permission (Source: TM/05/02130/FL, Informative 2).

¹³ 'Court wins over youngsters' skate area', *Sevenoaks Chronicle*, 22 September 2005, p. 9.

¹⁴ Occasionally the local planning authority might want to let the applicant know about other statutory consents. For example, if the applicant has purchased a listed building the local planning authority will remind the applicant in the notes appended to the planning permission that before they make any alterations they will have to seek listed building consent. A note can also bring to the attention of an applicant that they have a right to make an application to change or remove an existing condition. Basically, notes are not enforceable in the same way as planning conditions (Paragraph 11, DoE Circular No. 11/95: The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions, Date of Issue, July 20, 1995).

There are no grounds for T&MBC to refuse the developers application for planning permission to construct the two new tennis courts. In the Determining Issue of the Area 2 Planning Committee report it says:

I can understand that the PC would wish to secure a skateboard park. The provision of such a facility may be desirable but is not an obligation on Liberty through any legal requirement arising from previous grants of planning permission. The fact that such a facility has not been provided is not a reason to resist these replacement tennis courts (Source: TM/05/02130/FL paragraph 5.11).

A possible solution would have been to repair the old tennis courts, but this site is no longer available for a recreational facility:

It is now the case that existing public tennis courts would be lost as part of a current application for development for an amenities building for Churchill Square (Source: TM/05/02130/FL paragraph 5.5).

In one respect the planning process has not met KHPC's expectations. On the other hand, RK have been asked to consult with KHPC on leisure requirements for Kings Hill. Although RK is not legally bound to bring KHPC into the decision-making process, KHPC should feel more confident when they approach RK for information in the future.

In the March 2004 transcript one of the parish councillors sums up their partnership in these negotiations with RK and KCC:

It's all about the tail wagging the dog.

Even at this stage of the proposal it is unlikely that KHPC will get a SP because both RK and KCC are against it. Remember developers of gated communities are motivated to protect property values. RK are fearful it would give out the wrong image and encourage undesirable 'outsiders' into the club realm, and if potential buyers are put off by this it would reduce their profits. Like DPC's campaign to save their post office, the battle was lost before it started.

The December 2004 meeting is significant with reference to linking social capital. KHPC was attempting to equal out the balance of power more in their interest. First, they rebuked the borough councillor. They felt he had not supported them. Second, to reinforce their frustration of being left out of the decision-making process they informed the meeting of the Amenities Committee resolution. This states that the parish council 'seek regular and open

meetings with all parties involved in the future planning of Kings Hill particularly the provisions of the new s106 regarding sport, leisure and youth facilities'.¹⁵

There can be no doubt that the linking social capital KHPC formed with the two county councillors helped them on several occasions. But KCC like the national government is more remote from parish governance, so it would have been better if, as noted, they had built face-to-face social capital with the two ward borough councillors. This is the closer tier of local government. In fact, it was T&MBC who wrote the informative accompanying the planning permission for the two new tennis courts, asking RK to discuss local leisure requirements with KHPC.

It would be easy for the reader of this case study to ask, why include this final case study after all KHPC did not achieve a satisfactory outcome? The answer is that they may not have gained physical capital (the skate park), but they did achieve social capital. They successfully generated social capital (gained a relationship of trust and reciprocity with youths participating for the first time) and mobilised/expanded social capital (renewed bonds of trust and reciprocity with those who regularly participate in local politics). This initiative has provided the youths with a learning environment, where they have gained an understanding of abstract ideas such as citizenship, fairness, trust and the common good. In short, the parish council has provided the youths with a school of democracy, in which the lessons of participation could be applied to a different context. Furthermore, although Kings Hill is an affluent quasi-gated community, it does have a small amount of social housing, and the parish is inclusive of housing beyond the estate itself. This case study has provided us with evidence that this association brings its members into contact with the wider society, which consists of people from varied socio-economic backgrounds. It is therefore, not narrowly constituted, so it is effective in promoting generalised trust and reciprocity. Nevertheless, there has to be an incentive to get KHPC and the residents involved. The incentive was the provision of a club good, the skateboard park, which if it had been achieved would have helped to prevent the bored youths from taking part in acts of antisocial behaviour.

Since the main purpose of this chapter was to focus on policy implementation, Table 6.1 below has been designed to assess how long each policy objective has taken to reach an outcome, and by which sub-type of social capital.

¹⁵ Source: KHPC minutes 8 December 2004.

Table 6.1: DPC and KHPC policy objectives and outcomes

| Parish Council | Objective | No. months discussed | Outcome | Reason for Outcome |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|---|
| DPC | Church Road traffic calming | 11 Jan 04, Mar, Apr, May, June, July, Sept, Oct, Feb 05, Mar, Apr – work started ¹⁶ | Successful problem-solver. | DPC took power, successful linking social capital with higher tier of local government (Maidstone Borough Councillor) and successful bridging social capital with residents |
| DPC | Campaign to save Downswood post office | 4 July 04, Sept, Oct, Nov – closure date ¹⁷ | Unsuccessful but generated trust and reciprocity | DPC took power, successful bridging social capital with residents, but government policy not supportive |
| KHPC | Takeover of Community Centre | 5 Dec 03, Jan 04, Feb, Mar, Apr – residents back on board ¹⁸ | Successful problem-solver | KHPC took power, successful bridging social capital with residents |
| KHPC | Youth facility | 11 June 04, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan 05, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, June – completion date 20 Mar 2007 ¹⁹ | Successful service provider | KHPC took power, successful bridging social capital with residents |
| KHPC | Skateboard park | 10 Jan 04, Feb, Mar, May, June, Oct, Dec, Feb 05, Apr, May – decision 14 Sept 2005 ²⁰ | Unsuccessful but generated trust and reciprocity | KHPC tried to take power but failed, unsuccessful linking social capital with T&MBC, KCC and Rouse Kent |

As a non-participant observer of DPC and KHPC meetings, it has been possible to provide this study with an in-depth understanding of the complexities surrounding policymaking at the local level. The transcripts have shown how the parish councillors have worked in local partnerships, sometimes successfully and sometimes unsuccessfully to implement their objectives, and how they have generated and/or mobilised/expanded social capital.

At the start of this chapter the differences between the traditional parish model and the market model of local governance were described. Although as noted in Chapter 1, both parish councils are traditional parishes and both have to operate within an institutionalised legal framework, Kings Hill is different, as the case studies have indicated the role of the developer is important. It is this feature that makes Kings Hill similar to McKenzie's

¹⁶ Junction improvement commenced recorded in DPC minutes 5 April 2005.

¹⁷ Downswood post office to close 8 November 2004 recorded in DPC minutes 2 November 2004.

¹⁸ Chairman has contacted members of old MT and two will be getting involved again recorded in KHPC minutes 14 April 2004.

¹⁹ The completion date is from the T&MBC building control records.

²⁰ The date when RK gained planning permission for the two new tennis is from T&MBC Area 2 Planning Committee report

decentraliser model of governance. There can be no doubt that KHPC found it more difficult than DPC to form partnerships with the higher tiers of local government. The Downswood Borough Councillor attended nearly all of DPC's meetings and provided them with expert knowledge of borough council procedures. But the most difficult partnership for KHPC is the one with the developer. This is the partnership that holds the key to understanding the difference between the two models of local governance. The reason this partnership is strained is because Kings Hill is a quasi-gated community. I called it quasi-gated because it has nearly all the features of a gated community, with the exception of the gate at the main entrance and most important, its system of governance is unique. Instead of the developer setting up a homeowners association (HOA), the developer set up an estate management company (KHREMCL). The problem is it is unfair, opaque and not really democratic because it only charges those who purchased their properties from 1998 onwards, and there is only one elected resident on the board of directors, representing the whole of Kings Hill. This gave civic-minded residents an incentive to participate in an alternative form of neighbourhood governance, KHPC. This is the reason the partnership with the developer is strained because KHPC have to compete with a powerful developer to gain recognition from the higher tiers of local government.

Conclusion

We now have a clear understanding of the differences between the two parish councils. We also know how they have formed local partnerships with the higher tiers of local government. By referring to Table 6.1 above, we can use this summary of the parish councillors policy objectives to help us draw some conclusions about their partnership with the residents, and how both DPC and KHPC generated, mobilised/expanded this social capital. DPC successfully mobilised their residents on two occasions. First, they used their newsletter and parish notice board to ask residents to inform them about accidents at the Church Road junction. This information was used to provide a traffic survey to highlight the problem and try to gain funding from MBC and KCC. Second, they used their newsletter and parish notice board to invite residents to their two meetings about the campaign to save the Downswood post office. At the July 2004 parish meeting 17 residents turned out to hear about the plan to try and save this local service, and over 120 turned out to the protest 'special meeting' on 27 July 2004. DPC also collected a petition of 1,530 signatures against the closure to present to Parliament. KHPC successfully mobilised their residents on two occasions. First, they used their website and sent a leaflet to residents inviting them to a meeting to discuss their

proposal for a youth facility. Over 50 youths attended this meeting. From this meeting a group was set up to meet and discuss how to raise money to equip the youth facility. Second, like DPC, KHPC collected a petition of over 50 signatures in support of their proposal for a skateboard park. As the transcripts have indicated the parish councillors also contacted the local media who published the skateboard park campaign on three separate occasions.

Throughout this chapter all the case studies have shown that the residents of both parishes are far from apathetic. If the need arises for them to be politically active they will get involved. However, unlike Putnam's theory which states that high levels of social capital allow bottom-up initiatives in governance, the empirical research in this chapter has shown that it is about power relationships, and there is a need for effective leadership (which at times can be critical of government policy) and an incentive, club good, to get people involved. This is why it has been necessary to bring Bourdieu and Coleman's theories back into the social capital theoretical framework. Finally, parish governance is important. In particularly troubling times of increasing declining trust in authority figures, this study has found one way of how trust and reciprocity, and virtuous stocks of social capital can be generated and mobilised at the local level.

7 ASSESSING ASSOCIATIONAL LIFE

In the last chapter we came to the conclusion from the empirical research of the parish council meetings that, unlike Putnam's belief that social capital is a bottom-up initiative in governance, it actually requires effective leadership. To help understand why the present study's critique of Putnam's social capital is important, we will start by describing the two democratic traditions and the 'Civil Society I' and 'Civil Society II' approaches introduced by Foley and Edwards (1996) in their article *The Paradox of Civil Society*. The argument presented in Chapter 6, supports Foley and Edwards' critique of Putnam's work in which he underestimates the ability of the newer organisations and political associations to foster a civic community. The present study has argued that (although the civil society: parish councillors are volunteers) parish councils, which fall into the category of a political association, are more effective for sustaining a healthy democracy than the type of associational life (social capital) that Putnam highlights such as bird watching clubs, choral societies, Scout groups and PTAs (Parent Teacher Associations). These traditional secondary associations tend to acquiesce or inculcate the norms of the establishment. That is the social capital that cooperates with, rather than resists government policy. This is exactly what Downswood Parish Council tried to do with their campaign against government policy, which has resulted in the closure of many local post offices. The second part of this chapter will apply the CLEAR diagnostic tool, described in Chapter 3, to Downswood and Kings Hill. This will be used to help assess associational life at both parishes.

Associational life as a divisive or cohesive force

From the seventeenth century onwards the connection between the democratic state and associational life has been of great interest to theorists and philosophers. Early discussions were focused on sovereignty and natural rights. The question raised was whether the state is the supreme sovereign association or whether it should share sovereignty with other groups, especially religious groups. There was also the question of whether it was desirable for sovereignty to be shared with other types of associations. From these discussions two western democratic traditions developed. One was more characteristic of, and tended to be widespread in French and Continental thought and practice. This stemmed from Rousseau

and the French Revolution. The other was more characteristically Anglo-American. This stemmed from the Puritan Revolution and John Locke. The former argued that secondary associations are divisive forces because they endanger equality and diminish allegiance to the democratic state by promoting conflicting loyalties. The latter argued that secondary associations are cohesive forces because they promote liberty and democracy in the way they can influence and come between the individual and the state (Maccoby 1958: 524). However, as McKenzie's table of urban restructuring presented in Chapter 1 suggests, the two ideals of equality and liberty are not compatible.¹

More recently, this incompatibility between the two democratic traditions: the former arguing secondary associations are divisive forces and the latter arguing they are cohesive forces, has been re-examined by Foley and Edwards (1996). Their concern is that the 'civil society argument' and Putnam have only recognised the positive attributes of associational life, thus leaving many questions unanswered. For example, if we think about the imprecise definition of civil society (see Chapter 4) should we include business (the market)? If civil society does not include business should we exclude professional organisations and trade unions? What about political organisations. If we exclude these from the definition then how can we distinguish between political associations per se and the political activities of groups in civil society? For example, it is not unusual for interest groups or religious groups to mobilise to achieve a political goal. In short, when does civil society become politicised? Beyond the problems of defining civil society, there is also the relationship between civil society and the state. If civil society's main virtue is its ability to act as a counterweight to the state how can this happen without the help of political associations? Furthermore, what stops civil society from splitting into warring factions?

To help answer some of these questions Foley and Edwards developed two versions of the civil society argument. Civil Society I is the first version and it originates from Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. This approach emphasises 'the ability of associational life in general and the habits of association in particular to foster patterns of civility in the actions of citizens in a democratic polity' (Foley and Edwards 1996: 39). Civil Society II is the second version and it is connected to the fall of the communist regime in the late 1980s. This approach emphasises 'civil society as a sphere of action that is independent of the state and that is

¹ The closure of the Downswood post office provides us with an example. At the May 2005 parish meeting the Chairman wanted to help save their remaining local shops by encouraging residents to use them in instead of visiting the nearby supermarkets. The monopoly supermarkets hold over small independent shops has resulted in more liberty for the former and less equality for the latter.

capable – precisely for this reason – of energising resistance to a tyrannical regime’ (ibid). But like the two democratic traditions, there is a degree of contradiction between Civil Society I and Civil Society II: the former places emphasis on the positive effects of association, while the latter sees civil association as a counterweight to the state. The problem is that there is no reason why the counterweight of civil society should not be as much of a burden to the democratic state, as it is to the authoritarian regime (ibid).

Indeed, the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) successfully mobilised a major campaign against the government’s proposal for a new airport capable of competing with Heathrow, to the east of Cliffe, at the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA (Special Protected Area).² Based on Putnam’s empirical research of associational life this is one organisation that would not be included. However, there are times when civility is about being critical of the democratic state and controversial and/or conflicting government policy.³ Clearly there are times when it is not necessary for groups in civil society to be moderate and restrained. Furthermore, context really does matter and political associations (interest groups, social movements, political parties and even parish councils), which provide effective leadership, are more important than Putnam has acknowledged.

The CLEAR diagnostic tool applied to understand participation at both parishes

There are two ways in which people can take part in politics. They are electoral participation and non-electoral participation. When people turnout and vote at a general election they are given the opportunity to vote out an unpopular government, and replace it with one that they would prefer to lead them. The vote acts as a guide to policymakers who are expected to remain faithful to the promises they make within their manifestos. In between elections people can, and do, take part in non-electoral participation. In Chapter 3, we described the CLEAR diagnostic tool. This was developed to help local authorities, other organisations and groups understand non-electoral participation. This tool shows how people will participate when they **can**: when they have the resources and knowledge; because they **like** to: when they have a sense of attachment to their community; when they are **enabled** to: encouraged by an infrastructure of civic networks and organisations; if they are **asked** for their opinions; and if they feel the system they are trying to influence is **responsive**. In Chapter 6, we analysed the parish councillors’ social capital with the higher tiers of local government. We

² Safeguarding sites www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/policy/sites/international/25years/trumphed/cliffe.asp.

³ Business has put forward an argument that in order for Britain to remain competitive it needs a new airport, while environmentalists want to protect wild life sanctuaries.

also analysed how the parish councillors' mobilised stocks of social capital (with residents) through their parish websites, notice boards, newsletters and the local media. In this chapter we will assess the social capital the parish councillors have generated at Downswood Community Centre and Kings Hill Community Hall. To do this we will assess associational life at both parishes. But first the CLEAR diagnostic tool will be used to create a profile of participation at both parishes.

Table 7.1: The CLEAR tool of self-diagnosis applied to Downswood and Kings Hill

| | Downswood | Kings Hill |
|----------|--|--|
| C | Population: 2,225 (as of the 2001 census). Socioeconomic profile: mainly middle-class (including professionals and self-employed). Residents have their own resources to participate i.e. physical capital and human capital. The Kent Association of Parish Councils (KAPC) provides training for DPC. | Population: 3,500 (mid-2002 estimate by T&MBC). Socioeconomic profile: mainly middle-class (including professionals, self-employed and celebrities). Residents have their own resources to participate i.e. physical capital and human capital. KAPC provides training for KHPC. |
| L | Bonding social capital, trust and reciprocity between the parish councillors. Linking social capital with the higher tiers of local government. Bridging social capital with the residents. Strong sense of community. | Bonding social capital, trust and reciprocity between the parish councillors. Linking social capital with the higher tiers of local government. Difficult partnership with the developer (RK). The dark side of social capital. RK's motivation is profits KHPC's motivation is community. Bridging social capital with the residents. But divided sense of community between the old and new part of the development caused by RK's EMCs, which have only been imposed on those who purchase property after 1998. |
| E | DPC makes a difference it creates opportunities for participation. The Community Centre provides many opportunities for active participation: sports and hobby groups, environmental campaign group (Len Valley Action Group), social welfare organisation (Parkinson Disease Support Group), pre-school and after school groups, and a retirement club. | KHPC makes a difference it creates opportunities for participation. The Community Hall provides opportunities for active participation: sports and hobby groups, religious organisations, social welfare organisation (Baby Clinic), pre-school and after school groups, youth facility. |
| A | DPC provides a website, notice board, and regular newsletter, all of which invite people to participate. Downswood Community Association runs the Community Centre which is a hub of social capital where groups meet and invite people to actively get involved. | KHPC provides a website, notice board, and occasionally a newsletter, all of which invite people to participate. KHPC runs Kings Hill Community Hall which is a hub of social capital where groups meet and invite people to actively get involved. |
| R | Residents do believe DPC can make a difference. They will attend the parish meetings with issues they feel need addressing. For example, DPC's protest to save their post office (see Chapter 6). DPC provides very good feedback to the residents. | Residents do believe KHPC can make a difference. They will attend the parish meetings with issues they feel need addressing. For example, KHPC's campaign to provide a youth facility (see Chapter 6). KHPC provides some feedback to the residents. |

From the information presented in the CLEAR diagnostic table above, we can identify the problems, as well as the strengths, of public participation at both parishes with a view to making improvements. An important strength is that at both parishes they have the resources

second letter of the acronym in the diagnostic table: people will participate because they 'like to'. The developer has introduced an anomaly and this has divided the community into those who pay and those who free-ride. A resident said:

We do not have landscaping over this side and we have no idea what we are paying out for. Every time we have written asking what the money is spent on it takes ages to get a reply and then it is rubbish and vague. The fee is definitely unfair and it will lead to bitterness over the lavish landscaping on one part of Kings Hill compared to the nothing we have.⁴

The problem is the EMCs cannot by law be imposed on the property owners of the older part of the development retrospectively. It might be possible to resolve this dilemma if KHPC took over the management of the EMCs. To do this they would need to negotiate a generous financial settlement from the developer. Then they could put the work out to tender to see if the costs could be reduced. This would make the process accountable and transparent, unlike the management company set up by RK. However, if we look back at the transcripts in Appendix 20, there is indeed 'a huge legal aspect to this' and there can be little doubt that it would increase the parish councillors' and the clerk's workload. The most likely outcome is that maintenance of open spaces and the infrastructure, such as roads and paths will become the responsibility of Kent County Council, the original owners of the land at Kings Hill. A further problem which the diagnostic table has identified is that DPC provides better feedback to the residents than KHPC. To correct this problem it would be a good idea for KHPC to provide regular newsletters like DPC.

Finally, since the next task of this chapter is to assess associational life at both parishes, the diagnostic table shows that the Downswood Community Centre (DCC) is run by the Downswood Community Association (DCA), whereas the Kings Hill Community Hall is run by KHPC. A group of residents who moved onto the new Downswood housing development formed the Deringwood Community Association, now known as the DCA in 1986. The objective of the former organisation was to ensure the developer (Wimpey) fulfilled their agreement to build a community centre for the residents.⁵ Although DPC is a different organisation to DPC as explained in Chapter 2, they do work closely with each other to benefit the residents of Downswood. Furthermore, DPC has a DCA Committee which meets

⁴ 'Kings Hill villagers united in their anger over annual fee for maintenance work: Residents refuse to pay service charges' by Paul Devlin, *Sevenoaks Chronicle*, 24 April 2003, p. 1.

⁵ The chairman of DPC was a former member of the Deringwood Community Association.

monthly. This provides adequate justification for using the activities provided at DCC to assess the connection between DPC and the residents.

Assessing associational life at Downswood and Kings Hill

In Chapter 2, we described the methodology by which we have collected data from Downswood and Kings Hill. The questionnaire we designed has helped us to assess social capital at the local level. The first two (Tables 7.2 and 7.3) provide the names of the user groups and how many of the group leaders responded to the questionnaire. The second two (Tables 7.4 and 7.5) give more detailed information of the records of participation kept by the user groups.

Table 7.2: Associational life at Downswood

| No. | User Group | Responded |
|-----|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Kent School of Bridge | Yes* |
| 2 | DOARA ⁶ | |
| 3 | East Sutton Youth Theatre | |
| 4 | Parkinson's Disease Society | Yes |
| 5 | Shukokai Karate Club | |
| 6 | Muay Thai/Kickboxing | |
| 7 | Downswood Badminton Club | Yes |
| 8 | Downswood Short Mat Bowls | |
| 9 | Downswood Under 5's Parent & Toddlers | |
| 10 | Linden Lea Nursery School | Yes |
| 11 | Linden Lea After-School Club | Yes |
| 12 | Willow Rise Pre-School | Yes |
| | Willington Players Drama Group | Yes |

Note: * the respondent sent the questionnaire back but did not want to take part in the research. Survey response rate: 54%.

⁶ This acronym stands for Downswood and Otham Active Retirement Association.

Table 7.3: Associational life at Kings Hill

| No. | User Group | Responded |
|------------|---|------------------|
| 1 | Tiddlers and Toddlers | Yes |
| 2 | Sing and Sign | Yes |
| 3 | Iyengar Yoga | |
| 4 | Rainbow Tots | |
| 5 | Kinara Short Mat Bowls | |
| 6 | Kinara Art | |
| 7 | Spangles (Kids Spanish Lessons) | |
| 8 | Thomas-Raynor Dance | Yes |
| 9 | Quan Fa (Kids Martial Arts) | |
| 10 | Spangles (Spanish Lessons) | |
| 11 | Yoga | Yes |
| 12 | Count to 13 Bridge Club | Yes |
| 13 | Poppets | Yes |
| 14 | Yoga Monique Cuddon | Yes* |
| 15 | Quan Fa (Tai Chi) | |
| 16 | Happy Feet Dance | |
| 17 | Black Dragon (Karate/Kickboxing) | |
| 18 | Wing Chun (Self Defence) | Yes |
| 19 | Women's Development Group | |
| 20 | Musical Bumps | Yes |
| 21 | Kinara Keep Fit | |
| 22 | Fellowship – Crèche and Coffee Morning | |
| 23 | Watercolour Painting | Yes |
| 24 | Kizmet Dance | |
| 25 | Kings Hill Women's Institute (once month) | Yes |
| 26 | Baby Clinic | Yes* |
| 27 | Kinara Main Meeting (once month) | |
| 28 | Weight Watchers | |
| 29 | Dance Class | |
| 30 | Salsa | Yes |
| 31 | Prima Stage School | Yes |
| 32 | Church of England | Yes* |
| 33 | Fellowship Church Service | Yes |

Note: * the respondent sent the questionnaire back but did not want to take part in the research.
Survey response rate: 48%.

Table 7.4: Data from Downswood Community Centre user groups records of participation

| User Group | Number of years group held at DCC | Number of members participating from 2008 to 2009 (estimate) | Participation of those living at Downswood estimate (%) | Additional information given by respondent (group leader) |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Parkinson's Society | 3 | 360 | 100 | Yes |
| Badminton | 19 | 960 | 50 | No |
| Linden Lea Nursery | 19 | 5760 | 95 | No |
| Linden Lea After-School Club | 16 | 8880 | 95 | No |
| Willow Rise Pre-School | 19 | 6240 | 100 | No |
| Willington Players | 19 | 30-40* | 99 | Yes |

Note: The respondents said they did not keep past records of participation. But from 2008 the Parkinson's Society asked members and carers to sign a register. The respondents were aware of the maximum number permitted to participate in each session. The Willington Players respondent does not keep an accurate record of membership because only those involved in the play at the time of production are involved in the rehearsals. Other plays might involve a different group of participants.

Table 7.5: Data from Kings Hill Community Hall user groups records of participation

| User Group | Number of years group held at KHCH | Number of members participating from 2008 to 2009 (estimate) | Participation of those living at Kings Hill estimate (%) | Additional information given by respondent (group leader) |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Tiddlers & Toddlers | 7 | 2400 | 85 | Yes |
| Sing & Sign | 2 | 72 families | 70 | No |
| Thomas-Raynor Dance* | 3 | 3360 | 95 | No |
| Yoga Mondays | 5 | 1200 | 75 | No |
| Yoga Fridays Large Hall | 5 | 960 | 80 | No |
| Yoga Fridays Small Hall | 1 | 1920 | 85 | No |
| Bridge Beginners | 3 | 480 | 50 | Yes |
| Bridge Improvers | 3 | 1728 | 50 | Yes |
| Bridge once a month | 3 | 768 | 0 | Yes |
| Poppets Tuesdays | 8 | 635 | 98 | No |
| Poppets Thursdays | 8 | 630 | 98 | No |
| Wing Chun (Self Defence) | 8 | 960 | 10 | Yes |
| Musical Bumps | 6 | 60 families | 90 | No |
| Watercolour Painting | 4 | 624 | 50 | Yes |
| KH Women's Institute | 7 | 1728 | 100 | No |
| Salsa | 4 | 1440 | 60 | Yes |
| Prima Stage Sch Small Hall | 8 | 2400 | 90 | No |
| Prima Stage Sch Large Hall | 8 | 2400 | 90 | No |
| Fellowship Church Service | 3 | 6048 | 70 | Yes |

Note: The respondents with the exception of the Bridge Club and the Fellowship Church Service said they did not keep past records of participation. The respondents were aware of the maximum number permitted to participate in each session. Thomas-Raynor Dance holds five classes each week.

Analysis of associational life at Downswood and Kings Hill

In Chapter 4, we discussed the two data sources researchers use to gain information about associational life: monographic studies and survey research. Since the questionnaire we designed has provided monographic data (data from the records of participation kept by the organisation), we must not forget that ‘interest groups’ have a tendency to inflate the size of their membership. Although there was no incentive for the user group leaders meeting at Downswood Community Centre (DCC) and Kings Hill Community Hall (KHCH) to do this, the records relating to the number of children and adults participating in the various activities are mainly estimates. Nevertheless, they do provide us with an assessment of associational life at both parishes. If we look at the first column of Tables 7.2 and 7.3 we can see that Downswood has less than half the number of user groups (13) in comparison to Kings Hill (33). This is not because there is less interest in participation at Downswood but because DCC is smaller, so there is not as much room as there is at KHCH to accommodate as many user groups. In the second column of Tables 7.2 and 7.3 we can see that the response rate for Downswood was 54 percent, which is higher than at Kings Hill, where it was 48 percent. It is not possible to provide an explanation for this difference. It has however provided us with another interesting finding connected to the diagnostic table (see Table 7.1) and the first letter of the acronym: people will participate when they ‘can’. The list of user groups provided by DPC only included names and telephone numbers with the exception of one email address. The list of user groups provided by KHPC was a mix of 13 names and telephone numbers and 20 email addresses. Once the user groups were contacted and they provided their email addresses, there can be no doubt that the internet made it easier for them to respond to the questionnaire. Therefore, if community groups want to increase participation the empirical research suggests then the internet is an effective resource for this purpose.

If we look at the second column of Tables 7.4 and 7.5 we can see the user groups have been providing activities for participation much longer than those at Kings Hill. This is because DCC was opened in the 1980s, whereas KHCH was opened in the 1990s. As noted, most of the respondents said that they did not keep past records of participation, but the third column of Tables 7.4 and 7.5 provide an impressive list of the number of people who are estimated to have participated in the various group activities from 2008 to 2009. Notice most of the records of membership size are of individual membership with the exception of ‘Sing and Sign’ and ‘Musical Bumps’ who decided to record the number of families who participate in their groups. The user group with the highest membership at Downswood was

the Linden Lea After-School Club with 8880 participants. The user group with the highest membership at Kings Hill was the Fellowship Church Service with 6048 participants. It is possible that these two groups have high levels of participation because they are the newer type of organisations. Since many couples work there is a high demand for after school childcare, and the Fellowship Church Service offers a more modern way of worshipping, similar to the Saddleback mega-church described in Chapter 4. The fourth column is an estimate of those participating in the groups who live within the parish. On the one hand, it is important that the estimates show that most of those participating are from within the respective parishes. This is the social capital link between DPC and KHPC and their residents. On the other hand, it shows that participation (and bonds of trust and reciprocity) can be extended beyond the boundaries of the two parishes. There can be no doubt that the social capital generated by all of these groups is indeed very impressive. Finally, we have the last column of Tables 7.4 and 7.5. This informs us of the respondents who decided to answer the open ended question: Would you like to make any comments? At Downswood two respondents provided additional information, while at Kings Hill eight respondents provided additional information.

Before we discuss some of these comments it will be helpful if we refer back to Chapter 4, in which we discussed the list of groups in surveys, shown to respondents to help researchers analyse associational involvement. A problem arises when the researcher is trying to distinguish between political and non-political associations. As noted, this is one of the main reasons why Putnam's theory has been criticised. He placed emphasis on the political effects of engagement in non-political associations, disregarding the effects of the more political ones. The American Citizen Participation Study (ACPS) of 1990 can be used to detect the implications of a researchers 'technical' decision to classify an association as either political or non-political. This survey asked people if they thought the groups they were members of took a political stand, locally or nationally, for each category of groups. If the respondent was involved in more than one group per category then their response was linked to the group they singled out. By using this sort of question format, a researcher can find different ways of defining a political group. The researcher can classify as political groups all of those lying within categories where 50% or above participating in these groups say they have taken a political stand. For example, if more than 50% of the respondents in women's groups say that the main group of this category in which they participate takes a political stand on issues, we can say all those participating in women's groups are political participants. Another way of distinguishing between political and non-political groups is to only classify the group as

political if the respondent says they are a member of a group, which takes a political stand. Finally, political groups can be defined theoretically. If the researcher decides the group fits some criterion or criteria then it will be labelled political. Then all those who join these groups will be called political participants (De Ulzurrun 2002: 508). We will now put the list of user groups at both parishes (see Table 7.6 and 7.7) into functional categories to help us decided whether any of the groups are political.

Table 7.6: User groups at Downswood Community Centre

| Functional category | User group | Functional description |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Social function | Kent School of Bridge DOARA East Sutton Youth Theatre Willington Players Drama Group | These groups encourage conviviality. People often join these groups to make new friends. These groups also have a developmental function. They develop their members' skills.* |
| Health function | Shukokai Karate Club Muay Thai/Kickboxing Downswood Badminton Club Downswood Short Mat Bowls | These groups encourage a healthy lifestyle. They help people to look after their bodies. These groups also have a developmental function. They develop their members' skills.* |
| Social support function | Parkinson' Disease Society | These groups hold regular meetings to provide support for sufferers and carers. They raise funds and receive donations.* |
| Developmental function | Downswood Under 5's Parent & Toddlers Linden Lea Nursery School Linden Lea After-School Club Willow Rise Pre-School | These groups encourage children to develop their full potential. They do this by inculcating norms of civility. These groups could also fit into the social support function category. They provide a service for working parents.* |

Note: * There is a potential for members in this category to take a political stand.

Table 7.7: User groups at Kings Hill Community Hall

| Functional category | User group | Functional description |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Social function | Kinara Art Spangles (Spanish Lessons) Count to 13 Bridge Club Women's Development Group Watercolour Painting Kings Hill Women's Institute Prima Stage School | These groups encourage conviviality. People often join these groups to make new friends. These groups also have a developmental function. They develop their members' skills.* |
| Health function | Iyengar Yoga Kinara Short Mat Bowls Thomas-Raynor Dance Quan Fa (Kids Martial Arts) Yoga Yoga Monique Cuddon Quan Fa (Tai Chi) Happy Feet Dance Black Dragon (Karate/Kickboxing) Wing Chun (Self Defence) Kinara Keep Fit Kismet Dance Kinara Main Meeting Weigh Watchers Dance Class Salsa | These groups encourage a healthy lifestyle. They help people to look after their bodies. These groups also have a developmental function. They develop their members' skills.* |
| Social support function | Fellowship – Crèche and Coffee Baby Clinic Church of England Service Fellowship – Church Service | These groups hold regular meetings to provide support for sufferers and carers. They raise funds and receive donations.* |
| Developmental function | Tiddlers and Toddlers Sing and Sign Rainbow Tots Spangles (Kids Spanish Lessons) Poppets Musical Bumps | These groups encourage children to develop their full potential. They do this by inculcating norms of civility. These groups could also fit into the social support function category. They provide a service for working parents.* |

Note: * There is a potential for members in this category to take a political stand.

The questionnaire did not ask the group leaders if they took a political stand. We will now analyse some of the group leaders' comments to see what they reveal about group categories, local participation and building social capital:

These regular meetings are a means for sufferers and their carers to 'compare notes' and periodically are attended by professional medical personnel who specialise in this disease and who are available to give advice etc. We also endeavour to cater for some relaxation and entertainment by arranged visiting speakers, having games periods, quizzes etc. We also have 2/3 outings in each year for sufferers, their carers and other members (Parkinson's Disease Society at Downswood).

This group has branches nationwide. Although it is a newer mass-membership organisation the Downswood Branch is a local chapter, and as such it has more in common with the old-

fashioned face-to-face traditional secondary associations, which are particularly important for building social capital and bonds of trust and reciprocity.

All of our children live locally, but not all on Downswood. Our pre-school does have a good reputation which is why it can attract people from outside the estate, but it is not essential to live here to join (Willow Rise Pre-School at Downswood).

We provide tea, coffee, juice and biscuits free. We don't make a profit its all put into Tids &Tots. It's a place for mums to meet and children to play each Monday all year except bank hols (Tiddlers and Toddlers at Kings Hill).

These two groups are examples of newer organisations. As more parents have to go out to work, pre-school and after-school groups provide an important source of social capital. They are not unlike the PTA's that Putnam likes to cite: 'It is easy in our cynical era to sneer at cookies, cider, and small talk, but membership in the PTA betokened a commitment to participate in a practical, child-focused form of community life' (Putnam 2000: 56). Parents with children at these groups can and do make friends with each other, and so they can build the same trust and reciprocity as parents did in the PTA's.

I advertise in all of the local magazines twice per year... I am not getting enough people to justify the amount of work I put into this... I have concluded that I will have to spend far more on advertising or consider closing down. Kings Hill has thousands of houses populated by intelligent commuters and local business people. It seems the ideal area for a bridge club but the cost of the hall and refreshments can only just be met. A friend of mine teaches bridge in Chislehurst. He has 120 people regularly trying to cram themselves into his very basic village hall every week. Kings Hill is about the best venue in the County, leave alone just the area. There is easy access from motorways, good parking, good lighting and excellent heating. I do not know why my numbers are so low. I am and accredited English Bridge Union teacher... I feel well enough qualified for the job of teaching beginners and improvers so the heart of the problem lies elsewhere (Count to 13 Bridge Club at Kings Hill).

The Bridge Club is an example of a traditional secondary association. Although this quotation provides a pessimistic analysis of participation, the monthly meeting is far more optimistic. The group leader said: "I hold an event once a month for expert players from all over the county. There are 8 teams of 8 competing so 64 people turn up on these occasions. The takings from this competition keep the club solvent." This suggests that statistical data needs to be accompanied by qualitative analysis to reveal the whole phenomenon.

The percentage of local people is tiny, even though I advertise every month in the local magazines and have done for years. I have just two students from Kings Hill itself. I have tried leafleting the whole area as well. Why no more I do not know. There is definitely a bit of apathy in the area. Many clubs have given up and gone since I have been at the Centre, as they could not afford to cover the hall costs without members coming to their specific activity (Wing Chun (Self Defence) at Kings Hill).

It is not easy to say why this group leader is finding it difficult to get people to participate, especially as it is one of the more fashionable groups to join. It could be that people feel safe living at Kings Hill, so there is no need for them to learn how to protect themselves.

It was perhaps too big in the beginning at about 20 students and it was very social with much chattering. For the past few years it has been about 13 and 16 at the most, and they are keen to really learn... The majority by far are retired and there are more women than men... I get a feeling that Kings Hill is predominately younger couples with children. There are several child based activities at the Centre and these look well attended judging by the young mums coming and going (Watercolour Painting at Kings Hill).

Most of the people come here to have fun and enjoy the atmosphere, meeting new people, and then learning to dance (Salsa at Kings Hill).

These two groups fit into the traditional secondary association category. The group leaders have highlighted their social function. The participants meet up regularly to chat and make friends. But before they participate in these groups they have a common bond. In the former group they want to learn how to paint. In the latter group they want to learn how to dance. This is face-to-face social capital that builds trust and reciprocity.

From the data presented in Tables 7.6 and 7.7 and the group leaders' comments we can see the main purpose of these community based groups is to provide those who participate in them with recreation, support and personal growth. However, we have left out the two most important user groups: DPC and KHPC. Although all the group leaders have the potential to mobilise their members to take a political stand, obviously excluding the children, it is the two parish councils, which have provided their residents with effective leadership. They have and will continue to mobilise their residents to protest to save local services and campaign to provide additional ones.

Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter we highlighted the difficulties of defining civil society. On the one hand, there are the groups in civil society cited in Putnam's empirical research. These are the traditional secondary associations that are more inclined to cooperate with the democratic state. On the other hand, there are the newer organisations and political associations, like DPC and KHPC, which as we have argued throughout this chapter, are just as capable of fostering a civic community. The point we have tried to make is that there are times when it is not always necessary for civil society to be moderate and restrained. Civility can be about being critical of the democratic state. But to take a political stand there is a need for effective leadership, which has the capability to mobilise social capital (i.e., create bonds of trust and reciprocity) to solve collective-action problems. We then applied the CLEAR diagnostic tool, which we described in Chapter 3, to Downswood and Kings Hill. We used this to help us successfully assess associational life at both parishes. Although it is obviously not possible to make any generalisations from our meso-level, local network-based study, the qualitative research and statistical data tables presented throughout this chapter shows that through Downswood Community Centre and Kings Hill Community Hall, the two parish councils (DPC and KHPC) have successfully generated social capital.

8 CONCLUSION: PARISH COUNCILS AS SUCCESSFUL INSTITUTIONS

In Chapter 2, we explained why Downswood Parish Council (DPC) and Kings Hill Parish Council (KHPC) were chosen for observation. Basically, both are fairly new; the former came into existence in 1987 and the latter in 1999. They both have mainly middle-class populations, low unemployment, and neither is rural or urban, both are suburban. Like Putnam's Italian study of regional government this study has also tried to contribute to our understanding of the performance of democratic institutions. The research has included the non-participant observations of DPC and KHPC's meetings from 2003 to 2005. Later a questionnaire was designed to help find out how these two parish councils have generated and/or mobilised/expanded social capital at their community hubs: Downswood Community Centre and Kings Hill Community Hall.

When the empirical research started we were not too sure what to expect. Would our experience be anything like the Vicar of Dibley parish meetings? In this popular television programme the parish meetings are portrayed as rather boring, and the parish councillors are depicted as a funny bunch of eccentrics. One of them sits through the meetings knitting, and the discussions constantly diverge from the agenda. The minute-taking is also somewhat haphazard. This raises the question: do parish councils actually get things done or are they just 'talking shops'? The two case studies, DPC and KHPC, were nothing like the Vicar of Dibley parish meetings and yes, they definitely got things done. In Chapter 6, we have described in detail exactly how they generated and/or mobilised/expanded social capital, formed local partnerships, and solved a number of collective-action problems. The meetings were far from boring. They were most interesting and they covered a large number and variety of agenda items (see Appendices 6 and 7).

As for the parish councillors, they are dedicated volunteers. They not only deal with the mundane and minutiae of parish politics, they also take an interest in much wider issues. As noted in Chapter 2, the Local Government and Rating Act (1997) extended their functions to include the provision of public transport, traffic calming, and community safety. In order to take on such responsibilities they spent time in between their monthly meetings reading numerous documents. This provided them with information for example circulated by the Local Government Association (LGA), and planning consultation documents and the like.

Some of the parish councillors also attended training courses run by the KAPC. This all helped them to extend their knowledge base and expertise. The parish meetings were organised and they followed an agenda. There was definitely no time for gossip or for any one to sit in the meetings knitting.

Downswood and Kings Hill compared

In Chapter 1, we presented McKenzie's table of urban restructuring in the USA (see Table 1.1). This helped us to create a table of urban restructuring for the UK (see Table 1.2). From these two tables we can see that DPC has many of the characteristics of the centraliser model of local governance, while KHPC has many of the characteristics of McKenzie's decentraliser model of governance. That is why we referred to Kings Hill as the parish 'market model' of local governance. McKenzie's theory of the centralisers versus decentralisers has been helpful in the way it has set out the characteristics of these contrasting models of governance, but as Chapter 6 has shown, it is not capturing all that is actually happening at Kings Hill.

To understand Kings Hill we need to remind ourselves of the arguments against and the arguments in favour of gating. In America an increasing number of people started to 'fortress' themselves off in gated communities in the 1980s (Blakely and Snyder 1997: 4-5). In some of the extreme cases they are more than estates for the wealthy. Once incorporated as a separate entity they can become entirely independent of local government (Minton, 2002: 11). What happens is the developer forms a homeowner association (HOA) with the residents and together this 'private micro-government' represents the residents' interests, and purchases services from the private sector and other levels of government. These private micro-governments can take on responsibility for roads, parks and leisure, sanitation, and policing. But such 'secession' from the existing jurisdiction can have some worrying consequences for democracy. First, gating restricts access from the public realm. By this we mean the gate that stops the public from using the roads and open spaces behind the gate. Second, gating encourages a narrow individualistic approach to taxation. It is not uncommon for those living in gated communities to say we are paying for our own services, so why should we pay towards the cost of providing services for outsiders (Blakely and Snyder 1997: 24). Finally, if a proliferation of 'ghettos' and 'gates' is allowed to develop in the UK, research shows those who have been excluded in the ghettos do not take part in the democratic process 'in the largest poverty cluster in Newcastle only one in ten people vote' – as for the elites, 'they can gain access through funding' (Minton 2002: 12).

On the positive side, Chris Webster, professor of urban planning at Cardiff University, argues gated communities can enhance urban regeneration:

They can enhance high income residents back into areas not traditionally seen as their domain. And they bring not just themselves but their council tax payments and their need for local goods and services. And that means the standards in the area are raised for everyone's benefit.¹

Tom Startup, senior researcher from the Social Market Foundation (SMF) argues that gating can provide an appealing option for affluent people, but also a new model for social housing. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has put the theory into practice. It has gated two of its council-owned blocks of flats. The modifications include high fences, an intercom system, and a concierge service. Lord Richard Best, the Foundations director said:

This has given security and status to people who often haven't had either.²

Fenella Russell-Smith, a manager from Hamptons, a national building consultancy says of gating:

There are benefits for the family: their children can play outside without the threat of traffic and strangers. There are benefits too, for their possessions: cars can be parked securely and houses and contents can be watched at all times.³

We did approach Rouse Kent at the start of the research to see if anyone would give an interview. One of the marketing managers said:

We don't give interviews because we are too busy and not geared up to give them, unless they are promoting Kings Hill and if it is beneficial to us. We would only be interested in giving an interview if the research attracted the right people.⁴

As the transcripts show (see, for example, Appendix 22), Rouse Kent was reluctant to provide information to KHPC and the local newspapers. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Kings Hill is an impressive development. As noted in Chapter 2, at the business park it has about 100 businesses inclusive of some of the UK's most successful companies such as:

¹ 'Is Britain about to close the gates?' 15 March 2003, see www.guardian.co.uk

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Extract from an interview with Caroline Binns (Rouse Kent's marketing manager) at the development marketing office on 17 April 2003.

Kimberly Clark, Aventis, BT Ignite, Genzyme, Charities Aid Foundation, Rail Europe and Jupiter. These companies and the others based at Kings Hill provide a large number of job opportunities not only for people living at Kings Hill, but also for people living outside the community. The developers 'master plan' has been designed in line with planning guidance to encourage a 'balanced community' where people can live, work and play, and this reduces dependency on the private car. The residents also have their own golf club with areas of protected heath and mature woodland. More recently, part of the development has been set aside for a small number of properties for social housing.

Although DPC and KHPC are both traditional parish councils, Kings Hill is unique.⁵ It has a parish council within a quasi-gated community. We have called it a quasi-gated community as noted in Chapter 1, because it has all the features of a gated community with the exception of the gate. One could be forgiven for thinking: so what? That is only a minor design feature. But as Chapter 6 has established, it is the role of the American developer at Kings Hill that has made all the difference. Unlike gated communities in the US where the developer will set up a HOA, which usually has more than just one resident participating on the management board, the developer of Kings Hill set up a not very democratic management company, Kings Hill Residential Estate Management Company Limited (KHREMCL). It did initially have two elected residents representing the whole community on the board of directors, but now it only has one. It also opted out of the requirement to hold an AGM under the rights permitted by the Companies Act.⁶ Therefore, unlike KHPC's open AGM, there is no opportunity for residents to attend an AGM and question the five directors on the board of KHREMCL. As noted, KHPC came into existence in 1999. Consequently, Kings Hill has two governance institutions. This is why KHPC's partnership with the developer is difficult because KHPC has to compete with a powerful developer to gain recognition from the higher tiers of local government. Another related problematic design feature of Kings Hill is the fact that some of the development does have properties behind gates (see Appendix 17).

To understand the significance of these two design features we will now remind ourselves of club realm theory. In Chapter 4, we said that this study is interested in the distinction between traditional residential communities, where the goods and services are financed mainly by the public purse, and private residential communities (proprietary or entrepreneurial communities 'entrecoms'), where the goods and services are financed mainly

⁵ By traditional we mean both parish councils hold regular meetings, produce an agenda and minutes, and most important, both have to operate within an institutionalised legal framework (see Chapter 1).

⁶ See www.kings-hill.com/living-in-kings-hill/residential-estate-management

by the private sector. In the former model once the development is complete the communal infrastructure: roads, footpaths and open spaces are handed over to the local authority, which will collect a local tax (council tax/parish precept), from the residents to maintain it and provide additional goods/services. The problem with this model is congestion (over-use). This is the free-rider problem, which arises if the public goods are non-excludable. In the latter model the communal infrastructure is privately owned and gating prevents outsiders from using it. A charge is levied on the residents who, on the purchase of their property, freely sign an additional contract agreeing to pay an annual maintenance charge (see Appendix 1). This goes towards the upkeep of the communal infrastructure. The incentive to pay this charge is to exclude free-riders from using the high quality communal infrastructure.

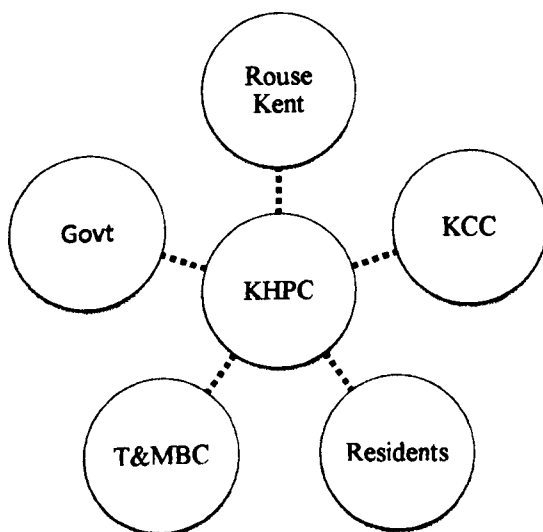
Downswood is representative of the former model, while Kings Hill is similar to the latter. But the distinction between the public realm and the private realm is not straightforward. Urban spaces are part of the public realm as they are jointly consumed, whereas the private realm is consumed privately. However, not many urban spaces actually provide benefits for everyone. The majority of open spaces only give enjoyment to those who live near to them. This is especially true of the public spaces in neighbourhoods. The public spaces in city centres and country parks are also of more utility to those who have greater access to them. In short, exclusion is also a feature of the public realm. In addition, open space is only one type of urban facility. Other public realms like health and education facilities impose greater exclusion mechanisms. For example, if a school has a good reputation then parents will opt to send their children there. To prevent congestion the school will operate a policy, which only accepts children living within a short distance from the school. Basically, the more likely the facility/service is to suffer congestion then there is more likelihood of exclusion. This means that the public realm is not that different from the private realm in the way some will be included, whilst others will be excluded. Therefore, 'club realms' are a better way of describing the public realm. This means both types of community (traditional and entrepreneurial), have club-like characteristic, which include the use of exclusion mechanisms (Webster 2002).

This is why, even though Downswood is a traditional residential community, it is possible to refer to the parish as the club realm, and the club members are the parish councillors and the residents. The exclusion mechanism used at Downswood to protect the club realm from antisocial drivers is a strong sense of community, helped by traffic policy (road signs that say 'slow down' or 'stop', speed humps, and speed cameras, etc). One of the reasons Downswood parish councillors wanted traffic calming at the Church Road junction was to

stop (exclude) free-riders (outsiders) from using Downswood as a short-cut. The exclusion mechanism can also be applied to the Downswood post office. This is because although some services are available to the general public, others are not; they have been made excludable. For example, you would not be able to go into any post office to collect your unemployment benefit, child benefit, or state pension. The recipient of any of these benefits has to fill in a form specifying a post office where it is convenient for that person to collect her/his benefit. Obviously old people, young mothers, or the unemployed, often those without transport or those without bank accounts, will select a post office near to where they live. This is why we can refer to the Downswood post office as a valued club good, which can and does exclude outsiders.

In Chapter 4, we provided two models to illustrate the difference between the two governance systems (DPC and KHPC), in their attempts to solve collective-action problems at the local level. The models are a summary of the case studies we analysed in Chapter 6. If Kings Hill had all the features of McKenzie's decentraliser model of governance, we would have been able to include the following diagram.

Figure 8.1: Kings Hill the autonomous model



Unlike all the other diagrams in Chapter 4, notice all the lines are dotted. Figure 8.1 above represents KHPC acting independently. But because Kings Hill is a quasi-gated community the important condition of 'closure' is missing.⁷ Only some parts of the development have

⁷ See (Coleman 1994: 318-320).

houses and flats behind gates (see Appendix 17). Therefore, it is only these parts of the development which can be referred to as the private realm, where free-riders have indeed been excluded. At the rest of Kings Hill anyone can consume the club realm. This is why the developer is having problems in getting all of the residents to pay the EMCs (see Chapter 6). Unlike gated communities where there is closure and people are happy to pay to prevent free-riders from abusing the club realm, Kings Hill is different. It is open to free-riders who have decided not to contribute towards the upkeep of the club realm.

A model representing DPC acting independently has not been constructed because in practice Downswood is not a club realm. As noted, club realm theory accommodates weaknesses in the condition of closure. To show how the condition of closure has not been met at Downswood, it will be necessary to re-examine the outcomes of the Church Road traffic calming initiative and the campaign to save the Downswood post office. If Church Road was in a gated community and there was a need for traffic calming, its main purpose would be to slow down drivers behind the gates.⁸ At Downswood, Church Road is used by outsiders as a short-cut, so although this initiative was, and continues to be successful, there is a clear distinction between the public realm and the private realm. The plan to close the Downswood post office is even more interesting to re-examine. Although the parish councillors and residents campaigned to save this service, it could be argued that they did not really value it. If they had they would have used it more often instead of using the nearby supermarkets. But even this would not have helped because Downswood is the traditional parish model of governance, and post offices are a part of the statist welfare model. Basically, the welfare state has created an involuntary club in which nearly everyone is coerced to contribute, and nearly everyone consumes.

To conclude, if Kings Hill was a gated community instead of a quasi-gated community, the exclusion mechanism on the club goods would be on cooperative terms, and free-riding or non-compliance would not be a problem. As the crime data indicates (see Appendix 11), youths from outside Kings Hill have been reported for riding about on motorbikes, without crash helmets and insurance. If Kings Hill was a gated community outsiders would be prevented from doing this. At Downswood (the statist welfare model) outsiders can and do free-ride in the parish. Therefore, the distinction between public goods and private goods is important. A club good in the private realm can, and does, exclude those who do not contribute towards its provision and maintenance. Finally, the consequence of having a parish

⁸ Identified outsiders are allowed into gated communities, but only by invitation. Obviously the gates, walls, CCTV cameras, private policing, and restrictive covenants keep this under control.

council and the developer's management company is a bit like having one car and two people squabbling over who should drive. But as Chapter 6 has shown, at present it is the developer who is the stronger partner and who steers the car.

Parish councils: accountability and openness

We will now discuss three practices of parish governance that we have discovered from our non-participant observations, which could open up this form of networked community governance to criticism. As the case studies in Chapter 6 show, DPC and KHPC are happy for members of the public to come to their meetings to support their protests to save local services, or their campaigns to gain additional services, but they do not encourage them to stay. This happened on four separate occasions. At Downswood it happened after the parish councillors had discussed the proposed closure of their post office (see Appendix 19). At Kings Hill it happened three times. Although it is normal practice not to expect people to sit through the whole meeting, it happened more explicitly at the February 2005 KHPC meeting (see Appendix 21). The parish councillors were having a heated discussion about their weak position in the local government hierarchy in comparison to the developer. One of the parish councillors was unhappy because he felt that the Chairman's meetings with the Director of RK had not improved their partnership and tipped the balance of power more in their favour. Due to this difficult partnership, KHPC introduced a policy of bringing questions from members of the public to the start of the meeting. This could open parish governance up to the criticism that it is all about a small group of elites making decisions and dealing with public money behind closed doors. But as the voting data in Chapter 5 has clearly shown, both DPC and KHPC followed all the rules of local council administration. If residents had been opposed to them making decisions on their behalf, surely more of them would have complained or attended the meetings to see what was happening. Throughout the empirical research only one resident came to express his disapproval. This gentleman was opposed to KHPC's proposal for a youth facility and skateboard park but on the grounds of nimbyism (see Appendices 21 and 22).

There can be little doubt that the parish councillors at Kings Hill are anxious about members of the public listening to their discussions related to their local partnership with the developer. This is a further consequence of having a parish council within this quasi-gated community. On the one hand, it is better to bring questions from members of the public to the start of the meeting, rather than putting people off parish politics by leaving them to sit through these long meetings. Then they can express their concerns and go. On the other hand,

if questions from members of the public are the last item on the agenda, the public can witness how hard the parish councillors work for the community. It could also encourage them to get involved in community activities, or at best to become a parish councillor. Furthermore, as we know from all the case studies in Chapter 6, both DPC and KHPC have built relationships of trust and reciprocity between themselves and their residents.

The second practice which could be open to criticism is connected to the local newspapers. In Putnam's Italian study he highlighted the importance of newspaper readership. He said:

Newspaper readers are better informed than non-readers and thus better equipped to participate in civic deliberations. Similarly, newspaper readership is a mark of citizen interest in community affairs (Putnam 2003: 92).

The question that needs addressing is who is writing the article and what is their agenda? Do they want to inform, lead, or entertain the reader? Unlike national newspapers which do quite a good job of holding politicians to account, local newspapers are not really performing this important function. There was a time when local newspapers used to send reporters to courts and into council chambers. This helped to keep these institutions accountable and open. More recently, with the arrival of the internet, local newspapers receive copies of the agendas of council meetings, press statements and statements regarding specific enquiries via email. This reduces the cost of an expensive resource, sending a reporter to sit through long meetings, but it removes local newspapers democratic function. During the two years of empirical research a reporter for the *Kent Messenger* local newspaper attended only three of DPC's meetings on 7 December 2004, 5 April 2005, and 5 July 2005 (see Appendix 8). No local newspaper reporters came to KHPC meetings (see Appendix 9). This was probably because one of the Kings Hill parish councillors was the parish correspondent for the *Sevenoaks Chronicle*, and one of the Kings Hill parish councillor's wives was the parish correspondent for the *Kent Messenger*. On the negative side, this obviously means it is not possible to hold local politicians to account. They are telling the story how they see it. On the positive side, it means the information they are giving to the readers is more accurate.

The third practice which could be open to criticism is that both DPC and KHPC co-opted new parish councillors instead of holding an election. At Downswood this happened three times: 2 March 2004; 6 July 2004; 7 December 2004 (see Appendix 8). At Kings Hill it happened three times: 14 April 2004; 9 June 2004; 8 December 2004 (see Appendix 9). Every time there was only one candidate with the exception of the last two times at Kings Hill (9 June 2004 and 8 December 2004) when there were two candidates.

To help show that this is not too much of a problem, before we describe the procedure that DPC and KHPC followed, we will explain the Quality status procedure. In 2003 the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme was launched to provide a benchmark minimum standard for local councils across the country. To gain Quality status the council has to fulfil five tests (Test 1: Electoral mandate; Test 2: A qualified clerk; Test 3: Council meetings; Test 4: Communication; Test 5: Annual report). For the first test the local council must have all of its seats filled by members who have stood for election at the start of each four-year term. Whether a seat is contested by several candidates or just one, the Quality Scheme wants every new member to be democratically elected. While it is essential for members of the public to be given the opportunity to vote at the local council elections held every four years, there may not be an alternative to co-option to fill council vacancies that arise during that term. This suggests this test is not practical. Furthermore, at the time of a quadrennial election, the council will have no way of ensuring that those who are not members of it stand for election, and a council which has co-opted members is no less capable of implementing the other tests (Arnold-Baker 2002: 349).

Both DPC and KHPC follow exactly the same procedure. When a parish councillor resigns the clerk informs the borough council, and puts the necessary notices on the parish notice board, and informs the local newspapers. The parish council has to wait to receive confirmation from the borough council that no request for an election has been received. Then the parish council can go ahead and co-opt a new parish councillor. On the two occasions at Kings Hill when there were two candidates to fill just one seat, the parish councillors held a ballot. The two candidates were asked to leave the meeting room while the parish councillors put the name of the candidate they wanted to fill the vacancy, on a piece of paper. On the first occasion when there were two candidates (9 June 2004) the result was a tie. The Chairman used his casting vote. On the second occasion when there were two candidates (8 December 2004) the vote provided an outright winner. There are two good reasons why smaller parish councils prefer co-option to holding an election. First, it is time consuming and costly to hold an election. Second, there is no point if they only get one candidate to fill the vacancy. From what we have discussed you would have realised that neither DPC nor KHPC have Quality status, but it was discussed:

When Helen was here she was a fully qualified clerk. We've considered it but there are drawbacks. A certain percentage, well the majority of the parish councillors have to be elected. We in fact had, but one of the parish councillors didn't fill in his form on time. We had to co-opt him so he missed

the opportunity to stand for election and he had to be co-opted onto the parish council, which meant we didn't qualify for Quality status. I have reservations. The local press has difficulty in differentiating if you have Quality status or not. It's fantastic but if one parish councillor is co-opted then you lose your Quality status, and what does that say to Joe Public (extract from DPC transcript of 2 December 2003).

I did a report on it and it's onerous. There's a lot of training involved (extract from KHPC transcript of 10 November 2004).

Parish councils as successful institutions: generating and mobilising social capital

First, we will re-examine our analyses of DPC's policy objectives and then KHPC's policy objectives. The main lesson from the Church Road traffic calming initiative is the importance of the linking social capital DPC formed with their borough councillor. His experience of his ward and knowledge of borough council procedures helped them on many occasions. He used his social capital to put them in touch with people who could help them. The traffic calming initiative is an excellent example of local democracy in action. For the size of the parish this initiative was and is still a major success. The danger was highlighted by DPC and the residents were brought into the political process. It would be wrong to say the residents are apathetic. They are interested in getting involved in local politics, and no doubt this is the case in other neighbourhoods. This could be related to the fact that DPC is not distant like national politicians. They are in close contact with the residents. They invite them to get involved and keep them informed through the parish council newsletter. Today the government looks at opinion polls and focus groups, but this does not bring people into local politics like DPC has and still does. This is the bridging social capital community leaders should aim for. This tier of local governance is not about following the party line. DPC is not trying to score political points. Their meetings are consensual not adversarial. This type of local politics is not about power struggles, it is about representing the needs of the community. This case study has provided us with evidence that this association brings its members into contact with the wider society, which consists of people from varied socio-economic backgrounds. It is therefore not narrowly constituted, so it is effective in promoting generalised trust and reciprocity. Nevertheless, there has to be an incentive to get DPC and the residents involved. The incentive was the provision of a club good, traffic calming, resulting in a safe open space for the whole community.

Like the traffic calming initiative, DPC's campaign to save the Downswood post office benefited from the linking social capital they formed with their borough councillor. Once again he guided them through the process. At the protest 'special meeting' he said:

There hasn't been proper consultation. Giving them (Downswood and Bearsted Parish Councils) information and telling them what they're going to do is not consultation. This Committee, this Parliamentary Committee did say in fact that the local people, the borough councils and the local communities, the parish councils should be involved in the planning, and we haven't been involved in the planning.

This is a serious criticism which only further reduces trust in national government, while on the other hand, it increases trust in local government. More than 120 people attended the protest 'special meeting' to gain support from their local politicians. The campaign in a sense failed, and Downswood lost this local service (club good). On the other hand, it is actually a success story. The parish meetings were informative and DPC successfully mobilised the residents to get involved. The protest 'special meeting' was skilfully organised, especially as it was held at such short notice. An impressive list of guest speakers, were invited to give expert advice. The petition was also successful, since it was signed by no fewer than 1,530 members of the public. The community came together and formed a powerful local partnership. DPC has developed a powerful tool, it has learned how to build bridges (bridging social capital) and mobilise the residents. Like the traffic calming initiative, this case study has provided us with evidence that this association brings its members into contact with the wider society, which consists of people from varied socio-economic backgrounds. It is therefore not narrowly constituted, so it is effective in promoting generalised trust and reciprocity. In the words of the chairman:

The very mixed community at Downswood alone includes many without private transport and many who are elderly. They do not have the luxury of choice.

The incentive for political participation was to turnout to try and save this local service (club good). Although DPC has built up a strong relationship of trust and reciprocity with the residents, it is important to remember that incentives are also a powerful driving force. As the transcripts noted, the government offered postmasters and postmistresses generous 'compensation packages' (incentives) to give up their post offices. The chairman summed up the reason why local shops are important:

I feel sorry for the pensioners living here, and it's a social thing for meeting somebody from your neighbourhood. It's a way of checking people living alone are safe. If a regular customer is missing the local shops notice and can get someone to check on that old person. We put this in our petition we sent to Post Office Limited.

This suggests Coleman's theory is correct. As discussed in Chapter 4, if individuals do cooperate, it is because it is in their individual interest to do so. The shop keeper wants the residents business, so it is in his interest to take an interest in their well-being. In this way relationships can generate obligations and expectations, and this in turn leads to trust and reciprocity.

The main lesson from KHPC's takeover of the Kings Hill Community Centre (KHCC) is that once they took over this responsibility, the finances had to be run in accordance with the rules of local council administration. This made all the future transactions accountable and transparent. Bourdieu's theory, as we noted in Chapter 4, is concerned with power relationships and it can help us to understand the takeover in a positive light. Although it started off as a power struggle between residents on the old management team (MT) and KHPC, it did not take long before the two sides came together, and formed a new and successful management committee (MC). The chairman of KHPC at the time was a businessman and he used his expertise to lead the takeover, and increase the number of user groups (generate new social capital) at KHCC. This example contradicts Putnam's theory in which he says social capital is a bottom-up initiative in governance. Our evidence suggests that it needs effective leadership. This case study is an example of where formal rules, which make the decision-making process fair and transparent, and KHPC's concern to treat all the members as 'equals', have both helped to generate social capital and trust. This case study also helps us to address an under-examined empirical question in the social capital debate: Do social networks generate trust or does widespread trust make the development of the social network possible in the first place? In this context the social network (parish council) has generated trust. Nevertheless, there must have been trust and reciprocity between the parish councillors in the first place, when they got together to create KHPC.

As we know from the takeover of KHCC an intentional action of disbanding the old MT and setting up a new MC will result in a 'by-product', the youth facility. The benefits this club good provides will be available to the wider community. The youths are being involved in the planning process, and they will take part in the activities once it has opened. This will result in a 'structure of obligations and expectations, responsibility and authority, and norms

(or rules) and sanctions which will bring about an effectively functioning organisation' (Coleman, 1994: 313). The idea of the youth facility is to keep the troublesome youths out of mischief. There is a realisation that widespread CCTV coverage and antisocial behaviour orders, coercive methods, do not deter antisocial behaviour. This is where KHPC is forward thinking. Instead of punishing the youths by moving them on when they gather, KHPC has decided to bring them in. The youth facility is actually about rewarding good behaviour with a club good through community involvement.

There are two lessons to learn from the youth facility initiative. First, it would have helped if KHPC had formed a partnership (linking social capital) with either of the borough councillors representing Kings Hill, like DPC did with their borough councillor. This would have made it easier for them to gain information about what KCC and RK were proposing for the future of Kings Hill. This is because T&MBC are the planning authority and they are empowered to enforce or vary any of the s106 agreements attached to the various planning permissions for the development of land at Kings Hill. In Chapter 4 it said: It's not always what you know, but who you know that matters. If the parish councillors had built linking social capital with their borough councillor(s) there would have been a sense of cooperation and obligation (trust and reciprocity) on the part of the borough councillor(s) to provide knowledge and help.

The second lesson to learn from the youth facility initiative is connected to the importance of the social capital generated between the parish councillors and the church groups. In Chapter 4, we discussed Putnam's study of the Saddleback mega-church. This started in the same way as at Kings Hill with a preacher, Reverend Stuart Mousir-Harrison, holding meetings at his home, and as the number of worshippers increased, meetings were held at KHCH. In Chapter 7, we set out the statistical data from the questionnaire we sent to user groups to assess associational life generated by DPC at DCC, and KHPC at KHCH. The list of user groups at Kings Hill included two religious groups: Church of England (Anglican) and Fellowship Church Service (Baptist). The former was originally led by Reverend Stuart-Mousir, but is now led by Reverend (Father) Peter Bennett. We only received answers to our questionnaire from the latter user group, which had the highest number of participants (6048) from 2008 to 2009 (see Table 7.5). At Easter, Christmas and Remembrance the worshippers of both congregations join together for a single service. Although as noted in Chapter 6, land was allocated at Kings Hill for a 'place of worship', this is too small so the church is looking

to buy a building or site at Kings Hill to build a new church.⁹ This qualitative and quantitative data highlights the importance of the social capital between the parish councillors and the church groups. Together they have generated an impressive stock of social capital (trust and reciprocity) and this could be mobilised on other occasions for other uses.

There is an important lesson to learn from the skateboard park initiative. In short, do not waste valuable time discussing an initiative if it is not achievable. All the KHPC meeting discussions make it clear that the developer is powerful. The parish councillors knew from the start that the developer would not agree to a skateboard park. On the positive side, although the parish councillors did not gain physical capital (the skate park) they did achieve social capital. They successfully generated social capital (gained a relationship of trust and reciprocity with youths participating for the first time) and mobilised/expanded social capital (renewed bonds of trust and reciprocity with those who regularly participate in local politics). This initiative has provided the youths with a learning environment where they have gained an understanding of abstract ideas such as citizenship, fairness, trust and the common good. In short, KHPC has provided the youths with a school of democracy in which the lessons of participation could be applied to a different context. Furthermore, although Kings Hill is an affluent quasi-gated community it does have a small amount of social housing, and the parish is inclusive of housing beyond the estate itself. This case study has provided us with evidence that this association brings its members into contact with the wider society, which consists of people from varied socio-economic backgrounds. It is therefore not narrowly constituted, so it is effective in promoting generalised trust and reciprocity. Nevertheless, there has to be an incentive to get KHPC and the residents involved. The incentive was the provision of a club good, the skateboard park, which if it had been achieved, as the parish councillors argued, would have helped to prevent the bored youths from taking part in acts of antisocial behaviour.

The wider relevance of studying parish councils

In Chapter 1 we set out the societal changes challenging Britain and other advanced post-modern industrial democracies. We argued that the state and the market are no longer able to cope with many of the more complex societal changes. The state can draw on an extensive set of coercive devices from increased electronic surveillance to the British Labour Party's ASBOs, but there is a limit to the extent to which democratic states can rely on centralised

⁹ Information provided by Mark Green leader of the Fellowship Church Service from our survey of associational life at Kings Hill.

coercion. Market mechanisms, seen as the solution in the 1980s, have, it has been argued, increased social inequality, exclusion, segregation and alienated many from the benefits of economic prosperity (Imrie and Raco 2003: 3). There needs to be a degree of voluntary adherence to legitimate rules and cooperation on the part of citizens. Clearly there is a need for the modern state to find new ways of mobilising collective action. This is why this study is important. It is part of a recent trend in the social sciences focusing on smaller-scale institutional solutions like those Elinor Ostrom (1990) referred to as 'self-organising' and 'self-governing'. Unlike the traditional institutions (family, church and political parties) small-scale institutions can effectively overcome collective-action problems that trouble local governance, and are insufficiently accounted for in most theories of social capital.¹⁰ The common-pool resource Ostrom's work was concerned about protecting from overuse (and from free-riders) included: fishing grounds, groundwater basins, and grazing areas. This study amongst other concerns is about a safe place to live. It has analysed how the parish councillors (at Downswood and Kings Hill) have successfully organised themselves and mobilised other residents (social capital) to protect their common-pool resource (the parish) from antisocial behaviour and free-riders. In short, this study is important because in these two settings which are rich in social capital, the parish councillors have promoted an ethic that considers it wrong to free ride on government policies and public goods, and created a strong sense of willingness that people should do their share in collective endeavours.

Now that we have established why this study is important in substantive terms, we will re-emphasise its theoretical contribution. As argued in Chapter 4, social capital is a particularly useful concept for understanding questions of social integration. In short, the relationships people form with other people really are important. When people meet on a regular face-to-face basis they will form strong bonds of trust and if people trust one another they will reciprocate and help each other out, not only on a regular basis, but especially in times of need (see Putnam 2000: 134-147). As the empirical chapters have shown the parish councillors did cooperate with each other, generate, mobilise and use social capital. They also had multiple links with the community (see Chapter 7), which is important beyond the elite level. But clearly there was a need for an incentive for them and the residents to get involved

¹⁰ The church is under increasing pressure to change. The number of regular worshippers has declined since the 1960s, with the exception of some denominations and the mega-churches (see Chapter 4). On the one hand, these changes have resulted in a decline of the church as an institution of care and social control. On the other hand, faith communities like the Fellowship Church Service at Kings Hill have become more assertive and created a significant amount of 'bonding' social capital, which is sometimes said to have contributed to an increase in inter-communal conflict.

in keeping the parish safe. This is where this study departed from Putnam who, as was argued in the theoretical part of this thesis, does not pay enough attention to the incentives to invest in the generation of social capital. Also unlike Putnam, who believes that high levels of social capital allow bottom-up initiatives in governance, this study found that effective leadership (which at times can be critical of government policy) and incentives emphasised by club-goods theory were particularly helpful for understanding how the parish councillors overcome collective-action problems, in the generation and maintenance of social capital.

The evidence presented in this thesis shows that the two examples of networked community governance that we have studied, can make a significant difference in solving collective-action problems. Although the prisoner's dilemma game predicts that because each individual is pursuing her or his own self-interest, there is little chance of cooperation in producing public goods, with the right institutional design (parish council with effective leadership) and a clear incentive, individuals will cooperate. However, this is not enough, if policymakers genuinely want to institutionalise networked community governance supported by new localism (now referred to as the big society) and increase trust levels, they must be prepared to let go and devolve power. Equally, if people at the grass-roots level want to have more control over the governance of their community, they must be prepared to take power.

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Deed of Variation and Supplement – to three Deeds of Planning Obligations each dated (2 February 2004) relating to the development known as Phase 2 Kings Hill, West Malling, and adjoining land at Heath Farm, East Malling, Kent – Ref: 2129/4269/30823144.

T&MBC Area 2 Planning Committee Report – Kings Hill 567415 155323 (19 July 2005)
TM/05/02130/FL Proposal: Two tennis courts and associated fencing – Location: Land to west of neighbourhood play area Gibson Drive Kings Hill West Malling Kent – Applicant: Rouse Kent (Residential) Ltd.

T&MBC Supplementary Reports – Area 2 Planning Committee (14 September 2005) – Kings Hill: TM/05/02130/FL – Two tennis courts and associated fencing to land to west of neighbourhood play area Gibson Drive Kings Hill West Malling Kent at Rouse Kent (Residential) Ltd.

T&MBC Area 2 Planning Committee – Notes to Meeting – to discuss Rouse Kent (Residential) Ltd planning application for two tennis courts – (14 September 2005) TM/05/02130/FL.

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Newspapers

Kent Messenger
 The Sevenoaks Chronicle
 The Downs Mail
 The Courier (Tonbridge)
 The Guardian
 The Daily Telegraph

Appendix 1**Copy of the Schedule 3 Stipulations from the 'Schedule of Restrictive Covenants' which applies to property at Kings Hill built from 1998 onwards**

SCHEDULE 3**STIPULATIONS**

(a) Not to submit an application for planning permission in respect of the Property for a period of seventeen years from 1st January 1998 without the previous written approval of Rouse and the Transferee to the development for which the permission is sought PROVIDED THAT on any such application for approval as aforesaid the purchaser shall pay to Rouse and the Transferee such reasonable fee for the consideration of such application as Rouse and the Transferee shall from time to time prescribe whether the approval of Rouse and the Transferee to such application be given or not.

(b) Not to construct or place any additional building or other erection on the Property or make any external alteration in or addition to the dwellinghouse and garage or car port erected thereon or the walls fences or the front garden thereof for a period of seventeen years for 1st January 1998 without previous written approval of Rouse and the Transferee to a detailed drawing thereof PROVIDED THAT on any such application for approval as aforesaid the Purchaser shall pay to Rouse and the Transferee such reasonable fee for the consideration of such application as Rouse and the Transferee shall from time to time prescribe whether the approval of Rouse and the Transferee to such application be given or not.

(c) Not without the previous written approval of Rouse and the Transferee to use the Property or suffer the same to be used for the purpose of any manufacture trade or business of any description (save for the business of letting the Property on terms set out in the remainder of this paragraph (c)) or for any purpose other than as a private dwelling-house in the occupation of a single family unit (not to exclude unmarried partnerships) (and a garage or car port or parking space for the purpose of garaging/parking one or two private motor car(s) motorcycles or bicycles) nor place or suffer to be placed on any part of the Property any showboard placard or nameplate.

(d) Not to do or suffer to be done any act or thing in or about the Property which shall or may be or grow to be to the annoyance nuisance damage or disturbance of Rouse or the owner or occupier of any part of the Remaining Property and the Retained Land.

(e) To keep the front and rear garden of the Property in a neat and tidy condition and not to erect any fences or walls whatsoever or grow hedges over 600 mm high at the front of the Property or between the dwellinghouse and the roadway.

(f) Not to place or keep dustbins or refuse bags or the like in front of the dwellinghouse erected on the Property (other than inside the refuse store provided for the purpose) except on such days as are recognised as refuse collection days or the evening before such days (and to keep the said refuse store in a neat and tidy condition).

(g) Not without the previous written approval of Rouse and the Transferee to erect or display any notice offering the Property for sale or letting within a period of two years from the date hereof.

(h) Not at any time hereafter to permit or authorise the demolition of the dwellinghouse or garage or car port erected on the Property so as to leave the party walls dividing any buildings erected on the Property from any buildings erected on the Remaining Property and the Retained Land exposed as exterior walls without complying with paragraph (i).

(i) To forthwith support point and render weather-proof to reasonable standard the party walls referred to in the preceding paragraph (h) if at any time the said party walls shall become exposed as exterior walls.

(j) Not to leave or park or permit to be left or parked any caravan boat or other vehicle on any unbuilt part of the Property except for private motorcar(s) motorcycles or bicycles in accordance with paragraph (c) above.

(k) Not to alter the colour of the external paint work or stained woodwork for a period of ten years from 1st January 1998.

(l) Not to erect or place any aerial satellite receiver or similar apparatus for the reception or transmission of television or radio signals on the roof or exterior of the dwellinghouse or flat erected on the Property or on any other part of the Property so as to be visible from the Remaining Property and the Retained Land or which might cause interference with the reasonable enjoyment of the Remaining Property and the Retained Land.

(m) Not to keep or allow any vehicles to stand on the Estate Road nor to do anything which would obstruct the easy access over such land.

(n) Not to remove or alter or cut away any trees surrounding the block or Rouse.

(o) In the event that any management company ceases to exist or the owner of the Property enfranchises it's leasehold interest in the Property to use all reasonable endeavours to procure the maintenance repair renewal cleaning and rebuilding of the Entrance Road and to contribute a fair proportion (with the other flat owners in the block upon the Remaining Property) towards the cost of the same and to pay the costs of the Transferor Rouse or Kings Hill Residential Estate Management Company Limited incurred in respect of any such works completed by them in default of the owners of the Property procuring such works.

PROVIDED ALWAYS that nothing herein contained shall prevent Rouse or its successors in title from transferring selling leasing or holding free from any restriction or stipulation any part of the Remaining Property and the Retaining Land or from waiving compliance with or varying or releasing any restriction or stipulation now or hereafter affecting any part of the Remaining Property and the Retained Land.

Appendix 2

Photographs of frescos in the Basilica of San Zeno, Verona, Northern Italy with graffiti like inscriptions on them by survivors of natural disasters over the centuries

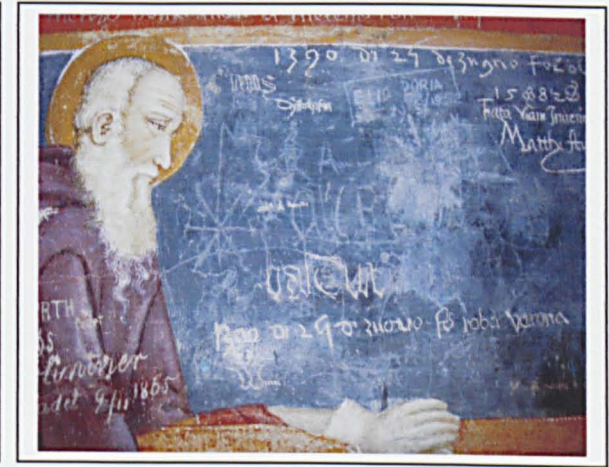
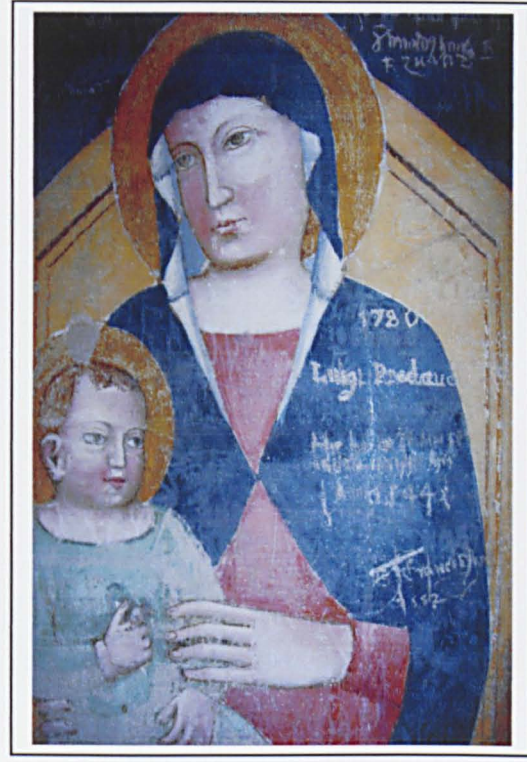


Plate 1 and 2: Virgin enthroned with Child. Photo credit: G. J. Hogben.

Plate 3 and 4: Saint Zeno, Eighth Bishop of Verona, died around AD 380. Photo credit: G. J. Hogben.

Appendix 3

**Copy of the details of the streets and numbers of electors at Downswood from Maidstone
Borough Council Register of Electors 2004**

Streets within Polling District

| Downswood | | Properties | Electors |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------|----------|
| Bournemouth Close | | 38 | 71 |
| Cheviot Gardens | | 20 | 40 |
| Chiltern Close | | 25 | 29 |
| Church Road | | 13 | 24 |
| Cotswold Gardens | | 33 | 58 |
| Derringwood Parade | | 4 | 4 |
| Ellenswood Close | | 24 | 34 |
| Foxden Drive | | 86 | 145 |
| Frithwood Close | | 21 | 44 |
| Gorham Drive | | 68 | 116 |
| Grampian Way | | 52 | 88 |
| Horton Downs | | 36 | 74 |
| Kingsacre | | 25 | 51 |
| Len Valley Walk | | 8 | 11 |
| Longham Copse | | 105 | 187 |
| Mallard Way | | 15 | 34 |
| Monkdown | | 37 | 66 |
| Murrain Drive | | 92 | 136 |
| Pennine Way | | 57 | 122 |
| Ravens Dane Close | | 31 | 41 |
| Redsells Close | | 26 | 37 |
| Reinden Grove | | 55 | 116 |
| Rhodewood Close | | 27 | 59 |
| Spot Lane | | 1 | 3 |
| The Beams | | 25 | 53 |
| Willow Rise | | 64 | 81 |
| Other Electors | | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | Polling District Total | 989 | 1724 |
| | | | |
| | Area Total | 989 | 1724 |
| | | | |
| | Grand Total | 989 | 1724 |

Appendix 4

**Copy of the details of the streets and numbers of electors at Kings Hill from Tonbridge and
Malling Borough Council Register of Electors 2004**

| Road/Sub Road | Electors | Accumulated | Properties | Voids |
|-------------------|----------|-------------|------------|-------|
| Admiral Way | 24 | 24 | 12 | 0 |
| Sandringham Court | 16 | 40 | 12 | 2 |
| Alderwick Grove | 47 | 87 | 24 | 1 |
| Alexander Grove | 12 | 99 | 6 | 1 |
| Alfriston Grove | 57 | 156 | 30 | 1 |
| Alton Avenue | 60 | 216 | 33 | 3 |
| Ames Way | 9 | 225 | 11 | 7 |
| Anisa Close | 27 | 252 | 17 | 2 |
| Anson Avenue | 82 | 334 | 41 | 0 |
| Bancroft Lane | 6 | 340 | 3 | 0 |
| Baxter Way | 22 | 362 | 14 | 2 |
| Blenheim Road | 31 | 393 | 16 | 1 |
| Bovarde Avenue | 19 | 412 | 11 | 1 |
| Braeburn Way | 102 | 514 | 63 | 10 |
| Bramley Way | 86 | 600 | 49 | 1 |
| Cardinal Walk | 42 | 642 | 29 | 6 |
| Carlton Close | 21 | 663 | 13 | 1 |
| Chestnut Close | 65 | 728 | 37 | 2 |
| Cleeve Court | 26 | 754 | 13 | 0 |
| Cobham Drive | 20 | 774 | 9 | 0 |
| Crabtree Close | 31 | 805 | 16 | 0 |
| Dawn Lane | 10 | 815 | 6 | 1 |
| Discovery Drive | 98 | 913 | 52 | 7 |
| Elstar Place | 12 | 925 | 5 | 0 |
| Forest Way | 17 | 942 | 6 | 0 |
| Fortune Way | 17 | 959 | 19 | 8 |
| Garden Way | 50 | 1009 | 30 | 1 |
| Gibson Drive | 0 | 1009 | 0 | 0 |
| Guy Gibson Court | 7 | 1016 | 16 | 12 |
| Goldings Close | 70 | 1086 | 33 | 0 |
| Greensleeves Way | 20 | 1106 | 16 | 4 |
| Hampden Way | 8 | 1114 | 4 | 0 |
| Hawkridge Grove | 14 | 1128 | 10 | 2 |
| Hawthornden Close | 27 | 1155 | 24 | 11 |
| Hayes Walk | 9 | 1164 | 5 | 1 |
| Hazen Road | 2 | 1166 | 2 | 1 |
| Hollandbury Park | 24 | 1190 | 19 | 8 |
| Ingle Place | 4 | 1194 | 3 | 1 |
| Kendall Avenue | 67 | 1261 | 30 | 1 |
| Lambourne Drive | 79 | 1340 | 38 | 1 |
| Lancaster Way | 21 | 1361 | 10 | 1 |
| Lapins Lane | 186 | 1547 | 90 | 1 |
| Laxton Walk | 23 | 1570 | 19 | 4 |
| Lindel Court | 21 | 1591 | 13 | 1 |
| Road/Sub Road | Electors | Accumulated | Properties | Voids |
| Malling Road | 1 | 1592 | 1 | 0 |
| Maypole Drive | 33 | 1625 | 17 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|------|------|------|-----|
| Melrose Avenue | 33 | 1658 | 21 | 2 |
| Mercers Place | 22 | 1680 | 12 | 1 |
| Meteor Road | 92 | 1772 | 40 | 0 |
| Milton Lane | 45 | 1817 | 30 | 8 |
| Milton Court | 13 | 1830 | 9 | 1 |
| Mitchell Road | 147 | 1977 | 70 | 2 |
| Monarch Terrace | 16 | 1993 | 9 | 1 |
| Montfort Drive | 25 | 2018 | 14 | 0 |
| Mustang Road | 8 | 2026 | 4 | 0 |
| Niagara Close | 25 | 2051 | 17 | 2 |
| Oslin Walk | 18 | 2069 | 11 | 1 |
| Pearl Way | 35 | 2104 | 18 | 1 |
| Peregrine Road | 61 | 2165 | 32 | 2 |
| Pippin Way | 83 | 2248 | 47 | 2 |
| Queens Street | 5 | 2253 | 3 | 0 |
| Redwell Grove | 36 | 2289 | 19 | 3 |
| Regent Way | 14 | 2303 | 7 | 1 |
| Rougemont | 10 | 2313 | 7 | 2 |
| Rubin Place | 10 | 2323 | 5 | 0 |
| Russet Way | 34 | 2357 | 20 | 1 |
| Saxon Close | 57 | 2414 | 34 | 2 |
| Sportsmans Cottages | 7 | 2421 | 5 | 1 |
| Stirling Road | 98 | 2519 | 50 | 2 |
| Sturmer Court | 37 | 2556 | 27 | 3 |
| Tempest Road | 12 | 2568 | 6 | 0 |
| Tower View | 18 | 2586 | 17 | 7 |
| Townsend Square | 46 | 2632 | 24 | 2 |
| Typhoon Road | 13 | 2645 | 6 | 0 |
| Victoria Drive | 74 | 2719 | 37 | 0 |
| Wellington Way | 9 | 2728 | 4 | 0 |
| Wheeler Place | 8 | 2736 | 4 | 0 |
| Wilkinson Place | 8 | 2744 | 4 | 0 |
| Winston Avenue | 85 | 2829 | 48 | 2 |
| Woodford Grove | 32 | 2861 | 20 | 4 |
| Worcester Avenue | 50 | 2911 | 25 | 0 |
| | 2911 | | 1633 | 163 |

Appendix 5

Community Organisation Observation Schedule

1. Information about the parish council meeting:

Name of the parish council: Kings Hill Parish Council

Date and time of meeting: 12 January 2005, at 7.30 pm

Location of meeting: Kings Hill Community Hall

Nature of the meeting: Monthly

Purpose of the meeting: To discuss parish business

2. Pre-meeting socialisation:

What was discussed? Linda Allen told PCSO Newby that he had just missed two youths riding about on motorbikes. PCSO Newby asked her where she had seen them. PCSO Newby said he was keeping an eye on this problem. When Colin Etheridge came into the meeting room Linda Allen asked him about his house. He invited her to go and see it. The two PCSO's were talking to each other. Margie the Community Hall manager came into the meeting room and spoke to Linda Allen

Was it a friendly atmosphere

(1) Not very

(2) Friendly: Friendly.

(3) Very friendly

3. The agenda:

Was there a written agenda for the meeting? Yes

If yes, was it distributed to the members and public? Copies were given to the County Councillors

If yes, when was it distributed:

(1) Before the meeting? Yes by email.

(2) At the meeting?

4. The participants:

How many people attended the meeting? 15 + Researcher

Who attended the meeting (County Councillors, Borough Councillors or Police Officers etc.)? Geoff Farge (Chair), the Clerk, Linda Allen, Colin Etheridge, Susan Farge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, PCSO Allan Newby, PCSO Alan Hatton (from Leighbourne), County Councillor Valerie Dagger, County Councillor Trudy Dean.

How many members of the public attended the meeting? No residents

5. Who presided over the meeting? The Chairman

6. What other persons had a formal role in the meeting (gave a presentation or report)?

Reports were given by: County Councillor Valerie Dagger, County Councillor Trudy Dean and PCSO Allan Newby

7. Did the chair encourage the other councillors to speak during the meeting?

Yes: Yes No

8. How many councillors or residents made comments or asked questions during the meeting?

See the field notes above

9. How closely did the councillors follow the agenda?

- (1) Not at all
- (2) Loosely
- (3) Fairly closely: Fairly closely
- (4) Strictly

10. What were the main topics of discussion at the meeting?

Kings Hill Community Hall

Policing the traffic problems at Kings Hill School

Resolution from the Amenities Committee

The new bus stop and shelter at Kings Hill

Kent Design Guide: housing at Kings Hill and the Section 106 Agreement

Council tax

Local hospitals and local schools

Tonbridge and Malling Crime and Disorder Partnership

11. How many formal votes were taken? 2

12. How did the councillors vote?

Show of hands: Yes

Secret ballot

Other

13. What were the issues about and what was the outcome on each vote taken?

ISSUE

OUTCOME

Vote 1: To agree the Precept for 2005/06. Graham Hall proposed they accept the precept and Brian Pearson seconded it. The Chair said could he have a show of hands. The Chair said right that's unanimous.

Vote 2: To give a donation to Age Concern. The Chair suggested they should give Age Concern £500 because they did not give them a donation last year. This was proposed and seconded.

Source: Adapted from Manheim and Rich (1994: 211-212)

Appendix 6

Downswood Parish Council Agenda Items

This table follows the progress of the Agenda Items discussed at the DPC monthly meetings (from December 2003 to July 2005). It shows the items that were successful and those which were not.

| Agenda Item | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|-------------------------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Questions Public | S | | | | | * | | * | N | * | | * | | | | | | | | | |
| Planning | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | O | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Church Rd Traffic Calming | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | | * | * | * | S | * | * | | |
| Litter Picking Man | * | | * | * | | | | * | M | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Xmas Lights Event | * | | S | | | | | | E | | * | * | * | * | * | * | | | * | * | |
| Quality Parish Status | * | | | | | | | | E | | | | | | | | | | | * | |
| Policing | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | T | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Disabled Ramp Cotswold Gdns | * | | * | | | | * | | I | | | | | R | * | | * | | * | | F3 |
| Vacancy | | * | * | | | * | * | * | N | * | * | * | C | * | | | | | | | * |
| Damage To Infrastructure | | * | | | | | | | G | | | | | | * | | | | * | | |
| Annual Parish Meeting | | * | * | * | S | | | | | | | | * | * | * | * | S | | | | * |
| Spring Cleaning Event | | * | * | | | * | S | | | | | | | * | * | * | | | | | |
| Website | | * | | * | * | * | * | * | | * | * | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Borough Cllr Report | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Speed Camera Wellington St | | * | | | | | * | * | | * | * | | | | | | | | | | |
| Overgrown Vegetation | | | * | | | | | | | * | | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Newsletter | | | * | | * | | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | * |
| Wilcon Bridge | | | * | * | | * | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Finances | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Foxden Play Area | | | * | | * | | * | | | | | | * | | * | * | | * | | | * |
| Mallards Play Equipment | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| CCTV Camera | | | * | | | | * | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | | * | | | * |
| Chewing Gum Clearance | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * |
| Len Valley Action Group | | | * | | * | | | | | | | | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Recycling | | | * | | | | | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Mallards Bank Stabilisation | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Mobile Phone Masts | | | * | * | | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | S | | | | | | | |
| Donations | | | S | | S | | | | | S | S | S | S | S | | S | S | | | | |
| Elections | | | | S | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | |
| Youth Huddle/Skateboard Park | | | | * | | | | | | | | | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | F1 |
| Affordable Housing | | | | * | * | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | |
| Declining Train Services | | | | * | * | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | |
| Parish Cllrs Allowances | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Handyman | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Best Kept Garden Competition | | | | | * | * | * | * | | S | | | | | | | * | * | * | * | * |
| Kent Assoc Parish Councils | | | | | * | * | | | | * | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Owl Boxes | | | | | * | | | | | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | F4 |
| County Cllrs Report | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | S |
| Quiet Lanes | | | | | | * | | * | | | | | | | * | | * | | * | | * |
| Mallards Antisocial Behaviour | | | | | | * | | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Election of Officers | | | | | | | S | S | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grass Cutting | | | | | | | * | * | | * | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dog Warden/Dog Litter Bins | | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Langley Bypass proposal | | | | | | | * | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | |
| Slide DCA | | | | | | | | | | | | * | S | * | | | | | | | |
| Community Centre Decking | | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Post Office Closure | | | | | | | | * | | * | * | * | | | | | | | * | | |
| Hollies Queen's Jubilee | | | | | | | * | | | * | * | * | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | F2 |
| Bus Services | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | | * | * | | | | |

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|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spires Medical Centre/Hosp | | | | | | | | | | * | | * | * | | | | | * | | |
| CommissionProtectionRuralEng | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | |
| New Notice Board | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | | | |
| Rural Conference | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | |
| Precept | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | |
| DCA | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | | | | | * | |
| New Licensing Act | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | * | |
| Dog Warden | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | * | | | |
| Allotments | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | * | | | |
| Community Warden | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | |
| Youth Forum on Website | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | * |
| Training for Clerk | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * |

Note: E* stands for enforcement of traffic calming or other ways of preventing antisocial behaviour. AP stands for Annual Parish Council meeting. C stands for the Clerk has resigned. R stands for re-opening the case for building a ramp for the disabled at Cotswold Gardens. F1 stands for DPC have decided that a skateboard park has been built at Mote Park so they no longer think it is necessary for them to provide one at Downswood. F2 stands for all the hollies have been stolen. F3 stands for the disabled ramp is no longer in the hands of the Highways Partnership and therefore DPC will have to start negotiations with Kent County Council. F4 stands for DPC have failed to organise to get the owl boxes erected onto the trees at Mallards due to Health and Safety issues.

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| Partnerships | | | | | | | | | | | F | F | F | | F | F | | |
| Section 106 Agreements | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| New Computer For Hall | | | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | |
| KHPC New Yrs Eve Dinner | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | | |
| SEERA/Housing Plans | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | * | * | | | |
| Hospital Changes | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | * | | | | * |
| Church Land | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | * | | * | |
| Proposal for Post Office | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | * | * | * |
| Proposal for French Market | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | * | | | * |
| New Licensing Laws | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | | | * | | * |
| Kent School Org Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | |
| Dogs Fowl | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | | * |
| Age Concern | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | | * |
| Richard Long KCC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | | |
| Annual Parish Meeting | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | | S |
| David Lloyd Leisure Centre | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | * | |
| Internal Audit | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | | |
| Hall Debtors | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | | S |
| Overgrown Trees | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | * | |
| Bye Law for Ball Park | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | |
| Southern Water | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | |
| Covenants | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | |
| Offham Road Closure | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | * |
| Golf Course | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | |
| GreenWaysCollectionScheme | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | |
| Allington Incinerator | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | |
| War Memorial | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | |
| Lack of Resident Interest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | |
| Village Green | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * |
| Proposal for a Church | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * |

Note: E* stands for enforcement of traffic calming or other ways of preventing antisocial behaviour. F stands for when an Agenda Item has been unsuccessful. Unlike DPC, KHPC held their 2004 Annual Parish meeting on a different evening to their Full Parish Council meeting. The 2005 Annual Parish meeting was held on 25 May (see column 5A). R stands for a question from the Reverend (Stuart Mousir-Harrison) for Kings Hill.

Appendix 8

Downswood Parish Council Meetings and Attendees (December 2003 to July 2005)

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| <p>3 December 2003 9 Parish Councillors in attendance 1 Member of the Public</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Andrew Archer, Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Geoffrey Davis, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Chris White, Cllr Mrs Reid, Mrs Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, Mr Fincham. <i>Cllr Mrs Reid has resigned.</i></p> |
| <p>6 January 2004 8 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Andrew Archer, Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Geoffrey Davis, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Julie Reid, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), PC Ian Gedge, MBC Cllr Winckless, PCSO M Smith, and Mr Les Thomas (DCA)</p> |
| <p>3 February 2004 6 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Andrew Archer, Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Chris White, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), PC Ian Gedge, Mr David Nuttall (LVAG).</p> |
| <p>2 March 2004 6 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Geoffrey Davis, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Chris White, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge, Kate Emerre and Mr Rajen Kantaria. <i>Kate Emerre was co-opted onto the Parish Council.</i></p> |
| <p>6 April 2004 – Annual Parish Meeting 9 Parish Councillors in attendance 3 Members of the Public</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Andrew Archer, Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Geoffrey Davis, Kate Emerre, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Chris White, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge, Mr Rajen Kantaria, Mr and Mrs Williams and Jim Wells.</p> |
| <p>4 May 2004 7 Parish Councillors in attendance 2 Members of the Public</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Andrew Archer, Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Kate Emerre, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Sands, MBC Cllr Dan Daley, MBC Cllr Malcolm Robertson, Mr Suter and Mr Tilton. <i>Cllr Chris White has resigned.</i></p> |
| <p>1 June 2004 – Elections 6 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Kate Emerre, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge, Mr Les Thomas (DCA).</p> |
| <p>6 July 2004 7 Parish Councillors in attendance 17 Members of the Public</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Geoffrey Davis, Kate Emerre, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge, Mr Rajen Kantaria, 17</p> |

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| | <p>members of the public. <i>Cllr Andrew Archer has resigned. Helen Williams was co-opted onto the Parish Council.</i></p> |
| <p>August 2004 Summer Break – No Meeting</p> | |
| <p>7 September 2004 7 Parish Councillors in attendance 4 Residents</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Kate Emerre, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Helen Williams, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), PC Ian Gedge, Mr Dallas, Mr and Mrs Noyce and Mrs Padbury.</p> |
| <p>5 October 2004 6 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Geoffrey Davis, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge.</p> |
| <p>2 November 2004 7 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Robin Bevan, Geoffrey Davis, Kate Emerre, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Helen Williams, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge and Mr Les Thomas (DCA).</p> |
| <p>7 December 2004 6 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Jerry Falkingham, Kate Emerre, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge, Mr J Davis, and Mrs Arwen Hann (Kent Messenger). <i>Jeff Davis was co-opted onto the Parish Council. Mrs Helen Rimmer (Clerk) has resigned. Kate Emerre will become Mrs Kate Barette on 18 December 2004.</i></p> |
| <p>4 January 2005 7 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Kate Barette, Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Jeff Davis, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Helen Rimmer (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge.</p> |
| <p>1 February 2005 7 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Kate Barette, Geoffrey Davis, Helen Williams, Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Mrs Teresa Irving (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge, and DC N Hatcher.</p> |
| <p>1 March 2005 8 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Kate Barette, Helen Williams, Jeff Davis, Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Teresa Irving (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC Ian Gedge.</p> |
| <p>5 April 2005 – Annual Parish Meeting 7 Parish Councillors in attendance 7 Members of the Public (including one youth less than 18 years old).</p> | <p>Roz Cheesman (Chair), Kate Barette, Helen Williams, Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Teresa Irving (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, Mrs Arwen Hann (Kent Messenger), PC David Leipnik, Mr Rajen Kantaria, Dr Singh, KCC Eric Hotson, Dawn Collins (MBC Youth and Community Development</p> |

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| | Worker), the Mayor and Mayoress of Maidstone Cllr Peter and Rosemary Hooper, and eight members of the public. |
| 3 May 2005 7 Parish Councillors in attendance | Roz Cheesman (Clerk), Kate Barette, Helen Williams, Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Teresa Irving (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC David Leipnik. |
| 7 June 2005 6 Parish Councillors in attendance | Roz Cheesman (Chair), Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Jerry Falkingham, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Jeff Davis, Teresa Irving (Clerk), MBC Cllr Winckless, PC David Leipnik. |
| 21 June 2005 Extraordinary Meeting/Elections 7 Parish Councillors in attendance | Roz Cheesman (Chair), Jerry Falkingham, Kate Barette, Helen Williams, Bill Greenhead, Mike Ladds, Jeff Davis, Teresa Irving (Clerk). |
| 5 July 2005 8 Parish Councillors in attendance 1 Member of the Public. | Roz Cheesman (Chair), Robin Bevan (vice-Chair), Jerry Falkingham, Kate Barette, Mike Ladds, Bill Greenhead, Helen Williams, Jeff Davis, Teresa Irving (Clerk), KCC Brian Wood, MBC Cllr Winckless, Caroline (Medway Valley Partnership), PC David Leipnik, Mrs Arwen Hann (Kent Messenger), and Mr Newton (Resident). |

Note: Members of the Public does not include: the County Councillors, Borough Councillor, Kent Police, Arwen Hann (Kent Messenger Reporter), Les Thomas (DCA), Rajen Kantaria (Local Businessman), Dr Singh (Local GP), and Dawn Collins (MBC Youth and Community Development Worker).

Appendix 9

Kings Hill Parish Council Meetings and Attendees (December 2003 to June 2005)

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>10 December 2003 7 Parish Councillors in attendance 1 Member of the Public</p> | <p>Geoff Farge (Chair), Diane Hall, Brian Pearson, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Colin Etheridge, Susan Farge, Graham Hall, County Councillor Mrs Trudy Dean, County Councillor Mrs Valerie Dagger, PCSO Allan Newby, Reverend Dr Stuart Mousir-Harrison, Robert Styles (T&MBC Principal Leisure Services Officer), and Karena Morley (T&MBC Youth and Play Development Officer).</p> |
| <p>14 January 2004 6 Parish Councillors in attendance 5 Members of the Public</p> | <p>Geoff Farge (Chair), Graham Hall, Brian Pearson, Graham Williams, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Susan Farge, Mr A Longmuir, Mrs S Kavanagh, Mrs S Rees, Mrs D Turner, PCSO Allan Newby, A Kings Hill Resident.</p> |
| <p>4 February 2004 – Community Centre Committee Meeting 6 Parish Councillors in attendance</p> | <p>Geoff Farge, Susan Farge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Dave Murray, Graham Williams</p> |
| <p>11 February 2004 6 Parish Councillors in attendance 3 Members of the Public</p> | <p>Geoff Farge (Chair), Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Colin Etheridge, Susan Farge, County Councillor Valerie Dagger, Borough Councillor Chris Brown, PCSO Allan Newby, PCSO Wendy Stanley, Mrs Sid (Resident), Miss Sid (Resident), Ms Kate Scott (Youth Team), Mrs D Turner (Resident).</p> |
| <p>10 March 2004 7 Parish Councillors in attendance 3 Members of the Public</p> | <p>Geoff Farge (Chair), Susan Farge, Graham Hall, Diane Hall, Brian Pearson, Graham Williams, Colin Etheridge, PCSO Allan Newby, Mr P Martin, Mrs A Martin, Mr W Purcell, Councillor Nicholas Hislop, Councillor Godfrey Hoarne, Councillor Brian Luker. <i>Mr Richardson has resigned. The Chair asked the Clerk to review the attendance of Ms Lesley Thomas.</i></p> |
| <p>14 April 2004 6 Parish Councillors in attendance 2 Members of the Public</p> | <p>Geoff Farge (Chair), Susan Farge, Colin Etheridge, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Brian Pearson, Graham Williams, County Councillor Trudy Dean, Mr William Purcell, PCSO Allan Newby, PCSO Wendy Stanley, Mrs R Augar. <i>William (Bill) Purcell was co-opted onto the Parish Council.</i></p> |
| <p>12 May 2004 – Elections 6 Parish Councillors in attendance 3 Members of the Public</p> | <p>Susan Farge, Colin Etheridge, Graham Hall, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, PCSO Allan Newby, Mr R Bennet (Chair, Kate Reed Wood Residents Association), 2 Residents. <i>A vacancy has arisen through non-</i></p> |

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| | <i>attendance of meetings by Ms Lesley Thomas. The Clerk will advertise the vacancy on the notice board and advise T&MBC.</i> |
| 26 May 2004 – Annual Parish Meeting 6 Parish Councillors in attendance 5 Members of the Public | Geoff Farge (Chair), Susan Farge, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, Borough Councillor Chris Brown, Sergeant D Hutton, PC G Ford, PCSO Wendy Stanley, Mrs L Allen, Mr A Longmuir, 3 Members of the Public. |
| 9 June 2004 6 Parish Councillors in attendance 6 Members of the Public | Geoff Farge (Chair), Susan Farge, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, PCSO Wendy Stanley, Sandra Wall (Asda), Graham Hines (Prospective Councillor), Vikki Radford (Prospective Councillor), 3 Kings Hill Residents. <i>A ballot was held to decide on which candidate (Mrs Radford or Mr G Hines) should join the KHPC and it was a tie, the Chair used his casting vote. Mr G Hines was the successful candidate.</i> |
| 14 July 2004 7 Parish Councillors in attendance 2 Members of the Public | Colin Etheridge, Susan Farge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Graham Hines, Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, PCSO Allan Newby, County Councillor Valerie Dagger, County Councillor Trudy Dean, and 2 Residents. |
| 11 August 2004 5 Parish Councillors in attendance | Colin Etheridge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Graham Hines, Brian Pearson. |
| 8 September 2004 7 Parish Councillors in attendance 4 Members of the Public | Geoff Farge (Chair), Colin Etheridge, Susan Farge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Bill Purcell, County Councillor Trudy Dean, Reverend Dr Stuart Mousir-Harrison, PCSO Wendy Stanley, Barry Clout (Kent Area Youth & Community Officer), 2 Malling Detached Youth & Community Workers, Sandra Wall (Asda), 2 Residents. |
| 13 October 2004 8 Parish Councillors in attendance | Geoff Farge (Chair), Susan Farge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, Colin Etheridge, PCSO Allan Newby. |
| 10 November 2004 6 Parish Councillors in attendance 1 Member of the Public | Geoff Farge (Chair), Colin Etheridge, Susan Farge, Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, Sergeant D Hatton, PCSO Allan Newby, County Councillor Trudy Dean, John Dean. <i>Mr G Hines has resigned.</i> |
| 8 December 2004 9 Parish Councillors in attendance 2 Members of the Public | Geoff Farge (Chair), Colin Etheridge, Susan Farge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, Borough Councillor Chris Brown, PCSO Allan Newby, PCSO Wendy Stanley, Mrs Linda Allen, Mr J Andrews. |

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| | <i>A ballot was held to decide on which candidate (Mr J Andrews of Mrs L Allen) should join the KHPC and the votes favoured Mrs Allen.</i> |
| 12 January 2005 10 Parish Councillors in attendance | Geoff Farge (Chair), Linda Allen, Colin Etheridge, Susan Farge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, PCSO Allan Newby, PCSO Alan Hatton, County Councillor Valerie Dagger, County Councillor Trudy Dean. |
| 9 February 2005 8 Parish Councillors in attendance 2 Members of the Public | Geoff Farge (Chair), Linda Allen, Susan Farge, Diane Hall, Graham Hall, Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, PCSO Wendy Stanley, 2 Residents. |
| 9 March 2005 6 Parish Councillors in attendance 2 Members of the Public | Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Colin Etheridge, Susan Farge, Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, PCSO Allan Newby, County Councillor Trudy Dean, Mr J Dean, 1 Resident. |
| 13 April 2005 9 Parish Councillors in attendance 2 Residents | Geoff Farge (Chair), Dave Murray (vice-Chair), Colin Etheridge, Linda Allen, Susan Farge, Bill Purcell, Graham Hall, Diane Hall, Graham Williams, PCSO Wendy Stanley, Mrs M Chilvers, County Councillor Valerie Dagger, Mr R Long, Mrs P Nix, 2 Residents. |
| 11 May 2005 – Elections 9 Parish Councillors in attendance | Dave Murray, Colin Etheridge, Linda Allen, Susan Farge, Bill Purcell, Graham Hall, Diane Hall, Brian Pearson, Graham Williams, PCSO Allan Newby, PC D Lismore, Special PC Hanky. |
| 25 May 2005 – Annual Parish Meeting 4 Parish Councillors in attendance 3 Members of the Public | Geoff Farge, Susan Farge, Bill Purcell, Dave Murray, Borough Councillor Chris Brown, PCSO Allen Newby, County Councillor Richard Long, Reverend Dr Stuart Mousir-Harrison, 2 Residents. |
| 8 June 2005 8 Parish Councillors in attendance 1 Member of the Public | Dave Murray (Chair), Linda Allen, Colin Etheridge, Geoff Farge, Susan Farge, Brian Pearson, Bill Purcell, Graham Williams, PCSO Wendy Stanley, County Councillor Richard Long, Reverend Dr Stuart Mousir-Harrison. |

Note: Members of the Public does not include: the County Councillors, Borough Councillors, Kent Police, Community Support Officers, or Officials who have been asked to give a presentation.

Appendix 10

**Voting Data of Downswood Parish Council and Kings Hill Parish Council
(December 2003 to June 2005)**

| Downswood | | | Kings Hill | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|---------|------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| Vote | Month & Item Voted On | Outcome | Vote | Month & Item Voted On | Outcome |
| | December 2003 | | | December 2003 | |
| 1 | Planning | P&AU | 1 | Takeover Community Hall | PS&AU |
| 2 | Donation | PS&AU | | | |
| 3 | Precept | PS&AU | | | |
| | January 2004 | | | January 2004 | |
| 4 | Donation | P&S | 2 | To Dissolve Old Committee | P&S |
| 5 | Donation | P&S | 3 | Novation Agreement | Agreed |
| 6 | Donation | P&S | 4 | Precept for 2004/05 | P&S |
| 7 | Concurrent Functions | P&S | 5 | Skate Park/Rouse Kent | P&S |
| | February 2004 | | | February 2004 | |
| 8 | Donation | P&S | 6 | Village Signs/Estimate | P&S |
| 9 | Donation | P&S | 7 | Resignation/Hall Manager | P&S |
| | | | 8 | To Acknowledge Letter/Ted | P&S |
| | | | 9 | Money Transfer (£5,000) | P&S |
| | March 2004 | | | March 2004 | |
| 10 | Co-option | SB | 10 | Resignation/Councillor | P&A |
| 11 | Donation | P&S | 11 | KAPC/Advice | P&S |
| 12 | Donation | P&S | | | |
| | April 2004 | | | April 2004 | |
| 13 | Donation | AU | 12 | Co-option | SB |
| 14 | Expenses | AU | 13 | Legal Transfer/Play Areas | P&S |
| | | | 14 | Village Signs/Over Budget | Agreed |
| | | | 15 | Donation | P&S |
| | | | 16 | Clerks Hours Increased | UA |
| | May 2004 | None | | May 2004 | |
| | | | 17 | Re-elect Chair | PS&AU |
| | | | 18 | Re-elect vice-Chair | P&S |
| | | | 19 | Donation | PS&A |
| | June 2004 | | | June 2004 | |
| 15 | Re-elect Chair | P&S | 20 | Minutes/Disagreement | A/1A |
| 16 | Re-elect vice-Chair | P&S | 21 | Co-option/2 Applicants | SB |
| 17 | Re-elect Treasurer | P&S | 22 | Kate Reed Wood Gate | P&S |
| 18 | Donation | P&S | 23 | Donation*/Not To Give | Agreed |
| 19 | Donation | PS&AU | | | |
| 20 | Approval of Accounts | P&S | | | |
| | July 2004 | | | July 2004 | |
| 21 | Co-option | SB | 24 | Cllr Hall to act as Chair | P&S |
| 22 | Traffic Calming | P&S/1A | 25 | Invite Guests/Hire Sm. Hall | Agreed |
| 23 | Website | P&S | 26 | Donation | 4F3AB |
| | | | 27 | August Meetings Changed | Agreed |
| | | | 28 | Wish Lists | Agreed |
| | August 2004 | NM | | August 2004 | |
| | | | 29 | Cllr Hall to act as Chair | P&S |
| | September 2004 | None | | September 2004 | |
| | | | 30 | Novation Agreement | PS&AU |
| | | | 31 | Donation | A/1A |
| | October 2004 | | | October 2004 | |
| 24 | Draft Budget | AU | 32 | To accept Hall Roof Quote | Agreed |

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|----|------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------------|--------|
| | | | 33 | To purchase Projector Stand | P&S |
| | | | 34 | Novation Agreement | Agreed |
| | | | 35 | Storage Room Conversion | Agreed |
| | | | 36 | Linforths/Law Society | P&S |
| | November 2004 | | | November 2004 | |
| 25 | Donation | PS&AU | 37 | Cllr Williams/PC purchase | P&S |
| 26 | Donation | PS&AU | | | |
| 27 | Donation | PS&AU | | | |
| 28 | Donation | PS&AU | | | |
| 29 | Donation | P&S | | | |
| | December 2004 | | | December 2004 | |
| 30 | Advertisement | AU | 38 | Co-option | SB |
| 31 | Co-option | SB | 39 | Youth Facility | PS&AU |
| 32 | Xmas Lights Event | A/1A | 40 | Donation/Not To Give | P&S |
| 33 | Donation | PS&AU | 41 | Budget/Meeting Date | Agreed |
| 34 | Donation | PS&AU | 42 | Donation | P&S |
| 35 | Precept | PS&AU | | | |
| | January 2005 | | | January 2005 | |
| 36 | Clerk Vacancy | SB | 43 | Finance/Precept for 2005/06 | Agreed |
| 37 | Mallards Open Space | PS&A | 44 | Donation | P&S |
| 38 | Donation/Not To Give | Agreed | | | |
| 39 | DCA Membership Fee | Agreed | | | |
| | February 2005 | None | | February 2005 | |
| | | | 45 | Clerk Training Day | Agreed |
| | | | 46 | Donation | P&S |
| | March 2005 | | | March 2005 | |
| 40 | Competition/Newsletter | P&S | 47 | Donation | P&S |
| 41 | Donation | P&S | 48 | Donation/CAB Deferred | Agreed |
| 42 | Donation | P&S | 49 | Donation | P&S |
| | April 2005 | | | April 2005 | |
| 43 | Donation | P&S | 50 | Age Concern Pop In | P&S |
| 44 | KAPC Membership Fee | A/1A | 51 | Novation Agreement | P&S |
| | May 2005 | | | May 2005 | |
| 45 | Garden Competition | P&S | 52 | Election of New Chair | P&S |
| 46 | Garden Competition | P&S | 53 | Election of New Vice-Chair | P&S |
| 47 | Annual Return 2004/05 | PS&AU | 54 | Donation/CAB see March | P&S |
| | | | 55 | Donation | P&S |
| | | | 56 | Annual Return 2004/05 | Agreed |
| | June 2005 | | | June 2005 | |
| 48 | Mallards Open Space | P&S | 57 | Donation KH Sch £500 | 3F3A |
| | | | 58 | Donation KH Sch £400 | 3F3A |
| | | | 59 | Donation KH Sch £300 | A/1A |
| | | | 60 | KAPC Motion 1 | PNVT |
| | | | 61 | KAPC Motion 2 | PNVT |

Note: The votes are recorded in the official minutes but not in a uniform manner as the codes in the table above illustrate: P (Proposed), S (Seconded), P&AU(Proposed and Agreed Unanimously), PS&AU (Proposed, Seconded and Agreed Unanimously), PS&A (Proposed Seconded and Agreed), P&A (Proposed and Agreed), A/1A (Agreed with One Abstention), SB (Secret Ballot), NM (No Meeting), 4F3AB (4 in Favour and 3 Abstentions), 3F3A (3 in Favour and 3 Against So Vote Not Carried), PNVT (Proposed But Not Seconded So No Vote Taken).

Appendix 11

**Crime at Downswood and Kings Hill
(December 2003 to June 2005)**

| Crime At Downswood (December 2003 to June 2005) | | | |
|---|---|--|------------------|
| Month | Incident | Additional Information | Code of Incident |
| Dec 2003 | 1) Abandoned car at Spires Medical Centre | This car could have been stolen and abandoned or abandoned by the owner. Therefore classified ASB. The local authority will put a notice on the car and then it will be removed. Downswood has been reinstated on the Operation Information System so abandoned cars will be removed within 24 hours | ASB |
| | 2) Vandalism to car | | CD |
| | 3) Theft from back of lorry | | THEFT |
| | 4) Attempted burglary | | BI |
| | 5) Youths throwing eggs | At houses | ASB |
| Jan 2004 | 6) Car stolen | From Mallards Way | THEFT |
| | 7) Theft from car | Parked at Deringwood Parade | THEFT |
| | 8) Road sign damaged | Keep left sign kicked | CD |
| | 9) Attempted arson | At Willow Rise. No damage to house. Embers outside letter box. Three males disturbed | ARSON |
| Feb 2004 | 10) Car stolen | | THEFT |
| | 11) Car stolen | | THEFT |
| | 12) Car burnt out | | CD |
| | 13) Car burnt out | | CD |
| | 14) Car damaged | | CD |
| | 15) Theft from car | | THEFT |
| | 16) Eggs thrown | At houses in Horton Downs | ASB |
| | 17) Handbag stolen | | THEFT |
| March 2004 | 18) Damage to Ford Transit | At Foxden Drive | CD |
| | 19) Youths throwing eggs at window | At Longham Copse | ASB |
| April 2004 | 20) Car stolen | From Grampian Way | THEFT |
| | 21) Car broken in to | At Gorham Drive | BI |
| | 22) Window smashed | At Community Centre | CD |
| | 23) Damage | To vehicle in car park | CD |
| | 24) Damage | At Chiltern Close | CD |
| | 25) Damage | To domestic property at Longham Copse | CD |
| May 2004 | <i>Suspect phone call</i> | Received by resident at Bournemouth Close. Alarm UK asking questions re providing security systems. Crime Prevention officer has spoken to the company re their methods of cold calling (Nuisance) | |
| June 2004 | 26) Threatening behaviour inside shop | At Downswood local parade of shops | ASB |
| | 27) Damage to door bell | At Community Centre | CD |
| July 2004 | 28) Youths riding bikes without crash helmets | At Mallards Open Space. Since the youths are not on the public highway this has been classified as antisocial behaviour instead of traffic offence | ASB |
| Sept 2004 | 29) Burglary at dwelling | Burglar got in through insecure window and saw car keys and stole car | THEFT |
| | 30) Theft from car | The fuel line was cut. Police recorded this as theft | THEFT |
| | 31) Damage to car | Scratch all down side. Car belongs to new resident. This has not given them good impression of Downswood | CD |
| | 32) Car accident | At Mallards Way. One vehicle drove off | RTA |
| | 33) Vandalism | At Madginford School | CD |
| | 34) Youths riding about on motor bikes, some with no crash helmets and no number plates | At Mallards Open Space. Since the youths are not on the public highway this has been classified as antisocial behaviour instead of traffic offence | ASB |
| | 35) Youths firing BB guns | In back gardens | ASB |

| | | | |
|------------|--|---|-------|
| Oct 2004 | 36) Burglary at dwelling | Cash and jewellery stolen | THEFT |
| | 37) Theft from shed | Three bikes stolen | THEFT |
| | 38) Moped stolen | Near Mallards Way | THEFT |
| | 39) Theft from car | PC Gedge said thieves took the front of the car. The owner had fitted the car up | THEFT |
| | 40) Damage to wall | At Foxden Drive | CD |
| | 41) Damage to goal post | At Mallards Open Space | CD |
| Nov 2004 | 42) Theft from car | At Mallards Way | THEFT |
| | 43) Criminal damage | At Ravens Dane Close | CD |
| | 44) Criminal damage to car | At Deringwood Drive. A lady was driving along, some youths were shouting verbal abuse, as they crossed the road one thumped the side of her car and dented it | CD |
| | 45) Dumped car | At Longham Copse. Insecure, needs moving. It is taxed and the registered, owner lives in Mote Park area. PC Gedge to pay owner a visit | ASB |
| Dec 2004 | 46) Break in to outbuilding | In fact was theft from back room at the Spires. Some youngsters took some beer and fled off in a car | THEFT |
| | 47) Motorbike stolen | Later found in Yeoman Way | THEFT |
| | 48) Damaged car | Grampian Way | CD |
| | 49) Damaged car | Cotswold Gardens | CD |
| Jan 2005 | 50) Burglary dwelling | At Reiden Grove. The door was forced but entry was not gained | BI |
| | 51) Burglary dwelling | At Monkdown. Conservatory door was open but entry gained through window to side of door. | THEFT |
| | 52) Noisy motorbikes | Riding about the parish | ASB |
| | 53) Noisy party | | ASB |
| Feb 2005 | 54) Garden ornament stolen | From garden at Longham Copse | THEFT |
| | 55) Cassette stolen | From car at Murraine Drive | THEFT |
| | 56) Holly dug up | DPC planted hollies to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee | THEFT |
| | 57) Suspicious person hanging about | In a residents garden at Monkdown | ASB |
| | 58) Nuisance moped rider | Seen riding around Cottswold Gardens. The person who reported the crime got the registration number. | TO |
| March 2005 | 59) Domestic incident | | DV |
| | 60) Youths throwing snowballs | Complaints about snowballing. PC Gedge said we used to do this when I was a kid so I don't know why people are complaining now. I thought this was what kids do | ASB |
| April 2005 | 61) Car stolen | | THEFT |
| | 62) Criminal damage | | CD |
| | 63) Theft | | THEFT |
| May 2005 | Two untaxed cars | PC Leipnik said the untaxed vehicles were on private property so we cannot do anything about this | |
| | 64) Two windows broken | At the Spires Medical Centre | CD |
| | 65) Young man arrested | At the local pharmacy. PC Leipnik did not say whether the crime was theft of antisocial behaviour | UO |
| June 2005 | 66) Attempted burglary | | BI |
| | 67) Burglary | | THEFT |
| | 68) Tin cans dumped | On the footpath leading from the shops to the church | ASB |
| | 69) Graffiti | At the Spires Medical Centre | ASB |
| | 70) Young men gathering at the local shops | | ASB |
| | 71) Chewing gum dropped on the ground | Especially around the shops and the bus stop opposite the shops | ASB |

| Crime At Kings Hill (December 2003 to June 2005) | | | |
|--|--|--|------------------|
| Month | Incident | Additional Information | Code of Incident |
| Dec 2003 | 1) Parents parking inappropriately at the schools | Some roads at Kings Hill are un-adopted so it is not the responsibility of T&MBC to impose restrictions on those parking inappropriately | ASB |
| | 2) Three fourteen year old troublesome boys | Given warning | ASB |
| | 3) | | ASB |
| | 4) | | ASB |
| Jan 2004 | 5) Break in | At Golf Club | BI |
| | 6) Shop lifting at Asda | | THEFT |
| Feb 2004 | 7) Muddy snowballs thrown about | Recorded as non-permanent damage | ASB |
| | 8) Eggs thrown about | Recorded as non-permanent damage | ASB |
| | 9) Graffiti | Recorded as non-permanent damage | ASB |
| | 10) Vandalism to bus shelter | At Discovery Drive | CD |
| | 11) Domestic violence | | DV |
| March 2004 | 12) Youths throwing stones | Recorded as antisocial behaviour | ASB |
| | 13) Youths knocking on doors | Recorded as antisocial behaviour | ASB |
| | 14) Nuisance scooter riders | | ASB |
| April 2004 | 15) Youths behaving in disruptive manner | On Arriva buses | ASB |
| | 16) Youths hanging around | At Kings Hill school at night | ASB |
| | 17) Nuisance scooter riders | No insurance and tax and riding on paths | TO |
| | 18) Parents parking inappropriately at the schools | Some roads are un-adopted so it is not the responsibility of T&MBC to impose restrictions on those parking inappropriately | ASB |
| May 2004 | 19) Car stolen | Keys taken off hook nr door through letterbox | THEFT |
| | 20) Antisocial behaviour | Letters and visits to parents and children who continually act in antisocial manner | ASB |
| | 21) Cars speeding | At Discovery Drive | TO |
| June 2004 | 22) Car stolen | Keys taken off hook nr door through letterbox | THEFT |
| | 23) Speeding | At Discovery Drive | TO |
| | 24) Antisocial behaviour | At Asda | ASB |
| | 25) Youths driving petrol driven bikes | No insurance and tax | TO |
| July 2004 | 26) Domestic violence | | DV |
| | 27) Four garage break ins | Golf clubs stolen | THEFT |
| | 28) | | THEFT |
| | 29) | | THEFT |
| | 30) | | THEFT |
| | 31) Garden furniture stolen | From resident | THEFT |
| | 32) Two attempts to take keys | From houses through letterboxes | BI |
| | 33) | | BI |
| | 34) Four youths shop lifting Asda | Spoken to and ban from going there | THEFT |
| | 35) | | THEFT |
| | 36) | | THEFT |
| | 37) | | THEFT |
| | 38) Four local youths driving noisy cars and speeding | Visited and spoken to | TO |
| | 39) | | TO |
| | 40) | | TO |
| | 41) | | TO |
| | 42) Ten year old boy driving petrol driven scooter – no license, insurance and tax | Cautioned. | TO |
| | 43) Ten year old boy driving petrol driven scooter – no license, insurance | Shortly after caught again. PCSO took boy home, spoke to the father. Boy given Section 59 warning. PCSO told | TO |

| | | | |
|-----------|--|--|-------|
| | and tax | parents if happened again police would seize scooter | |
| | 44) Local man drove into bollard | Arrested as he was boarding an aircraft | RTA |
| Sept 2004 | 45) Car stolen | From Golf Club | THEFT |
| | 46) Golf Clubs stolen | From Golf Club | THEFT |
| | 47) Youths riding motorised scooters fast | Along Discovery Drive and Pippin Way | TO |
| | 48) Conifer stolen | | THEFT |
| | 49) Youths caught drinking and urinating | On the green near the gazebo | ASB |
| | 50) Youths riding scooters at speed | Along the Bridleway | TO |
| | 51) Youths throwing fireworks from scooters | Along Russet Way | ASB |
| | 52) Graffiti | Removed from the sub-station at Pippin Way | ASB |
| | Animal Rights demonstration in August outside of Aventis | Protestors had banners and hooters. They also distributed leaflets | |
| | 53) Under age drinking | At Tower View | ASB |
| Oct 2004 | 54) Youths throwing tissue substance which they have taken from building sites | At Crabtree Close and Peregrine Road | ASB |
| | 55) Antisocial behaviour concerning scooters | Two warnings given | ASB |
| | 56) Horse riders cantering along the bridleway | Riders hold a licence which can be removed by Rouse if it is abused | ASB |
| | 57) Number of skateboarders at Liberty Square | Kings Hill Security Guards have expressed concerns | ASB |
| Nov 2004 | 58) Break in at Golf Club | Lockers forced open | BI |
| | 59) Car number plates stolen | Sergeant Hutton said this is done to ring a vehicle | THEFT |
| | 60) Youths throwing stones at the 123 bus | Youths not identified and no damage so classified as ASB | ASB |
| | 61) Noise reported | At Pippin Way | ASB |
| | 62) Two cars left parked on the road | Restrictive Covenant says this is not allowed | ASB |
| | 63) | | ASB |
| Dec 2004 | 64) Car drove into tree | At Worcester Avenue -- driver unhurt | RTA |
| | 65) Shop lifting at Asda | Thieves tried to steal 3 DVD players | THEFT |
| | 66) Number of thefts from building sites | Charles Church have employed guard | THEFT |
| | 67) Someone purposely spilled 400 gallons of fuel | This has caused pollution problems | UO |
| | 68) Attempted break in | At Crabtree Close. PCSO Newby tried to catch the intruder but he ran off | BI |
| | 69) Golf equipment stolen | | THEFT |
| | 70) Several windows broken | At the Control Tower. Two lads and their parents were visited | CD |
| | 71) | | CD |
| | 72) Car parts stolen | From property at Alexander Grove | THEFT |
| | 73) Notices issued to scooter riders | One was caught without number plates and no insurance | TO |
| Jan 2005 | 74) Domestic violence | | DV |
| | 75) Television stolen | From show houses | THEFT |
| | 76) Theft of gas bottles and diesel from building site | Released over building site | THEFT |
| | 77) Purse stolen | At Asda | THEFT |
| | 78) PCSO Wendy Stanley suffered verbal abuse | At one of the building sites | ASB |
| Feb 2005 | 79) Handbag stolen from unlocked car | Outside of the Academy Nursery | THEFT |
| | 80) Six lights stolen | From Liberty Square | THEFT |
| | 81) Golf clubs stolen | From a garage | THEFT |
| | 82) Eggs thrown at windows of houses | At Discovery Drive, Winston Avenue, and Lambourne Drive | ASB |
| | 83) White paint tipped over a wall | At Winston Avenue | CD |
| | 84) Small fire lit | At Control Tower | ARSON |

| | | | |
|------------|---|---|-------|
| | 85) Domestic violence | | DV |
| | 86) Youth riding scooters | Along Lambourne Drive | ASB |
| | 87) Two neighbour disputes | | DV |
| | 88) | | DV |
| | 89) 'Disabled from Birth' has been putting leaflets through doors asking for unwanted items | Not a legitimate organisation. They have been selling items donated for profit | FRAUD |
| | 90) Two car accidents | In the car park | RTA |
| | 91) | | RTA |
| | 92) Horse left tied up | At Alexander Grove roundabout | ASB |
| March 2005 | 93) Snowball fight turned unpleasant | A boy was cautioned | ASB |
| | 94) Two thefts from local shops | | THEFT |
| | 95) | | THEFT |
| | 96) Lady driver spun off the road due to snow | At the entrance to Kings Hill | RTA |
| | 97) Motor scooter problems | At Lambourne Drive. Section 59 to be issued | TO |
| | 98) Parents parking inappropriately at schools | Some roads at Kings Hill are un-adopted so it is not the responsibility of T&MBC to impose restrictions on those parking inappropriately | ASB |
| | 99) Youth caught drinking | PCSO Newby spoke to the youth | ASB |
| April 2005 | 100) Three males caught trying to break in to building site | | BI |
| | 101) Two BMX bikes stolen | Outside of Asda | THEFT |
| | 102) | | THEFT |
| | 103) Two incidents of shop lifting | | THEFT |
| | 104) | | THEFT |
| | 105) Damaged vehicle | | CD |
| | 106) Domestic violence | | DV |
| | 107) Two bollards broken | At Greenwich University at Kings Hill | CD |
| | 108) Two nuisance youths riding motor scooters | | ASB |
| | 109) | | ASB |
| | 110) One nuisance youth riding about on a skateboard | | ASB |
| | 111) Youths have been damaging the water tower | | CD |
| | 112) Drivers going the wrong way | Down Gibson Drive | TO |
| | 113) Horse left tied up | Close to the road | ASB |
| | 114) Tyres burnt by gypsies | Near West Malling Bypass. In the past this has occurred as a sign of protest. | ARSON |
| May 2005 | 115) Nuisance youths | At Russet Way | ASB |
| | 116) Skips left on roads with no lights and not displaying hirers name and address | Road un-adopted so T&MBC cannot take action. It is down to Liberty Property Trust to take action since they issued the Restrictive Covenant | ASB |
| | 117) People driving in the wrong direction up one way roads | | TO |
| | 118) Tyre of vehicle slashed | | CD |
| | 119) Burglary related to tenant dispute | | THEFT |
| | 120) Theft of vehicle | Keys were left in vehicle while the driver was taking a comfort break | THEFT |
| | 121) Theft from ATM machines in the area | Devices are fitted to the ATM machines to steal personal data | THEFT |
| June 2005 | 122) Four burglaries from the building sites | | THEFT |
| | 123) | | THEFT |
| | 124) | | THEFT |
| | 125) | | THEFT |
| | 126) Domestic burglary | | THEFT |
| | 127) Racial incident | | ASB |
| | 128) Plant stolen | From the new properties | THEFT |
| | 129) Theft | From the Spitfire pub | THEFT |
| | 130) Shop lifting | At Asda | THEFT |

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|--|---|--|-------|
| | 131) Harassment between neighbours | | DV |
| | 132) Threat to kill someone | | ASB |
| | 133) Couple of males fighting | | ASB |
| | 134) Bad driving incidents concerning bikes | Along Forest Way | ASB |
| | 135) Dispute between neighbours | | DV |
| | 136) Suspicious male hanging around one of the building sites | | ASB |
| | 137) Eight nuisance youth reports | Mostly at Lambourne Drive and trying to get into the Control Tower | ASB |
| | 138) | | ASB |
| | 139) | | ASB |
| | 140) | | ASB |
| | 141) | | ASB |
| | 142) | | ASB |
| | 143) | | ASB |
| | 144) | | ASB |
| | 145) Two vehicle incidents drink involved | | TO |
| | 146) | | TO |
| | 147) Two harassment incidents | | ASB |
| | 148) | | ASB |
| | 149) Two shop lifting incidents | | THEFT |
| | 150) | | THEFT |

Note: (ASB) antisocial behaviour, (BI) break in, THEFT, (CD) criminal damage, (DV) domestic violence, (RTA) road traffic accident, ARSON, (TO) traffic offence, (UO) un-coded offence FRAUD.

The crime categories have been checked by Anthony Muier-Brockett (ex-Detective Constable Metropolitan Police Force).

Appendix 12

Elite Interviews (2003-2008)

Interview with Kim Evans (Public Relations Officer of Swale Borough Council), at Swale Borough Council Offices, Sittingbourne, Kent, on (21 January 2003)

Interview with Derek Wyatt (Labour MP for Sittingbourne), at Sittingbourne Library, Sittingbourne, Kent, on (14 March 2003)

Interview with David Williams (Crime Reduction Officer of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (T&MBC), at T&MBC Offices, Kings Hill, Kent, on (25 March 2003)

Interview with Chris Pickvance (Professor of Sociology at the University of Kent at Canterbury), at the University of Kent at Canterbury, on (28 March 2003)

Interview with Reverend Paul Gibbons (Father of St Michael's Anglican Church), at St Michael's Vicarage, Maidstone, Kent, on (1 April 2003)

Interview with Caroline Binns (Marketing Manager of Rouse Kent Limited), at the Development and Marketing Office, Kings Hill, Maidstone, Kent, on (17 April 2003)

Interview with Mrs Melanie Colyer (Resident of Kings Hill), at Kings Hill, Maidstone, Kent, on (17 April 2003)

Interview with Mike Ladds (Downswood Parish Councillor), at the Music and Magic Evening, Downswood Community Centre, Downswood, Maidstone, Kent, on (12 July 2003)

Interview with Reverend Sewell (Otham Church), at the Music and Magic Evening, Downswood Community Centre, Downswood, Maidstone, Kent, on (12 July 2003)

Interview with Lady Pharmacist, at the Spires Pharmacy, Downswood, Maidstone Kent, on (12 July 2003)

Interview by telephone with Roz Cheesman (Chair of Downswood Parish Council), on (14 July 2003)

Interview with Roz Cheesman (Chair of Downswood Parish Council), and Helen Rimmer (Clerk of Downswood Parish Council), at Harpers Coffee Shop, Market Buildings, Maidstone, Kent, on (5 November 2003)

Interview with Fred Winckless (Maidstone Borough Councillor and former Mayor of Maidstone 1994 to 1995), at the Grange Moor Hotel, Maidstone, Kent, on (10 November 2003)

Interview with Rajen Kantaria (Manager of three of The Spires Shops), at the Convenience Store, Downswood, on (15 November 2003)

Interview with Fred Winckless (Maidstone Borough Councillor and former Mayor of Maidstone 1994 to 1995), at the Grange Moor Hotel, Maidstone, Kent, on (17 November 2003)

Interview with Fred Winckless (Maidstone Borough Councillor and former Mayor of Maidstone 1994 to 1995), at the Grange Moor Hotel, Maidstone, Kent, on (5 April 2004)

Interview with Fred Winckless (Maidstone Borough Councillor and former Mayor of Maidstone 1994 to 1995), at the Grange Moor Hotel, Maidstone, Kent, on (13 June 2005)

Interview with Fred Winckless (Maidstone Borough Councillor and former Mayor of Maidstone 1994 to 1995), at the Grange Moor Hotel, Maidstone, Kent, on (26 July 2005)

Interview with Jill Hodgson (Clerk of Kings Hill Parish Council), at Kings Hill Community Hall, Kings Hill, Maidstone, Kent, on (4 October 2005)

Interview with Doctor Keith Hayward (Lecturer in the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research at the University of Kent at Canterbury), at the University of Kent at Canterbury, on (29 August 2006)

Interview with Sergeant Alan Willett (Neighbourhood Policing Team), at Kent Police HQ, Sutton Road, Maidstone, Kent, on (30 January 2008)

Interview by telephone with Ashley Ralph (Kent Highways Authority Compliance Officer), on (15 April 2008)

Appendix 13

Interview with Maidstone Borough Councillor (10 November 2003)

1. Have you noticed a decline in peoples' attitudes towards authority?

Borough Councillor: I would say on balance that I have and I think that is related to emphasis being put on the right of the individual, which is important. But in some cases it's gone to the extreme and goes against any feeling of responsibility to community.

2. If yes, what do you think is the cause or causes of this?

Borough Councillor: Well yes, I think this is I covered this to some extent in the question just now. It is the, as one myself who believes in the balance between individual liberty and community interest. The, undoubtedly the balance has gone towards, too much towards individualism. Yes and the fault can be laid at the door of the contemporary political situation in this country. Now, you don't want me to elaborate on that at the moment?

Researcher: Yes.

Borough Councillor: Well in the, at the time when, this is what I say it blurs over the, this into to a political thing really. You can't divorce community from politics. It's at a time when we moved towards Thatcherism and so forth. Everything including the Labour party has gone to the right with so much emphasis on, opinions and individualism. That, that's I believe that is the cause of it. That has been antagonistic to the concept of community.

3. Do you think people find it more difficult to trust politicians at the national level than the political system itself?

Borough Councillor: Again my answer to that is that the, yes there is a distrust of politicians at the national level. But in so doing you can't divorce this from peoples' perception and trust in the political system itself because those politicians national or local are part of the system. Therefore distrust in national politicians or even local politicians, then breeds the whole contempt of the political system, and hence you get a situation where, this is manifested by people, not coming out to vote.

4. What do you think is the best way to encourage people to vote?

Borough Councillor: That's a much more difficult one that is a much more difficult one. Well taking it at local level, we must still keep up the personal contact by politicians knocking on doors, and not rely on computers and Internet and email. They have their part to play. But the contact between politicians for a better word local politicians and the, and the, electorate must be at the face-to-face level as far as possible. I think that. And I, I was engaged in first of all although I am always prepared to admit when I'm wrong. I believe the experiment that's going on in Maidstone Borough Council at the moment of holding twice a year a debate where public are invited, public decide on the issue they want to debate. Public are invited and they then in that meeting put their views and questions to members of the Council, and a debate takes place between members of the Council. Now I think that is a way of trying to engender people to take a political interest okay in their Borough, in their local affairs. And I think this is, truly an experiment because there's no easy answer to this. But this is a thing we're doing locally here, which may encourage people to think right. The other thing, which I think goes at the local and political level and this may sound strange coming from an Independent, but obviously I've got political views even though I'm an Independent of the party whip. Is that there is no clear division at the local level between parties in relation to policies that stem from different principles. I know you don't want to be, people don't want dogmatic politicians, but they want

political views with different principles so they know what their choices is, and there is a tendency at the local level, and I think I can speak with some authority. I've been on the Council for 19 years. That they have been moving towards the political administration that is more managerial than the political, and I think that although people may not realise this is where there is a loss of interest in politics, particularly locally because they say 'they are all the same'.

5. What do you think about e-democracy as a tool to get citizens involved?

Borough Councillor: Well my idea, is there's going to be a movement towards e-democracy. I think if you allow people to vote online and give their views like online, it will increase at least for a period interest in the, in the running of their democracy. But I don't think that there's any substitute at the end of the day for a face-to-face contact between the politician locally and the residents and the electorate. I don't think it's a substitute for going door-to-door and visiting people.

Researcher: Could you elaborate on the face-to-face, what is the, why do you need the face-to-face contact?

Borough Councillor: I think that there's something quite, although email is necessary it's something impersonal about email. I use it, and it speeds up communication, but nevertheless when I have a person with a problem and they tell me on an email or phone I find I get greater, a better picture when I go and see them, in their home or on the spot, and I'm in communication because there is communication other than verbal communication. One of the problems with the email of course is that you can make statements and very often for example, I've tried to be humorous on email, and it's been totally misunderstood. So it's the, it's so impersonal, and it's all connected with this very necessary one-to-one almost one might say, body language.

6. What individuals or groups at Downswood are more likely to take part in community activities?

Borough Councillor: Well I find that you've got, and I think this is right, I think that it's true that the parish council, and people like that are people very often connected with the local church. Not because they are religious or anything of that nature, but they seem to be, these are the people who seem to have an interest in community. So in some ways the church is almost central. I also find that if you've got, for example if I may give this as an example. The Downswood Community Association in one moment you will see, have a number of bodies affiliated to them like the bowls club, like the drama group, and things of that nature. They have representations on the Community Association executive on their management committee, and therefore that these are the people that are belonging already to local organisations that are coming together, and actually forming some sort of community group.

7. Is it the same people who volunteer?

Borough Councillor: I would say by and large yes. I would say by and large yes.

8. Is it more difficult to get young people involved in community activities?

Borough Councillor: It is these days. I am not sure why. I think probably because there's such a lot of attractions and activity outside of the community. They can go either for example, Maidstone is a well-known night economy spot in Kent, and people come from all over Kent and even southeast London, and you know when you get this, this is the main interest of young people. And therefore it's very difficult in these days to get them to take an interest, a civic interest, I would say, in community affairs.

Researcher: The last time we spoke, you said that although young people, it is difficult to get them involved, they are interested in politics and they support single issues such as anti-war protests.

Borough Councillor: Yes.

Researcher: Would you expand on that a little please?

Borough Councillor: Well two main, anti-war and the other thing is environmental. And I think that's because over a period of time the young members of the community have probably quite rightly lost faith, and therefore interest in what one might call conventional party politics. And they see issues which are fundamental to society, and they want to concentrate on those in particular, and I give the environment as well, as well as the anti-war movement as an example.

9. What motivates you to do such good work for the Downswood community?

Borough Councillor: Well as you know Downswood is only part of the ward. I have three other parts there's three Otham, Downswood and a little bit of Senacre, which is a housing cooperative. What motivates me? That's rather interesting. I find that difficult to answer because I've been in political life most of my, most of my adult life has been involved in politics, starting when I was twenty-five, and right up to now. And therefore I have a strong belief in well, I have a strong belief, well how can I put it, it's very difficult. In working for the community I get satisfaction out of achieving things for the community. So therefore, it's a two-way effort. I'm giving, but I'm getting, because I get great kudos out of what I might achieve and I don't always achieve things, but when I do. So I think that's one of the greatest motivations. And of course I get recognised for it. That's being honest with you. I think my experience shows that, that interest isn't in, in politics and community affairs. It's not down. When we talk about politics we are talking about community affairs it's never entirely down entirely to our truism. It comes in, to some extent, but the fact is that, that people do it because they are getting satisfaction. As I've said and achievement. There's a sort of ego strengthening. There's nothing wrong with that but we have to, we have to admit that. So it's you're, you're as I said earlier on, you're giving but you're getting back something from it. For example, when I started in politics as a young Liberal many years ago, I used to get a certain amount of satisfaction out of getting onto a public platform and talking about local issues.

10. Do you think citizenship lessons in schools are a good idea?

Borough Councillor: Well I'm almost bound to say they are a good idea. But obviously I'm not in touch with schools today. As you know I was a lecturer but not in schools with children. I suppose the only answer I can give to that is that it depends how the citizenship concept is delivered to the children. I think if you are doing that to increase citizens' awareness, so that it manifests itself later, a little later in life, you've got to go as far as to providing them with, and something we said earlier on, with the different philosophies of the different political parties so they understand what this is about.

Researcher: So just to expand on that a little bit. Do you think these lessons should cover for example instruction on choosing a bank account, instruction about how to be a good citizen, instruction about how the political system works?

Borough Councillor: Well I've gone on before, but yes I think it must include those. It must include those. But it certainly must include, if you've got to leave out, you can leave out the bank account although that is important. But I think how the political system works ties up with what I've said about the different parties and their philosophies, and also the structure of government, parish councils, local government and national government.

Researcher: Yes so that if they understand local government they're more likely to be interested in getting involved in local politics?

Borough Councillor: If they understand it yes. Yes that's right and how it works. But if you are going to do citizenship classes you must take them to council meetings or things of that nature so they can see it in action.

11. How would you assess the progress of the Government's White Paper, In Touch with the People?

Borough Councillor: Well this is, you're talking about modernisation aren't you, so called modernisation. Well I find that the problem is that if you have like we have in Maidstone the cabinet system. You've got the power rests very often in the hands of about six or eight people who make the day-to-day decisions, and if they are not as strong as they should be, if they are rather weak people, then understandably the officers almost take over policy making, which is undemocratic. The strong part of this modernisation process is the scrutiny committees. They go into things in more depth. But the problem there is that the cabinet can if they so wished reject anything the scrutiny committee say. So really unlike the old committee system although people, although decisions took longer, and the modernisation system has speeded things up. Under the old system of committees, more ordinary members of the council, back benchers if you like to call them were involved in the decision-making.

12. Do you think joined up government works?

Borough Councillor: Well I think it's in its infancy and I think it's advantageous that people like the borough council have to cooperate with say the health service, the police, the fire service and voluntary organisations and work together. But it's very difficult to say at this particular stage whether it will make any great difference in policy, in policy making. That's a very difficult question to answer that. I believe that joined up government is something which has to be attempted but whether in fact it works and just doesn't become a talking shop remains to be seen. Community strategy in fact arises out of working with your strategic partners, joined up government. What happens in fact is that you, they listen to you, and you listen to them, and as a result you as a borough council come up with a community strategy based on the information you've got from the various other agencies, and agencies is a word I use when I talk about the health service, the police, fire brigade, or even voluntary agencies. And I suppose one might also say that your strategic partners are also your parish councils within the borough boundaries, and you work closely with them and get their views. I think we always have done in Maidstone in actual fact. This is really part of the community strategy.

Appendix 14

Presentation Transcripts (2004-2006)

Sergeant Bryan Whittaker (Kent Police), *The fight against antisocial behaviour*, at the Annual Downswood Parish Council Meeting, Downswood Community Centre, Downswood, Maidstone, Kent, on (6 April 2004).

Dan Daley (Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration) Malcolm Robertson (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transportation), *Planning and the Environment*, at Downswood Parish Council Meeting, Downswood Community Centre, Downswood, Maidstone, Kent, on (4 May 2004).

Lindsey Daley (Head of Crime and Disorder, Manchester City Council, Bill Pitt (Head of Neighbourhood Nuisance Team, Manchester City Council, Viv Blow (Discus Project) and Graham Curel (Team Leader, East Manchester, Neighbourhood Nuisance Team), *Improving the neighbourhood and supporting local communities: Ensuring an holistic approach to tackling antisocial behaviour -- balancing prevention with addressing the causes*, at the Fifth National Regeneration Convention: Knowledge and power: connecting communities with cities, regions and countries, UMIST, Manchester, on (14 July 2004).

Charles Woodd (Community Development Team Leader, Civil Renewal Unit, the Home Office), *The new localism and redefining democracy around delivery and local needs*, at the Fifth National Regeneration Convention: Knowledge and power: connecting communities with cities, regions and countries, UMIST, Manchester, on (15 July 2004)

Roz Cheesman (Chair of Downswood Parish Council), Hugh Robertson (Conservative MP for Faversham and Mid Kent), Mike Fitzgerald (Maidstone Borough Councillor) Fred Winckless (Maidstone Borough Councillor) *Campaign to Save the Downswood Post Office*, at Downswood Community Centre, Downswood, Maidstone, Kent, on (27 July 2004).

Dawn Collins (Maidstone Borough Council Youth Community Development Worker): at the Annual Downswood Parish Council Meeting, Downswood Community Centre, Downswood, Maidstone, Kent, on (5 April 2005).

Doctor Singh (GP from the Spires Medical Centre): at the Annual Downswood Parish Council Meeting, Downswood Community Centre, Downswood, Maidstone, Kent, on (5 April 2005).

Laura Moyhahan (Chief Executive of (NUCA) Netherthorpe and Uppertorpe Community Alliance), *Getting people involved in making improvements to their community for themselves*, at the Uppertorpe Healthy Living Centre, Sheffield, on (18 July 2005)

Sixth National Regeneration Convention: Making neighbourhoods sustainable: services, skills and governance, Sheffield Hallam University 18-20 July 2005.

Tim Pope (Head of Branch in Liveability and Sustainable Communities) *Cleaner, Safer, Greener public spaces*, at the Sixth National Regeneration Convention: Making neighbourhoods sustainable: services, skills and governance, Sheffield Hallam University, on (19 July 2005)

Sir Sandy Bruce Lockhart (Leader of Kent County Council and Chairman of the Local Government Association), Keynote Speaker, at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Annual Conference, at the Winter Gardens, Eastbourne, on (24 September, 2005).

Claire Fox (Institute of Ideas), *Blue Sky thinking*, at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Annual Conference, at the Winter Gardens, Eastbourne, on (25 September 2005)

Paul Hilder(Lead Policy Advisor, Transforming Neighbourhoods, Young Foundation), Vicki Savage (Young Foundation), *Engaging Citizens and Communities in Neighbourhood Governance*, at the Seventh National Regeneration Convention: Regeneration – doing it better: engaging people, changing neighbourhoods, Warwick University, Coventry, on (25 July 2006).

Rachael Arnold (Gallery 37 Glasgow Representative) *Preparing young people for employment, tackling youth disengagement and antisocial behaviour through the arts and culture*, at the Seventh National Regeneration Convention: Regeneration – doing it better: Engaging people, changing neighbourhoods, Warwick University, Coventry, on (25 July 2006).

Amanda Beckles (Social Cohesion Consultant COHESIA Ltd), *Community Owned PI's (Performance Indicators): A route to community engagement and performance improvement*, at the Seventh National Regeneration Convention: Regeneration – doing it better: Engaging people, changing neighbourhoods, Warwick University, Coventry, on (25 July 2006).

Appendix 15**Copy of Downswood Parish Council's Agenda**

DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Parish Council to be held at Downswood Community Centre on ... at 8.00 pm when the following business is proposed to be transacted:

1. APOLOGIES
 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST
 3. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
 4. URGENT MATTERS
 5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON ...
 6. MATTERS ARISING
 7. POLICE REPORT
 8. CORRESPONDENCE
 9. COMMITTEE REPORTS
 10. REPORTS FROM SEMINARS ATTENDED
 11. PLANNING
 12. FINANCE
 - i. Items for payment
 - ii. Other matters to report
 13. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT
 14. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES
 15. ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MEETING
- DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ...

TERESA IRVING
CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 16

Extracts from Downswood Parish Council's Minutes and Kings Hill Parish Council's Minutes referring to the Abstentions Voting Category

Downswood Parish Council

In the minutes of 1st June 2004:

7. Matters Arising

6[6(vii)] Highways

Junction of Deringwood Drive and Church Road price received from Kent Highways for junction - £8740.55. The following proposals were raised:

- a. Do nothing
- b. DPC to pay 100%
- c. DPC to request 50% from MBC and finance rest
- d. Do all work except anti-skid surface at cost of £2250.00

Action: Clerk to write to MBC proposing 50-50 split, requesting reply before July meeting. To be placed on agenda for July meeting.

In the minutes of 6th July 2004:

7. Matters Arising

6[6(vii)] Highways

Junction of Deringwood Drive and Church Road – reports received from residents of other accidents/near misses. Parish will have to finance total project as no MBC funds available. Projects earmarked in the budget could be shelved for this financial year to allow for financing. Cllr Winckless advised that he has a devolved budget for use within his constituency – may be able to contribute to cost. Cllr Hotson to be approached re his KCC devolved budget. Cllr Bevan proposed that the whole scheme be carried out, seconded Cllr Greenhead. Agreed with one abstention – Cllr Davis believing that problem is a combination of speed, stopping and blind spot. Should we not be slowing traffic down rather than putting down an anti-skid surface? Church Road may come under Quiet Lanes scheme but in the meantime Highways Engineer to be asked for any suggestions to reduce speed.

In the minutes of 7th December 2004:

6. Matters Arising

6(15) Christmas Lights – Thank you to everyone involved. It was unfortunate that we were unable to co-ordinate the ringing of the bells this year. Next year more publicity is required. Official invitations to be sent to user groups. Surplus supplies were distributed to Mencap and the Shelter for Homeless. Councillor Bevan queried whether an event should be held next year. Following discussion it was felt that this was an important community event and should continue.

In the minutes of 5th April 2005:

12. Finance

The payment to KAPC was discussed. It was agreed payment should be made but a letter should accompany the payment requesting clarification of the following: Why the annual increase is always above inflation? Why the payment is based on the number of equivalent band D properties in the Parish?

Action: Clerk.

Kings Hill Parish Council

In the minutes of 14th April 2004:

04/141 Estate Maintenance Charges

Mr Pearson has written to Rouse Kent requesting the names of the attendees at the meeting on 2nd March between RK and the Parish Council. He also requested a summary of the conclusions of the meeting. Notes of this meeting had previously been distributed to all councillors and a full report on the meeting had been presented to the Parish Council by Mr Farge, the minutes of which were agreed as accurate. Mr Pearson stated his reason for contacting Rouse Kent was to publicise progress in Estate Maintenance Charges in the Newsletter. Mr Farge explained that the Parish Council had made considerable headway in getting RK to agree to discuss the matter. Mr Etheridge added that currently there was nothing to report. Mr Farge asked Mr Pearson not to write on behalf of the Parish Council unless authorised to do so.

In the minutes of 12th May 2004:

04/185 Approval of Minutes (04/141) Mr Pearson stated that the reason he gave for writing to Rouse Kent was to advise people attending his surgery, and not that stated in the minutes. Mr Murray advised Mr Pearson that if he receives any correspondence which requires a response, then to bring the item up at KHPC meetings for ratification. Mr Hall stated that if it is a confidential issue Mr Pearson must not reply on behalf of KHPC. The letter received from Mr Ives was referred to.

04/136 Matters Arising From the Minutes Mrs Farge reported that Mr Pearson had written to T&MBC as a councillor, referring to planning issues, which should be dealt with by the Clerk. Any letter written to T&MBC should be written as a resident, unless authorised by KHPC. It was noted that the Standing Orders state that Councillors must not act as individuals.

In the minutes of 9th June 2004:

04/231 Approval of Minutes (04/185) Mr Pearson stated that he did not agree that this item had been minuted accurately. A vote was held to determine the issue. Members who had been present at the meeting agreed the minutes reflected the issues accurately. Mr Williams abstained from voting as he had not been present at the meeting concerned.

In the minutes of 9th June 2004:

04/240 Administrative & Financial Matters

A request for a donation from Town Malling Day Ltd was received. As the event has already taken place it was agreed to defer the request to next year for a donation.

In the minutes of 14th July 2004:

04/277 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Town Malling Day – It was agreed at the previous meeting not to donate to Town Malling Day but to defer it to next year.

It was suggested that a donation should be made as the Park and Ride facility was provided for the residents of Kings Hill. Mrs Hall proposed to take a vote of those in favour of making a donation which was seconded by Mr Etheridge. A vote was taken and was carried with 4 votes in favour and 3 abstentions. It was agreed to donate the same amount as the previous year, which was £200.

In the minutes of 8th September 2004:

04/344 Administrative & Financial Matters

A request for a donation from Town Malling Day Ltd was received in May 2004 and presented at Full Council in June. It was agreed to defer the request to 2005. The decision was questioned at the July Full Council, due to the Park & Ride facility that was provided. The subject was put on the September Agenda as a separate item for full discussion. Mr Hall apologised for raising the item under 'Matters Arising' at the July meeting. A vote was taken to determine those in favour of a donation which resulted in 2 against, 4 in favour and 1 abstention. It was agreed to donate £200 to Town Malling Day Ltd.

In the minutes of 8th June 2005:

05/231 Administration & Financial Matters

A request for a donation from Kings Hill School to contribute to their ICT suite was received. It was noted that a donation was made five years ago for £250 for a similar project. After two proposals which were not agreed, Mr Farge proposed a donation of £300 which was seconded by Mr Purcell. A vote was taken which resulted in five votes in favour and one against the proposal. The proposal was therefore agreed.

Appendix 17

Photographs of some of the flats and houses at Kings Hill which have been purposely segregated from the public realm by gates



Plate 5: Manor Court, off Bancroft Lane, Kings Hill (9 flats behind the gates). Photo credit: G. J. Hogben.

Plate 6: Hollandbury Park, Kings Hill (19 houses behind the gates). Photo credit: G. J. Hogben.

Appendix 18

Church Road traffic calming initiative: from the transcripts of the DPC meetings

Discussions about accidents at Church Road started before the empirical research. At the January 2004 meeting PC1 said: There was another accident at the Church Road junction during the Christmas period. Borough Councillor: Although this must be a worry to you it's not considered to be a priority area. If it had been a personal injury case then it would get priority. I'll seek advice from MBC to see if they'll reassess your proposal for traffic calming.

At the March 2004 meeting PC1 said: Church Road was discussed at the police forum I attended and the idea of speed humps was mooted, but the engineer from MBC isn't sure about this because they slow the emergency vehicles down. The emergency services prefer speed cushions because the wheels of their vehicles go either side of the cushion so they don't slow the vehicles down quite so much and bump the passengers about. If their vehicles are slowed down their response times are increased when they're after quicker response times for their performance indicators. Borough Councillor: Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council made a one-off bid for traffic calming under concurrent functions and they got a fifty percent grant. I suggest you do the same. You'd need a design. PC2: We might need a raised cushion so we need to get a price for that. Borough Councillor: Okay, get a price then we can put the bid to my colleagues at MBC. PC1: I suggest a traffic survey. There's extra traffic at Willington Street, I'm wondering if people are using Church Road more. I think we could fund this. There's a real need for parish councils to report all road accidents. PC2: We should use local knowledge. PC1: Yes in our next newsletter we'll ask the residents to report where they've seen accidents. Then we'll be able to give this information to the Police Traffic Management Team. Borough Councillor: Yes a survey would support your bid.

At the April 2004 meeting the Borough Councillor said: Have you come up with a plan. PC1: We're thinking about a raised platform. Borough Councillor: I want to know where we are so I can put pressure on because there're a lot of us competing for funds. PC5: Since we last met there's been another accident. Borough Councillor: Madam Chairman would you send me an email with an update. PC1: Yes. I think we should mention the latest Church Road accident in our newsletter and ask residents for their comments.

At the May 2004 meeting PC1 said: The newsletter was successful in gaining attention about the accidents. We've received four emails so far. I've been informed that if we did the work first we wouldn't get the money we paid out reimbursed. Borough Councillor: No that's right. I suggest the first step is to see if it's possible to have the sign changed from 'give way' to 'stop'. I will speak to Highways.

At the June 2004 meeting PC1 said: We've received a letter with costs for the work. It comes to £8,740.55. Borough Councillor: I suggest you put in a bid for fifty percent towards the costs. PC1: Yes this is a small parish with a dense population and the Borough does well out of us. The parishioners are paying council tax and lives are being put at risk. PC4: This is a vast amount of money. I wonder if all the costs necessary. Borough Councillor: I've been allocated £3,000 (devolved budget) to use for Otham and Downswood.¹ I could put this towards your traffic calming. PC1: Well the residents of Otham use this junction so they'd benefit. Can we have a vote on that now? But it's not on the agenda. PC4: The trouble is not everyone is here. PC1: No and we've no clerk so we don't know the correct procedure. We'll have to wait and vote on this next month.

At the July 2004 meeting PC1 said: We've received several reports from residents concerning the blind spot at Church Road, and an email about the anti-skid surface. It looks as if this would cost extra and the Borough can't finance fifty percent, so we'll have to find this money. PC2: The costs could be reduced. PC5: We only need to alter one curb. That would bring the cost down. Borough Councillor: You won't get funding from MBC but as I have already said you can have my devolved budget if Otham agrees. Clerk: We could also ask Eric Hotson (County Councillor) about his devolved budget. Borough Councillor: Yes he gets about £10,000 to spend on his ward. You could approach him but he

¹ The devolved budget is an allowance given to each borough councillor by the borough council to use on a project of her/his choice.

covers a massive area. PC1: We must get on with this before there's another accident. PC4: We could fund it ourselves. Some of the projects we've planned we could put aside for the time being. PC1: Are you making a proposal? PC2: I will. This motion was proposed by PC2, seconded by PC5, with one abstention (PC6). PC 1 explained her experience of dealing with the junction. PC3: There've been lots of near misses. PC5: Yes and it's on the school route so we have to think about the safety of the children. PC6: I use that junction everyday and I haven't had any problems. It's a lot of money to spend. PC1: Yes and its public money so I understand your concerns. Resident: People speed up just past the church. PC1: We could think about road markings and a stop sign. We've one abstention and that's your prerogative. PC2: If it doesn't work we could reduce the speed to 20 mph. PC1 told the meeting that it might come under the Quiet Lanes scheme. It was agreed the clerk would ask the Highways Engineer for suggestions to reduce the speeding traffic.

At the September 2004 meeting a resident said: I live opposite Church Road. It's a hazardous junction. There was another crash there. I know there was a meeting the other day. I wondered what's happening. PC1: We're trying to get funding. We've received a quotation and this includes an anti-skid surface and to tighten the curb to narrow the junction. We've approached MBC and KCC for funding, but it looks like we'll have to pay for it. We want the 'give way' sign changed to 'stop', the road markings need renewing, and we want a sign saying 'Downswood please drive slow'. Resident: Oh there's a lot going on. PC1: Yes we thought about a raised platform, but this idea has been shelved because it would cause problems for the emergency vehicles. Is that okay? Resident: Thank you. PC1: There's an update in our newsletter.

At the October 2004 meeting PC1 said: We can't have a 'stop' sign as it doesn't meet with the criteria. Borough Councillor: Excuse me Madam Chairman. I had an email about this. I'll get the Highways Engineer to come and show me what she means. I'll get in touch with her personally. Email is good but not like a face-to-face discussion. PC2: We've got a design from the Highways Authority. If we can't get it done soon we need to go to the press. PC1: Yes we could say we're angry as the junction is dangerous. PC4: We've already sorted out the finances. PC1: Yes we just want it done.

At the February 2005 meeting PC1 said: We need to arrange a site meeting with Darren Price for a sketch and start date.² We'd need a high friction surface at Deringwood Drive and the contractors would be tightening the entrance to Church Road. PC5: I was crossing the road with my daughter and a car swung round and nearly hit us.

At the March 2005 meeting PC1 said: Do we have any information on the traffic calming. Clerk: No. PC1: Right we need to get that underway. PC4: It's all been agreed I don't know what's holding them up. Borough Councillor: The partnership is changing. It's now a County matter so it might have to go for approval again and you'll have to chase them not the Borough. PC1: The problem is we need it done before the end of the month. Helen, write another letter explaining the situation. PC 4: We planned to pay for it out of the concurrent functions money. PC2: Yes if it's not started by 31 March we'll have to pay the money back.

At the April 2005 meeting PC4 said: The money is available for Church Road. PC2: What about the anti-skid surface. Clerk: There's a meeting tomorrow. PC1: We also have to arrange to have the road markings repainted. PC2: There's been another two accidents. PC5: There was one today at about eight-thirty. PC1: Let's hope tightening the curb will cut down the accidents.

At the June 2005 meeting PC3 said: Some bright spark has driven over the curb at Church Road and now there's a deep wheel mark in the grass verge. PC4: The good thing is the traffic calming has slowed the traffic down. PC5: Yes at least we've had one half term with no prangs by now usually there would have been an accident.

² Darren Price is the KCC Transportation and Development Engineer.

Appendix 19

Campaign to save Downswood post office: from the transcripts of the DPC meetings

Seventeen residents turned out for the July 2004 meeting. PC1 said: Good evening ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming. This is an unusual meeting and it'll be very informal. I presume you're all here concerning our post office closure. The postmaster is hoping to be here shortly. I'll read out the background to the proposed closure which he gave us. The Post Office network reinvention programme is in two parts. The first part is the background and it says: Announcement by government that benefit and allowance books will be phased out by 2004/05 and payments made direct into claimants bank accounts. As these payments were handled by post offices the change in the payment system would reduce their remuneration by up to 60%. Pressure resulted in the introduction of a Post Office account but the uptake has been minimal, as most claimants have opted to use main bank accounts. Although banking services were expanded to allow claimants to withdraw from post offices this has not replaced the lost trade or remuneration. Other new products, like insurance related services, have been introduced but again the replacement value is insufficient. Introduction of further competition in the postal market to be opened up soon will have a negative impact. Wider availability of certain services direct from centre, for example philatelic services or over the Internet, for example stamps will have a net negative impact on small offices. There are falling customer numbers and continual increased costs of servicing. Reinvention programme introduced to restructure and modernise the network, whilst still making PO services available within a reasonable distance. The second part is about the process and it says: Announcement of proposals for closure of an office and notification to interested parties; consultation period of approximately 6 weeks; review of representations; decision; roughly 3-4 months process. It's been confirmed that our post office is under threat of closure. We're not going to sit by and say okay.

Resident: This is a serious matter and I've written to Hugh Robertson MP. The Royal Mail is cutting the services they offer and increasing prices. First post is from 9.30am to 10.15am which isn't particularly good for people working from home. We all need to write to them and complain. Borough Councillor: If I might come in here Madam Chairman. We need a concerted plan. There are eleven post offices down for closure in Maidstone. I don't usually say this. It's a classic example of cost effectiveness over social needs. You need to contact your MP. Local government runs on a cabinet basis and it's my intention this week, because there are eleven in the Borough, I'll put pressure on the Cabinet Member for Communications and External Affairs to arrange a meeting with Post Office Limited. That's my role. It's a borough council matter. I need to get the Cabinet Member to take it up with the higher level of the Post Office. PC3: With more people using their cars to go to another post office this will create more pollution. PC4: It'll put more pressure on the town centre branch. We need to draw up a petition for everybody to sign.

PC1: I suggest we get all the facts together first and put any information on the parish notice board and in our newsletter. Clerk: If anyone is writing to their local MP could I have a copy so we can get the overall view of what you're saying. Your views will help us with our protest. We need this before 19 August, the closing date for representation. Resident: We're in competition so we need points in our favour for keeping our post office. We have density in our favour. Lots of people live here and lots of us rely on this service. There are health and safety issues. Trying to get onto Willington Street isn't easy, there's lots of traffic, and our post office has parking. An alternative is the town centre branch but I understand they're trying to discourage parking. PC3: Are the closures post office or government driven? Postmaster: It's a combination of government taking away services and it's about costs and the Post Office wanting to make profits. PC1: Well watch this space. We've got to fight for it. *Now we'll continue with our meeting so if any of you want to go that's okay.* Most of the residents left at this point with the exception of five.

The parish council arranged a protest 'special meeting'. The guest speakers at this meeting held on 27 July 2004 included Hugh Robertson, Conservative MP for Faversham and Mid-Kent, and

Maidstone Borough Councillors Mike Fitzgerald and Fred Winckless.³ To start the meeting the Chairman read out a letter from Sir Sandy Bruce Lockhart, then Leader of KCC:

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of 15 July inviting me to the 'special meeting' on Tuesday, 27 July. Sadly the diary is already fully committed from now until the end of July, and I shall in fact be staying in London over night that evening so shall be unable to attend. I am extremely concerned by this proposal and fully support the Parish Council on its campaign. You will be aware that the KCC's very strong policy of keeping local services for local people. Two years ago the County Council ran a high profile public campaign with supporting materials to 'Save Our Post Offices'. We gave our full support to the sub-post office campaign where I stated: sub-post offices are absolutely vital to the fabric of rural life in Kent and the County Council will do all it can to ensure they remain and will actively promote this campaign. They act as a focal point, a living notice board for many village communities, and are a unique business. The move to pay state benefits via banks to automated credit transfer will lose 40 percent of sub-post office business at a stroke. People without bank accounts, people unable to travel, whole communities, not just villages, but in town areas as well will be disadvantaged. In a letter to me John Wilshire, the National Executive Officer of the National Federation of sub-Post Masters responded: The threat to sub-post offices in the KCC area is of great concern to sub-post masters and their customers. The threat of removal of pensions, allowances and benefit business, if it went ahead, would certainly mean closure of offices. The sub-post masters of Kent and their customers are very grateful for the support given by KCC in raising the problems with the Government. Thank you KCC for seeing the value of retaining a viable post office network. I do congratulate you on your local campaign to which I give my full support.

The Chairman continued to address the meeting. This is an extract from what she said:

Now the new proposed post office at Spar, Paydens, that's over a mile in distance, not zero point one as stated, and in a busy terrain with no direct public transport from Downswood. The nearest service 8 bus, stops opposite Roseacre post office, which is 420 yards away not 50 yards as stated, and car parking as we all know is abysmal. And should the Paydens branch be opened those able to access it will purchase pharmacy, supermarket, off-licence needs there, rather than from Downswood. This is unfair competition, which could lead to the demise of Downswood shops. It would appear Post Office Counters Limited has a countrywide agreement to open up post offices within Paydens pharmacies, which must not be allowed in Bearsted. We're told that proposed closures are due to economic factors. We understand transferring pensions and benefit payments from post offices is resulting in a re-numeration loss of up to 60 percent. Social needs too must be addressed. The very mixed community at Downswood alone includes many without private transport and many who are elderly. They do not have the luxury of choice. Downswood's post office must be allowed to continue to serve the needs of the local community.

This is an extract from what the Borough Councillor said:

There hasn't been proper consultation. Giving them (Downswood and Bearsted) information and telling them what they're going to do is not consultation. This Committee, this Parliamentary Committee did say in fact that the local people, the borough councils and the local communities, the parish councils should be involved in the planning, and we haven't been involved in the planning. So that is my first point, and I am one of these people who is going to ask our Cabinet Member for Communication and External Affairs who is sitting in the front, who has arranged a meeting with Post Office Limited on Monday morning. I think it is or Monday afternoon is it? Anyway it's on Monday and what we should first do is ask for a further delay in the closing date for the

³ Information about the post office closures in Maidstone and DPC's special meeting was recorded in one of the local newspapers: 'Chiefs sit down for post office pow wow' by Lee Winter, *Kent Messenger/WM*, 30 July 2004, p. 13. 'MP confident of keeping two out of four open' by Lee Winter, *Kent Messenger/WM*, 30 July 2004, p. 13.

consultation. The consultation should be extended so that we can be properly involved in that consultation. Now actually Roz (Chairman) has alluded to this, as to why we have a good argument for keeping Downswood open. It's not just a question as she said of being selfish for Downswood, although obviously people like myself are involved and interested in Downswood and Otham. This post office serves Otham, it serves Madginford, which is to the south of the Ashford Road. Now I believe that we've got to go into these negotiations with a plan, a possible solution, a possible compromise, because there's got to be a balance between the economic factors and the social need, and we are primarily concerned with the social need. And I believe that if you're going to close two post offices and open a new one, and as Roz has said in the wrong place, because quite frankly there is no parking space there, it will be a disaster.

This is an extract from what Hugh Robertson MP said:

We're all really here tonight for one very simple reason, which is to ensure that the community here gets the support it needs to fight these closure plans... The Post Office cannot force, cannot force, any single post office to close. All the post masters and mistresses hold them under license and the Post Office cannot force them to close, so everybody who, who has responded to the consultation has to some extent volunteered. Now I ought to say before you start to blame any of the postmasters or mistresses that they are of course subject to all these various constraints that I've mentioned already. They're under enormous pressure. There's the compensation package as well. Many of them feel that their business is dying in front of them. And of course, if the Post Office go and open a new branch, then there's the worry about whether, what, whether trade they already have is going to go. So I, I think it is important to say that before the fact that many of them have volunteered that that is entirely understandable. And the final thing they did say is that once this process is over, you will be relieved to know, there will be no further closures in any other network. So where does all that leave us? I mean having had the weekend to think about it, what conclusions did I, I come to? Fred is absolutely right when he says the post offices are more than just a business. They do address a very particular social need. I couldn't agree more. However, bearing in mind that this is a process going on across the country, and these plans are already well advanced, I do not think that those sort of arguments, however powerful they are to us, are of themselves going to save post offices. I think the trick here is to make out that it is a special case, and to address the local need for it here, and the economic arguments for keeping it open.

At the September 2004 parish council meeting PC1 said: We've received a letter from Hugh saying he didn't want to be over-political at our special meeting, but the suspicion was the decision had been made. Our postmaster had already handed in his resignation when he signed the voluntary redundancy agreement. Postwatch the consumer watchdog said Paydens isn't an option due to the parking problems, but it has backing from KCC Highways. They say there's plenty of parking there. Post Office Limited has offered 28 months salary redundancy to some postmasters and mistresses plus other extras. This is a big incentive. I hadn't realised this at our special meeting. PC4: I read in *The Daily Mail* that British people like queuing because we enjoy chatting to each other. At Maidstone the queues are often out of the door. PC1: Hugh will take our petition and present it to Parliament even if it's too late. It'll show public feelings about these closures.

At the October 2004 meeting PC1 said: We collected 1,530 signatures on our petition. Paydens have opened a post office counter. Borough Councillor: I believe the consultation was flawed. The Ombudsman can't stop the Post Office but you can suggest they get Post Office Limited to improve their consultation process in the future. PC1: Yes that might help somewhere else.

At the November 2004 meeting PC1 said: Have we got the closure date? The Clerk said yes and read out a letter from Post Office Limited. PC1: The closure received good coverage in the *Downs Mail*, saying we've received lots of complaints about parking problems at Paydens. PC2: The problem is a lot of other shops are selling the same goods as post offices so it's not surprising we lost ours. PC1 Yes and the 28 months redundancy package is a real incentive, but our postmaster signed it on the agreement they'd open one nearby. PC2: I don't blame him. He's a businessman. Borough Councillor: The procedure had no intension of keeping them open.

PC1: The main point is the government are trying to save money. It all started when post office customers were given the opportunity to have their benefits and pensions paid into their bank accounts. This took a huge amount of business from them. But we shouldn't have been included in the urban post office definition. After the 2004 Rural Conference I attended I spoke to Tim Allen the Head of Rural Economics and Strategy at DEFRA. He said the definition of rural is within a population of 10,000. The ODPM considers an urban population as over 10,000, and the National Statistics Office uses that for their data. We mentioned to the Parliamentary Ombudsman that Downswood and Otham are well below that.⁴ I feel sorry for the pensioners living here, and it's a social thing for meeting somebody from your neighbourhood. It's a way of checking people living alone are safe. If a regular customer is missing the local shops notice and can get someone to check on that old person. We put this in our petition we sent to Post Office Limited.

At the May 2005 meeting PC1 gave out photocopies of an article from *The Daily Telegraph* about new legislation that will have a detrimental impact on local newsagents.⁵ PC1: The point is we've already lost our post office and our pharmacy is losing business. This brings us to Rajen's (ex-Postmaster) request to advertise the Downswood shops in our newsletter. I think this is important for the parish. We've got to pull out all the stops to see what we can do to keep our local services. We've got lots of young mums and elderly people here and they need them. Should we charge him? PC2: Does he want ongoing advertising? Clerk: He wasn't sure. PC1: In previous newsletters we've spoken about the police and the local surgery so we could promote the local shops in the next issue. PC5: I'm not sure whether we should promote businesses. Borough Councillor: I suggested you contact the MBC solicitor to get advice. PC1: I agree we should contact him to be on the safe side.⁶

⁴ Information about the Parliamentary Ombudsman's decision was recorded in one of the local newspapers: 'Hopes are dashed by the watchdog', *Kent Messenger (Maidstone)*, 19 November 2004, p. 6.

⁵ 'Newsagents fear they will be the next small shops to go under' by Becky Barrow, *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 April 2005, p. 9.

⁶ The Clerk could have contacted the Kent Association of Parish Councils (KAPC), as noted in Chapter 1; this organisation gives not only training, but also legal advice to parish councils.

Appendix 20

Takeover of Kings Hill Community Hall: from the transcripts of the KHPC meetings

At the December 2003 meeting KHPC agreed they would takeover the running of the Community Centre from the Management Team (MT) because the finances were not being run efficiently. This was unanimously agreed by a show of hands. PC1 said: the Clerk will write to the MT to tell them. We've consulted our solicitor who has informed us of the procedure. Once we've taken it over we'll be responsible for all the losses. We'll need to set up a new committee and work out items of employment. We hope to retain the Centre Manager.

At the January 2004 meeting four members of from the MT attended. PC1 said: We need to set up a new management committee (MC). It'll need a budget, if there's a deficit we will help, but we want it to be autonomous, with its own bank account. The members will be co-opted but the MC will be able choose the co-opted members. I propose we dissolve the old MT. But only members from the MC, not the members from the public who are co-opted, would be entitled to vote. This is what the local council rules say. MT member: If the new MC is not allowed to vote then there'll be no MC. PC 1: The MC is there because they want to be there. All we want to do is get this set up. But the co-opted members can't exceed the number of parish councillors on the MC. I suggest a cross-section of the community. I recommend about nine members. If there are too many it'll become unruly. At this stage all we've got to do is dissolve the old MT and propose a new one.

MT member said: Are you aware of how much time it takes. You have to meet lots of people including businesses, then and there, especially if a financial response is needed. Decisions like this can't wait a month. PC1: We don't have to wait a month and the Clerk has an office here. MT member: I'm just saying it takes hours of work. PC3: We need a positive spirit. Although we have to follow the legal umbrella of voting we must treat all the members as equals. It shouldn't be huge issues they will have to vote on. We normally get to reach a consensus so whether the members are co-opted or parish councillors, they'll all have an equal say and equal workload. It's just a theoretical problem. I feel it's possible to do that. It's a spirit of cooperation I'm promoting. MT member: You say it's only a theoretical problem it's nevertheless a voting problem. PC1: I feel you're being negative. I think for nearly 5 years we've been going and we've had only one vote where it went fifty-fifty, and the Chairman had the casting vote. I echo PC3 point it's about a spirit of cooperation. If a member of the public made a suggestion I've no doubt it would be carried. Whilst I understand the principle is relevant, we're looking forward to a good community centre spirit. MT member: We haven't had support in the past. It's about an element of trust if you're trying to bring together two halves. In the past there've been tensions. PC1: We want to forget the past and focus on the future and that's what PC3 is saying. I repeat the proposal. This can be discussed in more detail on 4 February. Are there any contracts we have to honour? MT member: Only the Centre Manager's. PC1: We're now in a position to go ahead. I propose we dissolve the old MT. PC3: I second that.

PC1 said: Now what about parish councillors, do I have any offers? Five volunteered. PC1: It'll be up to the new MC to decide on a chairman and vice-chairman. MT member: I think before 4 February you should discuss some of the details. We had two sub-committees one for funding and one for marketing. PC3: Yes but we need your help. We have a website and a magazine. PC1: The idea of the MC is for them to come up with ideas. MT member: But they'd have no voting rights. I'll want it noted if I don't agree with a decision you make. PC3: You can have it recorded in the minutes. PC1: Yes it'll be recorded in the minutes. But like we've already said it's about a positive spirit, coming up with ideas together, and it'll be transparent. I strongly believe it's going to work. Then the new MC may decide to change the date of the monthly meetings, but I suggest 4 February for the first meeting.

At the February 2004 meeting PC3 said: I'm worried about the accounts of the old MT. We can't do anything about the Estate Management Charges (EMCs), but Rouse Kent's insurance for the building and the preventative maintenance costs need looking into. The Centre Committee needs to have this on their agenda. PC1: We need a database of suppliers and according to our 'standing orders' we need to get three quotes for any work. This is why it was a good idea for us to take over the Centre finances. I'm going to a meeting with RK. I'll ask about the EMCs. PC3: The point is some of the costs are high and the invoices are sketchy. It was agreed the Clerk would write to RK.

At the March 2004 meeting PC1 said: I want to tell you about my meeting with RK. We discussed our skateboard park proposal and the EMCs. There was an element of intransigence on RKs part. We need to proceed with caution. They might want to pass this over to us. We could precept it but we'd need legal advice. We could do this because we wouldn't have to collect the money. We'd get the money regardless of whether the residents pay it. The Borough collects the council tax. But the EMC is unfair because it's charged to only half of the residents. I pointed out that the long-term needs of the community should be discussed. I'm sceptical about this. Six months ago they wouldn't discuss this but now they want to discuss liquidating the Estate Management Service. They're having problems collecting it, they have lots of debts. PC8: Some of the residents want an update and they've asked me about this. PC1: I suggest you pass on any information to Jill. There's a huge legal aspect to this. PC2: We can't go public about this because we've no information to pass on. PC1: RK has an obligation to maintain the free half of the development up to the standard of the other half. They've a moral obligation to do this. From our point of view there's the half that pays and the parish covers more areas that we have to consider. I suggest we tread carefully and get it in place ready for when RK departs. We don't want them to get out of the costs they pay for the older part of the development, which doesn't have to pay the maintenance costs.

PC3 said: RK is starting to listen to us. They've acknowledged our meeting with them. I was concerned we're not wasting our time. PC1: RK wouldn't come to another public meeting because they were torn to pieces at the one they did attend. PC3: Could the notes Jill took be used as a record because RK didn't minute the meeting. Clerk: Somebody from RK and a KCC personal assistant took notes. PC1: Jill could you knock these up in a reader friendly way and give a copy to RK, but call them notes not minutes. I also discussed the Community Centre and again I asked about the freehold. The lease we have is obscure. We could sign a covenant to maintain the Centre to the level RK would expect, but there are some issues about health and safety. PC2: RK charge us about £2,500 a year for a planned preventative maintenance contract. The criteria are detailed for some of the services but for others it's not clear. PC1: Nick (Condon) has promised to get this sorted out so we can see exactly what we're playing for. Once we get this information we can get other companies to put in a tender. With regards to the insurance policy, Nick said we could have a look at this. We pay £1,200 for this, it covers everything. It's not expensive when you think what it covers. The vacancy for a parish councillor was discussed. It was agreed someone from the former MT should be considered so they could vote on decisions. PC1 said: I've spoken to a former member of the MT about attending the next Centre Committee meeting.

At the April 2004 meeting the parish councillors continued to discuss the EMCs. They agreed they would continue to discuss the possibility of taking it over when RK leaves. At the end of the meeting PC1 said: The good news is we have a former member of the MT on board and others are considering joining us.

Appendix 21

Youth facility initiative: from the transcripts of the KHPC meetings

At the June 2004 meeting PC1 said: Good evening everybody. *I'm sure there are better things to do than come to this meeting* but thanks for coming. I want to bring in Sandra from Asda to discuss youth issues. We're hoping we can get planning permission for an exclusive building for the youths of Kings Hill. PC5: We're hoping to get a 'landfill grant'. PC1: We'd like some help from Asda. Sandra: We've been discussing the youth problems here. I visited the Borough Green 'drop in' centre, it's very good. I'd be prepared to give up some time to help. I think the youths really need something to do in their spare time. PC1: I've been talking to the Centre Manager. She agrees a youth facility would compliment the ball park we're going to have. Are there any questions? We need to provide a facility for the youths to stop them causing trouble. Sandra: We arranged a 'bag pack day' and the kids raised £400. This gets them involved. It's better for them to work for their youth facility than they'll appreciate it. PC1: I agree. Has anyone got any questions for Sandra, *as most people want to go*? PC5: *Yes people don't usually want to stay*. It was agreed the Clerk would look into training for the youth workers.

At the September 2004 meeting PC1 said: We've been drawing up plans for a youth facility for pre-school children in the mornings and youths in the evenings. We have to decide on how to fund it. PC5 has been working on getting us a landfill grant but we'd have to fund raise 10 percent towards this. This is why we're looking to Asda for help. Janice: I'm a pre-school development worker. There's a great need for a pre-school group here. It's our task to get enough parents together to form a committee. We could help you get some funding. We can go through KCC and Sure Start. PC1: What about the regulations? Janice: OFSTED would regulate it, this isn't the problem, it's the way people hear about the service which is important. We can give you all the information you need. You need to get the young people involved from the start. This is important. It gives them a sense of ownership. Barry Clout: I'm from the KCC for Voluntary Youth Services. I think you should be looking at the bigger picture. It's not really about the money. It's about a good plan and getting a champion. PC1: Are you our champion? Barry Clout: We can support and advise you but the champion has to come from the community. I suggest you think ahead. Some people get worried about youth clubs on their doorstep. Have you thought about a youth parish council or youth forum?

PC1 said: We don't think funding will be an issue, as the population here grows so does the precept. We also have a generous supermarket. PC5: We have to check if KCC will let us build on the land. PC1: We've mentioned it to RK and in principle they've agreed. We just need to get KCC to agree. County Councillor Dean: KCC would have to examine the planning conditions first. Janice: We need the adults to start working with the youths now. For long-term success you need supportive adults on board. PC4: I agree. PC1: We should put together a working party. Who wants to help? I suggest our retired architect joins. I'm happy to be a member. PC9: I think we should keep the size down. PC1: So far we've had no volunteers. PC9: I don't want to put a damper on this but it will take time. PC1: I take your point but the community hall was planned and completed quickly. Barry Clout: Things take off quickly sometimes. PC1: I'm optimistic in life. PC9: Have we any volunteers? PC1: Jill will collect names. The only downside is that members of the public have no voting rights. The working party can only make recommendations. But it would be unusual if these recommendations were not agreed. I suggest we write about this on our website and contact the local press to get the publicity going.

At the October 2004 meeting PC1 said: Let's discuss the Rural Youth Conference. PC3: I'd like to add to the report I gave to the working party and the Community Hall Committee. The parish council paid for two of us to attend. We met Barry Clout. He has knowledge and contacts. Sir Sandy Bruce Lockhart was there. We mentioned his speech and the workshops we attended. We need to consider all of this to get ideas for our working party. PC1: Thanks for that, I'd just like to add, the working party meeting was successful. Our retired architect has drawn up a plan. The first meeting is on 18 October to look at extracting money out of people. Anna our youth worker is doing some research for us. PCSO Newby: I've met her and offered to help. PC1: Thanks Alan. We'll meet again on 1 December. The target is to have this youth facility built by this time next year.

At the November 2004 meeting County Councillor Dean said: Phase 2 of the s106 is a new ball game, within this you can get help towards your youth facility. You need to talk to T&MBC to make sure you get the bits you want. PC1: The problem is to do with not when, we want it now. Councillor Dean: Well we're discussing similar issues at West Malling. You should start to negotiate with T&MBC. PC3: But they have no obligation to talk to us. Councillor Dean: Be pro-active or you'll find you're just fitting in with their agenda. The s106 agreement is coming up for debate, but they won't come back to you. PC1: Who shall we contact? Perhaps we should contact Lindsay Pearson and request a meeting.⁷ Councillor Dean: I just think you should contact them now.

At the December 2004 meeting PC1 said: The community hall extension is a big project, we're going for the biggest expansion possible because Kings Hill is growing. The costs are estimated to be in between £500,000 and £600,000. We're researching ways of financing it. It's been argued council taxpayers should help finance it through the precept. It would be a big increase but this wouldn't pay for all of it. We could phase it in, that's assuming we've exhausted all the external avenues for funding. T&MBC funds are capped so the principle really is the Community Hall Committee is saying to us this is what we want to do. The proposal is for us to seek funding for the youth facility. PC5: I think the residents should be fund-raising. It would bring the community together. PC1: I agree. PC5: I think the community should be more involved. PC1: What do the members think? Do the members think it's over-ambitious? Should it be capped? We'd have to fund-raise for 10 percent of the cost. PC4: I propose we support them and go ahead with the fund-raising. Obviously we'll face all sorts of hiccups. PC8: I second that. PC1: So we're all agreed unanimously on that. PC6: Wasn't there something that could be incorporated in the s106? PC1: We'll look into that.

At the January 2005 meeting PC1 said: Could you tell us about the Kent & Medway Funding Fair Jill? Clerk: It tells you about funds you can tap into for your community. Councillor Dean said they're holding a series of workshops. PC1: Could you go Jill as you are preparing the application for a grant. I suggest PC10 goes too. Brilliant we need support because we need to raise half a million. Thanks to PC3 he has done a lot of work on this project. I only had to sign it. In order for us to set out what it looks like internally we decided to hold a meeting with the community hall members, Barry Clout, our youth worker, the pre-school people, and PCSO Newby. Have you seen the flyer? The youths did this in text language. The idea is to invite them to tell us their wants. The meeting is on 1 February.⁸ If no one comes we'll assume they don't want a youth facility. PC6 you could advertise it on our website, you could also ask your wife to mention it in the *Kent Messenger* and it could be mentioned in the *Sevenoaks Chronicle*. We also need some leaflets on the notice board, some at Asda, and some at the schools. We want to encourage as much interest as possible, it's important because we're investing a lot of money, and we want to get it right. On 27 January we're holding a meeting, it's a special meeting attached to the planning meeting. The idea is to discuss the agenda for the meeting on 1 February. Hopefully we'll have 30 to 40 people at this meeting. PC3: Has Anna been invited? PC1: Yes the actual meeting is on 1 February and all of the members are invited. It'd be good if we all attended to show solidarity on this. PC10: I've got some of the residents coming, and some young dads. PC1: The flyer says young people but we need to say it's *open to all the residents*.

⁷ Lindsay Pearson is the Chief Planner, Development Control at T&MBC.

⁸ This meeting was open to all the residents of Kings Hill. The Clerk said: We arranged a youth evening in the small hall to get the youths to come along and say what activities they want at Kings Hill. We sent a flyer about the meeting around Kings Hill. The youths were asked to sign in and about 50 to 60 turned up. Different activities were put up on the wall such as a pool table, computers and chess. The youths were asked to put a post-it on their choice. The most popular was a pool table. The evening was very successful. We got a lot of interest. We also provided a board for the youths to put down things not on display. One of the things they said they most wanted was a skate park. The plans for the youth facility were also on display to see whether they like it. They youths also requested a music room. They were not so concerned about having computers and the internet. I think this is because most of them come from affluent families who have computers and the internet at home. More of the youths liked the idea of a pool table and having somewhere to go and meet their friends. From that meeting a group was set up by Anna Bryant, the youth worker. This group meets about every six weeks. The discuss how to raise money to equip the youth facility. Shepherd Neame has donated £250. They are the suppliers to the local Spitfire pub. They were looking for a local cause and they felt this was a worthwhile cause to help. We wrote about this in our newsletter (Interview with the Clerk at Kings Hill Community Hall on 4 October 2005).

At the February 2005 meeting PC3 said: RK and T&MBC have been discussing the s106 agreement. RK said it was part of a public inquiry and we'd have to go to T&MBC for information. Well that's fair enough although they haven't included us in these discussions. PC4: Yes we're the parish council but there was no mention of us on the Conservative party leaflet. PC5: They've taken the credit for it, but we did all the hard work and got the 25K grant from T&MBC. PC4: It's very unfair. PC6: We need to let the residents know this. PC1: It's not untrue what they've written but they're inferring they're leading the way. I've been to a meeting with RK and we discussed the extension to the community hall. The good news is they agree whole heartedly with us. They'll contribute 25K a year for 10 years towards the youth facility. They're obliged to under the s106. KCC is drawing up a 'youth community strategy' then RK will have an obligation to provide this money. The downside is that part of the plot where we want to build it was set aside for a place of worship. RK suggests we turn it (the plan) round. The Reverend (Mousir-Harrison) thinks the youth facility is a good idea.

PC3: This all sounds encouraging but RK hasn't kept us informed, they've been talking to KCC without us. This discussion should include us PC9 has done all this work and we've discussed it at committee meetings. I think it's outrageous that we still haven't got our *partnership*. PC1: Regrettably we ran out of time and they were holding the meeting. PC3: I want it recorded in the minutes that we should at the very least be kept informed. PC4: What RK doesn't want is note taking at meetings, but it's to do with openness in local government. PC6: There's an element of we know we'd have a job stopping them because they're too powerful, but if they want to get us involved in the s106 they need to consult with us. We arranged a survey (questionnaire asking what the residents would most like) and then they said we don't want the parish council involved. PC3: We've been through all this before. PC4: I also think RK profit after all they're selling housing and land. But we represent the community.

PC1 said: They're not interested in bad press they just go underground. They communicate with KCC but KCC feel they don't have to liaise with a non-existent body.⁹ PC4: Did it come as a threat? PC1: No they just raised the issue of the Community Hall and how we set up a new Management Committee. It was a useful meeting but it was in their office. I can speak to them but if we called a meeting they'd say who could go. It's better to get some information rather than none. PC3: I think its good practice to set up meetings with RK and I think two parish councillors should attend. PC1: I just got the impression they're open with information but we just have to ask for it. PC6: But there's always a means to an end. It's about what they get out of telling us something. PC1: Yes but we have to remember they're a commercial enterprise. If we want a post office and they do, yes it's back scratching. PC3: I think you should have asked them about the church land. It's outrageous after all the time we've spent on planning the youth facility. PC1: It's not outrageous. No, no it was mentioned in the s106 about a church facility. PC9: We've always known we would encroach on their land. This church business is interesting to me and I've talked to Stuart (the Reverend) several times. PC1: Perhaps we should hope for a divine intervention, but at least we know where it's going to go. PC4: At least RK is in favour of our youth facility. PC1: I agree with PC3 we should make the meetings formal.

Two members of the public left the meeting at this point. PC1 said: Perhaps they want to crack on and see something on television. Right let's crack on with the extension meeting arranged for the 24 February. The architect knows what we're doing and RK will talk to KCC. We've also talked about the 25K that RK will pay us over 10 years. PC6: *We go through this process and then you get someone sitting in the public seats. I think we should ask them why they have attended the meeting.* PC1: *Yes that's a good idea.* PC6: *One could say something inadvertently.* PC9: *We could bring them forward so they have the opportunity to go.*

At the March 2005 meeting PC8 said: What's happening about item 05/052 of the February minutes? PC2: That was about the lease of the Community Hall. It was in the Management Team's name. PC5: It's not legally an agreement now because there's no MT. PC2: PC1 summarised this at his meeting, we can raise that as an item on the Community Hall agenda. It may be a legal

⁹ 05/052 Chairman's Announcements ... Mr Farge informed the meeting that the KCC are nervous that the Management Team no longer exists as the lease for the Community Hall is with the Management Team (Source: KHPC minutes 9 February 2005).

requirement that the names are changed. PC8: Yes we should put that on the Community Hall agenda. PC9: Could we go back to the Community Hall. A meeting took place and apart from me PC1 attended. It was a useful meeting. The information we gave to them (Clague) seemed as if it would be useful.¹⁰ Although our proposal infringes on the church site it looks like a trade-off can be made with RK and KCC. Clerk: RK has agreed in principle to the proposed youth facility. They just need to discuss it with the church.

At the April 2005 meeting PC3 said: We've had a report about training for the youths. They're getting ready to set up. The report from PC9 is not so good because of the problems over the church land. PC9: I phoned Lee and he said to me as far as the church site is concerned RK or whoever they are called now has ducked out. It's up to us to get in touch with the church. PC1: I'll talk to the church as far as I'm concerned it's a trade-off. PC9: Could I say that at the meeting we had great enthusiasm for the youth facility. We'll be in dire trouble if it all goes quiet, the youths will lose interest. PC3: We need to minute this. The land is theirs and they have it in their power to move it on and Lee is astonished. I think KCC and Liberty Trust (RK) are disgusting. PC6: The s106 doesn't say it's the Church of England's land. PC1: I guess the Church of England got in first. I'll talk to RK first, I think they're ducking. Then I'll talk to the church.

Two residents attended this meeting. Resident: I want to know why the precept has gone up so much. PC1: It's gone up to pay for the youth facility. The plan has been going on for a long time, it's been advertised. Resident: Shouldn't you put it up for a vote? PC1: We did. Resident: You started off as a small community group. I'm retired and I see no reason for this. PC1 tried to say something. Resident: No listen to me when the lights go out they don't get fixed. PC1: Are you saying you never voted. Resident: I'm going to push to have you disbanded. PC1: You can't we've been set up legitimately by law. PC3: We're a public organisation and it was advertised on the community hall notice board. I suggest you get informed before you start making accusations. Resident: All you care about is the community hall. I get the roads swept amongst other things. What do you do? PC1: We publish all we do. Resident: I appreciate you work hard but I don't support this youth facility. PC1: Have you got any more questions? The resident said no and left.

At the May 2005 meeting PC9 said: I want to tell you about the meeting with RK last Thursday. The architects have presented us with an acceptable site. The upshot is we've solved the problem of building on the church land.

At the June 2005 meeting Reverend Mousir-Harrison said: I'm beginning to have discussions about having a church building. There's an idea, well a policy to put post offices into churches in rural areas. PC1: Is this a rural area? Reverend: It's more a possibility. We've three years from 6 June. I'll be having a meeting with the diocese. It's all blue sky thinking at the moment. PC1: Do you mean you want moral support from us. Reverend: Well under the s106 we have land and we need community backing to say we need a church. PC1: Yes the sixth was an important date, it's key to everything. PC5: Do you get many at your services. Reverend: Not really, but it's to look at possibilities. PC1: We need help too so it's a bit of back scratching. Reverend: Yes complementarities.

¹⁰ Lee Batten of Clague is the architect who is designing the youth facility for KHPC.

Appendix 22

Skateboard park initiative: from the transcripts of the KHPC meetings

At the January 2004 meeting PC1 informed the members that PC3 had met with RK about the parish council's proposals for a ball park (BP) and skateboard park (SP). The insurance for the play equipment was discussed. It was proposed and seconded that the Clerk would write to RK suggesting the parish council pay for the maintenance and insurance of the SP.

At the February 2004 meeting a resident came to ask about the play areas. Resident: There's not much for those over the age of five. I'd support a more challenging play area. PC1: We'd support an eight to fourteen-year-old play area, but if it was next to the BP it'd be open to abuse by older youths. RK had a meeting about where to put it. They have to make provisions for the youths under the s106. PC3: At the moment we only have the scouts club. When we get RK on board we can get more sorted out. Resident: The only play area the youths have is the green, but in the winter it's waterlogged. My second point is emphasis on child obesity and encouraging children to walk to school. But there are no crossing facilities and cars on Discovery Drive are going far too fast. PC1: We totally support you.

Later in the meeting the Clerk said: I've received a letter from RK. They still haven't given consent for our SP. PC5: The youths will be very disappointed. PC3: We should send RK a sharp response, and we need to contact T&MBC and ask them about their discussions with RK. PC5: The children have asked me if they should get a petition started. PC3: That's a good idea. PC1: We could put this in our newsletter. We could ask the youths if they want a BP or SP. We could put it on our website too. Clerk: RK are definitely going to provide a BP.

At the March 2004 meeting PC1 said: I want to inform you about my meeting with RK because it was important. We discussed our proposal for a SP. We want a SP instead of a play area as designated in the Area Planning 2 letter to push RK to consider what KHPC wants. PC3: I went to another meeting and RK put forward arguments against it. We're waiting for them to get back to us. PC1: There are two things I'd like to add. We were told RK were holding a planning meeting this morning and they were discussing our proposal, but we haven't heard anything. Secondly, RK has come up with some obstacles. They're worried about the insurance and responsibility for running it. Jill has looked at the cost of insurance and we could run it. RK and T&MBC are looking at the s106 agreement. There might be some flexibility in it. But we're anxious to get the BP so we've asked RK if they could build this first, while they're considering the SP.

PC2 said: It's all about the tail wagging the dog. RK is fearful lots of youths will come here to use it. They are concerned about image and KCC felt it was the wrong thing to provide. But the youths have produced a petition saying they want one. PC1: This is the first time there's been any suggestion of flexibility in the s106. It was written 10 years ago on the number of houses then proposed at Kings Hill. Now there are lots more houses and the s106 hasn't been revised. RK fear it would give them a bad image. It's all about image for marketing their properties.

At the May 2004 meeting the Clerk said: We've received a letter from RK. They won't be building a SP here. PC5: Couldn't we send them the children's petition? I think we should send a copy to T&MBC. PC3: They're bothered it would cause safety and nuisance problems. If they handed the land over to us then we'd have responsibility for the safety and maintenance of it. The nuisance issue, well at the moment kids are coming from all over. They say it will cause antisocial behaviour but it won't be big. PC5: It would keep the kids off the streets and away from the gazebo. PC3: I feel incensed by this letter. We need to send them a letter. The facilities we have are inadequate. We should let the local newspapers know about this. We should say we're outraged RK is not going to go ahead with it.

PC8 said: They say it's important to bring the community in on planning issues but we're left out. PC1: The problem is the s106 is out-of-date. I agree, I think RK's letter is wishy-washy. PCSO Newby: The swings are taken over by the older youths, they need more facilities. I can't see nuisance is an objection. PC5: Would you say something for us? PCSO Newby: Yes but I'll have to go through the correct police channel. My worry is there's a need to provide something or the antisocial problems will be worse. PC5: Well you're the man on the ground you'd know. PC8: Could it go in our newsletter? PC1: It'd show we're active about doing something. What's in the petition? PC5: Names

and addresses of the children who signed it. We should copy it and send them a copy. PC1: That's the way forward, we've courted RK and we've tried to cooperate. Now we need to do something. PC3: Should we let the newspapers know. PC5: I'll ring *Sevenoaks Chronicle*. PC1: We could contact the KM. Okay that's agreed.

At the June 2004 meeting PC1 said: We've gone to the press and it was on the front page of the *Sevenoaks Chronicle*.¹¹

At the September 2004 meeting PC1 said: I thought Chris Brown was coming.¹² PC3: So did I, I phoned him. I said we're in a dilemma. If he has the power and influence he could help us. He said he'd come back to us but he hasn't. PC1: To be fair he has been in contact with us. PC3: If there's anyone here from KCC and you've any influence perhaps you could help us. Pre-school development worker: What do you want? PC3: The youths want a SP, they signed a petition, but RK and KCC say the s106 won't allow this. PC1: We're being held to ransom, it's been linked to the proposed BP and play area. The BP was proposed 4 years ago. It isn't happening because we haven't agreed to the play area. Barry Clout: This is why engagement with young people is important. Then they can see the problems. This is actually the best borough in Kent for youth facilities.¹³ Pre-school development worker: Yes Barry is right, the young people in Tonbridge got their SP. Don't forget if you get your BP lighting is important. Once it gets dark the youths can't see, then they go off causing mischief.

PC1 said: Perhaps we should agree to the play area and say no to the tennis courts RK want to provide. Barry Clout: This is where the conference 'We can make it work' will help you. PC1: I wonder if you've ever worked with this particular officer and RK. Then you'd understand the problem. Pre-school development worker: We'll try to help. We'll try to talk to this officer. PC1: That's fantastic, but one thing at a time, the SP is our first priority. Perhaps we could use it as a trade-off for them to build the tennis courts. We need a decision because we're being blamed. We need another meeting with RK.

At the October 2004 meeting the Clerk said: Kings Hill Security Guards are having problems at Liberty Square. They asked me about this. I told them it'd be best if the youths were provided with a SP. PCSO Newby: This is what we're recommending.

At the December 2004 meeting Borough Councillor Brown came to give his report. Before he left PC3 said: There's one last thing. I'd like to know did you support the comment that we're holding back the BP. We're very upset about this. Councillor Brown: I thought it was carelessly worded. PC5: Yes especially as you said you supported us. PC1: Please take that back to that person and get them to tone it down in future. I've got a copy of a resolution from the Amenities Committee requesting KHPC seeks regular and open meetings with all *partners* and discussions concerning Kings Hill, especially those related to sports facilities. PC3: We don't feel we're making any progress. We've sent several memos to RK and T&MBC, but we seldom get a response. PC1: I feel we can't all get round a table together. They'd probably see us as irritants. I suspect RK wouldn't want an open meeting.

PC3: Well I think we need a statement saying we've passed a resolution, and perhaps they'd like to come along to a meeting with us. PC4: Yes and what about the youth plans, parish councils are being talked about a lot by this government, even for issuing antisocial behaviour orders, and if parish councils are mentioned in this piece of legislation. We need to write this down as a statement. PC1: I applaud that, we have to attend meetings with all these different *partners*. What we want is for these people to tell us the truth or what is actually going on. PC3: Let's not tie ourselves up. We just need a statement, a policy to say we want to be more involved. PC4: Do you want us to redraft it? Should it say we want greater involvement with issues on Kings Hill? PC3: No on everything. PC1 said: We've got to be careful here. I suggested we need to be more general. If we say we have an interest within Kings Hill then we'll be excluding ourselves from other issues. We want to know what's going on at Allington concerning the building of the incinerator, and with recycling, and everything like that.

At the February 2005 meeting PC1 said: I had a meeting with Nick (Condon) from RK. It was very useful. Jill put together a list of topics I wanted clarification on. There's been no movement on our

¹¹ 'Kings Hill developer accused of letting down youngsters: Please give us a skate park' by Ross Purdie, *Sevenoaks Chronicle*, 27 May 2004, p. 1.

¹² Chris Brown is one of the ward borough councillors.

¹³ Barry Clout is from the Kent Council for Voluntary Youth Services.

plans for a SP because KCC is negative about it. They've (RK) no intention of building one near here, but they're thinking about one at Heath Farm. I said the problem is if we have no input. Nick said we would.

At the April 2005 meeting PC6 said: *As a matter of policy we haven't asked what the members of the public are here for.* PC1: Oh yes. County Councillor Dagger: This is Richard Long. He is standing at Kings Hill. They've changed the boundaries. This is an extra seat and that's down to your success as a community. PC4: I'd like to thank you for all your help, you'll be missed. Councillor Dagger: Thank you, before I go I'll leave you my report. Richard Long: If I'm successful would you like my address so you can let me know what's going on. PC3: Can I suggest you give it to the Clerk. PC1: You've got an opportunity to talk to us. Richard Long: I'm not here to campaign. PC1: We have an issue. Our biggest issue is with KCC. They're the landowners and RK is in *partnership* with them. It appears that KCC has an influence over the common areas and facilities and we're anxious to get a SP. But it seems you and your colleagues are anxious to see that doesn't happen. We've been told it'd bring in undesirables. The members have voted for it and the residents want it. Some members of KCC seem to be totally opposed to it. We've tried to contact Alex King but we don't get an answer. Richard Long: I'm sorry you've had no success. I'll do my best to help you.

Resident: Did you have a referendum on this skate park? I don't think everybody wants one. I don't. PC1: Yes we've consulted the residents. The youths have compiled a petition. It's been advertised in the local newspapers. Resident: I think you'll get the wrong element coming to use it. It'll lower the tone of the community. PC1: We need something for the youths. They've got one at Tonbridge and it's very successful. Richard Long: Yes you must be sensitive towards all the residents. Whether you would attract others is debatable, you'll probably only get youths from here. If I'm elected I'd be accountable to the people here and I'd be happy to help you. PC3: We need you to help us to get the landowners to agree about the plot where we can have it. There's been lots of prevarication with RK and KCC over this.

At the May 2005 AGM a new chairman was elected. The theme of this meeting was 'A summary of future plans for Kings Hill'. The new chairman said: This document relates to the s106 agreement. It's a planning document formulated by Liberty Property Trust (RK) and T&MBC concerning phase 2 of the development. It's a large and detailed document. We've gone through it and extracted certain elements we want to be involved in. The first planning document was produced in the early 1990s and it was set in stone. Now we want to have a say concerning the provision of affordable housing and additional infrastructure. We should be involved because we're the ground floor representatives of the community. What has to be remembered is once the building work is finished the developer will want to leave and transfer some of the land over to us for maintenance. We'll have to look at the costs. Clearly there's a need to produce a strategy document and we should have some input.

The SP was discussed under 'Matters arising from the minutes'. PC4 said: I assume Richard Long was elected last week. It was Lib Dem before now we have Richard as our candidate. PC3: He said he would help us. PC2: We raised the issue about getting support for the SP. PC3: Yes I made a facetious remark so hopefully he will help us.

At the June 2005 meeting Councillor Long said: The SP appears to be difficult people from outside are against it. PC2: Well it's the parishioners who want it. I don't think people from outside should have a say. Councillor Long: But you don't have any land where you could have one, we'll have to keep this bubbling. You have my support. It's a question of time and you getting control over land. I understand you have your BP. PC5: Yes but that's for younger children. PC6: They're (RK) hoping skateboarding is going out of fashion. Councillor Long: I think it's an image thing. The developer just doesn't want it to affect their image as a prestigious development. PC2: Yes and the proposed post office, is probably not upmarket enough. PC6: We've gone to the press and they don't like it. PC5: If they don't find somewhere for the older youths to use their skateboards someone will get killed. This will create bad publicity for them. PC2: We'll keep asking. We won't let it drop.