JRF JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION

'SMILEY'
Social Media Initiatives in Local East York

Local Level

SMILEY baseline evaluation report, 2015

East York community survey

Report to Joseph Rowntree Foundation

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Local Level

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Introduction

In 2014 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) began a programme of work in east York exploring how the use of social technologies by residents and groups can contribute to and reflect increased community involvement, positive community relations, and sense of identity. A digital inclusion strategy relating to the three adjacent localities of Derwenthorpe, Osbaldwick and Tang Hall was prepared with the stated aim of 'supporting community development through social media and digital inclusion.'[1]

Derwenthorpe is a new development under construction for Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust. In association with this, JRF plans a programme to deliver digital inclusion interventions and support existing digital inclusion initiatives in these areas. In turn, this work is intended to support 'the development of social links and networks between communities in Derwenthorpe and the neighbouring areas of Tang Hall and Osbaldwick.'

The SMILEY project (Social Media Initiatives in Local East York) is evaluating how these interventions and initiatives lead to the improvement of digital skills and literacy, a positive online identity for the area, support community development and the integration of Derwenthorpe residents with neighbouring communities. In order to assess the impact of the programme we conducted a baseline survey between November 2014 and January 2015: that survey is the subject of the present report. The survey was carried out by five community researchers in Derwenthorpe and the surrounding areas. The design and sampling process are described in Section 1 below.

A Theory of Change has been prepared which articulates the proposed outcomes of the programme (see Appendix 1). These intended outcomes informed the design of the survey questionnaire: apart from the demographic questions, and with one exception which is explained in Section 6, all the questions were directly related to the purpose of the programme.[2]

A further survey will be conducted (and other data collection methods will be deployed) at the end of the programme to assess its impact and the initiatives undertaken by JRF will be evaluated to assess their value to participants.

[1] Grant, J., K. Knox and T. Jackson (2014). *Strategy for supporting community development through social media and digital inclusion at Derwenthorpe*. JRF.

[2] A full version of the questionnaire survey is available at http://www.local-level.org.uk/smiley-baseline-questionnaire.html.

1. Methodology

The objective in designing the survey was to collect data from residents living in Tang Hall, Osbaldwick and Derwenthorpe, in order to investigate their experiences and attitudes to community life across the three neighbourhoods, and specifically to discover how these change over the period of the project. A target of approximately 150 respondents in total was agreed as realistic within the available time and budget.

A sampling framework was developed with reference to 2011 census ward and lower layer super output area data for Tang Hall, Osbaldwick, Heworth, Hull Road, and the area along the northern boundary of Derwenthorpe. These administrative areas do not correspond neatly with the research areas, and Derwenthorpe was scarcely populated at the time of the research, so some adjustment was necessary.[3] We agreed targets of 90, 50 and 10 respondents each for Tang Hall, Osbaldwick and Derwenthorpe respectively.[4]

Using 2011 census data, we generated population estimates for Tang Hall and Osbaldwick in age bands and calculated proportions to give targets that reflected the different demographic composition of these areas. These calculations are summarised in Appendix 2, together with the agreed targets.

Digital exclusion is to some extent associated with social exclusion and people on low incomes, which in turn is associated with social housing tenure. For this reason it was felt that the survey needed to reach a high proportion of social housing tenants, and we included target numbers for housing tenure.

One hundred and thirty useable responses were completed, slightly short of the overall target of 150. The characteristics of the respondents are summarised in Section 3 below.

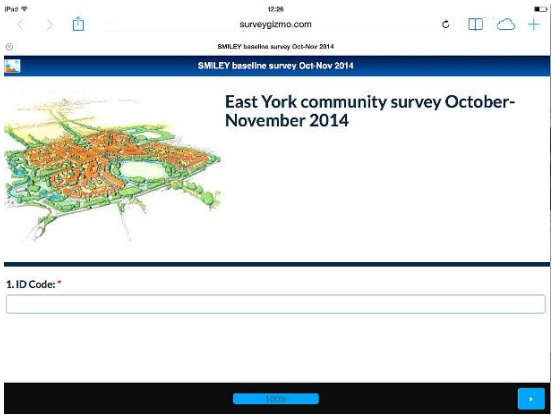
Our survey was designed to be administered in short face-to-face interviews by community researchers (CRs) working in Derwenthorpe, Tang Hall and Osbaldwick. It was not appropriate to make it available online because one of the themes of the study is digital exclusion, and respondents without internet access were part of the target sample. However, we chose to administer it in the field using iPads. The main benefits that we anticipated were:

> *Efficiency* – immediate data input saves subsequent keying-in of responses and reduces the risk of input error.
>
> *Demonstration* – the devices provided an opportunity to show participants how easy some technologies can be to use, their power and convenience.
>
> *User engagement* – respondents were more likely to find the process interesting and might be more willing to take part. The community researchers were encouraged to give respondents the opportunity to enter their own responses.

[3] In addition, census data is complicated by the use of different age bands for older men and older women.

[4] The Derwenthorpe sample is small and associated results cannot be statistically persuasive; but given that there were not many more than 100 households occupied at the time of the survey, it is approaching 10 per cent.

The survey was designed and built using the Survey Gizmo platform. This choice was made on the general basis of its user-friendliness, the HTML5 functionality that allowed for offline survey completion, and the fact that we did not expect to need the kind of statistical power that some other systems offer.



As far as the build was concerned, the platform was very easy to use and flexible. There were several questions with conditional logic (for example, questions that will only be displayed if a previous response meets certain conditions) and these were straightforward to develop. Similarly, it was straightforward to prepare questions using a checkbox grid or slider lists to give numerical values to an assessment of importance.

The final version of the questionnaire was installed in identical fashion on each of the five devices and tested rigorously. A detailed step-by-step guide and series of slides were prepared and given to all the CRs. The testing extended to an induction session that was run with the CRs, each of whom spent time preparing dummy responses by going through all the questions.

Unfortunately, once out in the field, some technical difficulties emerged. The first concerned a number of early questions that did not display: the CRs were finding that, inconsistently, most interviews resulted in incomplete surveys because a number of the initial questions were skipped automatically. We confirmed in tests that this was not the result of user error. Survey Gizmo provided a work-around but this involved the CRs, with technical support, having to download and install a new version of the questionnaire.

The CRs undertook to return to as many of the respondents as possible and in most cases succeeded in completing the surveys by going through the missing questions, but this was an awkward and time-consuming process. For a total of 17 respondents, we lack responses to these initial questions.

A second problem that arose later was the re-emergence of comments: if a respondent entered text into a comment field, that text was found to be reappearing in the comment field for subsequent questions. In practice, this was more confusing at the time than in reviewing the results, but it did serve to convince at least one of the CRs that they were better off administering the survey using hard copy.

When a questionnaire (or several) had been completed, the CRs found a wifi connection and followed a straightforward uploading procedure. The completed responses accumulated on the Survey Gizmo system from where they could be analysed. No difficulties were reported with the uploading process.

The use of iPads was a new and experimental approach both for JRF and for the research team. The key lessons from our experience are as follows:

- Even after thorough testing, there were technical difficulties and this burden was shouldered by the CRs. It is hard to know when new technologies are robust enough for general use: the whole process could well have gone smoothly and been rewarding for all concerned.
- Where the process did work smoothly – which was most of the time – it was very efficient, and the Survey Gizmo platform makes reviewing and analysing the data very straightforward. Nonetheless, as we discuss in Section 2, some of the CRs felt that only being able to administer one survey at a time was too much of a constraint, and for that reason sometimes chose to use hard copy questionnaires.
- Support is critical: we emphasised our availability by telephone and email and were pleased that this was taken up where necessary, so that problems did not escalate into crises.

2. Working with community researchers

The project chose to work with community researchers (CRs) to gather data for the baseline because we felt that this would ground the evaluation more closely in the knowledge and perspectives of residents. It also enabled us to harness local knowledge and offered an efficient use of time, with the added benefit of investing in skills and research capacity locally.

The CRs were recruited through adverts, shortlisting and interviews. The five individuals selected lived locally and between them had substantial experience of conducting face-to-face surveys, but had not used iPad technology for this purpose before.

They all attended a day's training and induction. This session covered the rationale for the project evaluation, the sampling framework, and offered a chance to pilot and practise the survey questions with the iPads. The CRs were allocated targets for the three neighbourhoods based on population statistics for the area so that the sample reflected local demographics as far as possible. It should be noted that the Derwenthorpe sample was deliberately limited, partly because as yet there are far fewer residents than in the other two localities anyway, and also because other research teams have already been making contact with the new residents.

The phone and email support from the research team was needed initially to advise on technological difficulties with the Survey Gizmo app, and later to provide suggestions and encouragement in relation to reaching the target number of interviews. In addition, the CRs were in contact with one another to coordinate their approaches within the three localities.

The CRs made contact with potential interviewees using a variety of techniques, some more successful than others. They started with their own contacts – family, friends and neighbours, and then used these networks to identify others. This 'snowballing' was effective up to a point, but in order to survey a wider diversity of residents the CRs also spent time in community venues, shops and open spaces, 'hanging around' and catching likely looking people to meet their targets. The community development worker directed some of them to potentially productive places and people.

Alongside this, they used more systematic approaches, contacting gate-keepers such as the manager at the local community centre, the head teacher at one of the schools and the secretary of the working men's club, to arrange access to specific sets of residents, including young people. This met with mixed response, with some people being considerably more helpful than others. Some researchers actively made appointments to meet with interviewees but were disappointed at how many of these became 'no shows', which was both dispiriting and a waste of time. It was understandably difficult for the CRs to identify people who occupied social housing before conducting an interview. As a last resort, some tried door-knocking in an effort to find respondents in this category, and this yielded just a few completed surveys.

The community researchers found the work to be more labour intensive than expected, and spent more time than we had allowed for in contacting people, setting up interviews and administering the survey. As noted above, there were problems with the survey platform, which in any case restricted them to conducting one interview at a time. Two of the researchers found it easier to use hard copies of the questions on at least some occasions and were able to conduct simultaneous 'interviews', keying-in the responses later.

There is an irony in the levels of resistance and difficulties encountered by the CRs in using digital means to capture people's attitudes and confidence around using social media and online

communication, in order to establish a baseline for the evaluation of a digital inclusion project. Nevertheless there is an important lesson to take from those who were approached but didn't want to take part. The CRs found it hard to explain what the survey was for and how it related to JRF's work outlined in their digital inclusion and community development strategy. This difficulty may have been exacerbated by two other factors. First, there has been some hostility amongst Tang Hall and Osbaldwick residents towards the Derwenthorpe development, and consequently a reluctance among some residents to have anything to do with it. Secondly, the absence through sickness of the community worker, for some of the period of the research, probably limited the number of 'forewarned' or primed respondents the researchers were able to recruit through local activities.

Many people seem to have been put off by the mention of the 'digital' aspects of the survey and we were told that those most willing to be interviewed tended to be those already involved in community activities.

In addition, the data gathering process was complicated by seasonal conditions, with baseline research taking place between November and January. In addition to the cold weather and dark evenings not being conducive to lingering in public places, the process was disrupted by Christmas, with people often being 'too busy'. We were also conscious of slightly heightened safety issues in these conditions, compounded by the risks of meeting unknown people in their own homes.

In order to increase response rates in the future, incentives such as shopping vouchers would be worth considering, and there could be advantages in re-designing the consent form to make it easier to enter contact details.

3. Respondents

Respondents were asked which neighbourhood they live in. Options included 'None of these' and the CRs used their discretion as to whether to continue the questionnaire. We wanted to take the opportunity to include people who visited any of the neighbourhoods on a regular basis, for instance in supporting family members or as members of a group. These respondents were given the chance to explain their involvement in the neighbourhood.

Figure 1

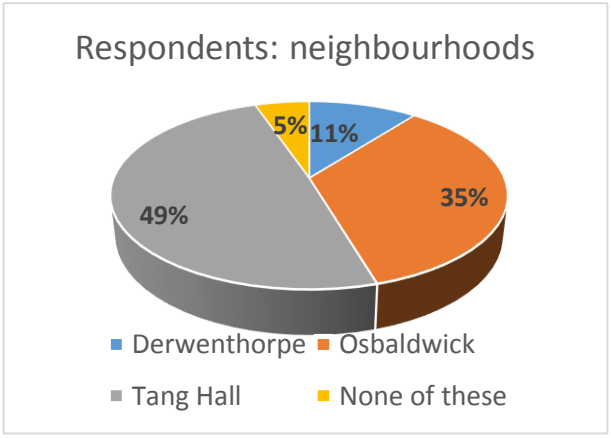


Figure 1 and Table 1 show the distribution of respondents across the three areas.

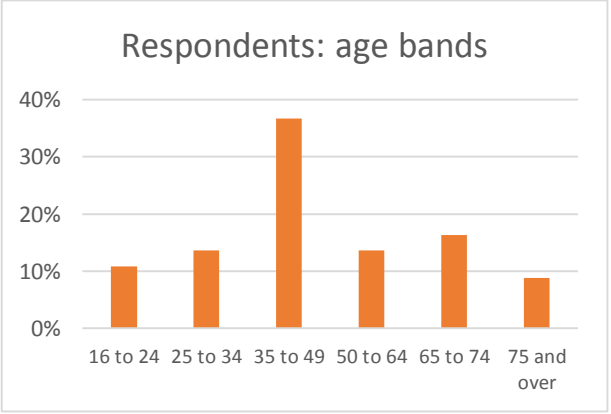
Table 1

Derwenthorpe	11%	16
Osbaldwick	35%	53
Tang Hall	49%	75
None of these	5%	8
	100%	152

Fifty-nine per cent of the respondents were female. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the sample by age.

Some 75 per cent of respondents own their home either outright or with a mortgage. Seventy-two per cent have a vocational qualification or higher.

Figure 2



4. Sense of community

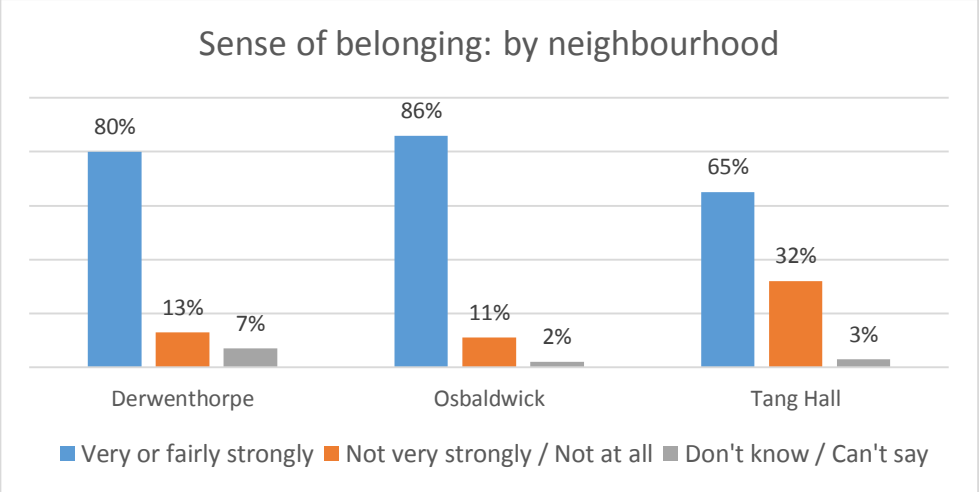
We asked a number of questions designed to help us to assess one of the main outcomes proposed for JRF's programme of work: 'increased sense of social cohesion, positive community relations, and local identity, attributed in part to digital fluency and increased communication.'

We were particularly interested in how this might differ across the three localities. Tang Hall is known to house a significant proportion of students attending York's two universities. According to 2011 census data, the proportion of people aged 16-24 living in the area most closely correlated with Tang Hall was 29 per cent. The national figure was less than 12 per cent. By contrast, in the area encompassing Osbaldwick, more than one third of the population is aged over 65 (males) and over 60 (females) according to the same census data; whereas in Tang Hall the proportion in these older age categories is 12 per cent.[5] One Osbaldwick respondent said that 'The area has become less of a community over the years due to the high number of student to-let properties,' although we received only one other negative comment associating the student population with Osbaldwick.

These varying demographics can be expected to be reflected in varying levels of expressed sense of belonging, and hence to identity and relationships. We know that people living in social housing are less likely to say they enjoy living in their neighbourhood than owner occupiers. And as would be expected, young people tend to have a significantly weaker sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods than older people, which may relate to length of residence in the area and the transience of student populations in particular.[6]

Sense of belonging to the area was expressed less strongly among residents in Tang Hall than in the other two localities, as Figure 4 shows. The high rate for Derwenthorpe (80 per cent feel they belong 'very strongly' or 'fairly strongly') is unsurprising, given that it is a new build neighbourhood. Nonetheless, it's worth making the point that the Tang Hall figure of 65 per cent is not particularly low: according to the government's latest *Community Life Survey* data, nationally no more than 70 per cent of people claim a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.[7]

Figure 4



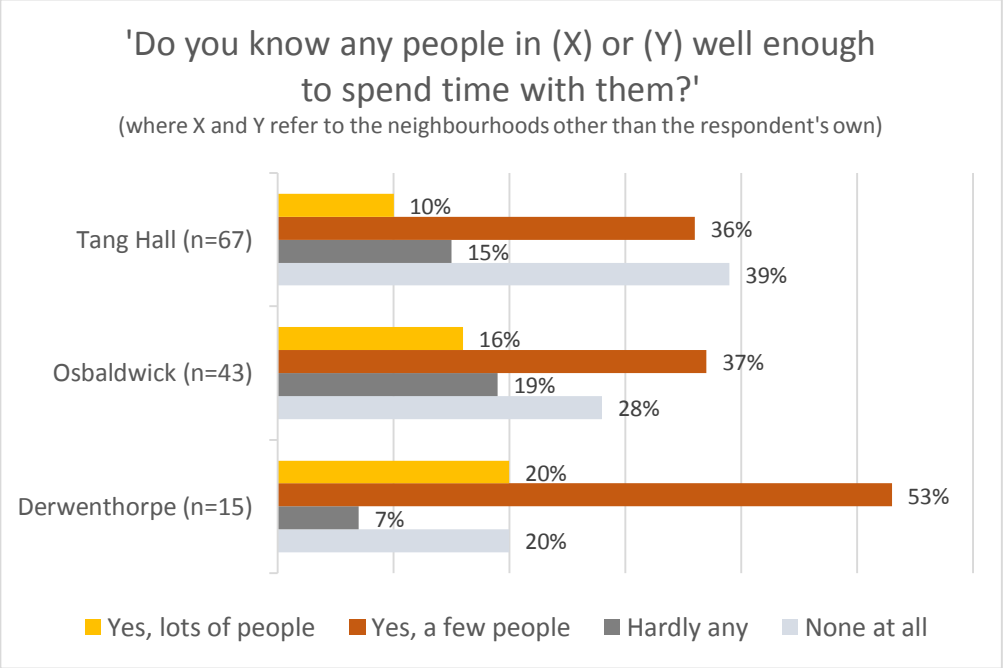
[5] See *Neighbourhood statistic* for York 015A area; and York 014C Area.

[6] *Community spirit in England: a report on the 2009-10 Citizenship Survey*. Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011.

[7] See *Community life survey press release*, 2013-2014, http://is.gd/Dr1DsC.

In order to assess social cohesion across the three different localities, we asked whether respondents knew people in the other areas ‘well enough to spend time with them’. The results are shown in Figure 5 below. The question did not make it possible to distinguish the particular area(s) in which respondents had such contacts.

Figure 5



It is perhaps surprising that there is relatively little difference between residents from Osbaldwick and Tang Hall in these figures: 46 per cent of Tang Hall respondents claim to know ‘lots’ or ‘a few’ people in Derwenthorpe or Osbaldwick well enough to spend time with them, while the figure for Osbaldwick respondents who know people in Derwenthorpe and Tang Hall is 53 per cent. The proportions for those who know ‘Hardly any’ or ‘None at all’ are comparable. Tang Hall is closer to the city, with a high proportion of working people, young people and students who will be drawn out of their neighbourhood on a day-to-day basis, and we might have expected to see greater contrast in these figures. The fact that nearly three-quarters of our Derwenthorpe respondents – albeit a small sample – know people in the other areas is worthy of note.

We can associate our findings for sense of belonging with length of residence in Osbaldwick and Tang Hall (Derwenthorpe residents had been there at most for a little more than a year at the time of our survey). This relationship can be seen in Figures 6 and 7 below. As would be expected the relationship is strong but not experienced universally.

Figure 6

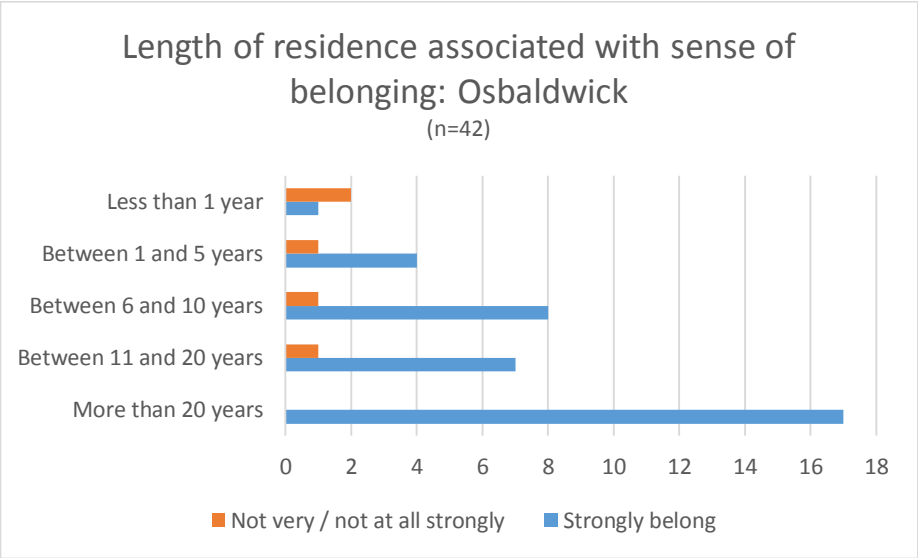
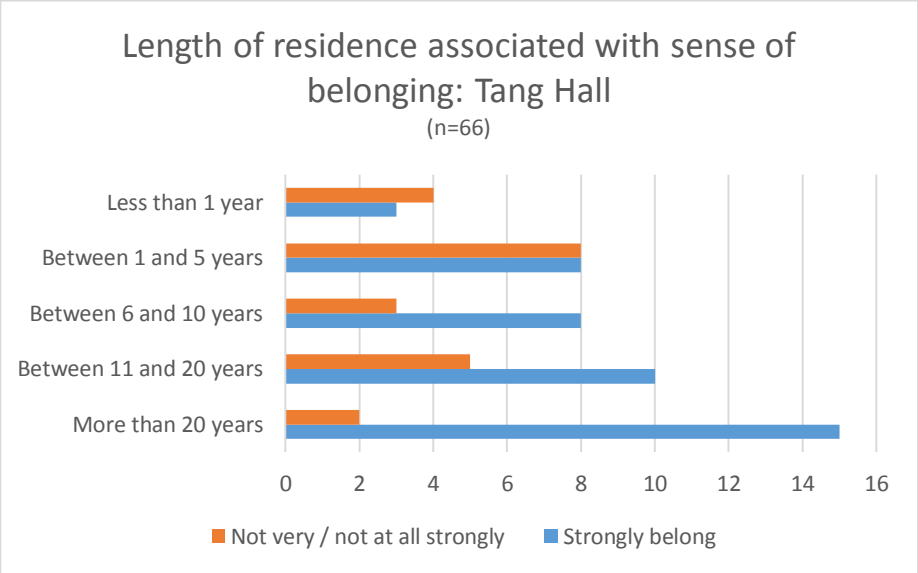


Figure 7



If the question about belonging helps us understand how people identify with their area, we can also learn from people's sense of their area's identity. We asked how they think their area is seen by others; and then how they think of the area themselves. The results are shown in figures 8 and 9 below.

'Tang Hall has prior image with people in York. It seems to be associated with anti-social behaviour, crime and poverty. Estate agents don't use Tang Hall in their information, they always say Heworth or Hull Road! They usually only focus on Tang Hall when there is bad news.'

(Tang Hall, homeowner, 35-49)

Figure 8

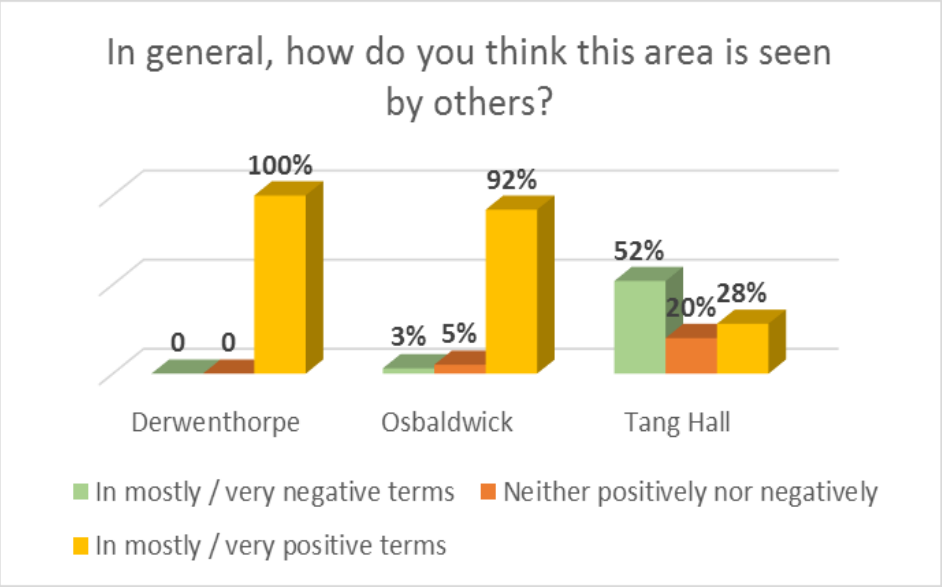
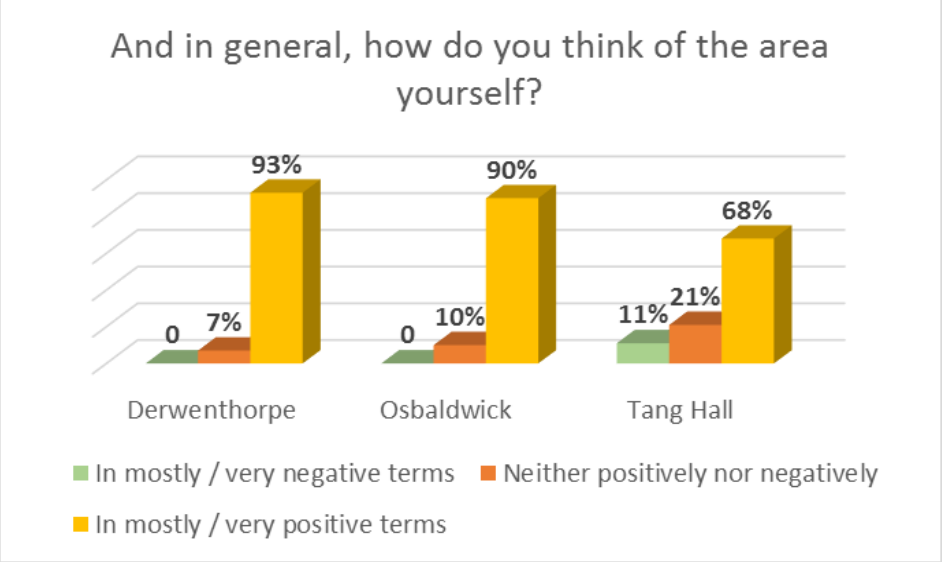


Figure 9



It is apparent that people believe Tang Hall to have been labelled in the past, but there is a significant contrast between the 52 per cent of our respondents who think that the area is seen in negative terms by others, and only 11 per cent who view it in negative terms themselves.

'I was told not to live in this area when I moved to York. However, when I got to know the area I realised its really fine, especially compared to the areas in Cardiff I used to live.'

(Tang Hall, private renting, 25-34)

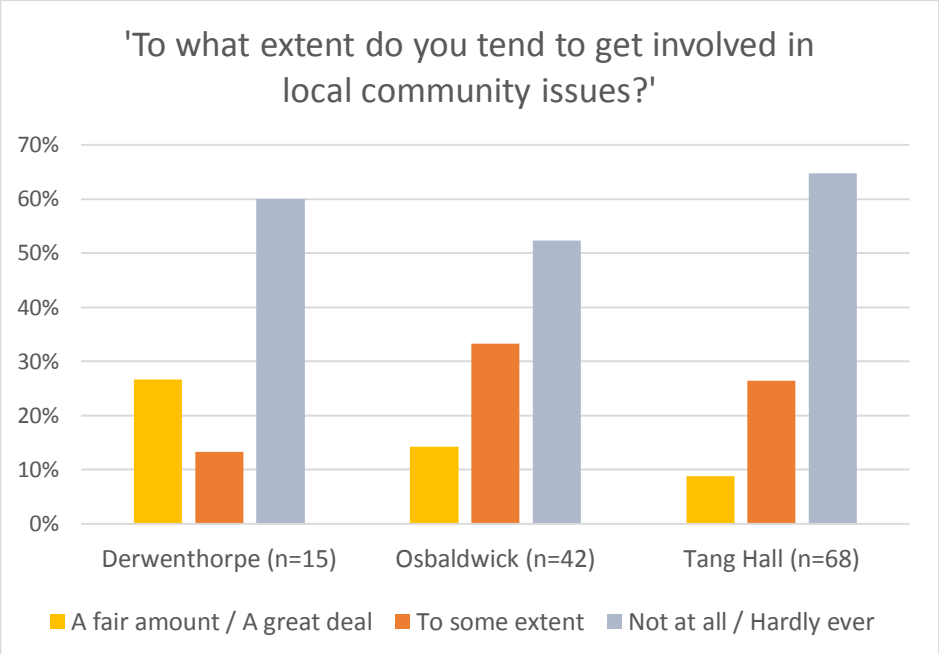
5. Community involvement

Figure 10 below reports respondents' levels of community involvement for the three localities. In Osbaldwick, some 47 per cent get involved in community issues 'to some extent', 'a fair amount' or 'a great deal'. The figure for Tang Hall is 35 per cent. Among our small sample of Derwenthorpe respondents, all comparatively recently arrived with a nascent ready-formed residents' association, it is 40 per cent. The latest national data for 'informal volunteering' give a national average of 41 per cent.

'I can't be bothered. Nothing has really motivated me to get involved.'

(Osbaldwick homeowner, 50-64)

Figure 10

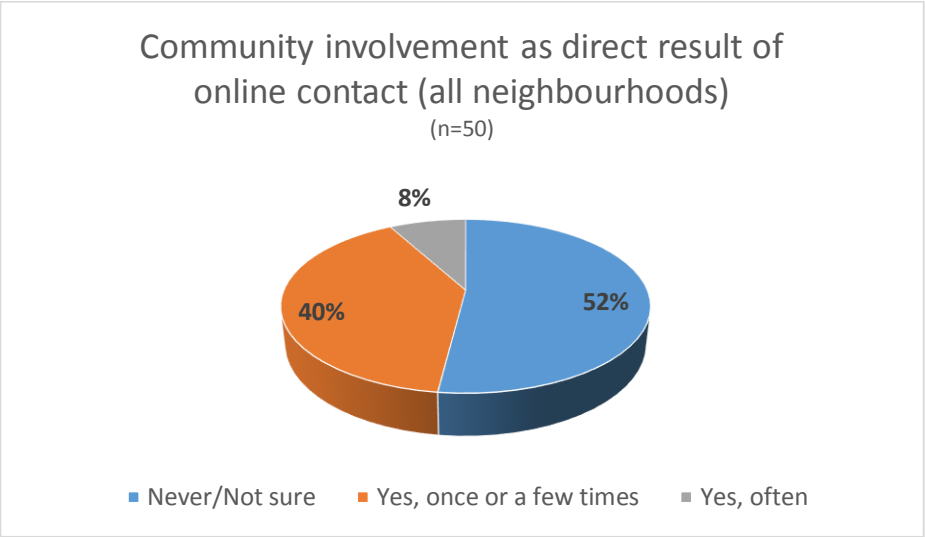


We then asked 'has your involvement ever come about as the direct result of an online contact – an email about an issue or a website announcement of a meeting, for example?' The results are shown in Figure 11 below. They show that for almost half of those who have been involved in a local community issue, this was as a direct result of online contact ('once, a few times, or often'). This applies to 60 per cent of Osbaldwick respondents and 30 per cent of Tang Hall respondents.

'Communication from a friend regarding council planning and proposals.'

(Tang Hall homeowner, 35-49)

Figure 11



Our survey also asked a question about the extent to which community involvement might be affected by residents' contributions to local online sources: this is discussed in section 6 below.

6. Sources of local news and information

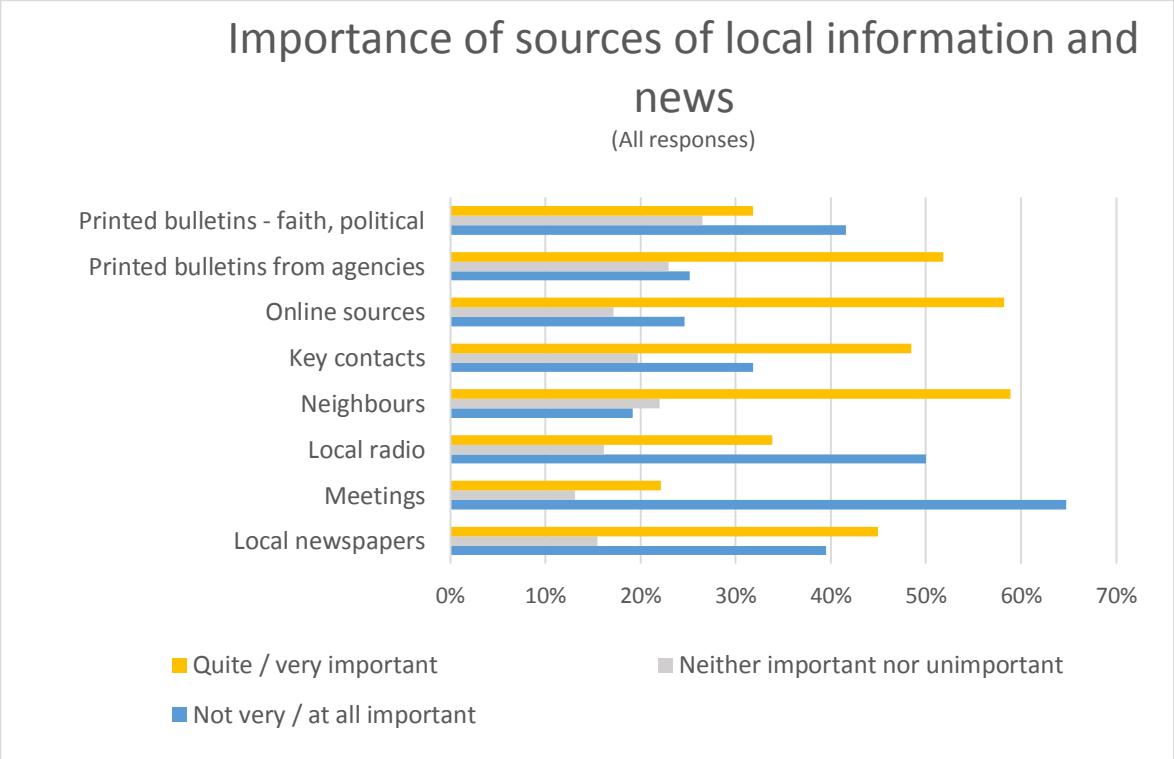
One of the intended intermediate outcomes for the overall programme is that 'residents and stakeholders place greater value on communication initiated by residents about local issues'. It is clear that not everyone feels any obligation or motivation to take an interest in local issues, whatever the source of information: one respondent said simply 'I don't really read much about the area where I live'. Against this, another respondent commented: 'It is the people in the area that should contribute, after all it's those people that the issues affect.'

In order to measure any future change in this value through the course of the programme, we needed to find out at the outset the extent to which people think local residents contribute to local information channels; and the extent to which people think that residents *should be* contributing. Calculating the difference between responses to these two questions would allow us to assess the value placed on citizen-led information and communication.

Thus if 25 per cent of respondents say that local people contribute 'a fair amount' or 'a great deal' to local information channels; and 75 per cent say that residents could be contributing more, then the difference (in this case 50 per cent) gives an indication of the potential for resident-led communication. This measure could be re-calculated after the programme to see if it has increased.

These are not easy issues to raise clearly in a survey interview. We devised a preliminary question intended to get respondents thinking about local information channels. This question lists a variety of channels and invites respondents to assess their importance as sources of local information. Figure 12 shows the distribution for all responses.[8]

Figure 12



[8] The categories were described as: Local newspapers; Attending meetings; Local radio; Talking to neighbours; Talking to contacts (such as faith leaders, teachers, shop owners, dog walkers); Online sources (such as local websites, Facebook pages or Twitter); Printed bulletins from housing association, council, civic society or police; Printed bulletins from local faith groups or political parties.

These responses suggest that meetings are not widely valued as a source of local information, nor is local radio. However, neighbours and other key contacts (such as faith leaders, teachers, shop owners, dog walkers) are considered important: together with local newspapers; printed bulletins from key agencies; and, most strikingly, online sources. Some 59 per cent of respondents regard neighbours as either 'very important' or 'quite important' as sources of local information and news; and 58 per cent say this for online sources.

'I have attended ward meetings in the past but I didn't find their meetings very productive.'

(Tang Hall homeowner, 35-49)

We then asked respondents to assess the extent to which residents contribute, or could be contributing more, to some of these sources. Figure 13 shows responses with reference to *broadcast sources* (local radio, newspapers and printed bulletins). It is striking that 39 per cent say that residents already contribute 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' to these channels. Nonetheless, 63 per cent felt they could be contributing more. One Osbaldwick resident pointed out that 'for someone who is new to the area they are a good source of information.'

Figure 13

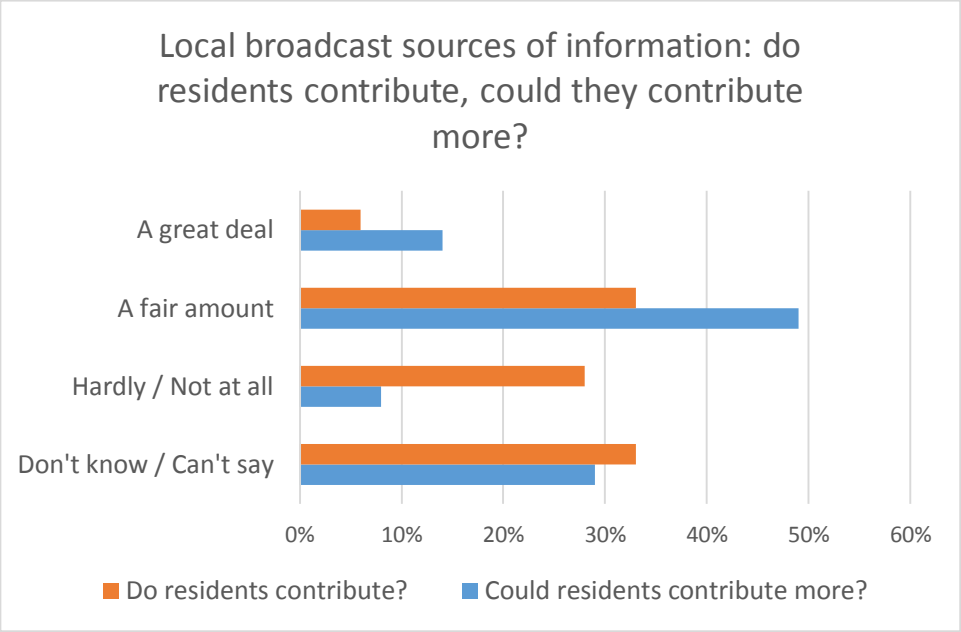


Figure 14 below gives responses with reference to local *online* sources. It shows that one in five people believe that residents hardly contribute, if at all, to these sources at present. Some 59 per cent think residents could contribute more to local online sources.[9]

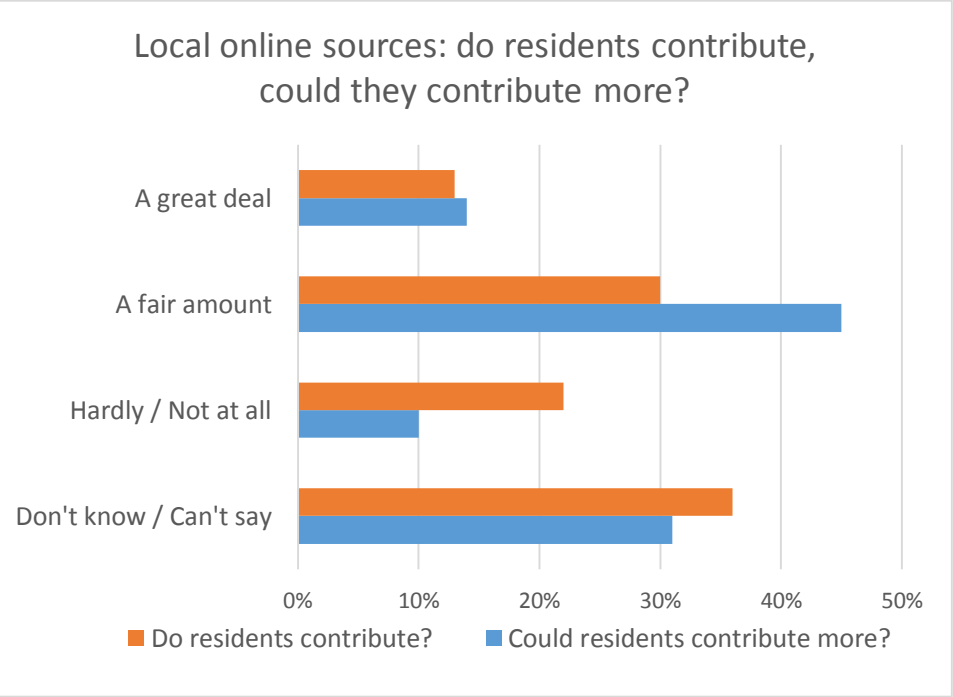
'I don't listen to local radio and don't read local newspapers (unless online).'

(Respondent from outside area but active within it, 50-64)

[9] We note the high proportion who responded 'Don't know' or 'Can't say' to these two questions, which suggests they may need re-forming.

As would be expected, there is a gap between the perceived contribution that residents make to local communication channels (broadcast and online), and the perception that they could contribute more. Taking the percentage of those who think residents contribute 'a fair amount' or 'a great deal'; and subtracting the percentage of those who think residents *could be contributing* 'a fair amount' or 'a great deal' more, this gap is currently 20 per cent.[10] If this gap can be shown to have reduced over the course of the programme of digital activities in the area, it will suggest that people have been encouraged or enabled to contribute more to their local communication channels.

Figure 14



Next we asked two questions related to the observation that 'Sometimes residents write articles or comments on local websites.' First:

> 'Overall, do you think that is likely to make a positive difference to the identity of the area; a negative difference; or no difference at all?'

And secondly:

> 'When residents write articles or comments on local websites, does that (or could it) affect your willingness to get involved in local issues?'

> 'FB *[Facebook]* tends to exclude older people and some in F/T jobs and those who are not computer literate. In my group of FB friends and local pub has FB page a lot of local info is shared and links shared to local events and local news stories. Probably is including only families with younger children (friends) the pub may include a bigger age range.'
>
> (Respondent from outside area, active within it, 50-64)

[10] The gap is noticeably different for solely broadcast channels (24 per cent) compared with solely online channels (17 per cent).

These questions were designed partly to explore whether or not the assumption is widely held that local websites are hotbeds of off-putting, malicious trolling.[11] We were also seeking to establish the basis for the concept of increasing local 'digital identity' which features among the programme's intended outcomes; and to assess the degree to which effort invested in local online channels might be rewarded by increased community involvement. A noticeable proportion responded 'Don't know' or 'Can't say' to these two questions, which presumably reflects limited experience of local online sources.

'I haven't found a website yet telling me what is happening in Tang Hall / Osbaldwick.'

(Osbaldwick homeowner, 50-64)

Figure 15 below shows that more than half our respondents felt that residents' contributions to local online channels are likely to make a positive difference to local identity, and the proportion of those who anticipate or experience a negative effect is tiny.

Figure 15

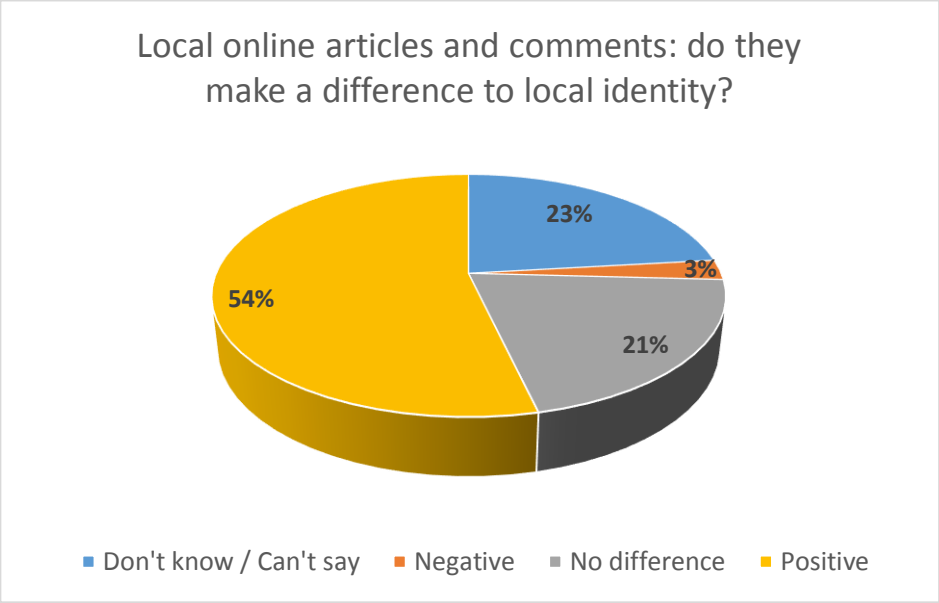


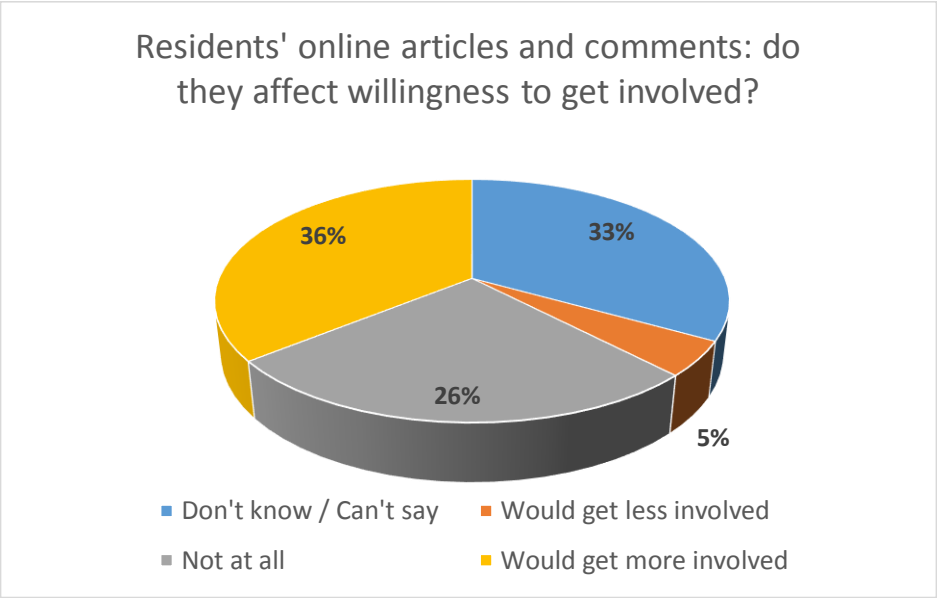
Figure 16 below indicates that only a small percentage (five per cent) of respondents would be discouraged from community involvement by other residents' online contributions. Strikingly, more than one third said they would get *more* involved locally.

'I think that the people who are interested maybe are busy working and have less opportunity to contribute than the people who may have a little more time in wealthier areas like Osbaldwick and Derwenthorpe.'

(Tang Hall homeowner, 35-49)

[11] See for example http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/mp-claims-internet-trolls-totally-dominate-local-newspaper-websites

Figure 16


Residents' online articles and comments: do they affect willingness to get involved?
36%
33%
26%
5%
Don't know / Can't say
Would get less involved
Not at all
Would get more involved

7. The internet as a social resource

We were interested in the extent to which people see the internet as a resource that could make a difference to local social relations. We asked a set of four questions about whether people felt the internet could help to:

a. keep in touch with your friends or social contacts locally?

b. make new friends or social contacts locally?

c. connect with groups and organisations that are active in your local community?

d. find new ways of raising and influencing local issues?

Figures 17 and 18 show that more than half our respondents expect that the internet could help them stay in touch with friends and local social contacts; but as would be expected, the proportion drops when it comes to making *new* friendships *or* contacts locally.

It is noticeable that one person in five – not a trivial proportion - does *not* expect that the internet could help them to keep in touch with friends or social contacts locally. We regard this as a potentially strong indicator of the relation between digital and social exclusion.

Further, there were three or four comments suggesting that there is still an *either/or* perception when it comes to the internet and face-to-face contact:

> 'I do try to keep interacting with friends but would rather welcome face to face interactions than the internet'
>
> 'I would rather talk face to face than on the Internet'.

Figure 17

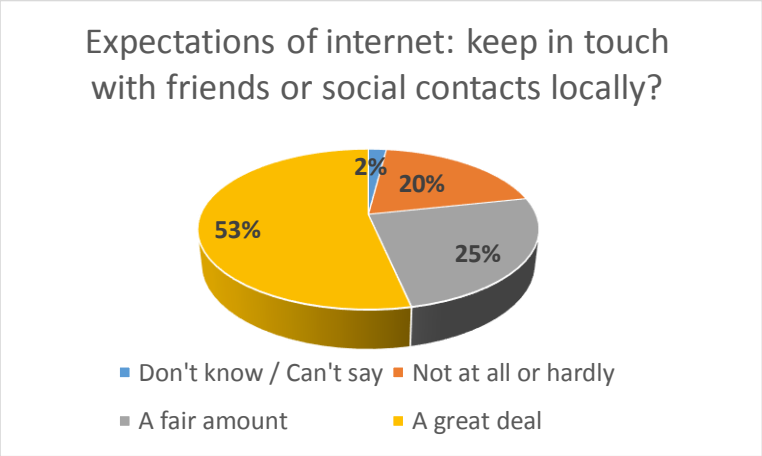
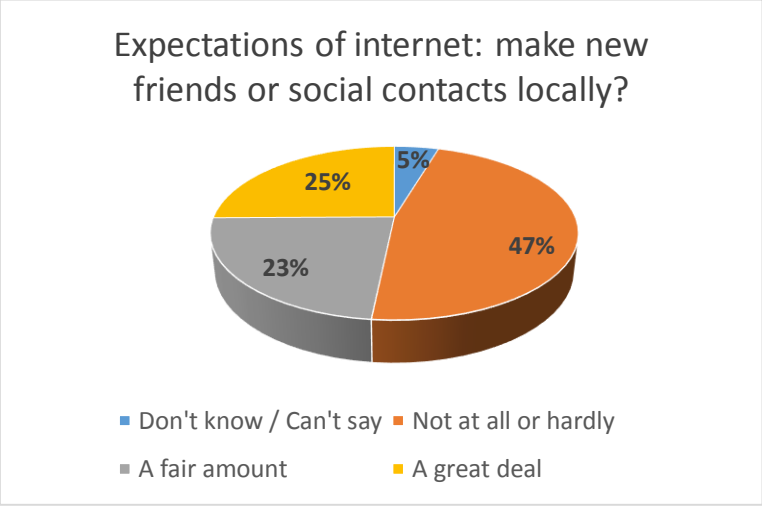


Figure 18



Around 60 per cent of our respondents (figures 19 and 20 below) could see potential in local community uses of the internet, either through connecting with active local groups, or as a way of raising and influencing local issues. This leaves a substantial 40 per cent who either did not see such potential or saw it at best as 'hardly at all'.

These 60:40 proportions are reflected in both Osbaldwick and Tang Hall, as figure 21 shows. Since one of the intended outcomes for the overall programme is 'increased uptake of digital services and resources among residents and within local groups,' this is a matter of concern, and the ratio is one that we will be re-examining after the interventions have taken place.

'I have never even thought of using it to raise or influence local issues.'

(Osbaldwick homeowner, 75 or over)

Figure 19

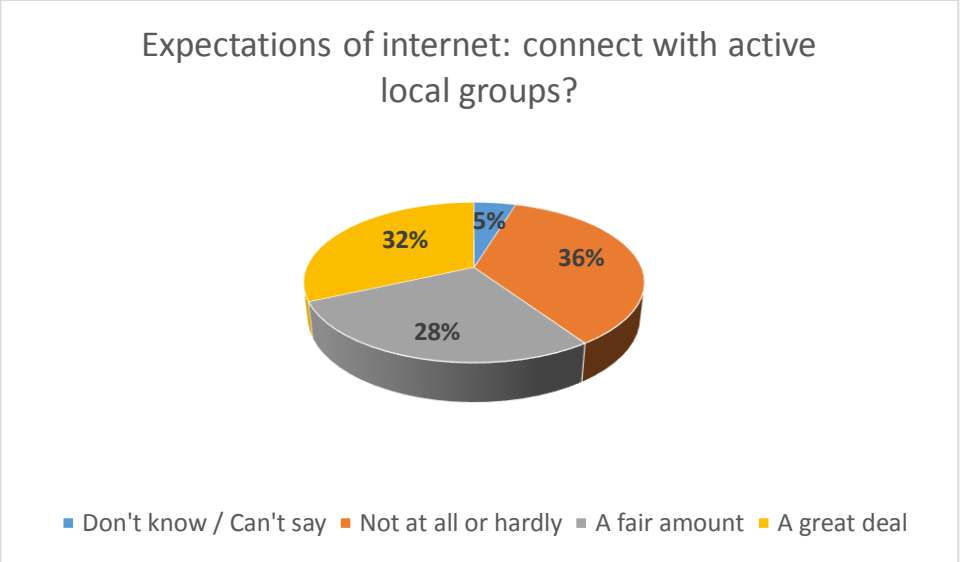


Figure 20

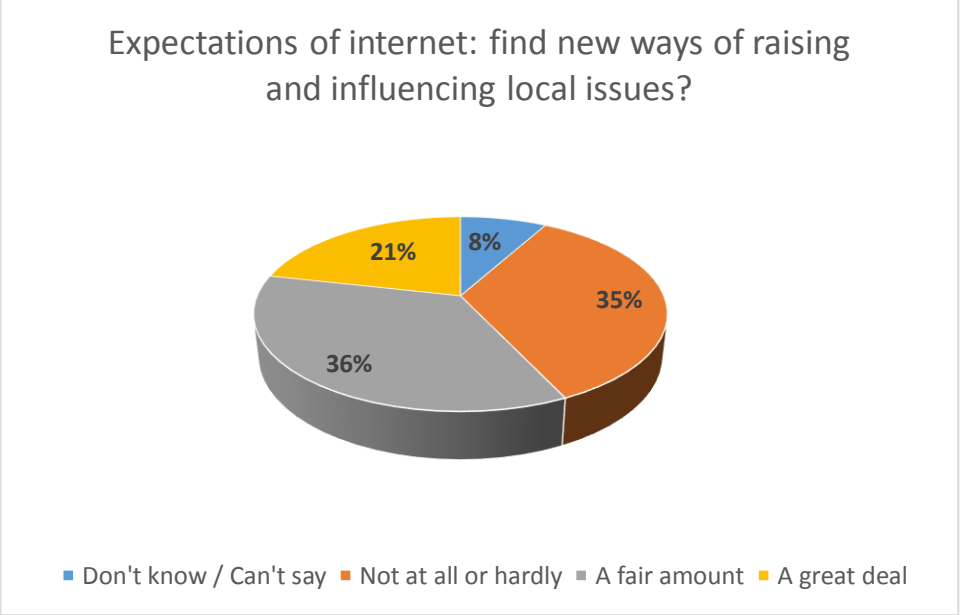
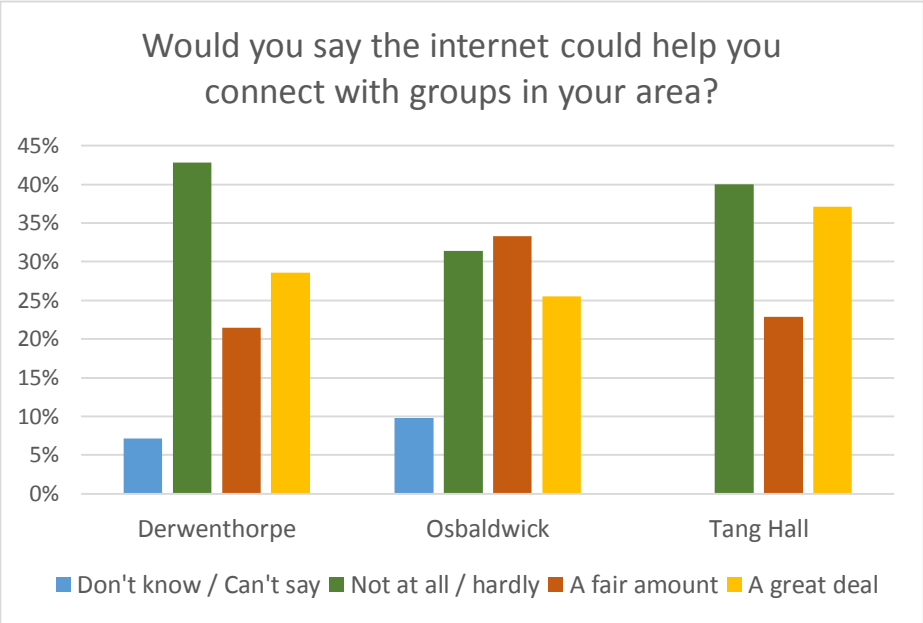


Figure 21



'Social events are largely planned online (Facebook events) in my social groups.'

'Online forums can offer a less intimidating route into more engagement about local issues.'

(Tang Hall, 25-34)

8. 'Digital fluency': confidence with digital technologies

One of the intended outcomes of the overall project is to see increased levels of 'digital fluency'. Briggs and Makice (2011) distinguish this concept from 'digital literacy,' noting that a literate person is perfectly capable of using the tools, but:

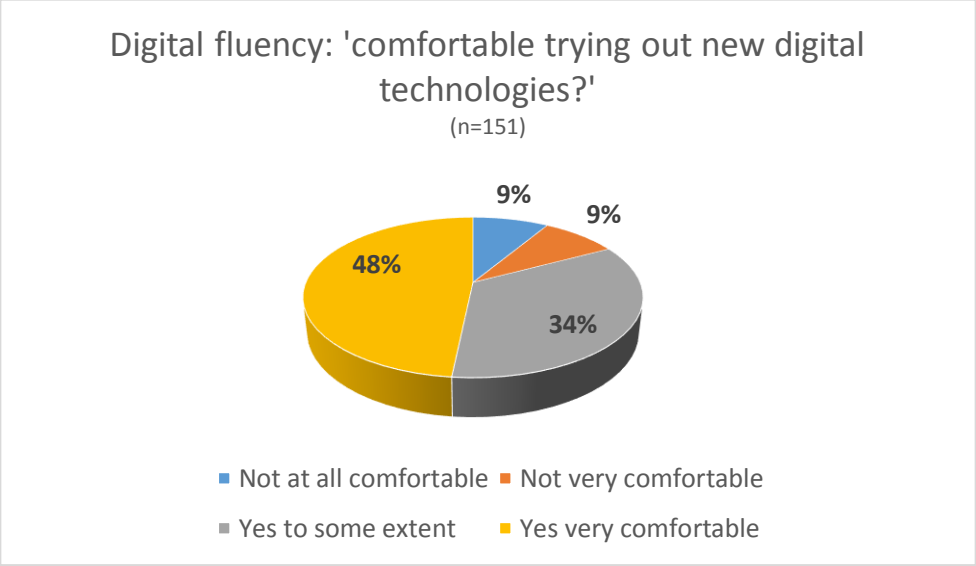
> 'It is not until that person reaches a level of fluency… that they are comfortable with ***when*** to use the tools to achieve the desired outcome, and even ***why*** the tools they are using are likely to have the desired outcome at all.'[12]

We prepared two questions (the second of them in two parts) to assess digital fluency, as follows:

- 'Would you say you are comfortable trying out new digital technologies as they become available?'
- 'To what extent are these statements true of you?'[13]
  (a) 'I know how to do most things online, such as downloading files, filling in forms, or going on Facebook'
  (b) 'I feel comfortable establishing and maintaining social contacts online, and participating in online conversations'.

Figure 22 shows that some 82 per cent of our respondents feel either 'very comfortable' or comfortable 'to some extent' in trying out new digital technologies. This still leaves nearly one in five who say they are 'not very' or 'not at all' comfortable.

Figure 22

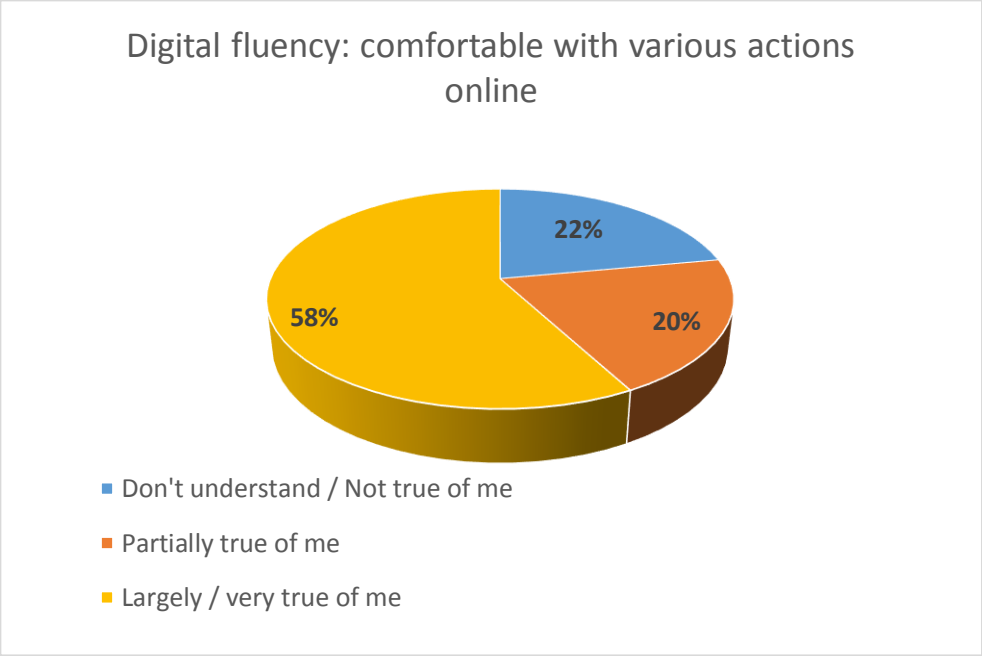


Responses to the two parts of the second question have been combined in figure 23 below. This summarises the extent to which respondents feel comfortable with practical actions and social interactions online. Again, it suggests that approximately one out of five respondents (22 per cent) lacks, or lacks confidence in, their online digital skills.

[12] http://www.socialens.com/blog/2011/02/05/the-difference-between-digital-literacy-and-digital-fluency/

[13] Answer options were: 'Not at all true of me'; 'Partially true'; 'Largely true of me'; 'Very true of me'; 'I don't understand what this means'. These questions were partly based on examples in the OII/LSE study on *Measuring digital skills*.

Figure 23



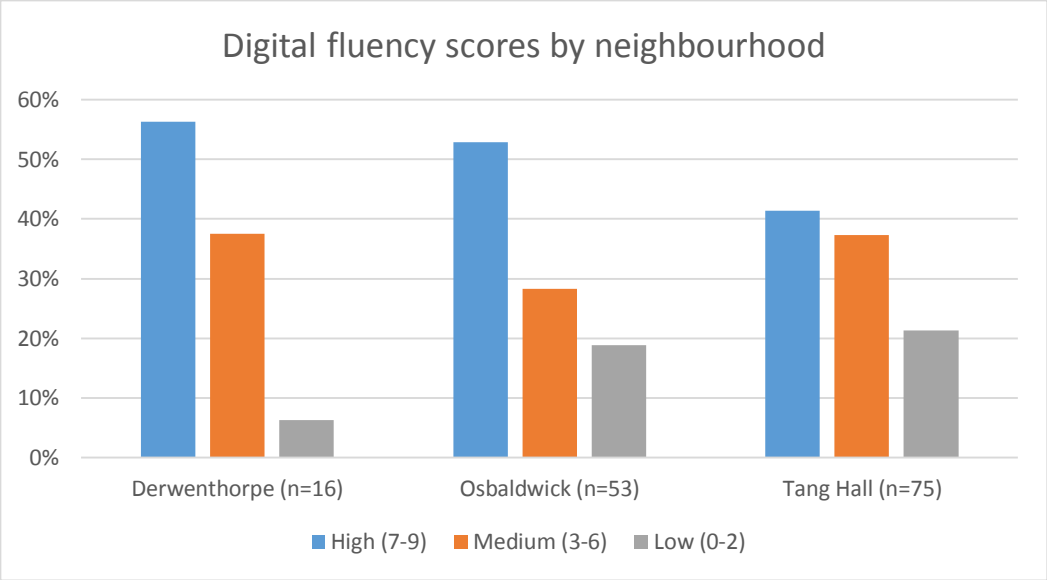
We have looked more closely at the 46 respondents who answered either 'I don't understand what this means' or 'Not at all true of me', to *one or other* of these questions.[14] More than half (27), are home owners and the same proportion (27 in number) hold a vocational qualification or degree. Again, while 19 of this group are aged 65 or older, 17 of them are in the 35-49 age range: they include, for example, some home-owners with higher degrees. These points serve to remind us that there is not a simplistic relationship between digital exclusion and age or social class (as represented by housing tenure and educational attainment).[15]

We then constructed a rudimentary index for digital fluency, by assigning scores for all three parts of the questions, from zero ('Not at all comfortable'; 'Not at all true of me'; 'I don't understand what this means') to three ('Yes very comfortable'; 'Very true of me') with equal weight. The scores were then marked as 'high', 'medium' or 'low,' where 0-2 is low and 7-9 is high. Figure 24 below shows the suggested levels of 'digital fluency' according to this index, for respondents from each neighbourhood.

[14] 'To what extent are these statements true of you?' (a) 'I know how to do most things online, such as downloading files, filling in forms, or going on Facebook'; (b) 'I feel comfortable establishing and maintaining social contacts online, and participating in online conversations'.

[15] The government's 'digital landscape' research (2012) suggested that more than a quarter (28 per cent) of socio-economic group C2DE are 'offline,' compared with just eight per cent of ABC1s; 41 per cent of those aged 65 or over do not use the internet; but 92 per cent of those aged 35-44 are online. See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-landscape-research/digital-landscape-research#who-is-online-and-who-is-offline.

Figure 24



Again, in both Tang Hall and Osbaldwick, we find that approximately 20 per cent of people have a low digital fluency score. This compares with just one out of 16 Derwenthorpe respondents. There also seems to be a substantial gap, in Osbaldwick, between the more digitally fluent and the rest. These features will be re-assessed later in the programme.

9. Use of internet and interest in training

JRF is interested in the level of demand for learning digital skills, and what sort of interventions would be most successful. The survey listed a range of activities that can be enhanced through internet use, and we asked respondents if they 'already do this' or would be interested in learning how to do it. The results are shown in Table 2 below. It is noticeable that the topics most likely to attract people are all related to leisure – not to employment or functional use of services.

Table 2

Please tell us how you use the internet now and what you might like to use it for:	*I already do this*	*I'd like to learn how to do this*
Keeping in touch with friends and family	119	15
Pursuing a hobby, leisure or creative interest	110	20
For studying; or for personal or family research	100	23
Reading news and magazine articles	117	7
Shopping, ordering goods and services	115	11
Banking and personal finance	106	11
Dealing with official services	104	13
Searching for work opportunities, applying for jobs	85	7
To promote or support my trade or business	72	6
Finding out about local activities	108	9
Finding health information for myself or someone else	107	9

In the past six months, have you been on any training courses or received support in developing your digital skills?	*Yes*	*No/Not sure*
	24	124

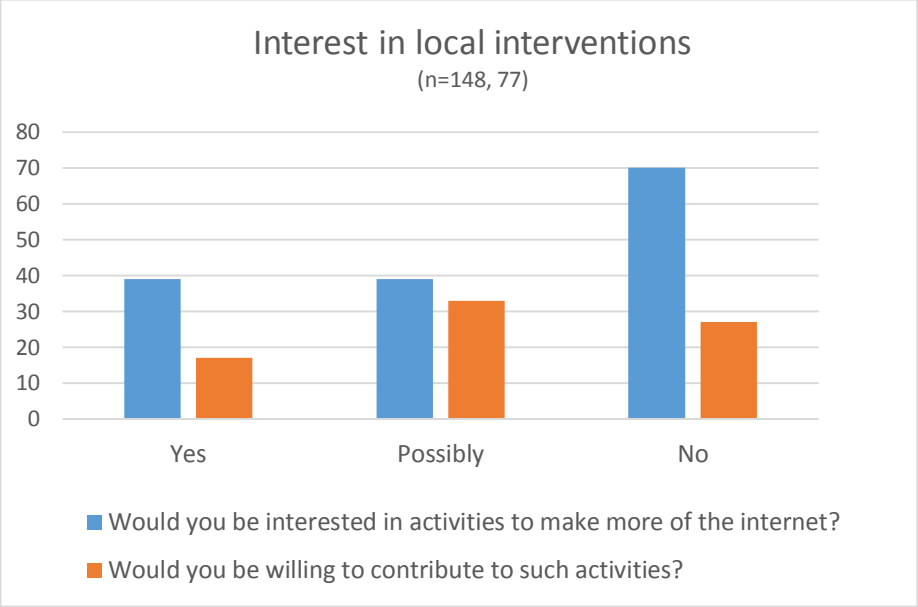
Twenty-two respondents told us that they have been on a training course or received support in developing their digital skills within the past six months. Of these, we were told that in 14 cases the support was 'organised' and in five cases it was 'informal'.

We then asked two further questions:

> 'Would you be interested in local activities (such as training, clinics, or drop-in sessions) to help residents make more use of the internet?'
>
> 'And would you be willing to contribute to such activities, and help other residents to use the internet?'

As is shown in figure 25 below, about half our respondents said they would be or possibly would be interested. There is also a very healthy level of interest in contributing to the learning at these events, with 40 respondents saying they would definitely or possibly be willing to help.

Figure 25



These expressions of interest are shown by area of residence in Table 3 below.

Table 3

	Interested in local activities	*Willing to contribute*
	(Yes or possibly)	
Derwenthorpe	10	7
Osbaldwick	19	12
Tang Hall	30	18
	59	37

Taken together, these findings suggest a sound justification for local activities to help people develop their internet skills.

10. Concluding remarks

Establishing the baseline for the JRF programme threw up some challenges, but has been a rich learning experience – partly around the involvement of community researchers and the use of handheld devices in the field, and partly with some unexpected findings. In particular it was a challenge, given the limitation of resources, time and expectations, to establish an appropriate sample to explore relationships across the three localities. Nonetheless several new survey questions have been tested successfully and the exercise has provided (i) a base of information for the programme activities, and (ii) a number of measures by which we can expect to gauge impact in due course.

We suggest that there are four groups of findings that may be of particular interest to JRF, as follows.

- **Tang Hall is labelled**

  In several cases we noted that responses for Tang Hall were not significantly different to those for the other two areas or in relation to national figures. 'Sense of belonging' at 65 per cent in Tang Hall is only a little below the national average. Forty-six per cent of Tang Hall respondents claim to know 'lots' or 'a few' people in Derwenthorpe or Osbaldwick well enough to spend time with them; while the figure for Osbaldwick respondents who know people in Derwenthorpe and Tang Hall is not much higher at 53 per cent. Levels of community involvement in Tang Hall are not particularly low and it is striking that while 52 per cent of our Tang Hall respondents think that their area is seen in negative terms by others, only 11 per cent view it in negative terms themselves. This suggests that, potentially, residents might welcome and commit to initiatives that use online resources to promote the identity of their area.

- **A substantial minority do not yet see the potential of local online**

  We may have evidence of a sharp contrast between those who recognise and appreciate the potential of digital media to contribute to local life, and those who do not. For almost half of those who have been involved in a local community issue, this was as a direct result of online contact ('once, a few times, or often'). Some 58 per cent of respondents regard online sources as either 'very important' or 'quite important' as sources of local information and news. And around 60 per cent could see potential in local community uses of the internet, either through connecting with active local groups, or as a way of raising and influencing local issues. But this leaves a substantial 40 per cent who either did not see such potential or saw it at best as 'hardly at all'; and a similar proportion who do not see online sources as useful for local information and news.

- **Digital exclusion: the one-in-five**

  In several respects we noted that approximately 20 per cent of respondents seem to experience digital exclusion. Eighteen per cent say they are 'not very' or 'not at all' comfortable trying out new digital technologies. Twenty-two per cent say they lack, or lack confidence in, their online digital skills. One person in five does *not* expect that the internet could help them to keep in touch with friends or social contacts locally. And in both Tang Hall and Osbaldwick, we found that approximately 20 per cent of people have a low digital fluency score. There seems to be no straightforward correlation with age, tenure or educational attainment. This recurring

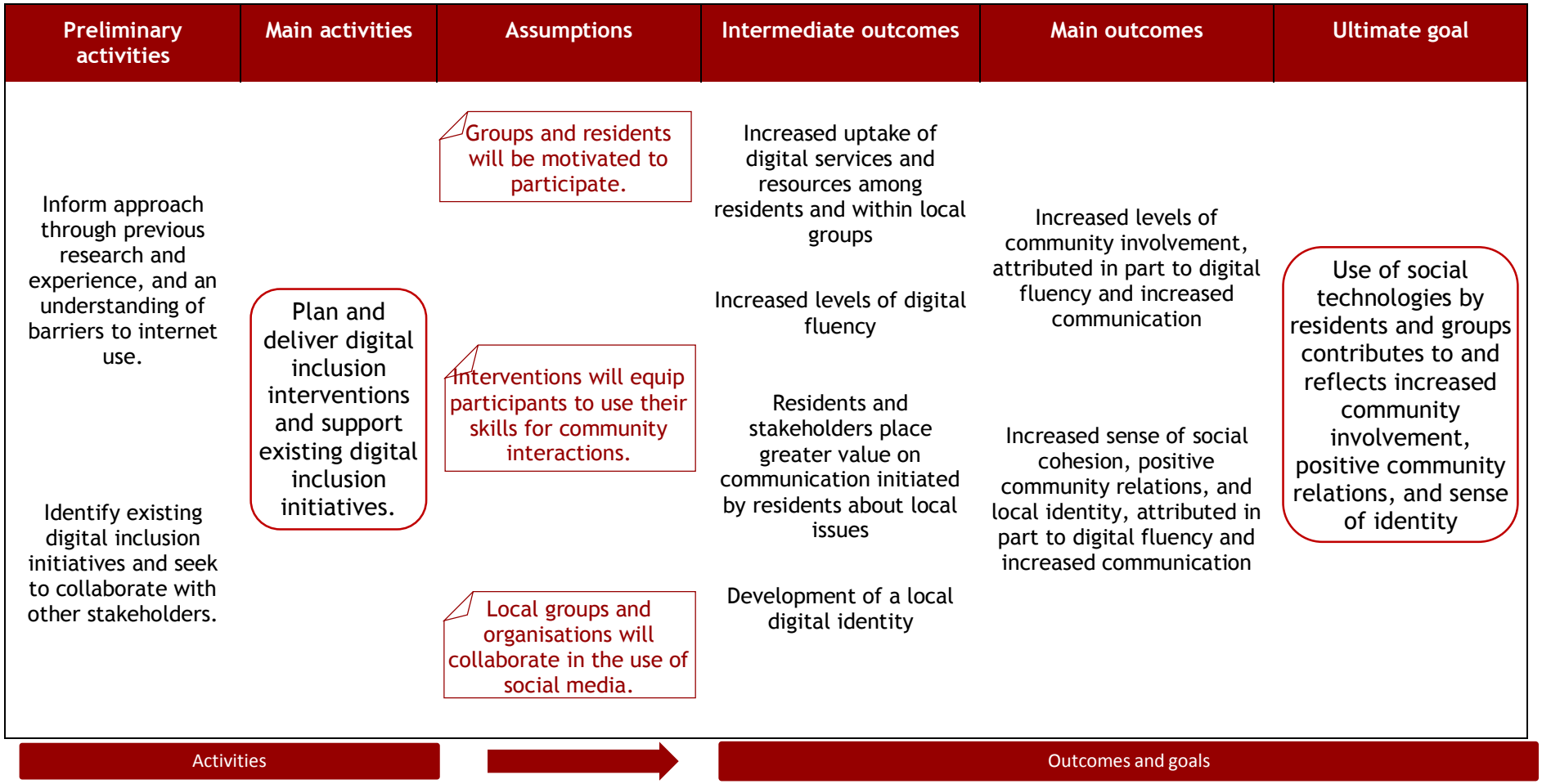
percentage is unlikely to be coincidental and it is of concern: it seems to give a meaningful focus to the programme of proposed activities.

- **Interest in learning digital skills**

The topics most likely to attract people to learning digital skills are related to leisure, not to employment or functional use of services. This does suggest that people could be helped to develop skills and confidence around specific their interests: they are more likely to attend, return, and spread their enthusiasm. At the same time, it will be important to introduce learning opportunities for those - fewer in number but possibly experiencing more profound exclusion - who do need practical instruction around employability and finance, for instance. There is also a very healthy level of interest in contributing volunteer support to the learning activities, with some 40 respondents saying they would definitely or possibly be willing to help. It will be important to go back to these potential volunteers and give them genuine opportunities to contribute their skills and experience.

Appendix 1

SMILEY digital inclusion and community development project: theory of change



Appendix 2

Sampling targets

Basis

Based on 2011 census data		*Age bands*		*totals*
	16-24	25-59 (f), 25-64 (m)	60+(f), 65+(m)	
Tang Hall				
Proportion of total population (%)	29	43	12	84
Proportion of 16+ population (%)	35	51	14	100
Target no. out of 90	**31**	**46**	**13**	90
Osbaldwick				
Proportion of total population (%)	14	39	33	86
Proportion of 16+ population (%)	16	45	39	100
Target no. out of 50	**8**	**23**	**19**	50

Targets

	Tang Hall	*Osbaldwick*	*Derwenthorpe*
Approx population	1746	1524	200
Female	45	25	5
Male	45	25	5
Older people (65+)	13	8	-
Middle aged (25-64)	46	23	-
Young adults (16-24)	31	19	-
Social housing tenants	30	15	7
Private tenants	30	15	-
Owner occupiers	30	20	3
Totals	90	50	10