



LOTTERY FUNDED

# **SNAPSHOTS OF THE BOURNVILLE**

**Community Profile**  
Sept 2010 – May 2011

**STREET SPACE WSM**

Snapshots  
of the  
Bournville

**Community Profile**  
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# Acknowledgements

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The research was undertaken by John Wheatley and David Wilkie on behalf of StreetSpace WSM. It was supported by a team of committed and hard-working volunteers.

Many thanks to all of those involved in the research, including the young people of the Bournville, the professionals who were interviewed, and the local residents involved with BARA and the focus group.

References of other works are included in the text, for further info contact the authors.

We are grateful for the support we have received from those living on the Bournville, and the openness of other agencies working in South Ward.

**More information about the work of StreetSpace WSM can be found online at [www.streetspacewsm.org.uk](http://www.streetspacewsm.org.uk)**



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# Section One: Context

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## Research Backdrop

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We, at StreetSpace WSM, believe that youth and community work should be relevant to context and needs; this report is the product of a participative community profile on the Bournville Estate leading to the development of a five-year youth and community work project. As such, the brief leaned heavy on action research, participation, and community involvement to highlight the needs and context of the area.

This publication reports our eight-month research into the local area, outlining the geographical and social-economic contexts, the action- and interview-based research, and the views of local professionals, residents, organisations, and young people. It closes with some observations and implications for ongoing youth and community work practice. It is a snapshot into life on the Bournville – a glimpse into the opportunities and threats facing both young people and their local community.

Through this profile, we would like to widen our understanding of the local culture, developing our provision and strategies alongside local young people, activists, and professionals. This report is our important first step in fostering long-term youth work on the Bournville Estate.

### **About Us (StreetSpace WSM)**

We are an innovative and creative youth work organisation working at the heart of Weston-Super-Mare. We aim to deliver holistic and contextual projects with a broadly Christian ethos, helping young people to grow, develop and explore. We are primarily a provider of detached youth work, contacting young people where they are, on the streets, in the parks, and hanging around Weston-Super-Mare.

Following a pilot (2009/10) in the centre of town, we intend to make a more targeted impact in one of the more disadvantaged areas of Weston-Super-Mare. We aspire to reach those most 'at risk', providing the relationships and interventions that make a real difference.

Our values for practice are as follows:

- Relationships with young people that provide avenues for support;
- Opportunities to connect young people and the local community in a positive way;
- Action that meets the needs and interests of young people;
- Practice that enables young people to take more control over their lives; and
- Personal, social, and spiritual development

As a youth work organisation, our focus is young people targeted although we take a broad view of community transformation in all that we do. Our provision and engagement is directed at those aged 8 – 25, focusing mainly on young people of a secondary school age.

We do not have a fixed venue, and we value the distinct opportunities that meeting young people on their 'own turf' offers, for example in parks and on the street. Our strategies will be discerned within this sphere of practice, looking for innovative ways to engage young people in their own locality. We are, however, believers in holistic youth work, seeking to develop practice that envelops the whole of life. Our practitioners therefore reside on the estate, and there is consequently potential for using their living spaces in a community house for informal education and youth work practice.

### **The Research Process**

This research was undertaken as a process of listening over an eight-month period. Drawing on previous reports and the input of local professionals as a backdrop, this research is to develop a picture of local voices and needs. The community profiling process has been well tested as a method for developing effective interventions, and it comes recommended from the StreetSpace Hub as having worked in other UK contexts

We intend that this profile will involve the whole community as far as possible. While work is targeted specifically towards at risk young people, the input and support of community members, local organisations, and relevant professionals will significantly improve the research results.

Our research methods included a variety of accessible opportunities, including detached youth work across the estate at different times of the week, contact with local residents, activity-based research with local young people, and interviews with appropriate professionals. In order that this profile had validity, it was essential that everybody had their say and therefore we made every effort to ensure a wide-ranging report with contributions from every part of the community.

### **Early Intervention and Long-term Impact**

In the long-term, we desire to make a positive contribution to the area, benefitting the wider community through more targeted projects. These may include projects tackling anti-social behaviour, community cohesion, inter-faith relations, healthy living, and positive community action. StreetSpace WSM is committed to the values of youth work, ensuring equality of opportunity as far as possible in all circumstances.

It is important to emphasise that our direction is early intervention – tackling causes not symptoms. We are committed to long-term youth and community work, and this profile is the starting block for new funding and fresh projects run in conjunction with local young people and professional partnerships. We hope that, arising from the recommendations of this assessment, we can be part of the ongoing community transformation on the Bournville Estate.

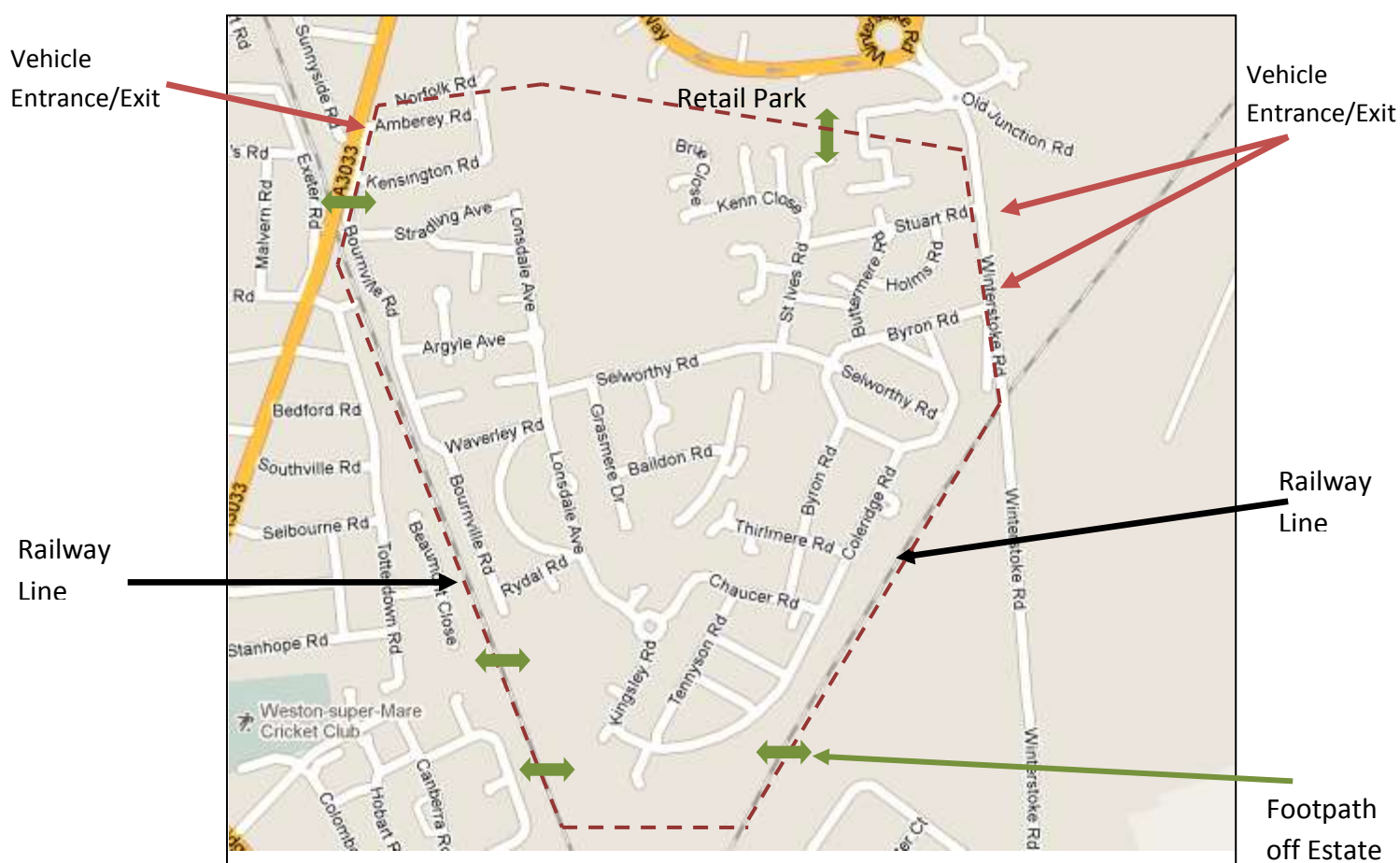
## Geographical Implications

When exploring context, it is first important to consider the physical geographical implications of an area – including size and location of the place in question.

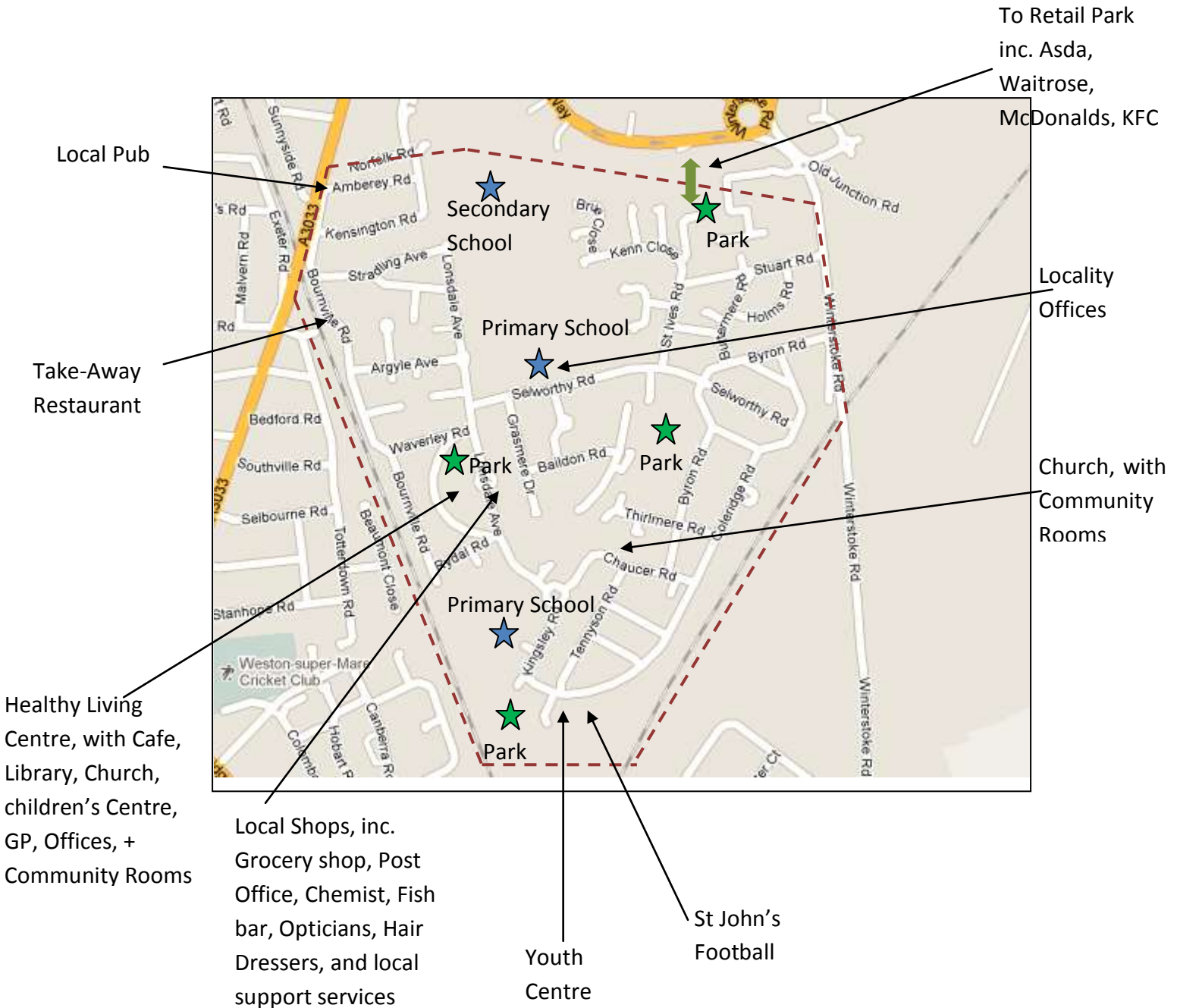
**National Context:** Weston-Super-Mare is in North Somerset, located in the south west of the UK. The major nearby towns include Bristol, Bath, and Taunton. Weston-Super-Mare was traditionally a major tourist destination, especially for the Birmingham region. The pier and seafront still maintains a vibrant tourist industry as part of the local economy.

**Local Context:** The Bournville Estate is located in the South Ward of Weston-Super-Mare. South Ward covers four estates (Bournville, Coronation, Oldmixon, Potteries), of which the Bournville is the largest. The ward has a population of just over 10k inhabitants (2001 Census).

**Boundaries:** The Bournville is approximately half a mile across in both directions, and is hemmed in by boundaries on all sides. This has tended to create an insular community within each of the estates. This simple map demonstrates the many boundaries and few entrances on and off the Bournville.



**Amenities:** The services and facilities on and near the estate are vast. There is an extensive amount of green space including four designated park areas, a community garden, allotment spaces, and a host of shared-residential gardens around the estate. There are also a range of shops and everyday services, although they are all grouped together in the centre-east of the estate. Access to the large supermarkets is also easy via the footpath in the north.



**Implications:** While the estate is relatively self-sufficient in terms of the services it has access to, it is cut off from the rest of the town. It is not a thoroughfare for any other part of the town, and is therefore avoided locally. These implications create larger barriers for local residents venturing out in search of relaxation, services, or employment.

## Socio-Economic Outline

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Social and economic factors have a significant impact on the life of the Bournville; this section intends to explore the context in this light. The analysis first explores the context of Weston-Super-Mare, then a more detailed look at the situation of South Ward, especially the Bournville Estate.

### **Context: Weston-Super-Mare**

#### **Population and Welfare**

The population of Weston-Super-Mare aged 15+ is 82 200, and the region is growing as a seaside resort and a pleasant place to live. Affordable housing by North Somerset Council has been on the increase every year, and an overall 12,946 new dwellings were completed between the period of April 1996 and March 2008.

Weston-Super-Mare is a convenient location for both business and commuters being close to Junction 21 of the M5 and 25 minutes from the airport. The majority of development in the region is residential as well as the redevelopment of the town centre and seafront (which is nearing completion). This redevelopment is an £11m Civic Pride scheme of regeneration and this is hoped to attract commercial development within the area.

There are a high number of drugs and drink rehabilitation centres within Weston-Super-Mare, a result of the down turn in local tourism in the past decade. As B&Bs turned to dry houses and HMOs, the result was an increase in mental health, unemployment, and drink/drug addiction. Weston-Super-Mare has become tarred with this reputation and those using the services have often found a home here.

#### **Employment and Tourism**

There are relatively few jobs in Weston-Super-Mare compared to the other local towns:

*“The 2001 census data shows 34,151 residents of Weston-Super-Mare are in employment, with 21,974 of these working in the town, and 12,177 travelling to jobs outside. The level of “self-containment” in Weston-Super-Mare is 64%, the lowest of all of the Principal Urban Areas in the South West region. This compares with self-containment percentages of 85% in Bristol and 71% in Bath.”*

(Tropicana: Environmental Statement, Feb 2008)

Employment is an issue of identity for Weston-Super-Mare. New housing developments closer to the M5 motorway junction have little local business or employment opportunities, resulting in a commuter population. This context subsequently discourages both community interaction and the social welfare of the residents. Policy SS10 of RPG10 outlines this,

stating that development in Weston-Super-Mare should “limit further housing growth until employment development is more closely in balance with housing.”

In terms of the employment available, the services sector is the largest employer with a concentration of employment in retailing, health, business services, and hotel catering. The tourism industry remains an important source of employment in North Somerset. In 2005, the number of visitors to North Somerset was estimated as 5.8 million generating a total expenditure of approximately £268 million. In the same year, the estimated number of people employed directly in tourism was estimated at 5,300. In recent years, there has been an upward trend in visitor numbers, expenditure, and employment in tourism.

This employment, however, is mostly seasonal, resulting in fluctuating and sometimes misleading employment statistics. The level of unemployment in Weston-Super-Mare is higher than the rest of North Somerset with the highest levels found in certain town centre neighbourhoods. There two areas in Weston-Super-Mare are in the 10% most deprived in England.

### **Leisure and Recreation**

*“The Council accepts that Weston-Super-Mare is relatively poorly provided for in terms of leisure facilities; there is only one cinema, and few good quality sports facilities. The long-term revitalisation of Weston-Super-Mare Seafront and Town Centre is therefore intended to benefit not only new investors and residents, but also visitors and tourists.”*

(North Somerset Replacement Local Plan, accepted 2007, p86)

Proposals are under way to redevelop the Dolphin square to introduce further services and recreation. The sport facilities have been improved in recent years within the university and Campus facilities. The opportunity for sport and recreation, while helping to develop better wellbeing and community focal points are not, however, targeted towards those with little disposable income.

### **Context: South Ward**

The population of South Ward is 10416, making it 6% of the total population of North Somerset and therefore the largest ward. Twenty five percent of these are aged 0-15 years.

There are seven super output areas in South Ward, three of these are found on the Bournville estate and are all within the most deprived 25% of areas in the country. (Info found within Weston-Super-Mare South ward profile p2)

There has been significant investment in the past decade in the estates of Weston-Super-Mare categorised within the most deprived in England, two of those being the Bournville and Coronation estates. The completion of a University campus and the Healthy Living

Centre has made significant change to the environment within the estates. There is also a strong emphasis on community artwork, with new pieces of art appearing every year across the estates, demonstrating the different agencies' commitment to improving the physical environment.

However, while the environment of the estates has been significantly improved, determining the success of solutions aimed at issues of drug and alcohol abuse, economic deprivation, criminal activity and the violence around the estates is more complex. As the estates are not a thoroughfare, it has become easy for the town as a whole to forget these isolated areas and the severe relative poverty found here. Once the effect of cuts can be seen, it will be important to watch how local politicians respond to the commitment to regenerate the entire town.

### **Economic Wellbeing in South Ward**

Unemployment on the four estates is more than double the local amount when compared to North Somerset. A number of factors define this trend:

- South Ward has 28% permanent sick/disabled people compared with 15% in North Somerset
- South Ward has a higher percentage (23%) of people looking after the home/family, and there are more 'young carers' on the estates than in North Somerset as a whole.
- An on-going generational cycle encourages a reliance on benefits.

In addition to this, part-time employment is 26% compared to 20% in North Somerset, with much attributed to seasonal work, and low paid temporary contracts. There are also a lower number of retired people in the area (32% compared with 51% across the district).

*"Of the 6970 people of working age in this [south] ward 58.1% are economically active and 41.9% are economically inactive."*

(Weston-Super-Mare South Ward Profile p2)



## Relative Poverty

The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation identify the most deprived areas in England, combining a number of indicators and help identify areas that would benefit from special initiatives. Areas are categorised into a specific deprivation score. The scores in the Table below were gathered in 2010 for a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) on the Bournville estate and can be found at <http://www.imd.communities.gov.uk/InformationDiscovery.aspx>

### Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 for E01014831

Index of Multiple Deprivation	250
IMD Income Deprivation Domain	492
IMD Employment Deprivation Domain	283
IMD Health and Deprivation and Disability Domain	1021
IMD Education and Skills and Training Deprivation Domain	557
IMD Barriers to Housing and Services Domain	22431
IMD Crime Domain	224
IMD Living Environment Deprivation Domain	16075

This places the Bournville as the 0.77% most deprived LSOA in England, out of a possible 32,482 areas. Low scores show that the area has low income, low employment, poor health, poor disability education, and a high crime rate. This range of factors all contribute to an area that has a very poor social-economic status. The majority of crime in the area is due to criminal damage and violence against another person. The secondary school had the lowest pass rate across North Somerset, however has recently undergone many changes.

Access to housing is rated highly, with a large amount of the estate being owned by the council and private housing agencies. More than twice as many homes on the South Ward are rented than in the whole of North Somerset. The quality of living environment is also high, as the area is known for its good open spaces and parks. The majority of money spent in the area in recent years has been on the parks and the environment of the estate.



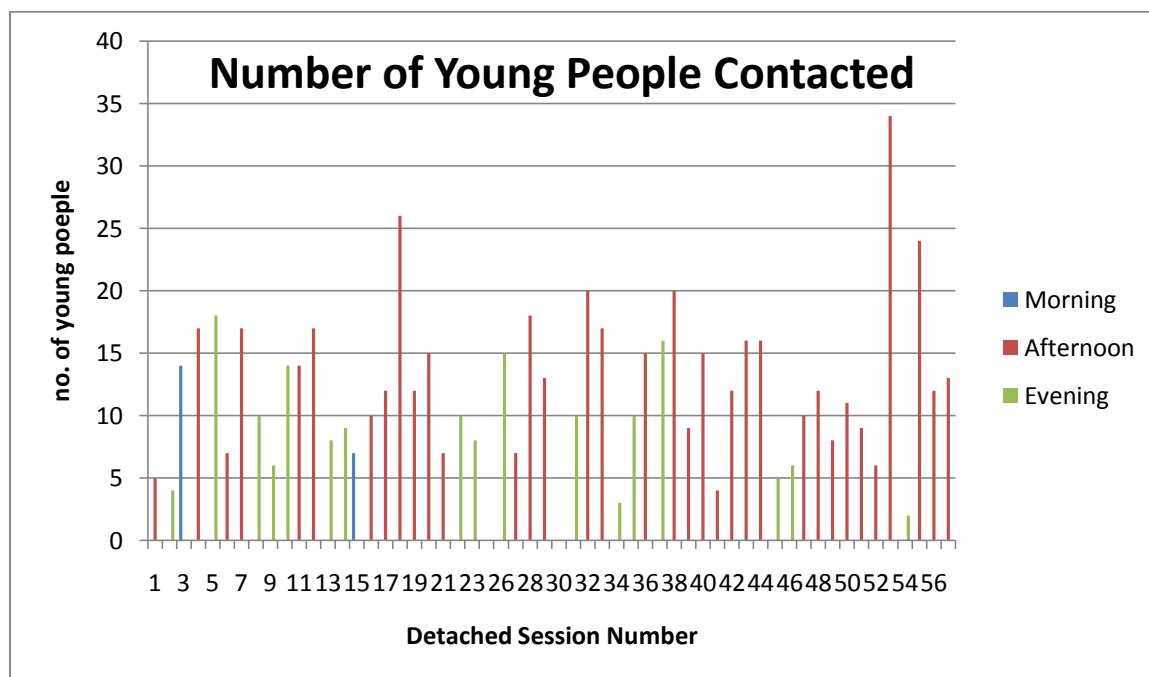
## Section Two: The Research

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## Detached Youth Work

This research project was undertaken in the ethos of Action Research in the sense that youth work was undertaken as part of the process in discerning future practice. In this section, the report outlines the trends and themes arising from regular detached youth work undertaken from October 2010 to March 2011.



This project, led by two professional youth workers, has relied on volunteers to support the detached sessions. All volunteers have undergone appropriate checks and attended necessary training. Volunteers come from a wide base including local residents, local employees, youth work trainees, and young volunteers.

On average, there has been contact with up to twelve young people each session, although the number varied greatly from none up to 34 in one evening. The content of sessions varied greatly, sometimes venturing out with nothing and other times with tools like a football or a stove to make pancakes. There are consistently more young people out in the afternoon. After school or at the weekend young people are normally engaged in some kind of play activity, while the evenings are quieter with young people tending to be older and having less to do in the poor light.

Here are some of the key themes that have arisen from this action research:

### Theme: Stranger Danger Concerns

At the outset of the project, there was suspicion and misunderstanding about the reasons why detached youth work was being undertaken. One girl asked, "Why do you say hello? Our mum tells us not to speak to strangers". This has been a hard obstacle to overcome,

although many young people have been receptive. A more significant concern has been young people (as young as three) spending entire afternoons in the park away from caregivers. The community on the estate trusts the children and other members to look out for each other; guardians are very rarely seen in the parks, and as such, children are often vulnerable.

### **Theme: Football and Community**

Much of the detached work comprised football games with some of the local young people. This was throughout the winter period and the number of young people playing football is now increasing with the better weather. Football is an event that draws young people from primary school age right through to late teens, and all play together. We were welcomed to play from our first detached session and through football, we have been able to consistently meet and grow relationships with young people quickly.

Football also provided us with invites: the young people invited us to join them on a number of occasions, allowing us to be treated as guests instead of the power holders. On the margins of games of football we have also observed suspicious behaviour, involving swapping of goods and cigarettes to young people. Those activities that draw the full spectrum of young people are helpful in this type of community development work, and in observing the 'edgy' behaviour of some groups of young people.

### **Theme: Service Providers**

We initially used to take out a football with us for some detached sessions, and as we lived close by the young people quickly asked if they could borrow it if we were not out. This was a regular occurrence until one group lost it.

It is interesting to note that the young people were comfortable asking for the football, but even more significant is that the relationship changed when we no longer had anything to give them. We have seen this in a variety of settings, including handing out food, making hot chocolate, and lending equipment. The young people are used to receiving things like food, entertainment and advice from the services they engage with and we observed that it may benefit long-term development in the attitude of some local young people not to take on a 'service provider' role. We have therefore refrained from purchasing a new football to lend-out.

### **Theme: Play and Adventure**

The young people play a variety of games at the parks and across the estate. The young people have been creative with the facilities and infrastructure of the estate (see below for a list of these). The most popular of the games we have observed have a degree of risk and adventure involved in them.

- Curbies – A ball is thrown at the opposite curb across the road, if it bounces back to you, you get a point. If it bounces away beyond the road, you are out.
- Manhunt – a game of chase over the high walls, roofs, and stairwells of the estate. We have observed the young people running over narrow 8ft walls chasing each other. They have also told us that some young people have managed to climb on top of the higher buildings.
- Rocket Ball - a game of dodge ball but isolated to the tall rocket-climbing frame.
- Swing Ball – a ball is thrown to the person on the swing who kicks it. If the ball is caught, they are 'out', or if the kick does not exit the swing area, they are 'out'.
- Tig – this is played on the wooden climbing frame that in parts is high off the ground. The young people run across the high balance beams to get away from the catcher.

We attempted to introduce new games with these young people, such as frisbee, boules and basketball to varying degree of success. Their favourite past time still revolves around the riskier games of the park, making adventure and play a key opportunities for future development.

### **Theme: Community Rhythms**

By listening to young people and being alert to the services available to them, we have attempted to observe the rhythm of life the young people lead on the estate. Since we started, some things have changed and these are noted below:

- North Somerset Youth Service – cuts to the council have led to major cuts across the youth service. The joint Neighbourhood Youth Program and North Somerset youth service has ended. This provided eight sessions a week across the three neighbouring estates. The sessions were in the form of detached youth work, a youth internet bus, café, single sex projects, No Worries drop in and a skating community project. Weston-Super-Mare Youth Centre will remain open under the management of North Somerset council and has partners such as Barnardo's and the social service using its premises.
- CCTV – There are many cameras across the estate, some being fixed, others roaming. We discovered the effect the cameras had on the young people by noting that a certain group no longer met on the stairs outside our house for the space of five months. One day they came back and when asked why it was because a CCTV camera had been removed, providing a blind spot once again for them to hang out in.

- Library - Young people regularly use the internet access after school in the library. One young girl told us it was where she did her homework. The majority of the time we have seen young people using social networking sites or online games.

### **Theme: Informal Education**

Young people have been receptive to using the every-day experiences of the estate to explore issue-based work in a variety of contexts. This openness offers opportunity for the development of work on the estate. Here are two examples:

- **Justice** – Around February 2011, one of the youth workers had their car window smashed; this provided ample space to discuss issues of justice, policing, snitching, and money. The young people were eager to help fix the car, and to explore why we did not have enough money to simply buy a new car.
- **Halloween/Staying Safe** – On Halloween (2010), we met a group of young people avoiding the police due to a pre-announced curfew. We took time to speak with them about the importance of staying safe, and the guidelines around sensible ‘trick or treating’.

### **Themes: Groups and Gangs**

Young people on the Bournville, like other areas, spend much of their time in consistent groups of friends/peers. As part of the project, we identified key groups as a method of developing more targeted and in-depth work. Over the research period, we identified 10 – 15 distinct groups meeting regularly in the open space of the Bournville.

Most significantly is the ‘PYO’ group/gang that has taken its name from the police label, prolific youth offender. This group have a semi-structure of protecting one another and are involved with some criminal activity. Their ‘tag’ is graffitied around the estate.

The groups on the estate tend to have a family-like element with young people of all ages coalescing around key leaders. Some local agencies have described them as feral.

### **Summary**

Detached youth work has formed a significant part of this research – it has demonstrated the extent of the opportunity and need, as well as drawing out the views, thoughts, and patterns of local young people. From the relationships and professional contact we have developed as youth workers in the past eight months it is clear that detached youth work is a needed and welcomed provision.

## Research Exercises

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As part of the research process, we undertook some direct activities to highlight specific issues. Some of these were undertaken on detached youth work sessions around the estate, while others were organised as formal events. Every effort was made to ensure a wide-range of inputs from across the spectrum.

These activities have helped build a picture of where the young people and local community are at, both physically, mentally and spiritually. The images and discussions create a story of young people with low aspirations and a narrow field of vision for opportunities and creating dreams.

Presented here is an outline of each exercise and focus group with a short methodology, and reflections on the results

### **Genie Lamp**

**Aim:** To explore young people's aspirations for the future, and the things they wish for in life

**Method:** Using a Genie-Lamp, we invited young people to make three wishes... what things would they like to have, change, or do.

**Results:** Results were collated in a variety of formats – some verbally, some using post-it notes, and some in conversation.



The wishes that resulted have a varied flavour. There are some that represent the cultural instant gratification of money, sex, drugs, and material items; while others demonstrated aspirations towards fame – through movies, theatrical arts, and television.

Some young people looked to stopping activities that they didn't like – from bad family relationships to a poor experience of education.

The most interesting results were those that aspired to something ordinary or regular – these results seemed surprising in their profound blandness. These included fixing bikes, maintaining home spaces, going on holiday, clearing gardens and parks, meeting new people, and visiting local countryside. These will be the most helpful in developing projects.

### **Candle Reflections**

**Aim:** To explore the symbols that are important to local young people, and therefore the things that are significant in their lives.

**Method:** Young people were invited to create symbols using battery-powered tea lights that were important to them or held some-form of significance. They had the freedom to create whatever they wished

**Results:** Symbols like those pictured were created. The key results were the discussions that followed the activity. These included:

**Faith** – One young person drew a cross and verbally expressed a loose understanding of the Christian story; the group then discussed their own experiences with church

**Initials** – Names were important for many participants, and nearly all had a go at making their own initials. It is how they define themselves

**People** – images of stick men and smiley faces were common, and this led to talking about the individuals in their lives that were important to them.



### Chalk Sketches

**Aim:** Explore with local young people the places they feel they belong, and therefore the spaces they consider important.

**Method:** Using chalk to draw on the ground – posing the question of belonging, and allowing discussion to follow.

**Results:** Here is a sample of pictures the young people drew:



It is clear that certain items or themes stand out, most notably these include:

**Youth Centre/Youth work** – the current youth provision, and relationships that result

**Friends** – Friends, and to a lesser extent family, came out high

**Home** – There were, however, many drawings of homes and/or houses

**Football/Sport/Games** – Play, especially playing football, was important for some young people

**Local Park** – The rocket refers to the local park, which is the centre of the game 'rocket ball'

**Music** – Playing music was a safe activity for some young people, one plays the ukulele

**Computer** – One young person drew a computer, which might represent the new space the virtual world now plays in the lives of young people.

### **Pulse Rating**

**Aim:** To locate the key themes of engagement that local young people choose to identify with; the themes/activities/things that they connect with most.

**Method:** Each young person had to propose one word that described him or her best, and one word that described their life best. These words, laid out on cards (anonymously), were sorted into key themes by the group. The group were then asked to title each theme, and then say whether they identified with the theme. Young people were then given opportunity to say how or why they felt each theme was important to them.

**Results:** This exercise was undertaken with a school class of 11 year olds; their key themes included the following:

- Theatrical - Included Drama, Music, Dance Art, etc
- Friendship - Included Caring, Friends, Family, Best Friend
- Strangeness - Included self-assessment in a negative sense, including Weird and Boring
- Sporty - Included a variety of sports, and those who described themselves as 'Sporty'
- Funny - Included both a sense of fun activity, and being a comedian
- Relaxing - Included self-assessment in a positive sense, including Fanatical, Wonderful, Amazing
- Energetic - Included a risky or intriguing element, using Adventurous and Mysterious

There was a distinct divide between girls being theatrical and boys being sporty – this may reflect a local cultural resistance favouring more traditional gender roles. The importance of relationships and friendships is significant – especially in the potential context of troubled family lives.

It was apparent that participants were able to easily identify what made them different in a negative sense, and drew on this for positive attention. This demonstrated a sense that they do not 'fit in'; and that they need to be different to stand out. Conversely, participants, while initially positive about themselves, were unable or unwilling to express any positive attributes about themselves other than the things they do. They were unable to say, "I am amazing, because..." It is possible that this demonstrates a poor self-image, but a desire to have the confidence to believe and express that they are 'amazing'. It was odd that the group titled such positive self-assessments (fanatical, amazing, awesome, etc) as relaxing. This may point to an understanding that good self-belief is therapeutic for the soul.

These themes offer a broad range of insights and opportunities for future engagement. They offer opportunities for activity in the realms of sport, theatre/arts, comedy, and in adventure. They also present deeper opportunities to explore self-esteem, uniqueness, life aspirations, and positive relationships as the important connection points for deep learning.

## Professional Interviews

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As part of hearing a balanced view of the life and challenges facing those living and growing-up on the Bournville Estate our research included interviews with a variety of the experienced professionals already working here. We have gathered responses into the key themes that arose from the interviews; most of the text here is direct from the interview notes. A brief summary of each participating body is included at the end of the section – references are by the letters in superscript.

### Key Themes

#### **Local Perceptions**

How people view the area is important – both those who live here and those who see it from the outside. Perceptions of the Bournville are varied, with both positive and negative strongly represented.

Many here feel that it has changed for the worse over the years, and therefore there are very negative views, from both residents and those living further afield <sup>(WS)</sup>. Local perceptions are negative, especially from outside, and there is even some sense of pride in the degeneration of the estate <sup>(WW)</sup>. Nevertheless, it is also home, and there is a great familiarity and spirit about the place, especially among those who have been here for generations <sup>(WS)</sup>.

The reputation here seems to be something to be both proud of and ashamed of. On the positive side there is a great community spirit and many needs are being met <sup>(CD)</sup>. In fact, the people that live here love it <sup>(NM)</sup>. It ranks highly in popularity for community spirit and services; only the lack of dentists, the police, and poor transport came out low.

It is interesting to note that the rebuild of Bournville Primary School kept its name. The head of the school did a community survey and people wanted the name to remain – it was found that some people are proud of it and want it redeemed <sup>(EW)</sup>. The Bournville is the first place where an ASBO was issued, and this only fuelled the reputation. Subsequently, perceptions off the estate are of a poor area, and some are scared to move here.

It was felt that all young people on the Bournville are ‘At Risk’ due to being vulnerable to the environment. It is ‘a far scarier place than we’ve given it credit’ <sup>(BP)</sup>.

#### **Aspirations**

Tackling low life aspirations is repeatedly a big issue facing professionals in the area - those living on the Bournville, especially children and young people, face massive barriers (from physical geographical barriers to educational ones).

The local primary school <sup>(WS)</sup> explains how low life aspirations can be here. They find that each year at the age of 11 some children have never been out of Weston-Super-Mare when they take a school trip to Bristol, and each year they find another small minority (aged 6) who have never even been to the beach in Weston. Many of their young people have no concept of 'working', and therefore cannot imagine what they would like to be or do. Added with their low self-esteem, and their negative perceptions of the estate, they cannot imagine how life could be different, let alone change it.

Furthermore, this is compounded by a bleak employment environment. There has been no net increase in jobs for years, with only small amounts of people with seasonal and/or cleaning work, often low paid <sup>(NM)</sup>. In Weston-Super-Mare, there are seasonal jobs, but not to the extent there used to be years ago - it is no longer full of B&B's and only some businesses are viable to remain open all year round. This creates a "low pay/no pay cycle" where an individual gets a temporary job only to return to benefits again <sup>(WW)</sup>

Tackling this issue needs a different focus <sup>(PR)</sup>. It takes a long time to encourage young people to believe they could do, or aspire to, anything. Opportunities are not channelled to what young people want, because when asked young people respond with 'I don't know'; they find it hard to think for themselves.

Most people simply want to bring up their children in a safe environment, and the Neighbourhood Management Team has been successful in improving the physical perception of the estate in order to make it a more pleasant and happier place to live. However, there still needs to be change in people's hearts and minds <sup>(WW)</sup>.

### **Health, Education and Welfare**

The Bournville is a vulnerable environment for young people. In particular, there are high levels of substance misuse and many young people are drawn into drugs and sexual activity at a young age <sup>(BP)</sup>. The problems are complex, and there are some who cannot cope with everyday life.

Many of these aspects of living on the Bournville all link together. There is a lot of drugs, alcohol abuse, and poverty. In addition, the housing is not brilliant, and it is often the wrong way round with old people on the ground floor, and families with children on the top with no garden.

Education and truancy is another massive issue. Learning difficulties are more complex to identify due to bad behaviour, no sense of safety and poor living environments <sup>(EW)</sup>. Many young people are in caring roles, and they therefore worry about going to school because of the cared-for person they leave behind. In addition, as young people stop attending school, the consequences get worse, and therefore they attend less. <sup>(BP)</sup>

Some young people experience a lack of basic needs. In general there is little 'healthy' eating, and there are many health challenges for young people including easy access to smoking, drinking, drugs abuse and obesity <sup>(CD)</sup>.

On some occasions, children are out alone very late at night in only a t-shirt, and many children start their day with an ice cream on the way to school instead of eating properly at home <sup>(NM)</sup>. On food, young people are often the ones that have to prepare it at home otherwise they do not eat properly – food is therefore a welcome bonus to all activities <sup>(BP)</sup>. Furthermore, much of the social housing on the Bournville comes unfurnished, so tenants do not always have washing machine or other important household items <sup>(NM)</sup>.

### Local Services

In the current climate we are on the brink of severe cuts to local services, in particular those targeted at children and young people. In recent years, there has been a lot of funding put into projects and facilities on the Bournville, core projects that have been received well include:

- One-to-One work supporting young people here, especially male role models for young men. <sup>(BP)</sup>
- The improved parks and open spaces - the provision for young people was highly valued and many feel Coniston green is the best play park in Weston. (Two thirds of the neighbourhood management budget was spent on outside spaces across the four estates.) <sup>(NM)</sup>
- The Healthy Living Centre and positive wellbeing project has made a lot of progress in five years, and has been a welcomed resource increasing wellbeing <sup>(CD)</sup>.
- Breakfast clubs for children before school, and the accompanying support for parents and families <sup>(NM)</sup>

There are, however, young people that choose not to engage with local services and activities. The play rangers observe that there are two types of young people: those that will engage in structured activities and those that find their own direction to life. They do not respond well to structured activities and are hard to reach. Lots of structured activities, like extended schools, but little for those who do not want to engage in these things. Those that chose not to engage get very bored and then create problems.

In coming months, there will be a greater presence of health services in the Healthy Living Centre, in particular from a new dental hygienist. Sure start, a valued service, will remain for the meanwhile <sup>(NM)</sup>.

Transport is another challenge for locals. There is low car ownership locally <sup>(NM)</sup>. In addition, being geographically isolated, the cost of getting anywhere is high (e.g. bus return to station is £3.70) unless you are able to walk or cycle <sup>(WW)</sup>. Buses are always busy; however, the routes are radial meaning if you want to get anywhere you have to travel into the centre of Weston-Super-Mare first.

This creates wider issues in terms of employment as it is expensive, and a hassle, to travel for work, and to simply go for an interview <sup>(WW)</sup>. There is also a psychological aspect in the transport due to the territory and boundaries to the estate, which may link to the low aspirations found here <sup>(NM)</sup>.



### **Young people at Risk**

Young people living on the Bournville are considered 'at risk' due to their vulnerability to the local environment. There are high levels of abuse locally, including severe neglect (i.e. young people having to steal in order to buy food) and inappropriate relationships. <sup>(BP)</sup>

Furthermore, there is a lot of domestic violence in the area and many young people struggle with the shouting at school <sup>(BP)</sup>. In fact, 40% of domestic abuse cases in Weston-Super-Mare are from the South Ward <sup>(NM)</sup>, and the number of children on the child protection register in the local schools is significantly higher than the national average.

There are also several known local houses and individuals that pose a significant risk to young people on the estate in terms of having young people into their homes inappropriately. There is a wider strategy in place to monitor this <sup>(BP)</sup>.

Key problems facing young people on the estate include high levels of drug use, and the peer pressure from older young people often leads children (from a young age) into substance misuse and criminal activity. The estate houses many vulnerable families, and

therefore there are significantly larger volumes of substance, sexual and physical abuse amongst children, as well as severe neglect through poorly equipped parents <sup>(WS)</sup>.

There are groups of young people on the estate that are considered hard-to-reach; these young people are not comfortable in a youth club setting, and often need engaging on a one-to-one basis <sup>(CD)</sup>. There is a real need to engage these young people <sup>(WW)</sup> and prior to September 2010 there were a lot of problems with young people in their late teens around the shop area. Police strategies have made a noticeable difference.

Moreover, Young people in school years 5-8 are especially risk. This is the age when they are most vulnerable, and historically where it has 'all gone wrong'. Provision frequently misses this age group, and they spend a lot of their time outside on the estate. Transitioning to secondary school is the important step in this age group where support is most needed <sup>(BP)</sup>.

### **Cultural and Behavioural Habits**

The local school reports that it is common for children in the area to have low social skills. Children have not learned to respond positively to authority like children of the same age elsewhere. Anger management is poor, and therefore young people struggle to socialise within the school environment. This is partly due to a lack of role-modelling behaviour in the home environment, and potentially a lack of positive attention from parents <sup>(WS)</sup>.

In groups, it is often a minority that ruin it for the majority - a couple of young people can mess up a session, but then they are usually the ones that you need to be working with most <sup>(PR)</sup>. Children step over the mark into criminal activity instead of being a rebellious teenager. A different focus is needed, we need opportunity to develop relationships and teach young people to grow up in a responsible way <sup>(PR)</sup>.

Part of the problem is the cultural pattern of the estate, and the way it is viewed by those who are moved here. A large proportion of the estate is transient, and the Bournville is seen as a place you 'end up' when you hit 'rock bottom'. Parents move their families on as soon as the opportunity arrives and it is subsequently difficult to build any meaningful sense of community <sup>(WS)</sup>. The male population is especially transient. There is, in fact, a significant lack of male role models, especially important for young men. Relationships tend to be short-term, and households are often mothers with children (often from different fathers); and often they live with the mother's current partner (not the biological fathers) <sup>(BP)</sup>.

Young people here are repeatedly referred to as feral and gang-like. Family-like groups form among the children and young people; the older young people protect and instruct those younger than them, and they behave as if it is them against everyone else <sup>(WS)</sup>. Subsequently many young people spend their evenings/free-time in houses where there are few or no responsible adults, and where they have the freedom to do as they please. This is often accompanied with drink and drugs, and potentially sexual activity. Some vulnerable adults allow this because they think they are helping and/or enjoy the company <sup>(BP)</sup>.

## Parenting and Home Life

Parenting is also a significant issue on the estate. Parents are often unprepared and do not have the skills or confidence to manage home-life. They tend to perceive children as adult-like, giving them vast quantities of autonomy. It seems that parents desperately want to please their children, and therefore do not hold any authority and cannot 'control' their children<sup>(WS)</sup>.

The home-life norm on the Bournville is very different from what you might expect elsewhere. Many homes cannot provide the basic rights of a child, e.g. nutrition, clean bed, education needs<sup>(EW)</sup>. There is often a lack of attachment to at least one adult, missing because early-development attention from the parent was lacking. Local children are used to being left, and are subsequently more likely to attach themselves to professionals<sup>(NM)</sup>. In addition to this, there is a culture of allowing young people to roam, either alone or with elder siblings, which means they often attend community events without responsible adults<sup>(NM)</sup>.

Children are becoming victims of their own circumstance. Many children starting school have low levels of basic language, probably because of high TV usage; and behaviour is often poor due to a lack of role modelling from both parents and siblings. Additionally, home-life is tending to instil and reinforce the traditional gender stereotypes, and with few positive role models, especially males, the local school feels these issues are getting worse<sup>(WS)</sup>.

Parenting knowledge is a significant issue for mothers who have little support – advice is readily welcomed<sup>(BP)</sup>. Working with and supporting parents is an important priority for long-term development work on the estate, and there is need to invest in the current generation of young people in order to enable them to parent their children more responsibly. Many families are part of a repeating cycle, and there are few support structures to enable young people to be different<sup>(WS)</sup>.

Most families just want to bring up children in a safe environment, and the Neighbourhood Management Team has been successful in improving the physical perception of the estate in order to make it a more pleasant, happier place to live<sup>(WW)</sup>. Additionally there has been a degree of success in delivering groups aimed at fostering positive relationships between mothers/daughters and fathers/sons<sup>(EW/BP)</sup>.

## **Interview Participants**

### **BIP Shop – A Multi-agency Team <sup>(BP)</sup>**

The BIP (Behaviour Improvement Programme) is a government, education-based initiative operating out of a shop front – making it a uniquely accessible multi-agency team for those on the estate. Their work includes schools work, one-to-one support, group work sessions, and a transition programme helping young people move on to secondary school.

### **Positive Wellbeing Project - Community Development Worker <sup>(CD)</sup>**

The aim of the Positive Wellbeing Project is to encourage healthy living, involving physical exercise and healthy eating; providing support, training opportunities, and a place to listen to local people. The intention is to raise the social capital of the area. Work is primarily with those older than 19 years; but indirect contact with young people occurs through working with families and professional partners such as Barnardo's children's Centre, the Library, and North Somerset Youth Service. The project is part of the Healthy Living Company, more info at [www.forallhlc.org](http://www.forallhlc.org)

### **Neighbourhood Management Team <sup>(NM)</sup>**

The Neighbourhood Management team are working closely with local residents and service providers to improve the quality of life for people living on the four estates. The team are aiming to make a real and significant difference to the look and feel of the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood Management is a national regeneration programme. It is designed to target resources into those neighbourhoods where residents are experiencing significant disadvantages, simply because of where they live, and to improve their quality of life. More info at: [www.southward.org.uk](http://www.southward.org.uk)

### **North Somerset Education Welfare – Assistant Locality Leader for Learning Support <sup>(EW)</sup>**

This role is responsible for Education Welfare Officers who visit children who do not go to school, for example, due to truancy, bullying, or being new to the area. The role includes taking parents who do not send children to school to court, pastoral meetings with parents, and linking with nine local primary schools.

### **Play Rangers – Lead Play Development Worker <sup>(PR)</sup>**

This role supervises eight play rangers delivering play sessions across North Somerset. Presently they are working on exit strategies following three years of provision. There are six play pods across North Somerset that are containers filled with play equipment. Young people are encouraged to create play, not just be told what to do. It is a voluntary attendance scheme and there is no need to register the children. Some outreach work is used to develop interest in the play pods - work on the Bournville has mainly included this engagement in the parks.

**Weston Works – Skills and Job Shop Manager <sup>(WW)</sup>**

A scheme managed by Neighbourhood Management Team to find jobs and courses for people living in the area. Weston works opened in October 2009, and work with young people is mainly between the ages of 16-25 years. As local relationships have developed people also tend to visit the shop to use the internet, the phones, ask questions around housing, to find a driving instructor - all sorts of questions come up.  
[www.westonworks.org.uk](http://www.westonworks.org.uk)

**Windwhistle Primary School – Head Teacher <sup>(WS)</sup>**

One of two local primary schools, Windwhistle takes in a large proportion of the young people on the estate and South Ward. It is one of the BIP (Behaviour Improvement Programme) schools; and is part of the Weston-Super-Mare Excellence programme. The school has a variety of additional support staff to work alongside the additional problems that families in the area face, including a nurturing programme working with eighty children a year. Children entering the school tend to have low levels of basic language, and appropriate/good behaviour is scarce. While arriving below average, students tend to leave school with abilities equivalent to the national average for that age.  
[www.windwhistleschool.co.uk](http://www.windwhistleschool.co.uk)

**In addition to these formal interviews, our research also had informal input from Local Youth Workers, Police, the Church Army Captain, the Local Vicar, and the Chair of the Residents Association.**

## Local Residents

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As part of hearing the views of the wider community, we also spent time engaging with local residents. This happened in two principle ways: a focus group with long-standing residents, and being part of the BARA (Bournville Area Residents Association).

### **Focus Group with Long-Standing Residents**

**Aim:** To hear the views of long-standing local people about their community, and their views/hopes for young people in the area. In addition, to consult about local youth work.

**Method:** The exercise required participants to discuss four questions, and propose answers in the form of short post-it notes that reflected their personal views. Participants had opportunity to discuss and express their views about the local area having completed the post-it notes

**Results:** Here are the four questions with reflections on the group's answers:

**What do you like most about the Bournville?** It is evident, that while some of the answers are biased towards the faith community, there is a strong sense of community here. Local long-standing residents enjoy the relationships and sense of belonging/neighbourliness that they find on the Bournville. It is important to note the positive change, and the significant role of the HLC in this community

**What would you change about the Bournville?** Long-standing residents complain of nothing unusual; for the most part, it is standard anti-social behaviour that they would change (drinking, smoking, loud music, dogs). Although it is good to see that some are overly positive about the area, unable to propose any changes they would make. Nobody highlighted economic or cultural issues, nor did they attack local services

**What are your perceptions of Young people (locally and/or in general)?** Young people are portrayed in generally a good light – there is a consensus that they have the capacity to be helpful and be part of the community. Negative perceptions tend to be attributed to self-absorption rather than mal-intent. It is important to note that these residents recognise that there is something lacking, suggesting fear, a desire to be wanted, or encouragement at the things they seek.

**What are your hopes/dreams for this generation of Young people?** While some hope to see young people take on the values and behaviours they cherish (manners, respect, faith), many also hope that they have a secure and prosperous life, both economically (jobs) and socially (good times, love). It is important to highlight that some recognise that life could be better than the lives they had, and they wish this among the next generation.

### **Bournville Area Residents Association**

The BARA is a group of residents and local professionals who attend a meeting once a month to consult and discuss issues that are affecting the estate. It is a committee that seeks to empower and allow residents to have a voice in their community. Recently they have completed on a community project called the 'Chocolate Garden' that brought great focus and achievement to the group.

The services like the police and NS housing regularly give updates to the B.A.R.A and when in attendance they receive a lot of the attention. This provides the opportunity for residents to air concerns and the services to feedback news. We have heard some young people call the group "grassers", naming them responsible for people that have gone to jail. This is an interesting perspective on those politically engaged in the community but may provide an opportunity to engage with those young people affected by similar issues in their community.

We have attended meetings since October 2010 and being part of this group, both as residents and local youth workers, has given us a unique view into community life, which has been invaluable in getting to know the Bournville.

Through our involvement with BARA, we feel that motivation and energy from local residents is often focused on making a visible difference to the estate. Projects like the garden have given inspiration to investigate others areas of derelict land and to pick-up local issues like dog fouling. Residents seem proud of the Bournville, and seek to improve its outward appearance for both residents and visitors alike.



## Section Three: Conclusions

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## Youth Work on the Bournville Estate

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In conclusion, to this report and research project, it is clear there is vast opportunity for youth work on the Bournville Estate and across South Ward. The success of the Action-Research side of this project demonstrates clearly the reception and viability of a detached youth work project; while the various themes arising from both that engagement and the direct exercises and interviews point to the direction such a project might take.

From Oct 2010 to March 2011, StreetSpace WSM engaged over 100 young people – throughout these months, our teams of detached youth workers met regular groups of young people hanging around the estate, on the streets and in the parks. With the imminent cuts to council youth services, both on the street and in youth venues, the large numbers of young people, out on a regular basis, across the age-range from five through to twenty, merits a presence on the estate providing opportunities for education, positive activity and community activism.

Group work will be a significant part of our interventions, developing work with each group based on their needs. It is, however, important to raise again our key concerns:

- 1) That in an area where children as young as three are roaming the streets/parks with elder siblings (as young as 8), detached youth work must consider the implications of encouraging children to speak to 'strangers'. Practice must adhere to good practice guidelines, and this issue must be tackled as a matter of urgency.
- 2) Young people on the Bournville are accustomed to engaging with 'services' and therefore it is easy for them to view a new project as simply a service to be consumed. As resident-professionals, it is important that this project considers carefully a balanced approach

Youth and Community work is, however, a clear need with sufficient opportunity for development –there is also scope for working collaboratively with other agencies and professionals, and a multi-agency approach is important in this context.

Therefore, in the light of these concerns and actions, the following section draws upon the research to explore some key themes that will be important in the development of Youth and Community work within this context, identifying some broad accompanying interventions for future practice.

All recommendations should be understood in the light of the Youth and Community Work core values of Equal Opportunities, Voluntary Participation, Informal Education, and Empowerment. Practice will be measured and directed in line with the Every Child Matter's outcomes: Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution, and Achieving Economic Wellbeing.

## Aspirations and Economic Wellbeing

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The research shows that the young people we engaged on the estate repeatedly conveyed low life aspirations; and the professionals we interviewed reinforced this assertion.

Most significantly was the Genie Lamp exercise where participants failed to identify long-term goals in terms of career or family choices – results were repeatedly for extremely lucrative/material items, for fame, or for everyday wishes (like a trip to the woods).

Furthermore, the professionals reiterated this – most poignantly was the experience of the local primary school who had children who had not visited nearby attractions like the local Beach or Bristol. This sheltered and limited outlook was again demonstrated on a Detached Youth Work session when our detached youth work team discovered a young person (aged 7) who did not know how to use a swing.

In addition, the high levels of unemployment, over 40%, and the reliance on temporary, low-paid work has defined a repeating culture that is hard to break. Young people living on the Bournville have few career prospects, and are likely spend time receiving state benefit.

Young people need support in overcoming the barriers to employment, and they need their eyes opening to new horizons, in order that they might achieve. Opportunities to make positive contributions to the estate will be important in developing a sense of purpose and self-worth.

### IDEAS FOR PRACTICE

Tackling low aspirations and unemployment is important. We can identify three approaches that will contribute to improving aspirations.

**Demonstrate:** Opportunities for volunteer youth workers to demonstrate employment and initiatives in their own lives will frame the culture of working, and provide opportunity to engage on that issue.

**Support:** Space to explore issues of purpose, self-worth, and perceptions through informal education will contribute to personal self-image; and practical support in issues like interviews, CV writing and time management will offer opportunity to support young people transitioning into work.

**Opportunities:** Creating environments in which young people can explore their own contributions to the world, and experiment with employment. This may include community activism projects making a difference to the estate, work experience, or setting up a social enterprise to experiment with finance and business, and even employing young people as a forum for youth work.

## Life Skills: Relationships and Role Models

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In the light of low aspirations, high unemployment, and a multitude of barriers to opportunity, life skills amongst the young people growing up on the Bournville are poor.

There are many skills (including socialising, behaving acceptably, organising oneself, managing relationships, managing time, and living independently) that some young people fail to pick up on their journey to adulthood. As the professionals remarked, young people are becoming victim to their own circumstances.

Children are not equipped to deal with the emotional or learning environments when they start school, and this tends to hold them back throughout their schooling and adult lives. On the street we regularly met young people who were unable to relate in a mature way or initiate a conversation (even if the desire was there). Several times, we also discovered young people that did not have a basic skill or experience that we would have expected of a child of their age – for example, using a swing, cooking a pancake, or navigating to the town centre.

These issues were repeatedly connected, by both the professional interviews and our interactions with young people and their families, to an uncertain home life. This was paralleled with few positive and supportive relationships and a lack of role models, especially from males. The relationships young people do have, however, are cherished, and were often highlighted as important in their sense of identity and belonging.

The patterns of the estate include a transient male population, short-term relationships, and an ease of access to negative influences. These seem to point to a need for strong supportive relationships with caring adults (not just parents and teachers), good positive role models demonstrating healthy and holistic lifestyles, and practical opportunities to gain life skills.

### IDEAS FOR PRACTICE

Building life skills is important, and clearly, this theme demonstrates a need for positive adult relationships and role models to support that process. Key ideas include maintaining a regular street presence to promote relationship and contact, and there is subsequently opportunity to develop mentoring with those young people most at risk. The use of the StreetSpace WSM community houses may be important in deepening trust

Participative activities that build skills, like using the telephone to book the cinema or cooking a meal, will be important in the educative process.

Furthermore targeting young people transitioning between schools, and into employment, will provide support at the most vulnerable time

## Promoting Welfare, Relieving Poverty

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The deprivation statistics for the area are obscene – the Bournville rates as one of the most deprived areas in the country. Crime rates are high, and deprivation is compounded in particular by low incomes, high unemployment, and high barriers to gaining education and training. The Bournville is an area of relative poverty, and all young people growing up here are considered ‘at risk’ because of the nature of the environment.

In addition to deprivation statistics, health amongst young people on the estate is poor with disproportionate obesity rates. There is high alcohol and substance misuse amongst both adults and children alike, with an associated high rate of mental health cases. Violence, especially domestic and child abuse, is a major concern.

The research reiterates the harshness of the context, highlighting the many barriers to improved wellbeing. Projects targeting any of these issues, raised by the statistics or the research, will be important in contributing to the wider picture.

Above others, these issues are preventing young people from breaking the poverty cycle:

- Geographic boundaries, and the poor transport routes on and off the estate
- Poor local perceptions of the estate, both from inside and outside the area
- Barriers to education and training, and subsequent barriers to employment
- Uncertain home lives, especially where is characterised by a poor home environment, either physically (e.g. bad housing) or more generally (e.g. abuse, drinking, violence)
- Few positive opportunities often paralleled with easier routes into negative behaviours.

### IDEAS FOR PRACTICE

Improving welfare and tackling poverty are intrinsically linked – but it is essential that those living here play a key role in any solution. Therefore, a key approach is to develop more community action projects targeting key issues and meeting key needs (for example a community laundrette).

As an agency, other directions include targeted education projects on local and social issues (e.g. on drinking). In a time of severe government cuts however, it is important to ensure projects do not overlap – and that new projects meet the gaps that may be left by the cuts.

Support around the key issues of school, exclusion, employment, as well as taking a family-orientated approach, will be important in supporting young people overcome adversity.

## Parenting and Generational Cycles

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When working with young people it is important to consider the family context. In addition, while this research has leaned heavily on the views of young people, the generational cycles and habits of the estate have begun to emerge.

Across the board, the professional interviews highlighted home-life as a significant factor in determining the wellbeing, aspirations, and future direction of young people. It is felt that, in general, parenting skills across the estate are stretched, especially in the face of such adverse challenges. Young people enter school, and the world, ill equipped to handle the complexities and pressures they face. The impact, however, is beyond them – as they too become ill equipped to parent the next generation.

These are broad critiques – especially in such a delicate area. It is clear that parents on the estate want the best for their children, and previous work in offering support has always proved successful. That said, relationships between adults/parents and children/young people are somewhat strained across the area. This is compounded by the poor image given by a minority of young offenders, persistent so-called antisocial behaviour, and the media's demonisation of young people.

Working with families is a large task – however, supporting and encouraging young people within the family context and equipping them for their future families, is an important and essential task of youth workers and practitioners in this context. The research demonstrates clearly the wide-ranging issues facing families and young people and begins to outline their repeating and cultural nature.

### IDEAS FOR PRACTICE

In terms of working more broadly with families, it is important to ensure the focus remains on supporting young people; however, as an agency it is good to have strong links with families to ensure young people receive the support and encouragement they need from home.

**Family Link:** Spending time to get to know families, understanding their background and context, and explaining the processes of work will be important in supporting young people at home.

**Parent-Child Work:** Previous groups run as 'mums + daughters' or 'dads + lads' have proved successful – more work like this, or supporting other agencies deliver it, will be important in improving family relationships. Parenting courses are also well received.

**Promoting the image of Young people:** Improving the perception local residents and families have of young people will help improve relationships. Methods might be community action or a campaign.

## Adventure, Play, and Positive Activity

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Play has arisen as a key activity for young people around the estate – all ages seem to participate in games of varying types across the estate. Most games include a degree of risk or adventure, and we have encountered young people exploring ‘risky’ activities (sometimes criminal) in different ways.

Opportunities for young people to participate in positive activity seem important – young people repeatedly say there is nothing to do, and the local professionals and agencies call for more diversionary activities to encourage young people to use their time more wisely. Play and adventure seem to be a key draw – being highlighted in the ‘pulse rating’ as a key connector. Young people have requested trips, including biking, visiting the woods, and go karting; and those involved have enjoyed trips to local restaurants. In the lights of poor eating-habits, food is another essential element to youth work activity.

The research exercises uncovered a wealth of positive activity – either already underway, or a desire to be involved. Moves towards art and theatre, as well as sport, came high in the pulse rating. Music and computing were again highlighted in chalk.

However, other than simply providing and supporting activities, there is a wider issue in that young people locally struggle to create their own positive activities – and when they do (as we have seen in the variety of home-made games), they fail to recognise it as fun, enjoyable, or even something to do.

### IDEAS FOR PRACTICE

Positive activities have always been important in youth work, and they will continue to play a significant role within this project. Specific ideas, however, which tackle the issues discussed include:

**Invest in Local Games** – The creativity amongst young people on the estate is vast; taking time to invest in these games and providing essential equipment will help validate and encourage these as positive and worthwhile

**Participative Positive Activities** – Encouraging young people to take a leading role to design, fundraise and implement their own activities will teach the skills for using time wisely, and will provide diversionary activity. There is a wide range of interest, and therefore projects should reflect this including art, theatre, music, sport, etc.

**Incorporate Risk** – Opportunities to take risks is actively sought by young people in the area; there is opportunity for outdoor/adventure sports and/or residential

**Playwork** – Explore the possibility of drawing on the expertise of playwork within detached youth work, especially when working with young people aged 8 – 12.

# Summary

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*Snapshots of the Bournville* offered a glimpse into the world of the Bournville Estate, seeking to identify directions for youth work practice. The research undertook detached youth work for eight months, contacting over 100 young people living in South Ward. The researchers also interviewed a variety of local residents and professionals to paint a wide-ranging picture of the context.

The research established the foundations for youth and community work on the Bournville, confirming the need, opportunity, and scope. In conclusion, the report outlined five themes that may offer direction to youth work. Each discussion proposed ideas for future practice.

## **Aspirations and Economic Wellbeing**

The estate suffers from high unemployment and low life aspirations – young people struggle to see beyond the life of the estate, and therefore moving into work is more complex. Interventions included role modelling healthy employment, supporting young people in the process to finding jobs, and to create spaces to experiment (such as a social enterprise).

## **Life Skills: Relationships and Role Models**

Young people growing up on the Bournville face great numbers of barriers on their journey to adulthood – of which one key barrier is a lack of positive relationships and role models. This means that some young people fail to pick up key skills and behaviours. Interventions included maintaining a presence on the streets and starting a mentoring scheme. Participative activities and targeting young people transitioning between schools were also raised.

## **Promoting Welfare, Relieving Poverty**

Deprivation is high in South Ward, which is of serious detriment to the developmental growth and welfare of children and young people. Deprivation indicators include low incomes, high unemployment, poor health, geographic barriers, and poor access to training and education. Interventions included community activism on key practical issues, targeted projects on education issues (e.g. drinking), and support around young people at key life stages (e.g. changing school).

## **Parenting and Generational Cycles**

In this harsh context, parenting can be difficult; and many young parents are ill equipped and poorly advised. Many of the issues affecting young people are cyclical, as young people are not equipped to raise the next generation. Interventions included raising the positive profile of young people locally to improve adult-child relationships, run or support projects

that work with parents and their children, and develop ways of building stronger links with parents.

### **Adventure, Play and Positive Activity**

Young people on the Bournville are creative with their time – there is a vast array of homemade games, of which many have a significant degree of risk and play. Young people often fail to see their own activity as positive or fun. Greater opportunities are needed, both as diversionary and educational activities. Interventions included opportunities to invest in local games, and to encourage young people to plan more trip-based activities. Opportunities for risk, such as adventure education, should be promoted; and StreetSpace WSM should explore the potential of using playwork as a mechanism for practice.



### **Conclusion**

This research has explored the issues affecting young people on the Bournville Estate – it has heard their views, and engaged with their way of life. The research also considered the informed view of the local professionals, and the experienced view of residents. As a new venture, StreetSpace WSM aim to draw upon these findings to develop a responsive and supportive strategy for ongoing youth work practice.

Young people growing up on the Bournville face many challenges, some of which are detailed here – It is now time to take action, commit to long-term youth and community work, and invest in the Young people here.

# Notes

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**StreetSpace WSM**, online at [www.streetspacewsm.org.uk](http://www.streetspacewsm.org.uk)

**The National StreetSpace Hub**, online at [www.streetspace.org.uk](http://www.streetspace.org.uk)

**The National Lottery BIG Lottery Fund (Awards for All)**, online at [www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk)

**North Somerset Council**, for information and publications on policy, online at:  
[www.n-somerset.gov.uk](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk)

**North Somerset Ward Profiles**, including the South Ward profile, online at  
[www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Environment/Planning+policy/Research+and+monitoring/wardprofilespage.htm](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Environment/Planning+policy/Research+and+monitoring/wardprofilespage.htm)

**Information on the Census data (2001) and the Index of Multiple Deprivations**, online at  
National Statistics: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)  
IMD: [www.imd.communities.gov.uk](http://www.imd.communities.gov.uk)

**SNAPSHOTS OF THE BOURNVILLE  
STREET SPACE WSM**

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