

Pembrokeshire SHARP Project

Third progress report – Phase 2

1st July – 31st December 2003

Pembrokeshire SHARP Project
c/o Pembrokeshire County Council
Haverfordwest
SA61 1TP

Action Researcher: Angela Evans

Tel: 01437 776204
Email: angela.evans@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Pembrokeshire SHARP Project

Third progress report – Phase 2

31st December 2003

1.0 Introduction

This report covers the period between July and 31st December, 2003. It follows the format set out by the Welsh Assembly Government, which has funded this research project.

The report discusses progress against the anticipated timetable for this period. It describes the effect of key issues on community forums and their responses. It reflects on the project's success in recruiting, training and undertaking community based interviews in Llanychaer where, because of the small size of this rural area, all 111 residents are being contacted. The communities of Hubberston & Hakin and Monkton have completed action plans, with recommendations to address issues identified in the community research undertaken in phase 1.

2.00 Brief summary of planned activities (July - December 2003)

In Llanychaer, this period has seen extensive community activity, connected to the SHARP research and also generated by the forum to create local benefits. The timetable outlined in the phase 2 bid estimated that community interviews would now be complete and action planning would be well advanced. The bid acknowledged the difficulty of planning community based work where none had existed before and stressed the importance of community involvement. These principles have required high time input. The community-based research has taken place in this period, approximately six months later than timetabled.

Action planning in Monkton, Hubberston and Hakin has been completed during the period of this report. Activities which had been planned based on dissemination and implementation of the plans can now begin. This should allow irregularities in the timetable to even out in coming months.

3.00 Progress to date

3.01 Llanychaer

Community activity in Llanychaer has been vigorous and positive. The timetable for activity here was acknowledged to be difficult to predict when the phase 2 bid was prepared, since the process was “entirely community driven and community owned” (*phase 2 bid*). The period spent building contacts and trust was lengthy (see Second Progress Report). The commitment of Llais Llanychaer, to SHARP and wider community regeneration, suggests this was time well spent but it put activity approximately six months behind the timetable. Because Llanychaer appears to have its own pace (as previously identified) and research issues specific to this community needed addressing in this period, it has not been possible to recover the programme.

This period has been characterised by wide commitment and enthusiasm. Community activities have been held, where none previously existed. The community interview process is underway. The quality of participation at forum meetings is very high.

Six meetings of Llais Llanychaer have been held between July and December. The group formally constituted in August. The forum has arranged a number of events to engage the community including: an information stand promoting SHARP at a vintage tractor rally (July); Haymaker’s Tea (August); Harvest Supper (October); Christmas buffet and carols on the Green (December). A Llais Llanychaer newsletter has been launched with editions produced in July and October and distributed to each household.

Six Community Researchers were recruited and undertook three training days over two October weekends. One decided not to continue as a community researcher but agreed to act as a communication link during fieldwork. Because of the small and rural nature of the population, it was agreed to seek interviews with everyone on the electoral role who votes in Llanychaer. This increased the total sample from 90 (ward total) to 111 residents.

A Llais Llanychaer newsletter and SHARP information sheet were distributed. Signed consent to be interviewed was sought on returnable slips. Interviews are available in English or Welsh. The interview format is based on the phase 1 format.

In the period of this report, 53 residents (47%) consented to be interviewed. Twenty three consent forms were returned in freepost envelopes. Three Community Researchers then canvassed non returnees and 30 further consents were obtained. This personal approach was proposed by forum members. Twenty three residents (20%) gave a verbal refusal; 29 (26%) who have not responded will be contacted.

Thirty one interviews have been completed, six in Welsh (31/12/03) and 16 are scheduled in the new year. New researchers met researchers from the phase 1 work to discuss issues, before beginning fieldwork.

Research issues in this period have taken time to resolve and pursue as follows:

- The small population meant a 100% sample was selected. Repeat interviews will be undertaken with a sample of respondents to identify any effect of researchers and respondents knowing each other.
- A slow response to letters reinforced indications that residents dislike formal contact processes. Recruiting researchers was delayed by this. Forum involvement and word of mouth is increasingly used which is a slower process.
- All SHARP activity is undertaken bilingually. The time required to translate written material and interviews is an additional cost and delay.

The table below gives an update of progress (to December 31st) against the proposed phase 2 timetable.

<i>Proposed date</i>	Actual date	Proposed activity	Progress
<i>October – Dec 02</i>	July - ongoing	Meetings attended, recording of processes, understandings and agreements	Ongoing
<i>Jan – March 03</i>	September – Dec 03	Devise sample; refine and clarify nature and coverage of first phase interviews	Achieved in discussion with SHARP partners and Llais Llanychaer
<i>Jan – March 03</i>	July - ongoing	Rapid transcription of meeting notes	All notes and records are made as soon as practicable after meetings.
<i>Jan – March 03</i>	September – Dec 03	Rapid transcription of interviews	Achieved. Welsh interview transcripts also requires translating, which involves additional time.
<i>Jan – March 03</i>	Sept – Dec 03	Conduct interviews and focus groups	Underway
<i>Jan – March 03</i>	Sept – Dec 03	Regular meetings of Community Researchers	Underway as far as time commitments allow. Regular telephone links and one-to-one support provided
<i>July – Sept</i>	July – Sept	Quarterly meeting of Research Coordinating Team and Project Steering Group	These meetings have taken place and all present were updated on the Llanychaer project process.
<i>Sept – Dec</i>	Sept – Dec	Quarterly meeting of Research Coordinating Team and Project Steering Group	These meetings have taken place and all present were updated on the Llanychaer project process.

3.02 Monkton and Hubberston & Hakin

The community forums in Monkton and Hubberston & Hakin completed action planning during 2003, a significant milestone in project activity. Both groups encountered successes and blocks to their activities in the late summer and autumn. Membership, committee skills and leadership continue to be significant factors for the groups as they enter the next phase of dissemination and implementation.

Hubberston and Hakin – CHAD

CHAD's year was punctuated by moments of enthusiasm, visible community interest and real commitment towards acting on identified local needs. But irregular and declining attendance at meetings in the late summer and autumn dented the momentum. The group ended the year with a question mark over its existence, membership and role. The situation had echoes of CHAD's position at the turn of 2002/3 but also some distinct differences which may suggest a more positive outcome.

Progress against the anticipated timetable was affected in this period. The issues, as previously in the project, were the commitment of members and leadership of the group. However, draft completion of the action plan marks a significant milestone in the project's activity in Hubberston & Hakin. While delays remain against the proposed timetable, it means that deferred activities may now progress in 2004, depending on the future role of CHAD.

After the very well attended public action planning meeting in May (see Second Progress Report), a programme of meetings and consultations was agreed so CHAD could complete and present its action plan in September.

On July 31st, a second public meeting was held. Representatives of statutory and voluntary organisations were invited as "special advisors" to help identify the feasibility of community ideas and advise on ways forward. Nine advisors attended with community members (including six of the CHAD committee) numbering 10. The summer holiday date and wet evening were noted with hindsight. Nevertheless the event was successful in focusing minds on feasible actions and community members were impressed at the support and information provided by the statutory visitors.

Work on the action plan progressed in August but the planned launch event in September was deferred because the plan would not be complete. Irregular attendance by almost all members and the continued lack of a Chair or Secretary impacted on continuity between and at meetings. The November meeting had just three attendees who questioned the purpose and function of

CHAD. They called a meeting to discuss the future of CHAD. There was reluctance to disband but recognition that the commitment of sufficient members and a focus for activity were needed. Numbers and confidence seemed to prevent them viewing the completed action plan as such a focus. But award of funds for healthy living activities to the National Public Health Service in Pembrokeshire (formerly Health Promotion Service) in December may provide it instead.

In discussing its future, CHAD has articulated what their group needs to continue. Sufficient (*"five or six"*) and active (*"they must turn up"*) members; a chairman (*"a driving force"*); a focus (*"if you get the right focus, you get the right commitment"*). Involvement of the Rector since the recent "crisis" meeting, a respected and articulate community leader, has given support. Individuals are being personally approached to be involved. The opportunity presented by the grant for healthy living activities may provide CHAD with a ready-made focus in a project with resources and support already in place. Recent events illustrate how fragile community activity can be. But the self-awareness may help CHAD regroup in a more effective and stable form.

Monkton – Monkton Voice

Monkton Voice ended 2003 with a newly elected committee and a completed action plan. The first AGM for several years was held and the chairman was able to present evidence of activity and progress on several issues. Election of a committee and officers, plus community development support from outside SHARP mean that Monkton Voice appears to start the new year in a more positive position.

Completion of the action plan marks a significant milestone in the project's activity in Monkton. While delays remain against the proposed timetable, it means that deferred project activities can now progress in 2004. Organisational issues within Monkton Voice and the need for ongoing support affected completion of the action plan during 2003. During action planning, there continued to be a lack of confidence among committee members that issues would be addressed, based on the longstanding nature of key complaints.

Two committee meetings were held during the period of report, in October and November. Having agreed in June that the Monkton Voice Executive Committee would use the SHARP data to update the existing community action plan, each meeting undertook that work. Discussion and group work were used to identify, debate and agree issues. The draft plan was available at the AGM on December 1st and a summary put on each seat in the hall. Every Monkton home was notified of the meeting and progress on the action plan.

During this period, Monkton Voice received significant support from SHARP to help counteract the lack of a secretary and unstructured meetings. Notices and agendas were distributed and meeting notes with action points were taken and sent to all members. Two meetings and several phone calls were held with the chairman, to discuss the action planning process and the AGM.

The newly established Communities First Partnership Board also began to function during this period. Two residents who fill “community” seats on the Partnership Board, including a SHARP community researcher, were encouraged to attend Monkton Voice meetings. Three Monkton Voice members were also on the Board. The Chairman reported optimism that Communities First could help implement action plan recommendations. Having delayed action planning in the early days of Communities First (see Second Progress Report) to avoid duplication of activity, opportunities for the community may now be identified.

Pembrokeshire County Council has also established a Monkton Improvement Group to consider key environmental and social problems in the community. These were highlighted in the community research and are the subject of many action plan recommendations. The chairman is fully briefed about this and received an interim draft action plan. No discussions have yet been carried out with Monkton Voice.

The key organisational issues affecting Monkton Voice may now have been addressed, with committee changes and external support. Several initiatives are beginning in the community, which may have some effect on the disillusion over lack of past progress if clear impacts are seen.

The table below gives an update of progress in Monkton and Hubberston & Hakin (to December 31st) against the revised phase 2 timetable.

<i>Date</i>	Planned Action	Progress
<i>July – September 03</i>	MILESTONE decision – if no action planning has taken place	Action planning underway – no decision needed
<i>July – September 03</i>	Action plan & capacity building and start of implementation	Action planning underway in both communities with aims to complete documents by late autumn. Tackling new experiences and gaining new skills means capacity building is incorporated in the process
<i>July – September 03</i>	Identification of evaluation case study	To be undertaken when action planning is completed
<i>July – September 03</i>	Recording use of community development key funds – ongoing	Communities to identify projects for key funds on completion of action plans
<i>July – September 03</i>	Recruiting community evaluation team	To be undertaken when action planning is completed
<i>July – September 03</i>	Quarterly meeting of Research Coordinating Team and Project Steering Group	Project Steering Group meeting held on September 23rd. A written update was given to Research Coordinating Team meetings in mid July.
<i>October - December 03</i>	Recording process of action plan implementation – ongoing	Ongoing community activity and action planning is recorded by attending meetings and note-taking. Recording implementation will begin when action plans are completed
<i>October - December 03</i>	Training of community evaluation team	Recruitment and training of team will begin when action plans are completed
<i>October – December 03</i>	Undertake and analyse self perception evaluation	To be undertaken
<i>October – December 03</i>	Recording – ongoing	Detailed records are kept of project activity
<i>October – December 03</i>	Selection of evaluation discussion groups	To be undertaken when action plans are completed
<i>October – December 03</i>	Planning for evaluation discussion groups	To be undertaken when action plans are completed
<i>October – December 03</i>	Quarterly meeting of Research Coordinating Team and Project Steering Group	Project Steering Group meeting held on December 9th. Research Co-ordinating Team meeting held on November 3rd.

4.00 Comment on continuing contribution of the project to the overall aims of the SHARP initiative

4.01 Partnership working

The good relations with particular organisations, which have characterised the SHARP Project so far, continue to generate successes. The National Public Health Service Pembrokeshire successfully sought significant grant funds for a healthy living project based on needs identified in the SHARP community interviews. Staff will work closely with CHAD and Monkton Voice to implement the project, worth £75,000 over three years with provision for two part time workers.

Training developments (see 4.04) have also continued the effective partnership with PAVS (Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services).

The Community Regeneration Unit, one of Pembrokeshire County Council's representatives on SHARP, responded to concerns about community development support beyond the remit of the action research. Following discussion of needs, staff will attend community forum meetings if invited (see 4.02).

These examples of partnership working have arisen from the personal interest of individuals and the opportunity for benefit to all parties.

4.02 Supporting community development

The project has defined the degree and nature of support to partner communities in order to clarify the boundary between community development and action research and to avoid dependency by community forums on the project. This was particularly significant during the action planning work where the action researcher was being perceived as secretary and/or the group lynchpin at times. The close involvement of an action researcher in a forum means the boundary between SHARP activity and forum activity can be unclear. While there is no wish to distance the researcher from the group, there was a need to clarify the degree and nature of support for everyone's understanding. It was proposed by the Research Coordinating Team and agreed by the Project Steering Group that:

The researcher's role is supporting, to be defined as follows:

Supporting = *filling a gap in knowledge or available resources by providing information and emotional assistance to enable a forum to achieve an immediate objective or overcome a present difficulty*

- ▶ *Examples of information: sources of practical support and advice*
- ▶ *Examples of emotional support: encouragement, suggestions, ideas, using examples to illustrate outcomes*

→ *Where practical support is required and not available, funding should be provided to the forum so members are able to fill the gap eg. pay for secretarial support; provide training*

Community development support is now provided by staff from the authority's Community Regeneration Unit. This is a permanent arrangement, thereby addressing concerns of sustainability after SHARP's conclusion.

The pace of work in Llanychaer illustrates the time required to build effective links in such a community. Working through the forum has enabled discussion of processes, what works and why. Thus, the informal approach of personal contact and word of mouth has been locally identified as the more appropriate way forward. Llais Llanychaer members have also been willing to undertake this work.

The Community Researcher Handbook is published in draft format and being piloted by Llanychaer Community Researchers. A meeting has been held between the existing and new researchers to discuss ways of working and any relevant issues. Three existing researchers have undertaken training as mentors. They proposed this with the intention of mentoring the Llanychaer group. In the event, this has not been practicable. The three are to meet their local Family Centre managers to explore mentoring opportunities for people returning to learning – as they did when training as Community Researchers.

4.03 Effective / ineffective practice

Recruitment and training of Llanychaer Community Researchers was adapted from the phase 1 process, based on local requirements and forum advice allowing for more effective practice in this rural community. When mentoring arrangements did not take place as planned, alternative opportunities were identified with the trainee mentors. By listening to local needs, the project seeks to identify effective approaches.

Sustainability beyond the life of SHARP is also an element of effective practice. The project recognised that extensive community support was ineffective because it could not be sustained, neither by SHARP nor forum members who, at the time, were not looking to learn those skills themselves.

The project has sought to disseminate its research results and examples of good practice through display of abstracts, posters and a presentation. A poster and oral presentation were given at the *Society for Social Medicine 47th Annual Scientific Meeting*, (Edinburgh, September 2003); the presentation abstract was published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* (September 2003); three posters were presented at *Conversazione* (University of Wales Swansea, December 2003), one in the peer reviewed category.

4.04 Training issues (to include capacity building within the wider community)

PAVS has successfully applied for permission to create a national qualification in Community Action Research, to be accredited through the National Open College Network. This would bring all the modules developed for SHARP into a Intermediate and Advanced qualifications, to be available UK wide and the first of their kind. Time and resources (including a £5,195 charge) are presently being considered in order to take advantage of this notable achievement.

Meanwhile, the original training programme delivered to Community Researchers has been amended and an accredited Mentoring unit written, registered and partially delivered. The analysis work of the eight original researchers has been successfully accredited, while one gained a further credit for her action planning work.

Levels of experience, confidence and particular skills continue to vary within forums. It is hoped that involvement of the Community Regeneration Unit may assist here. Committee skills training provided through the Tenants and Residents Association network is said be at inconvenient times and locations for some. Leading by example and informal discussion continue to occur.

5.00 Anticipated changes to the work plan, including the evaluation plan

Despite the vigorous activity by forum members, community researchers and the action researcher in Llanychaer, the project remains behind the anticipated work stage. This rural community appears to have its own pace, which cannot be hurried and partly caused by the fact of a myriad other commitments and priorities held by residents. The proposed workplan does not appear realistic in this light.

Completion of action plans in Monkton and Hubberston & Hakin will now allow activities which had been dependent on these to be undertaken. The coming months should be very active in these communities.

6.00 Progress with website development

Web site designs were considered by the last Steering Group meeting and key decisions made about layout, colour, content and style. A name was also chosen – sharppembrokeshire.org.uk. The aim is to complete the main site within coming months. Whilst under construction, it will be placed at a hidden web location where partners can view it and comment. Meanwhile, key search words are being listed, with input from partners.

The second stage of the website project will be to work with the community forums to develop community websites, linked to SHARP, to promote their community and activities.