

18. REPORT OF LINWOOD RESOURCE CENTRE

Officer responsible Community Advocate	Author Eleanor Bodger, Community Worker
Corporate Plan Output: Community Advocacy	

A detailed report from Eleanor Bodger, Community Worker at the Linwood Resource Centre is reported below for the information of Board members.

“Garden

This year has really seen the expansion of the community garden and associated projects. The original garden has been productive and provides a relaxing place to be and a good learning environment for people who attend the eight weekly gardening workshops.

Workshops are held three times per year. The next course begins in early spring. Topics covered include; composting, no dig gardens, propagating, herbs, container gardening etc. Part of the course focuses on drawing out the skills that people already have and developing these further. Confidence is built and friendships made. The Practical Resource Co-ordinator (Sue Wilkinson) facilitated the last workshop. The feedback was excellent.

As an outcome of the workshop we have developed a gardening group. This meets on Mondays. There is a good attendance. Monthly visiting speakers are being arranged.

The garden extension into adjoining City Council owned land is proceeding, with plans being drawn up. Young people on community projects, students from Linwood Intermediate, garden club members and hopefully Linwood Service Centre employees (doing their 30 minutes of exercise) are assisting with this project. There is a good mix of people including diverse cultures, young and older, male and female, and people with disabilities. This is a good example of networking across groups in the community.

The composting pilot arranged and funded via Eric Park (Solid Waste Engineers) is drawing to completion. Local people have been saving their kitchen scraps for composting and in return are given some of the compost that has been produced. People who have been contributing report that the amount of rubbish going out in the black bag has been reduced in some instances to almost half. Cost effectiveness is going to be the issue here. However one vital factor that should not be ignored, when evaluating the project is the community building that has come about as a result of this exercise. The question is, how does one factor this in to the figures? Certainly the project meets a number of the objectives of the “Community Development and Social Wellbeing Policy”. Social wellbeing can not be measured immediately in monetary terms.

Heritage Group

The Heritage group is active again this year with another video being planned. (Last years video on the Linwood Cemetery “A Grave Subject” is available from the Linwood Library). The purpose of these videos is to validate the experience of the average person and give recognition to their achievements. It also provides a great learning opportunity for those involved. Linwood Intermediate students also contribute to this group.

Networking

Networking plays a vital role in Linwood. This is demonstrated by the attendance of the majority of community groups at the Forum meetings and a willingness to work together and make good use of the resources we have within the community.

The broad networking role of the Centre is apparent in our intensive involvement with projects such as LYFE (Linwood Youth Festival) and "It's Great to Live Here" (four days promotion of community groups and services at Eastgate). Both events involve people from a number of groups in the community and are examples of the community organising events for themselves.

The Centre also published a local directory at the beginning of the year.

Other Projects

Other projects currently being explored are; computer skills (a successful pilot was run last year, funding is being sought for a tutor), support groups for women who experience depression and panic attacks, economical/vegetarian cooking and a co-mentoring pilot where young people are linked with older people and skills exchanged (co-operative venture with Linwood Avenue Corner Trust youth worker). An extensive file is held on the Genetic Engineering issues. The Monday Issues Group discusses local and national issues and possible impacts of these on this community."

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received and that Eleanor Bodger be commended on the work being done at the Centre.