



LOVE LOCAL

first survey results

What is Love Local?

Love Local is Civic Voice's campaign to uncover the local DNA of different places – revealing what makes them distinctive and people proud to live there. At its heart is an online survey asking people to say what they love about their local area and how they feel about it and to send in images. This will build a constantly updating digital mosaic of what people love about the different parts of England and why. Civic Voice pledges to campaign on what people say they value. The first results from an initial survey of 250 local community volunteers are below, including the views of Griff Rhys Jones about where he lives in Fitzrovia, London.

How to get involved?

Civic Voice cares about the things in your local area that you care about and we want others to care too. By telling us what you love about where you live we can help make the places where everyone lives more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive.

To get involved in the Love Local campaign you should tell us what you love and why using the short online survey at www.civicvoice.org.uk. We are also asking for digital images of what makes you proud about where you live. These will form part of a new digital mosaic of England and images can also be uploaded to Civic Voice's Flickr site at www.flickr.com/photos/civicvoice. Your views will help us build a constantly updated picture of what makes people proud about where they live and encourage others to give voice to their feelings too. Civic Voice pledges to campaign on the issues people care about.

The first results

Civic Voice surveyed 250 members of local civic societies to tell us what makes the place where they live attractive, enjoyable and distinctive and what makes them proud to live there. People were asked to provide five words describing how they felt about the things they identified and also asked to tell us what they cared about which they feel is at risk. Digital images were requested and a selection of these can be viewed at www.civicvoice.org.uk/lovelocal. Civic Voice will build a digital mosaic of what people say they love about where they live in the different parts of England in response to the campaign and this will be constantly refreshed as more people contribute to the Love Local campaign.

The results below reveal the top 5 things that civic volunteers feel make places attractive, enjoyable and distinctive as well as what makes them proud and what they fear to be at risk.

The first overall results reveal the top 5 things that people love about where they live are:

1. Lots of open space and gardens
2. Having a natural setting and views
3. A friendly and spirited community
4. Well cared for historic buildings
5. A range of cultural and community activities

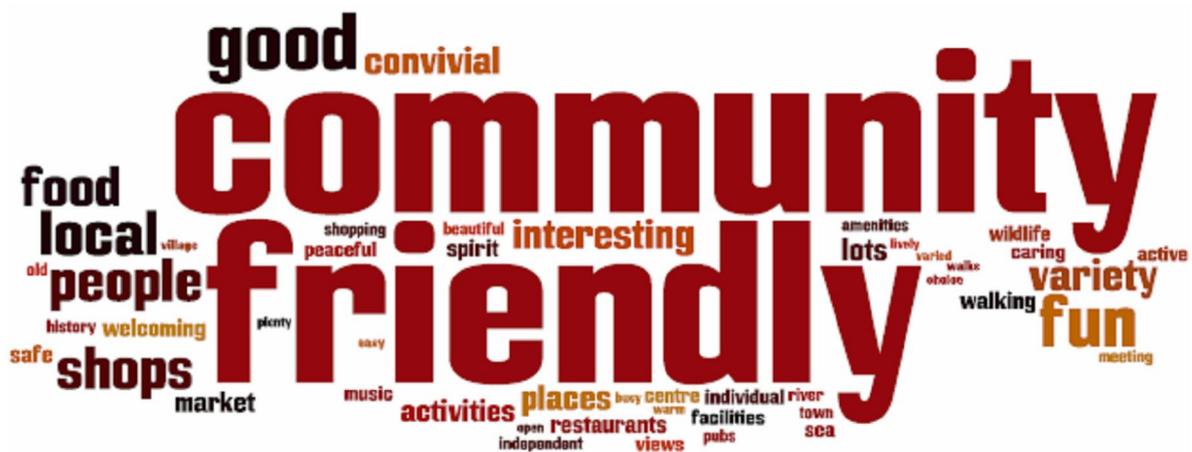
enjoyable

The first results from what people say they find enjoyable about where they live are:

The top five

1. Having a friendly and spirited community
2. A range of cultural and community activities
- 3= Retaining the feel of a village or market town
- 3= Good cafes, pubs and places to eat
- 3= Lots of open space and gardens

and how people feel.....



Community and culture are at the heart of what makes places enjoyable to live in. A friendly spirit and a constant stream of activities and events rate highest and people also enjoy places offering a wide range of cafes, pubs and other good places to eat and socialise. Compact places with plentiful green space and gardens that retain a characteristic village or market town feel are also highly valued.

Elaine Smith, Blackpool Civic Society says:

“Blackpool is MAGIC! It brings happiness and joy to millions with our trams, piers, illuminations and Stanley Park. It is regenerating itself into a modern thriving holiday resort once again, proud of its history and Victorian heritage.”

Griff Rhys Jones says:

“Fitzrovia has parts of recognized great architectural worth and parts which are ‘ordinary’ by Central London standards. But there are no such distinctions as you walk through it. It evolved. It blends together to make a safe place that you want to explore at any time of day or night. Big shops, yes, but little shops too. Big offices, but not universally so. Houses, apartments and dead ends for cars so they keep out. Squares and narrow alleys. This is almost impossible to replicate in new build and very difficult to improve by centralized planning. There is always something of a minor, unthreatening nature going on.”

distinctive

The first results from what people say makes their local place distinctive are:

The top five

1. A sense of history
2. Well cared for historic buildings
- 3= Distinctive building styles – such as Victorian or Georgian architecture
- 3= Having a natural setting and views
5. The cathedral, church or abbey

and how people feel....



Nothing beats a sense of history for giving somewhere a distinctive feel. People identify historic buildings and churches and cathedrals in particular as giving their locality character and many people love a distinctive setting in a valley or at the foot of surrounding hills. The character of many places is defined by their building style – with Georgian and Victorian architecture featuring prominently. For many it is the use of distinctive building materials – such as white Pease brick or Cotswold stone – that stands out. There is also a love of their place holding a record – such as the first Garden Suburb (Bedford Park, London).

Debbie Reavell, Basingstoke Heritage Society says:

“The centre of Basingstoke was levelled in the 1960s when it was chosen to be an “expanded town” but it is still a place of distinction and I love where I live. The old town cemetery is within spitting distance of the centre with ruins dating from the 13th century and it is a place of quiet and stillness in a busy town. The Basingstoke of today has that ethos of town life which is as important in England as the rural. It is a town of many communities, unpretentious, friendly, mixing the modern with the old. There are parts of it which Jane Austen would still recognise from when she shopped and visited here.”

Griff Rhys Jones says:

“History makes my quarter distinctive. People have lived and worked here since it ceased to be fields three hundred years ago and what an outstanding mix of bohemians, politician, scientist inventors and tradesmen it has been. If they managed to coexist here they should be able to do so anywhere in Britain.”

at risk

The first results of what people say they value which is at risk are:

1. Well cared for historic buildings
2. Having a natural setting and views
3. Lots of open space and gardens
4. A range of independent shops and markets
5. Historic street patterns and town centres

78% (196) of civic volunteers identified something they cared about in their local area which is at risk. The variety of things that people value but feel are at risk is wide. The loss of historic buildings such as lidos, swimming pools, town halls, churches, fire stations, bridges, old school and court buildings, windmills, theatres, museums, cinemas and industrial heritage are among the most frequently raised concerns. One example is in Bristol where there is concern about the risk to the Banksy artwork on the boat *Thekla* in the harbour from other graffiti. Another is the threat to the recently vacated Art Deco factory building dating from 1939 which sits like a “*giant white crate*” outside Basingstoke as a striking landmark. A more pervasive fear is that of losing green fields and green spaces to new development. The identity that comes from a range of independent shops and a successful local market is also clearly both valued and vulnerable and many people feel that the integrity of the architecture and layout of their local area is at risk.