**Notes from Overton Futures meeting**

**16th May 2017**

Attendees from OCC: Peter Lynch and Charlotte Copeman

Presentation by Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research (WISERD)

Professor Howard Davies, Drs Robin Mann and David Dallimore

**Introduction by Professor Howard Davies**

* The social science research they undertook is part of a larger group of research projects which focus on civil society at a local level
* 5 Welsh universities conducted the research
* Grant funding by Economic and Social Research Council
* The research centred on local society and social participation at a local level, asking what this looks like in different locations / sites and why some are flourishing and others not, to anticipate patterns
* 100 people interviewed in each location
* They presented two contrasting locations: Rhos and Overton
* Data gleaned from:-
  + Interviews with leaders of local activities and associations
  + Local people (to assess how things have changed)
  + Surveys
  + Documentary and social resources

The following slides were presented:-

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| Age demographic | Comparison broadly the same between Rhos and Overton – Rhos maybe a bit younger |
| Occupation | More intermediate and higher level occupations in Overton – more middle class in other words – than in Rhos |
| Place of birth | Rhos much higher than Overton with residents being born in Rhos, or even in Wales |
| Welsh language | Much fewer Welsh speakers in Overton than in Rhos, although in the 3-15 age group the percentage was broadly the same |
| Identity & sense of belonging | Rhos has a higher percentage than Overton in this category with Rhos residents having a stronger identity and sense of belonging to their own location  Other interesting statistic is that a very low percentage of people in Overton identified themselves as being British. Rhos had a much higher % in this category |
| Best things to do in the village | 90% of respondents said that the best thing is that there are lots of things to do in the village  c. 50% that everyone knows one another \* |
| Worst things to do in the village | c. 50% that no one knows each other \*  \* With 50% citing the same thing suggests change |
| Levels of participation | Many more people in Rhos don’t participate in any local activities than in Overton – 18% vs 50% in Rhos |

Other comments

* They were surprised at the volume of participative activity in Overton
* Rhos’ activities very traditionally Welsh, i.e. male voice choirs, rugby and chapels with mostly male leadership, whereas Overton’s had mostly female leadership and much less traditionally Welsh
* Findings underline the importance “under the radar” activities, i.e. most of the activities are local and do not extend to a wider civil society – represents the identity of the villages
* Sense of belonging and identity seem to be important for vibrant communities
* In Rhos people volunteer because they have a strong sense of belonging, heritage etc. In Overton they volunteer because they want to belong and feel part of the community – they have chosen to live in Overton so they invest in “belonging”
* In both locations growing individualism can be a threat
* Resistance needs to be developed against this (growing individualism)