

# **Community Involvement in Halswell**

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## Table of Contents

	Page
<b>1. Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Research question.....	3
1.2 Context for the research.....	3
1.3 Summary of the methods.....	3
1.4 Key findings.....	3
1.5 Limitations of the research.....	4
1.6 Suggestions for future research.....	4
<b>2. Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Background of research area.....	5
2.2 Community partner and objectives of research.....	5
2.3 Our research.....	6
<b>3. Literature review.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. Methods.....</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 Survey development and importance.....	9
4.2 Sampling methods.....	9
4.3 Administration of the survey.....	10
4.4 Data processing and analysis.....	10
<b>5. Results and Discussion.....</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1 Community involvement in Halswell.....	11
5.2 Halswell resident’s opinions on community.....	13
5.3 Factors that influence community involvement.....	14
<b>6. Limitations.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>7. Conclusions.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>8. Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>9. References.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>10. Appendices.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Appendix A: Methods.....	23
Appendix B: Results and Discussion.....	24

## **1. Executive Summary**

### **1.1 Research Question**

This research aimed to find out to what extent residents in the Halswell area are actively involved in a community.

### **1.2 Context for the research**

- Halswell is a suburb located 9km southwest of the Cathedral Square in Christchurch, with a population close to 15,000 people.
- Halswell has experienced population increase since the 2010/2011 Canterbury earthquakes, and it is unsure whether or not community exists among residents.
- The Halswell Community Project is a community organisation that aims to enhance community in Halswell, and are interested in finding out if residents are involved in community, and if they want community or not.

### **1.3 Summary of the methods**

- The project used a simplified random sampling technique with the development of a paper survey and online survey
- The surveys were done through a door to door approach and were also made available online via Google survey
- The data was analysed by using Excel spreadsheets and R commander

### **1.4 Key findings**

- Many Halswell residents are not involved in clubs or groups, however those that do are more likely to be involved with sports clubs.
- Most residents contact their neighbours once a month or two to six times a week
- Most of the people who have moved to Halswell since the earthquakes are in the 30-39 age group, and want activities for children
- Residents appreciate the community in Halswell, and want more fitness options and markets
- Residents know how to find out about what is happening in their area, but disagree about feeling a sense of community in Halswell
- Aidanfield and Oaklands East are more likely to have their wants and needs met

- Social media is not required for residents to find out about community

### **1.5 Limitations for the research**

- Unfortunate events during surveying week resulted in several group members being unavailable to help collect data.
- The weather forecast for some days did not allow for surveying to take place
- Lack of experience resulted in no response rate being recorded
- Piloting of the survey ensures that the survey was clear, however, the first question raised some problems to the participants and data for this questions lacked accuracy
- A small response rate meant that our results are not completely representative of Halswell

### **1.6 Suggestions for future research**

- Narrow research questions down to focus more on particular aspects of community involvement
- Investigate the rural areas of Halswell
- Survey the area over a wider time frame
- Include more demographic survey questions such as gender, ethnicity and religion

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Background of research area**

Halswell is a suburb located in Christchurch approximately nine kilometres southwest of the Cathedral Square. The suburb used to be geographically separate from the rest of the city until recent developments in the Aidanfield and Oakland's subdivisions closed the gap between Halswell and the rest of the city. Halswell has a population of 14,680 according to the 2013 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). The population has almost tripled in size since the 2006 Census (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). This is because of its increasing popularity following the Canterbury Earthquakes in 2010 and 2011. The earthquakes caused people from the highly affected east side of Christchurch move to the less affected southwest of the city. Halswell has many resources available for everyone to use including a public swimming pool, library, churches, and a post office with a bank. The Halswell quarry park is also open for everyone to use, including walkers, mountain bikers, dog owners, and horse riders. Halswell has thrived since the earthquakes, and will continue to grow as the city moves forward.

### **2.2 Community partner and objectives of research**

For this research, our community partner was the Halswell Community Project. The Halswell Community Project is a group that runs different initiatives to connect the residents of Halswell. The project has an underlying vision of being “A community that cares, Halswell is a thriving community where people know each other, have fun together, can learn together, and look after each other” (Halswell Community Project, 2015)

The Halswell Community project also supports other groups such as churches, schools, and clubs, to develop community events, activities and places for everyone to go. Examples of activities they offer include a website, email newsletter, Facebook page, markets, business network, youth action group, community gardens, and welcome packs.

We worked with the head of the Halswell Community Project. We learnt that they were curious to know if residents in Halswell wanted a community and if they felt like they had one. This gave us some objectives for the research. We started to ask if Halswell residents feel as though they have community, and if so, why? Also, do Halswell residents want a

community? After much discussion, we finalised a research question: *“To what extent are residents in the Halswell area actively involved in a community?”*

This question will help us better understand whether people are involved in a community and if they actually want one, as well as contributing to existing research. The wording of the question was also important, because the use of ‘a community’ instead of ‘the community’ does not limit residents to being involved in one community. Community looks different to everyone, and cannot be limited by geography.

### **2.3 Our Research**

This research is important in striving towards the understanding of a 'sense of community' in Halswell. This research can help the Halswell Community Project to better understand those who live in the area, and therefore help them move forward with their vision. The results from the research will hopefully inform the Halswell Community Project of how the residents are involved in community, their views on community, and what can be done to help them reach their vision. Therefore, we will examine factors that contribute to Halswell residents being involved in community.

This report will underline the relevant literature reviewed that was helped to gain wider knowledge on the topic and to outline any particular conceptual or methodological points that will contribute to the design of the research. Literature review will then be followed by the methodology, and how we conducted the research. This will then be followed by the results and the discussion to draw together a conclusion.

### 3. Literature review

The research by Kang and Kwak in 2003 was examining community involvement by measuring length of residence and media use. They found that the length of residence within a community has significant effects on participation, as does social media use. In relation to our research question, measuring the length of residence in the area can be used as a factor to estimate involvement. Including questions on this in our survey could help us estimate involvement within Halswell community as well as the influences of social media such as Facebook, Neighbourly and Newsletters via email.

Hampton and Wellman describe how the internet can increase greater community due to fast internet speeds, local discussion groups and through people that are always online (Hampton & Wellman, 2003). Following this, the internet is discussed to increase contact compared to non-wired residents, as residents can get to know and communicate more with the people in their area without actually being active. Subsequently, it will be important to understand if people are more involved due to the use of the Halswell community email newsletter and the Halswell community Facebook page. These are organised and maintained by the Halswell Community Project.

Edwards and Jones in “Nature of community and developing community” discuss how community can be observed as a social system where groups share common concerns (Edwards & Jones, 1976). The definition of community shows the linkage between informal and formal groups. This is important in understanding how people may be interacting and the types of linkages between people, and their involvement in the Halswell community. Edward and Jones also detail that prior to the forging of community, values and norms must be correlated or agreed on to ensure unity (Edwards & Jones, 1976). For our research this could be important in assessing the informal community that may exist in Halswell.

Our research in Halswell can relate to the paper, 'we all get along: social cohesion in three Auckland suburbs' by Meares and Gilbertson. Results show that residents felt a sense of belonging associated with feeling safe and comfortable in an area. Feelings that were described as arising from knowing one's neighbours, and being able to turn to them for help if necessary (Meares & Gilbertson, 2013). Residents who did want to be more involved in

their communities listed time; a lack of knowledge; and a lack of events, activities and spaces as things that hinder their participation (Meares & Gilbertson, 2013).

McMillan and Chavis described four factors that define community. These include; the feeling of belonging to an area, the sense of mattering, common needs enhancing involvement and that shared emotional experiences enhance connections within the area (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). These aspects are directly associated with involvement where our research can further benefit from this understanding of community. These characteristics could be directly used to measure belonging and wants and needs within a community, contributing to the aims of this project.

Based on our research, we defined community as groups of people who care about each other, feel as if they belong, and have unity in attitudes or behaviours.

## **4. Methods**

### **4.1 Survey development and importance**

Our research question proposes an investigation into both community and active involvement within Halswell. Therefore, a survey was developed to give us the opportunity to gather information at a large scale and directly measure community and involvement through questions on belonging, trust, wants and needs as well as assessing the level of contact and how active they are within the community. These aspects are based on literature, that has defined these aspects to be crucial in developing community and are therefore important to include in measuring it. Compared to focus groups or interviews, this option is more appropriate, as we are able to obtain a larger, more accurate sample of Halswell. The questions formulated also covered the behaviour, attitudes, and respondent values that Parfitt discussed as being crucial in developing a survey (Parfitt, 2005). The resultant survey asked qualitative and quantitative questions; a total of 17 questions, which varied in completion time from 2-10 minutes. Prior to implementation, the survey was reviewed by our community partner, academic advisor and piloted through friends and family to ensure it was not unethical or discriminating.

### **4.2 Sampling methods**

Due to the size and population of Halswell and our timeframe, we could not expect to survey all of Halswell. Subsequently a simplified random sampling method was used. This was used because of its ability to remove bias (both clustering and area) and ensure we had a fair representation of Halswell residents. Sampling began by layering a grid (2cm vs 2cm) over a Google generated area of Halswell (A3 print out). Numbers were assigned to each square. A random number generator was then used to find 30 areas to sample. Within each square at least three streets were included to ensure an appropriate study sample (see Appendix A1). Within each block, 10 surveys were collected ensuring easier data entry per area and a greater distribution of areas sampled. This gave us a proposed sample of 300, to which we believed was realistic given our timeframe and choice of administration. However, due to certain limitations during our research, only 14 of the areas were actually sampled, as can be seen in Appendix A1.

### **4.3 Administration of the survey**

The way a survey is conducted can often be vital in achieving a representative sample. Therefore, a door to door approach was used. This was mainly because of its ability to obtain a higher return rate of 80% on average compared to other methods of distribution such as mailbox returns (30% average return rate) (Mcguirk & O'Neill, 2010). This option also provided insight into the differences in community between places on data collection. Surveys were handed to residents at the door, and we waited while they completed it, to save having to come back and pick up the completed surveys. This ensured the survey was completed, and that the participant understood the questions. In conjunction with the paper survey we also ran an online survey on the Halswell community Facebook page and newsletter. The online survey provided a way to reach more people in Halswell, and was also given to participants at the door if they had little time to complete the survey.

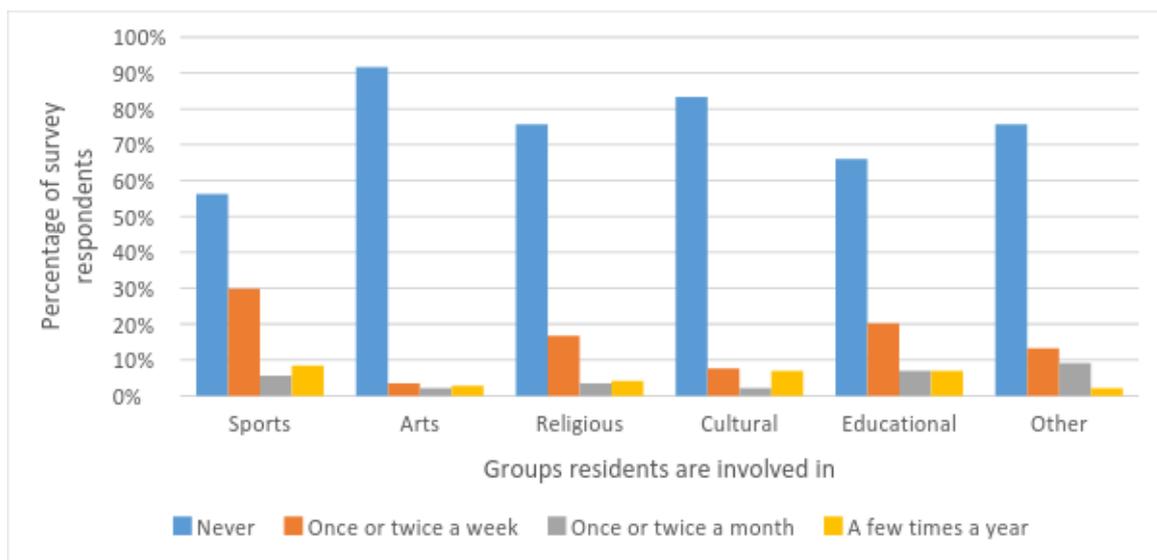
### **4.4 Data processing and analysis**

In order to analyse both the quantitative and qualitative data, specific techniques were required. Firstly, the data was separated into these two categories and analysed separately. The qualitative data was analysed using a thematic analysis, which involved looking at the responses from the questions ‘activities you would like to see happen in Halswell’ and ‘things you appreciate about Halswell’ and finding common themes. The qualitative data was analysed using R commander software with an exploratory data analysis to find common relationships within the data. To examine the significance, a Chi-squared test was carried out to observe how much the data varies from the expected values.

## 5. Results and Discussion

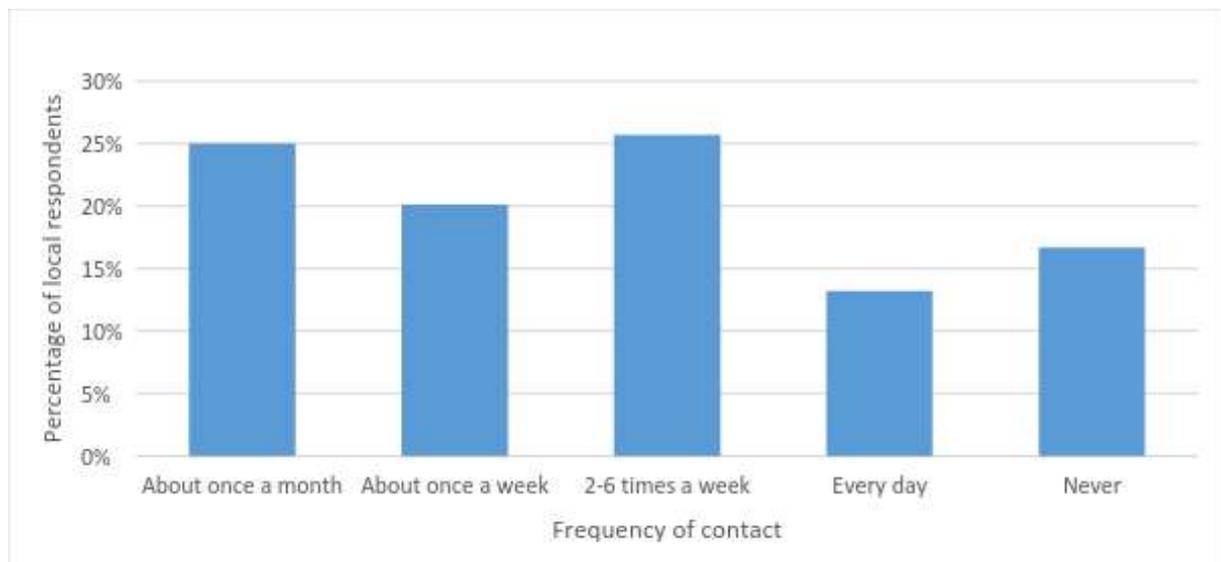
### 5.1 Community Involvement in Halswell

Results from the Chi-squared tests and exploratory data analyses revealed how Halswell residents are involved in community, and their perceptions of community. The first question in our survey was asking residents what clubs or groups they were involved in, and how often they participated in them. Figure one below shows that for all groups, the main response was never. People were then more inclined to participate once or twice a week in all of the groups. It is unclear what 'other' groups may actually refer to, and was included in the survey so that people were not confined to the set responses. Sports groups have the highest amount of weekly participation, while 'other' groups have the highest amount of monthly participation. Arts groups have the least overall participation. Possible reasons for these results could be due to Halswell having more sports, religious and educational clubs than arts, cultural and other clubs. Therefore, residents may be more likely to be part of these communities. It is interesting to note that more residents are involved in sports clubs, because as Table one shows, a common request was for more sports clubs in Halswell. A reason for this could be to supplement the already existing sports clubs, which have shown to be successful in drawing residents into community involvement.



*Figure 1: Halswell residents' involvement in groups, based on frequency of attendance*

Figure two shows that the majority of Halswell residents contact others in their street at least once a month, or two to six times a week. The least common frequency of contact is every day. 13 percent of survey respondents contact their neighbours, or others in their street every day. 17 percent of people never contact others in their street. Informal contact such as knowing and contacting others in your street has been shown to increase community (Edward & Jones, 1976). Based on the respondents who do contact others in their street, community is formed. It seems that the majority of those surveyed do contact others in their street. However, the survey did not establish whether or not this contact was positive. Given the results shown in Table one, it is possible that those who want more activities for children are among those who never contact others in their street. Also, contact with others in one's street has been shown to be beneficial for developing community (Meares & Gilbertson, 2013).



**Figure 2: Halswell residents' responses to how often they contact their neighbours**

In Figure B1 (see appendices), it can be seen that 30-39 year olds are the largest age group that have moved to Halswell since the earthquakes. A Chi-squared test revealed that age groups and having moved since the earthquakes were statistically significant at the 95 percentage confidence level, which is shown in Appendix B, Table B1. The purpose of having a question about Halswell and the earthquakes was to see what groups of people had moved more recently, and therefore may be less involved in the community. Previous research has revealed that length of residence is a factor that contributes to strong communities, with people who have lived in an area longer being more involved in

community (Kang & Kwak, 2003). Perhaps it is possible that the 30-39 year olds who have moved to Halswell since the earthquakes experience less community involvement. This age group may be more likely to have small children, and therefore list activities for children as something they would like to see happen in Halswell. This could lead to greater community involvement.

## 5.2 Halswell residents opinions on community

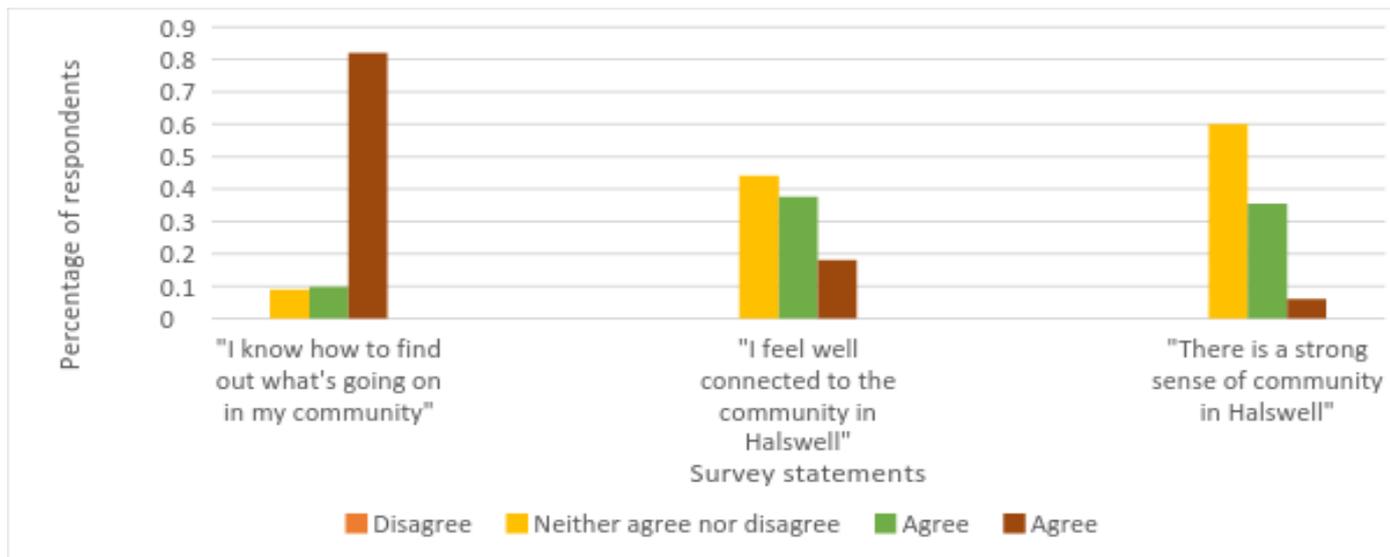
The last two questions of the survey required participants to list activities they would like to see happen in Halswell (question 16), and also what they already appreciate about Halswell (question 17). Not everyone answered these questions, however people seemed more inclined to list what they appreciated about Halswell. 47 percent of respondents answered question 16, while 65 percent of respondents answered question 17. Table one shows the most common answers for this part of the survey. Many people would appreciate more sports opportunities in Halswell, and the most commonly listed assets were the community feel and the quiet, scenic nature of the area.

*Table 1: Qualitative survey results of residents 'wants and needs' and items of appreciation about Halswell*

<b>Activities residents would like to see happen in Halswell</b>	<b>Things residents appreciate about Halswell</b>
More sports and fitness options (18 comments)	Friendly community atmosphere (36 comments)
More markets and fairs (13 comments)	Peaceful and scenic area (31 comments)
Activities for children and youth (13 comments)	Green space (22 comments)
More social events (8 comments)	Close to the city and amenities (21 comments)
Facilities to make things more comfortable (7 comments) – e.g. covered seating at bus stops, rubbish bins, better roads, cycle lanes	Safe area (12 comments)
More shops and cafes (6 comments)	Local shops (8 comments)
Cultural or art/craft activities (4 comments)	Local schools (5 comments)
Most activities are catered for (3 comments)	Used to be small, now it's "too big to know everyone" (4 comments)
	Newly built (3 comments)
	Sports opportunities (2 comments)

Within our survey, there was a set of three statements about whether or not people know how to find out about their local community activities, if they felt well connected in Halswell, and if there was a sense of community. People tended to agree with the first statement in

particular of knowing how to find out about what is happening in their local area. The purpose of these questions was to assess perceptions of community in Halswell. Figure three shows that residents tended to disagree with the statement about belonging, and there being a sense of community. A sense of belonging is important to developing community involvement (McMillian & Chavis, 1986). Figure three also shows that residents tended to agree about knowing how to find out what is happening in the area. This seems to indicate that knowledge of what is happening in the area does not contribute to a sense of community, or belonging. Upon reviewing the data, some residents who rated there to be less sense of community were among those who wanted to see more activities happen for children, as well as more markets. Perhaps residents are not feeling connected because there is a lack of activities that cater to their lifestyles.

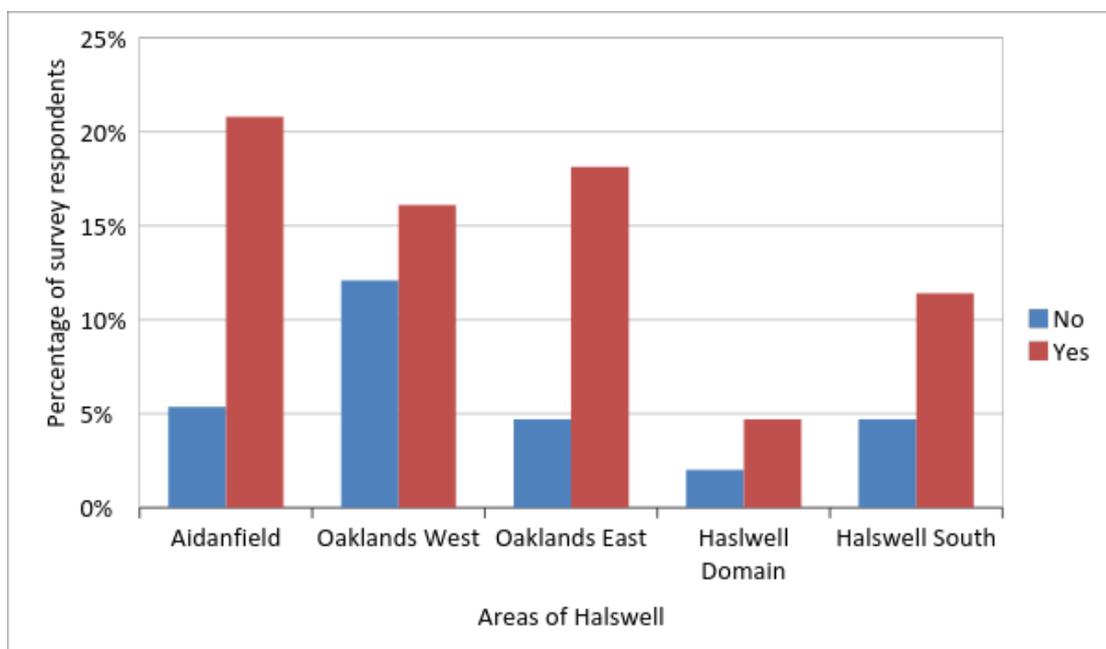


**Figure 3: Survey respondents' opinions on community in Halswell**

### 5.3 Factors that influence community involvement

Figure three below shows that people in Aidanfield and Oaklands East are more likely to say that their wants and needs are being met. This result was found to be significant when a Chi-squared test was run, as seen in Table B1 (see appendix B). McMillan and Chavis (1986) identified the fulfilment of needs as being a key factor in a sense of community. Halswell Domain and Halswell South are the areas with the least amount of responses, which is reflective of our sampling. Key aspects of fulfilment of needs are shared values, feeling competent, and if one has a place in their community. 'Wants' can refer to if residents feel as

if they can voice their concerns, or ask for improved community facilities. ‘Needs’ refers to residents feeling supported in their day to day life, or if they would receive support at a difficult time. If Halswell residents feel as if their wants and needs are being met, they are more likely to feel as if they belong. This may mean that they are more likely to be involved in their community, and participate in community activities, which is what our research question asks (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The first column in Table one gives insight into what the residents wants and needs might be. Perhaps Aidanfield is an area in which residents are actively involved in a community.

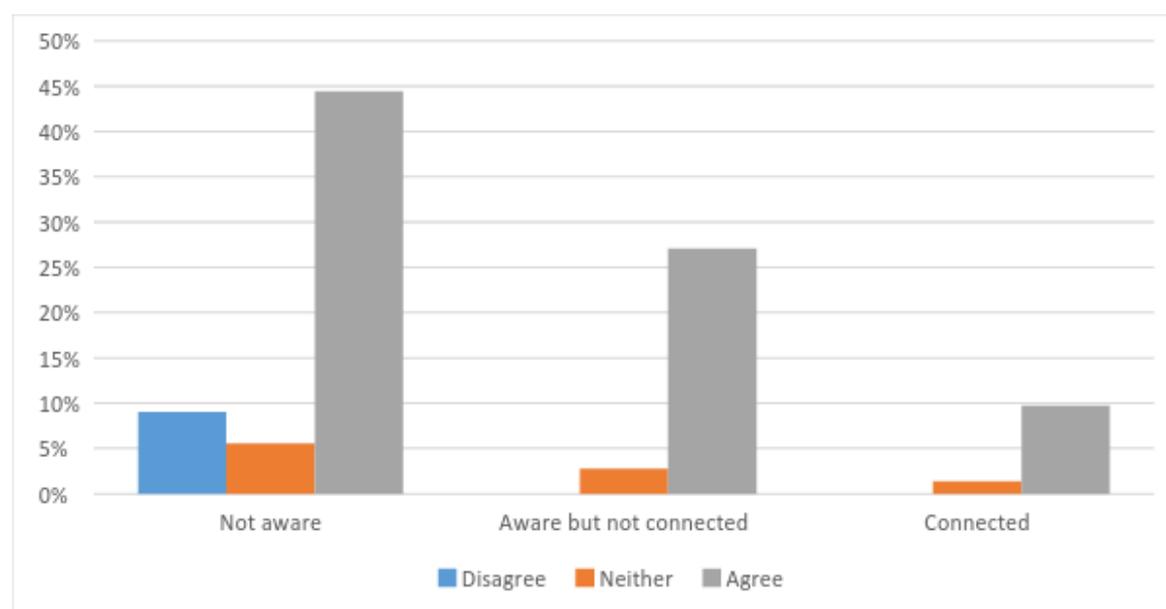


**Figure 4: Halswell resident's rating of their wants and needs being met. This was a yes/no question in the survey**

Residents who lived in Halswell before the earthquakes were more likely to report higher feelings of being valued, as seen in Table B1 (see appendices). As the population in Halswell has increased since the earthquakes (Future Christchurch Design, 2014), it would make sense for those who have recently moved to know fewer people, and perhaps feel less connected to others in the area (Kang & Kwak, 2003).

Relevant Chi-squared results displayed a significant relationship between those connected to social media and whether or not residents can find out about community activities. Based on Figure five below, and Figures B2 and B3 in the appendices, it would appear that people

know how to find out about what is happening in Halswell without necessarily being connected to social media or online resources offered by the Halswell Community Project. This could be due to the large amount of signage in the area advertising the Halswell Community Project activities, which was observed on data collection. Hampton and Wellman (2003) conducted research into the effects of social media on community, as it was feared that the internet could be destroying, rather than aiding local communities. However, Hampton and Wellman found this was not the case in Toronto, their area of study. Our findings suggest that in Halswell, residents do not need to be connected to online resources in order to have community. There seems to be a group of people who are more connected on social media, with the majority of them agreeing that they know how to find out about community in Halswell. Many Halswell residents wanted to be informed of those living near them, and also wanted to meet new people, as seen in Figure B4 in Appendix B. This seems to indicate that at least some of the residents in Halswell value community and want to be involved.



**Figure 5: Residents awareness of the Halswell Facebook page and whether or not they know how to find out about what is going on in their community**

From our results, we can begin to form a picture of the community in Halswell, how involved residents are, and if they actually want community or not. While opinions on community in Halswell seem mixed, generally, residents seem to be in favour of community in Halswell, and indicate that they would appreciate more opportunities to be involved in community. The

online data has been analysed and has similar findings to the survey data we collected. Our results show that factors such as wants and needs being met and involvement in social media appear to be associated with how involved in community Halswell residents are. Originally, our definition of community was “groups of people who care about each other, feel as if they belong, and have unity in attitudes or behaviours.” However, our results seem to challenge this. It would appear that in Halswell, community does exist without all residents feeling as if they belong. Community can be seen in the results showing how often residents contact each other, and their wants and needs being met.

## 6. Limitations

Like any project there was a series of limitations that hindered the research. During our surveying week a combination of unfortunate events and members away on holiday resulted in only 3 people surveying each day for 4-5 hours, resulting in a total of 63 hours in the field. As a result we were only able to obtain 144 paper surveys and 35 online surveys (total of 179), which was significantly fewer than our aim of 300. We only managed to sample 1.2% of Halswell's population, which means that the data may not be entirely representative of Halswell. The use of door to door surveying has also been documented to cause 'interviewer effects' promoting greater positive responses due to the presence of a surveyor and social expectation (Mcguirk & O'Neill, 2010). Thus, it is difficult to know if our results are truly accurate. Our lack of experience also resulted in no response rate being recorded. This gives us no indication of the willingness to be involved or if residents want to change their community in certain areas. During piloting we were able to ensure questions were not discriminating or confusing. However, one question did provide issues in the field, where many participants were confused by the layout of the table. Subsequently, the data for this question was to an extent inaccurate and indicated an example of 'non-sampling error' within our data (Parfitt, 2005). Finally, in collection, only 10 surveys were collected per area, which may not be representative of that specific sample area.

## 7. Conclusions

In conclusion, the aim of our research was to find out to what extent residents in Halswell area are actively involved in a community. This included how residents felt about Halswell, to develop an understanding of what the residents want and how people are connected to a community. Using our literature reviews, a research question was formulated. To obtain our data, we used a simplified random sampling technique. The survey was administered through a paper survey and an online survey, obtaining 179 responses. Findings show that many Halswell residents are not involved in clubs or groups. There were only a few residents who are and they are more likely to be involved with sports clubs. Most of the residents contact their neighbours once a month or two times to six times a week which showed how involved they are in wanting to know their neighbours. Most of the people who have moved to Halswell since the earthquakes are in the 30-39 age group, and want activities for children. Many residents appreciate the community in Halswell and would like more fitness options and markets. They know how to find out about what is happening in their area however they disagree about feeling a sense of community in Halswell. We can then recommend Halswell Community Project to have regular events involving face to face contact. This could lead to a stronger sense of feeling valued. Perhaps more advertising of the Halswell Community Project would help the residents and also develop a stronger sense of community.

It is recommended that future research should involve independence of questions in terms of creating fewer questions with the same scale. Also, formulating a shorter survey with more direct and predictive questions would be useful. More demographic questions could also be asked, such as gender, ethnicity, religion and income. Using the Census data more would also be useful in gaining an understanding of the demographic in Halswell. It would be beneficial to survey over a wider time frame, and to include the more rural areas of Halswell.

## **8. Acknowledgements**

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to all of those who provided our group the possibility to complete our project. A special gratitude is given to our course coordinator, Eric Pawson and our academic advisor, David Conradson, for their continuous help, advice and guidance throughout this project. We would especially like to thank our community partner Chrys Horn at the Halswell Community Project for her generous help in sharing ideas towards our project. Also, thank you to the Halswell residents that took part in this study by completing the survey, whether it was online, or in person.

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## 10. Appendices

### Appendix A: Methods

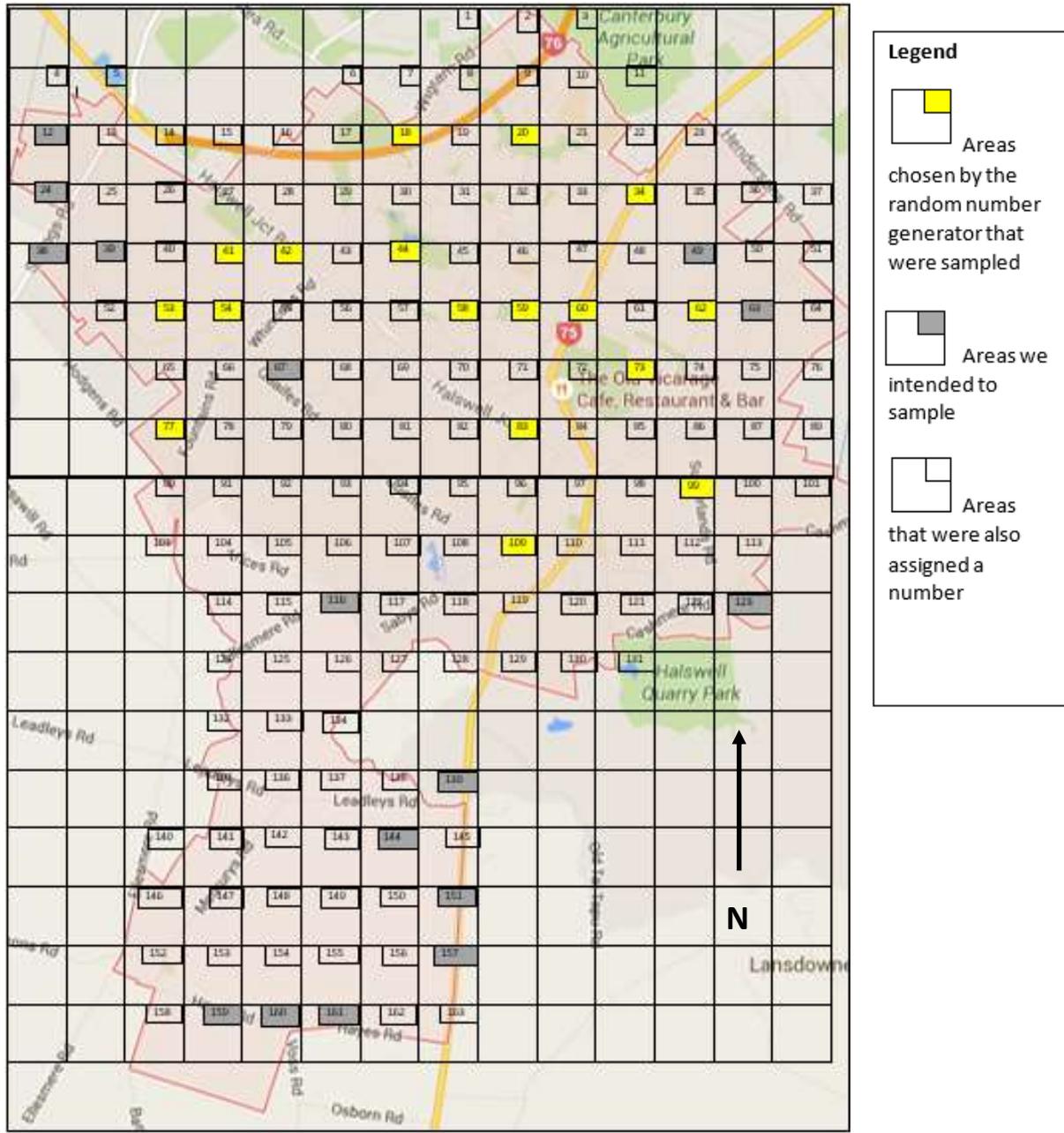


Figure A1 shows the map that was used to sample the Halswell area. Not all of the areas that were intended to be sampled were, due to the extensive farm land and limited time to survey such areas.

## Appendix B: Results and Discussion

Figure B1 displays the results about those who have moved to Halswell since the earthquakes, split by age. This was a significant result from the Chi-squared test. Age groups 30-39 show the highest levels of increase, while the group that has stayed in Halswell the longest is the 40-49 year olds. The 30-59 year olds were the age group that responded most to our survey.

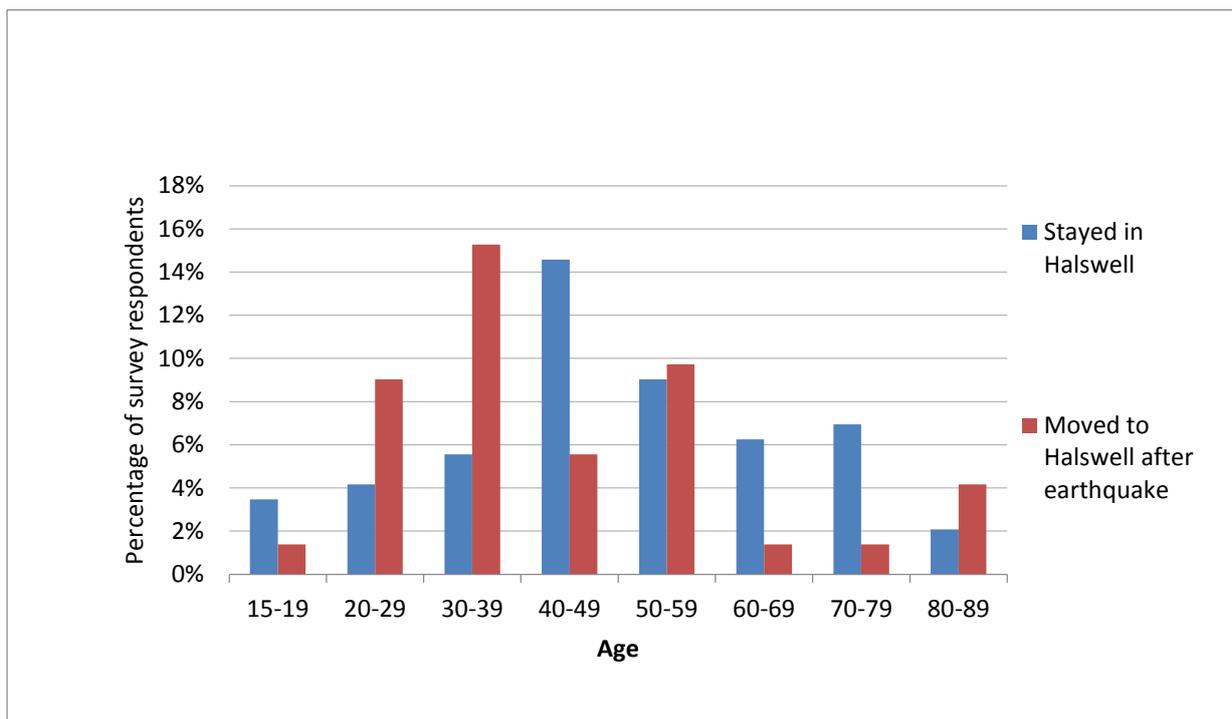


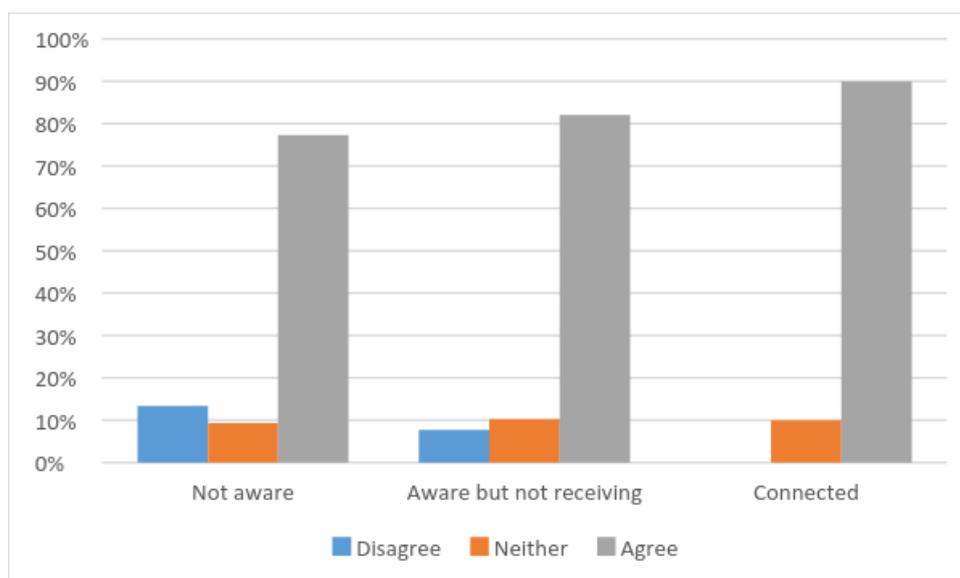
Figure B1: Graph of Halswell residents who have moved to Halswell since the 2010/2011 earthquakes, according to age

Table B1 shows all significant Chi-Square test from the collected data. The results here show that there is a relationship between the variables. The null hypothesis that variables A and B are independent is rejected, as a low p-value shows that these results depend on each other. The results about knowing how to find out about activities, feeling connected, and there being a sense of community relate to whether or not people participate in the activities or resources run by the Halswell Community Project. These include day markets, a business network, a youth action group, the email newsletter, and Facebook page. Residents that did not feel connected were not aware of these initiatives, and vice versa.

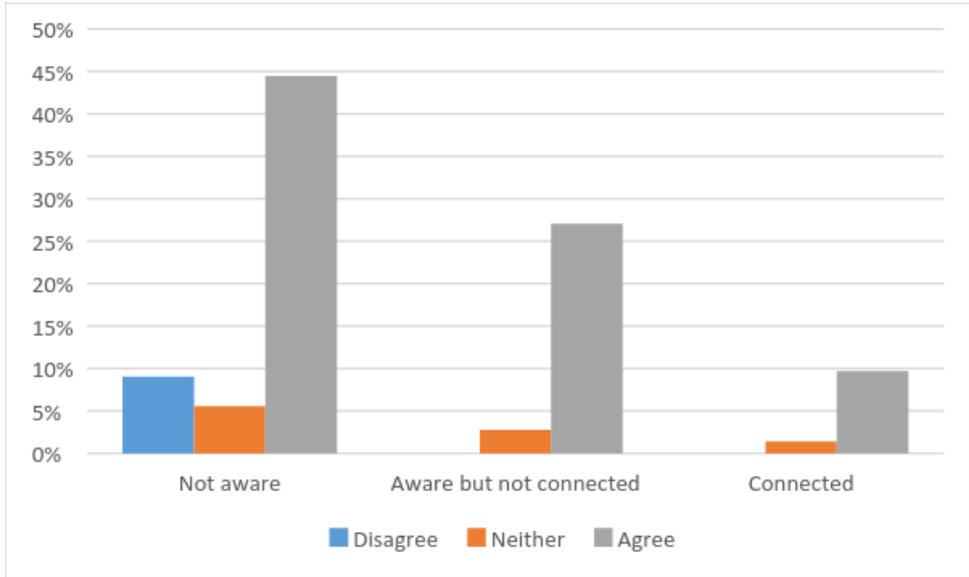
*Table B1: Results from Chi-squared tests, all of which show a statistically significant relationship between variables A and B*

<b>Significant Chi-squared results</b>		
<b>Variable A</b>	<b>Variable B</b>	<b>P.Value</b>
Importance of knowing others in the neighbourhood	Interested in meeting new people	1.14E-12
Knowledge of how to find out about activities within Halswell	Feeling well connected in Halswell	1.83E-12
Knowledge of how to find out about activities within Halswell	Sense of community in Halswell	1.39E-12
Knowledge of how to find out about activities within Halswell	Halswell email newsletter	3.54E-03
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Day Markets	3.66E-04
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Business Network	1.97E-02
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Community Gardens	2.72E-02
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Halswell email newsletter	1.28E-03
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Facebook	6.57E-03
Sense of community in Halswell	Day Markets	0.03286
Sense of community in Halswell	Business Network	0.02708
Sense of community in Halswell	Community Gardens	0.01545
Sense of community in Halswell	Halswell email newsletter	0.0003944
Sense of community in Halswell	Youth Action group	0.02708
Area of Halswell	Wants and needs being met	0.02783
Area of Halswell	Age	0.03801
Moved to Halswell since the earthquakes	Age	3.551E-05

Figure B2 shows residents awareness of the Halswell community email newsletter, and their level of agreement as to whether or not they know how to find out about what is happening in their community. Residents tend to agree that they can find out about what is happening, however they do not necessarily need to be receiving the email newsletter in order for this to be the case. No one who receives the email newsletter disagreed with the statement about know how to find out about community happenings. This indicates that the newsletter is informative for those who receive it. A similar trend can be observed in regards to residents being connected to Neighbourly or not. However, here we see that more people agree that they can find out about community happenings when they are not aware of Neighbourly, compared to when they are connected. This indicates that Neighbourly is perhaps more of a social network, and does not inform people about what is happening in Halswell.

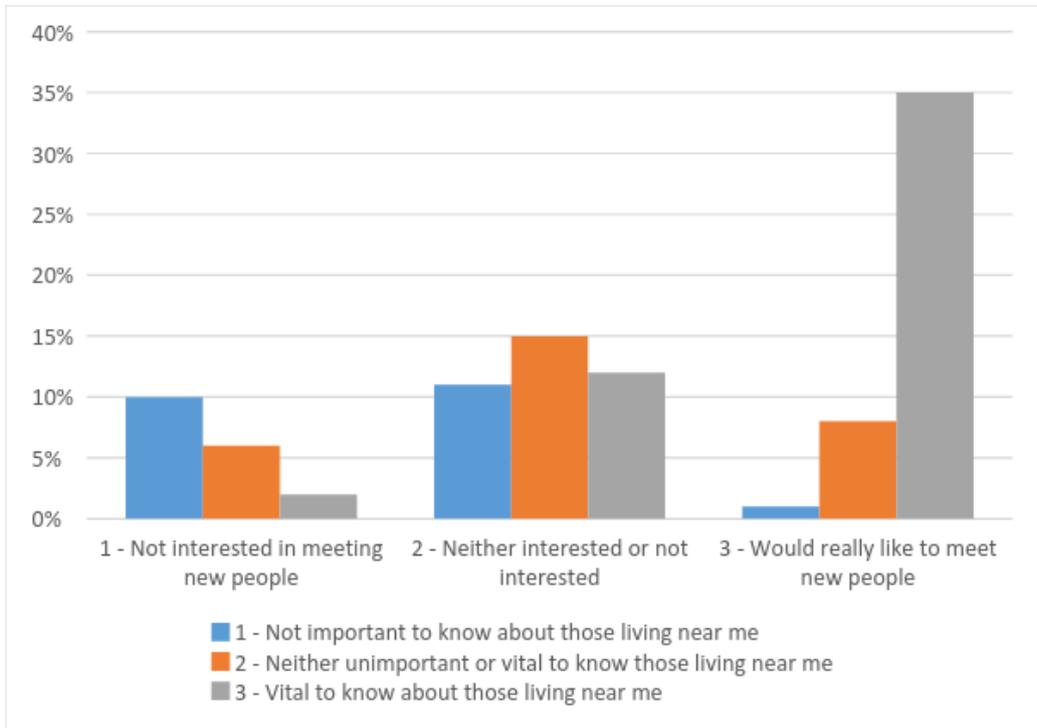


**Figure B2: Residents awareness of the Halswell Community email newsletter and whether or not they know how to find out about what is going on in their community**



**Figure B3: Residents awareness of the Neighbourly website, which connects local residents, and whether or not they know how to find out about what is going on in their community**

In figure B4, we see that residents who would like to meet new people also consider it important to know about those living near them. This works in reverse too, as those who are not interested in meeting new people also do not see the importance of knowing about those near them.



**Figure B4: Halswell residents that want to know about those living near them and also are interested in meeting new people**