

and everyone will live within 3 minutes' walk of a park.

Harmony is the brainchild of Martha and Jim Lentz. Jim is one of the developers, and emphasizes that this is a commercial development that has to pay its way. Martha runs the Harmony Institute, a charitable organization which is pioneering, monitoring and reporting on the environmental aspects of the town and the lives of its residents. Advisers include Roger Ulrich, Director, Centre for Health Systems and Design at Texas A&M University, who has suggested (1984) that people with a view of the natural environment recover from surgery more quickly than those without such a view, and that merely entering a semi-natural urban greenspace immediately reduces a person's heartbeat and stress levels.

Another adviser is John Hadidian, Director, Urban Wildlife Programs, the Humane Society of the United States. John's special contribution has been the authoring of Harmony's 'Community Covenants and Restrictions'. Every resident has to sign up to this 22-page document, the full title of which is: *'Harmony Residential Properties Restrictions, Guidelines and Goals Concerning Companion Animals, Habitat and Wildlife'*.

The Harmony covenant lays down what is probably the most detailed framework and mandate for the relationship between a town's inhabitants and its wildlife anywhere in the world. It begins: 'The overall goal of Harmony is to promote the peaceful coexistence of (these) human and animal residents within the community while striking a balance between the preservation, use and enjoyment of Harmony's natural areas. Underlying these objectives are the values of fostering respect for the land, the protection of wildlife and the sensible use and enjoyment of Harmony's abundant

natural and manmade amenities by its residents'.

Restrictions include no trapping of or keeping wild animals and no hunting – although fishing is allowed. Some of the contents may seem surprising, for example: 'Removal of wildlife shall not be conducted simply because a homeowner considers the mere presence of a wild animal to be a "pest" or "nuisance" or because a homeowner wishes to favour a species or group (such as songbirds) over another that competes with it (such as squirrels)'. There are also sections on environmental management (which includes encouragement to cultivate native plants), preserved area management and companion animals (pets). Subjects within these sections encompass the use and disposal of anti-bacterial agents, the use of low intensity outdoor lighting, fences, the height of mowers (at least 2 inches) and the use of chemicals.

MERSEY BASIN CAMPAIGN

This was launched in 1985, and describes itself as "... a 25-year government-backed partnership which brings together local authorities, businesses, voluntary organizations and government agencies to deliver water quality improvements and waterside regeneration throughout the Mersey Basin river system'. It was one of a number of environmental initiatives flowing from Michael Heseltine's intervention after the Toxteth riots in 1981 (the Groundwork movement being another). It is one of the longest-running environmental management programmes in Britain. More importantly, it is unusual in being based on the natural boundaries of a river basin rather than the artificial boundaries of one or more local authorities.

The River Mersey and its tributaries, including the Irwell and the Irk, flow through the heavily industrialized and urbanized north-west of England between Manchester and Liverpool. Those three rivers are inextricably linked to the Manchester Ship Canal, which was partly created from them. The old docks in Manchester, which include Salford Quays, form the largest inland harbour in the UK. Until recently it was heavily polluted but, thanks to the development of a unique oxygenating process, it is now supporting aquatic life throughout the year. The re-oxygenation is scheduled to continue for ten years, after which it is anticipated that natural processes will have been restored.

In tackling water quality issues virtually from source to sea in a major river basin, the Campaign has not only generated and harnessed major resources (£3 billion will be spent between 2002 and 2005 alone), it has been able to direct those resources in a coordinated way. The vertical silos of different funding sources in the public, private and voluntary sectors, their different objectives and time scales, and the needs of their various stakeholders, have been integrated in ways which cut horizontally across their respective boundaries. It is a model of sustainable development – using an environmental platform the Campaign has been involved in social inclusion and development through activities, events and recreational provision, and has underpinned the major regeneration programmes of Manchester, Liverpool and other towns.

The Campaign's work was recognized when, in 1999, it was awarded a £45 000 prize for the best river clean-up programme in the world, at the World River Symposium in Brisbane. In the eighteenth century, the

Mersey was a famous salmon river, and in the twenty-first century it may be again.

BIRMINGHAM AND THE BLACK COUNTRY BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

The Plan was put together by a partnership including the five local authorities, the local biological records centre, English Nature, the Environment Agency, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the University of Wolverhampton and the local Wildlife Trust. More than sixty organizations in total were involved in the Plan process, including Business in the Environment, Walsall Local Agenda 21, British Waterways, the Countryside Agency, the National Federation of Anglers, the Forest of Mercia, Groundwork Black Country, and various local natural history societies and species- and site-based groups. This wide-ranging involvement in the Plan should help to ensure effective implementation and ownership. It demonstrates just how many people and organisations are involved and interested in biodiversity in one of Britain's most industrial and heavily populated areas.

By commissioning the Plan, the Partnership recognized and acknowledged that nature conservation requires a strategic approach and is not tied to political boundaries, even in densely populated areas.

In the Foreword the then Chairman of Advantage West Midlands (the regional development agency) says: 'Advantage West Midlands recognises that a pleasant and natural environment plays a crucial part in stimulating economic development and regeneration. In this respect the West Midlands Economic Strategy – Creating