



emmaus

Sharing in success

An economic evaluation of Emmaus Village Carlton



Executive summary of 'Emmaus: Sharing in Success, An Economic Evaluation of Emmaus Village Carlton Community' by Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research, University of Cambridge 2008

Emmaus – the homeless charity that works



The Research

In 2007, Emmaus UK commissioned the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research to undertake an economic evaluation of Emmaus Village Carlton. This evaluation was done by following loosely a previous economic evaluation of Emmaus Cambridge as a social enterprise (Lovatt et al. 2004). The evaluation of Emmaus Village Carlton was carried out in Spring 2008, using a simple cost benefit analysis approach supplemented with information gathered during interviews with Companions, staff members and volunteers, and representatives of key voluntary and statutory agencies in the local area.

The overall fundamental aims and objectives of the project were four-fold: to update the evaluation methodology and evidence on the success of the Emmaus approach; to apply this methodology to Emmaus Village Carlton; to identify the lessons to be learned more broadly in the context of the rapid expansion of the Emmaus model; and to contribute to the policy agenda on Social Enterprise.

This is a summary of the full technical research report 'Emmaus: Sharing in Success, An Economic Evaluation of Emmaus Village Carlton' by Anna Clarke, Sanna Markkanen and Christine Whitehead.

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Key Findings

- An economic evaluation of the benefits of Emmaus to the wider community suggests that Emmaus Village Carlton is responsible for savings and benefits to society of at least £660,777 per year – an output of around £24,473 per Companion. Most of this represents a direct saving to the Treasury and therefore the taxpayer. Taking into account the fact that many of the people who have lived at Emmaus as Companions regain control of their lives and move on to paid employment, the total savings and benefits generated by the Community total £843,815 per year, or £31,252 per Companion.
- Emmaus Communities offer an alternative approach to homelessness by using a social enterprise model. Emmaus is a distinctive homelessness organisation for a number of reasons, but particularly:
 - Work is essential to Companions, who give up income related benefits and work in the Community.
 - The concept of Solidarity lies at the heart of the Emmaus Movement. Communities show Solidarity in many ways, including sharing their surplus with others who have less, offering household goods at a discount or free to low income households and supporting other local community projects.
 - Communities provide a supportive environment, enabling Companions to develop confidence, recover their self-respect and their independence.
- The first level of economic evaluation, based on accounts figures for 2006-2007, shows that Emmaus Village Carlton generated a surplus of £67,586 from its trading activities. Although this alone was not sufficient to meet the full costs of accommodating, sustaining and supporting the Companions, additional income from other sources of funding (of which the only statutory sources are Housing Benefit and Supporting People funding) enabled the Community to produce a surplus of £19,089 after Companion costs had been met.
- Emmaus Village Carlton benefits from being able to rent its site for a peppercorn rent from the Carlton Education Trust. This, however, may not be the case for all newly-formed Communities. If costs for property rental and voluntary input are imputed, the Community would incur an annual loss of £119,121. This indicates that, as a fairly new and developing Community, Emmaus Village Carlton is still dependent on volunteer activity and charitable giving that enables it to occupy a large site nearly free of charge.
- While an economic evaluation cannot account for intangible benefits, such as improved self-esteem or quality of life, it is clear that there are real benefits resulting from Emmaus Communities for the Government (national and local), the wider community, the homeless population and the environment.



Background: The Emmaus Movement

Emmaus is an international movement with more than three hundred self-supporting projects in 36 countries. The Emmaus Movement aims to alleviate poverty and homelessness by helping those most in need. Whilst there is a wide variety of Emmaus projects, the core model is one of self-financing Communities within which residents (known as Companions) live and work together thereby regaining their self-respect through supporting themselves and working to help others.

The Emmaus Movement began in France in 1949 when its founder Abbé Pierre, a Catholic Priest, opened up his home to some of the many homeless and dispossessed people on the streets of Paris after the end of the Second World War. In order to support themselves these first 'Companions' became 'rag pickers' collecting things that people no longer wanted and selling them on. So began the tradition of re-use and recycling which is still the main activity for many Emmaus Communities today.

In line with its Universal Manifesto, the Emmaus Movement aims to alleviate poverty and homelessness through a network of self-financing Communities in which residents feel free and respected, and where they meet their own needs and help each other. The concept of work is essential – all individuals who join agree to work according to their ability and give up all income-related state benefits. The concept of solidarity – 'serve those worse off than yourself before yourself. Serve the needy first' – is also important. The approach enables Emmaus Companions to get their life back together and move on to independent living. Within the Community, individual needs are recognised and Companions may stay in the Communities for as long as they need.

The first Emmaus Community in the United Kingdom opened near Cambridge in 1992. At the time of writing in 2008, there are 15 Emmaus Communities* in the UK using a variety of redundant industrial, public and historical buildings, some of notable historical heritage. In addition, there are 12

'Affiliated Groups' at different stages of development that are affiliated but not yet full members of the Emmaus Federation, and 9 'Emerging Groups' at an earlier stage.

Emmaus Communities contribute in a unique way to the need for a diversity of accommodation with support for homeless people. They effectively operate as therapeutic communities; peer support and meaningful occupation are important integral characteristics.

Emmaus Communities fit easily into the model of social enterprise: they rely on an enterprise-orientated approach; they have specific social aims beyond providing accommodation, including the capacity building of individuals experiencing disadvantage, exclusion and homelessness; and, they are very much autonomous social organisations.

A key weakness, particularly in the context of the Emmaus evaluation and probably in most social enterprise projects, is that there are many factors such as improved quality of life and self esteem, that are impossible to value in monetary terms. Whilst economic analysis can include some elements such as improved health by attributing values, other elements can only be identified but remain outside a quantitative economic evaluation. These intangible benefits, however, are important outcomes and must at least be identified as an additional qualitative layer to the economic evaluation. Some of these outcomes are also indirectly included in the final part of the economic evaluation, which seeks to estimate the benefits of Emmaus to wider society due to former Companions' improved ability to live independently and make a positive contribution.

** Two more Communities opened in Summer 2008, taking the total number of Emmaus Communities in the UK to 17.*



The Case Study – Emmaus Village Carlton

The Emmaus Village Carlton Community was set up in December 2001 with the help of monks from Turvey Monastery and financial support from local businessmen. The site for Emmaus Village Carlton was acquired from the Carlton Education Trust for a nominal rent of £1 a year. A formal lease agreement was drafted for 50 years, stating that instead of rent, Emmaus would carry out improvements and refurbishment on the site. The first six Companions and only a few staff members joined forces with volunteers and took on the task of building a Community that would eventually offer accommodation and work to a much larger number of homeless people. At the time of writing this report, the Community has been in operation for nearly six and a half years. With support from a range of funding and grant making bodies including the Lottery, private donations, company donations and a huge number of private individuals, the Community has developed and expanded, and now has the capacity to accommodate up to 29 Companions.

Life in the Community

The Companions are housed in two buildings accommodating 12 and 17 people, and there are also self-contained living quarters for some staff members who live on site, as well as three 'move-on' flats for Companions who have acquired employment outside and are preparing to leave the Community. In the Companion accommodation blocks, each Companion has their own bedroom. One of the accommodation buildings has a kitchen where communal meals are served twice a day during the week. The kitchen facilities can be used freely by all Companions during the weekends when they are expected to cook their own meals. The purpose of this kind of arrangement is to help prepare them for independent living when they leave Emmaus. The other residential building has some recreational facilities, including a gym, that are accessible to all Community members.

The Companions receive a weekly allowance of £36, and are free to use this money according to their own preference (with the exception of illegal drugs). In addition to this, a further £5 is put in a leaving fund which they receive when they move out of the Community. Clothing, accommodation (including accommodation-related expenses such as council tax and electricity) and meals are provided to all Companions free of charge. Laundry is also taken care of. Companions must sign off all benefits except Housing Benefit, and work according to their ability. The Companions are expected to abide by the Community rules.

Emmaus Village Carlton derives its income from a number of activities; bric-a-brac sales, furniture recycling and sales, the Bistro and the newly established clothing boutique. Other activities that require an input from the Companions include cooking, cleaning and gardening. Work is organised via a rota system, whereby all Companions receive basic training for each type of job but can later sign up for certain jobs according to their preference on most days. Companions are expected to work for five days a week, and have two free days each week. The Community's trading activities are important because they generate the surplus that supports the Community.



Companions who have to do community service have to undertake this activity in their free time (i.e. their day off), but Companions who attend college courses or other training outside the Community are allowed to use working days for this. On their free days, the Companions can come and go as they please, and many go walking, fishing, to visit family, or to the nearby town of Bedford. On some Sundays the Community organises social events. Although the consumption of alcohol on site is prohibited, the Companions can visit pubs in the area as long as their behaviour does not reflect negatively on the Community.

When a Companion wants to move on, s/he is given help to find accommodation and work in the local area. A recent innovation over the past 12 months has been the development of three 'Transitional Flats' in one of the accommodation blocks which are available to Companions as part of a 'moving on package'. Under the terms of this, an individual must have secured permanent employment outside the Community. Rather than being forced to leave the Community and take on the other challenges of new home etc. all at once, Companions who are preparing to leave are allowed to rent a flat on site. This allows a staff member to work with him or her in finding housing, getting used to financial budgeting, shopping and cooking as an individual rather than as part of a Community, yet still within the support network of friends at Emmaus Village Carlton.

In addition to the Companions, the Community consists of seven staff members who live permanently on site, and four other employees, three of whom work part-time. Two of the part-time staff members who presently live on site are about to retire, and their places will be taken by two Companions who successfully applied for the posts and so will soon become members of staff. The Community also benefits from the input of 60-70 volunteers, who work a total of 230 hours a week on average. These people are needed to run the site, but are also beneficial in other ways, for they provide a link with the world beyond the Community and give the Companions an opportunity to mix with members of the mainstream community. The volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds, although many of them are retired, and most of them are female.

Conducting an Economic Evaluation of an Emmaus Community

One aim of the evaluation of Emmaus Village Carlton is to provide a baseline against which the value of other Communities and social enterprises can be measured. Decision-makers need to be able to estimate the likely costs and consequences of any particular activity in order to determine whether or not it should go ahead and what level of resources should be involved. As such, economic evaluation is designed to help both decision-makers and funders make better decisions. Out of a wide range of different economic evaluation approaches, simple cost-benefit analysis was regarded as the most suitable for the purposes of an economic evaluation of Emmaus Village Carlton. This decision was made because cost-benefit analysis provides a comprehensive and transparent evaluation methodology, which involves specifying and valuing all inputs, outputs and outcomes and expressing both costs and benefits in monetary terms.

A two-step, six stage quantitative economic evaluation of Emmaus Village Carlton was undertaken to identify its social investment value. The six stages are:

A. Purely Financial Evaluation

1. Actual trade income and expenditure
2. Imputed costs
3. Accommodation, living and support costs versus total income
4. Estimations of trade income, trade expenditure, Community costs and annual surplus following the expansion of Emmaus Village Carlton

B. Evaluation of Benefits and Outcomes

5. Beneficial outputs and savings arising from the existence of Emmaus Village Carlton
6. The impact on the public purse of the cost/input of Companions who leave



Purely Financial Evaluation of Emmaus Village Carlton

Stage One: Actual trade income and expenditure

The business element of Emmaus Village Carlton is crucial to the functioning of the Community. Not only does Emmaus Village Carlton's greatest income come from trading activities, but trading is central to the whole Emmaus concept of Community financial independence and of building the morale and self-esteem of Companions. An examination of business accounts is therefore central to the financial analysis.

Actual trading income and expenditure has been identified from accounts figures for the period of 1 July 2006 - 30 June 2007. Trading income represents the money generated by Emmaus Village Carlton's trading activities only. Trading expenditure comprises only those goods and services that were purchased to operate the business element of the Community. Table 1 shows Emmaus Village Carlton's trading income, expenditure, and the actual surplus generated by its trading activities. This does not include imputed costs.

Table 1: Emmaus Village Carlton: Actual Business Expenditure and Surplus (2006/07)

Trading Income	£276,479
Trading Expenditure	£208,893
Trading Surplus	£67,586

Stage Two: Considering imputed Costs

Three significant costs required imputation to account for missing values in the business accounts relating to Emmaus Village Carlton's inputs and outputs. These were the rental costs, volunteer staff costs and donation of trading consumables. The main report discusses why the opportunity costs of Companions' employment (wages) are not considered relevant here.

Property Value and Rental Values: As Emmaus Village Carlton leases the site from the Carlton Education Trust for a nominal rent of £1 per annum, there is no significant cost associated with rental or mortgage payments. However, the estimated value of the site is approximately £2.6m, and so a considerable amount of capital that could be used in other ways is tied up in the land that is given to Emmaus to use.

The most obvious low-risk alternative to giving the site to Emmaus to use would be to simply sell the property and place the money in a bank account. A good return on such an investment would be represented by a yield of approximately four per cent. An imputed rental value was generated based upon the interest that could be gained by investing a sum that equals the estimated value of the site in a bank account at a rate of four per cent. An annual yield from an investment of £2.6m could be expected to be approximately £104,000. This was therefore the figure used to represent the opportunity cost of rental for Emmaus Village Carlton for the period 2006/07.

Because only approximately 30 percent of the site is used for trading related activities, only 30 percent of the imputed rental costs of the site is regarded as trading expenditure and the remaining 70 percent as Community costs. Thus the imputed rental cost of the property used for trading activities was estimated at £31,200.

Valuing Volunteer Input: At the time of the research, Emmaus Village Carlton had 60-70 volunteers, who collectively worked for approximately 230 hours per week. The qualitative interviews with Emmaus Village Carlton volunteers suggest that volunteering is seen as a leisure activity by most of the volunteers, many of whom are retired. The volunteers themselves feel that they are getting a reward, albeit a non-financial one, for their labour input.

While it is reasonable to expect that some of the volunteers see their work in Emmaus purely as a leisure activity and would not be engaging in any other productive activity were they not in Emmaus, some of the volunteers would probably offer their services to other charities, or take on paid work. For the purposes of this evaluation, it was decided to assume that half of the volunteers would probably be undertaking paid or unpaid work elsewhere, so



the cost of income foregone by their volunteering in Emmaus (or the opportunity cost of other charities losing their potential labour input) ought to be considered.

If 50 percent of the 230 volunteer hours that are presently worked in Emmaus Village Carlton in an average week were to be paid at the minimum wage, i.e. £5.52 per hour (HMRC 2008), the weekly cost would be approximately £634 (or £33,010 per annum, based on 52 weeks).

Donations of trading consumables: A further voluntary element relates to the donation of trading consumables by the Community – estimated to be approximately £1,200. This takes the form of furniture donated to those in need, often formerly homeless people moving into a home of their own, referred to Emmaus from the nightshelter, social services or CAB. This should also be included as an economic cost.

Table 2 shows that the overall economic (actual and imputed) costs to the Community of trading would set expenditure at £274,303.

Table 2: Emmaus Village Carlton: Annual Actual & Imputed Cost of Trading

Total Actual & Imputed Business Expenditure	£240,093
Imputed Cost of Volunteer Input	£33,010
Donations of Trading Consumables	£1,200
Economic Trading Costs	£274,303

As shown in Table 3, Emmaus Village Carlton's trading activities would generate only a small surplus of £2,176 if the full imputed cost of the premises, donations and volunteer input was taken into account.

Table 3: Emmaus Village Carlton: Annual Economic Surplus

Trading Income	£276,479
Economic Trading Costs	£274,303
Economic Business Surplus	£2,176

Stage Three: Accommodation costs and other income

Actual Companion support/subsistence costs: A key element of the Emmaus ethos is to provide accommodation for those in need, who are willing to contribute to the Community through work. Emmaus Village Carlton provides Companions with not just a place to live and basic subsistence, but also many basic requirements of life, including recreation, training and travel. Council Tax is paid for the Companion accommodation blocks, and this is not subsidised by the local authority. Council Tax is also paid for the staff accommodation.

The Companion subsistence and support costs taken together represented a total cost of £174,684. This was the annual cost of housing 18 Companions (based upon 2006/07 figures). This includes all accommodation, subsistence and support costs, including food, clothes, staff salaries, motor expenses, insurance, Council Tax, water and electricity.

Imputed Community rental costs: Approximately 70 percent of the site occupied by Emmaus Village Carlton is used for accommodation and Community non-trade related activities. Using the same approach to imputing an opportunity cost as for trade related rental cost, an estimated annual property rent for the area used for accommodation is approximately £72,800.

Table 4 shows that when the imputed rental cost is added to the actual Companion accommodation, subsistence and support costs, the Community's non-trade related expenses increase to £247,484.

Table 4: Emmaus Village Carlton: Actual & Imputed Companion Subsistence Costs (2006/07)

Actual Companion Support and Subsistence Costs	£174,684
Rental Cost (imputed)	£72,800
Total Economic (actual & imputed) Companion Subsistence Costs	£247,484



Other income and total income: Although the business element of Emmaus is central to the whole Movement, most Communities also have other sources of income. Emmaus Village Carlton is no exception and accepts a financial element of government support via Supporting People funding and through Companion ‘accommodation contributions’ – i.e. the rent paid by Companions, mostly met from their Housing Benefit. All other costs are met by income from the Community’s business activities.

Table 5 lists the actual range of different sources of income that Emmaus Village Carlton utilised during the 2006/2007 accounting year. These sources include bank interest and investment income; donations and grants; reclaimed Gift Aid; fundraising and accommodation contributions, mostly met by Companions who are eligible for Housing Benefit and Supporting People funding.

Table 5: Emmaus Village Carlton: Total Income by Source (2006/2007)

	Actual	Economic
Donations	£13,516	£13,516
Housing Benefit	£88,178	£88,178
Supporting People	£16,157	£16,157
Interest Income	£7,291	£7,291
Other Income	£1,045	£1,045
Business Surplus	£67,586	£2,176
Total	£193,773	£128,363

Income from all different sources made up a total of £193,773 in actual - financial - terms, and £128,363 when imputed property rental and the opportunity costs of donations and volunteer input were taken into account.

While Supporting People funding is unlikely to rise even if the number of Companions increases, income from Housing Benefit is influenced by the number of Companions who are eligible for it. Hence if the number of Companions rises, the income from Housing Benefit is likely to increase accordingly.

Balance of total costs and expenses: As Table 6 demonstrates, the income of Emmaus Village Carlton would not be sufficient to meet even the actual Companion subsistence and support costs if the imputed costs were taken into account. Despite the fact that the trading activities of Emmaus Village Carlton generate a healthy profit of £67,586 in actual financial terms, the Community is still dependent on volunteer activity and charitable giving that enables them to occupy a large site nearly free of charge.

Table 6: Emmaus Village Carlton: Total Community Expenses and Income

	Actual	Economic
Total Income	£193,773	£128,363
Companion Subsistence Costs	£174,684	£247,484
Total Community Surplus	£19,089	- £119,121

As Table 6 shows, Emmaus Village Carlton generated a surplus of £19,089 in 2006/2007. A notable proportion of this, £2,564, was given to those in need via the Companions’ Solidarity Fund. The actual surplus in 2006/2007 was therefore £16,525.

Stage Four: Emmaus Village Carlton in a normal year

The year 2006/2007 was atypical in the sense that the Community had fewer Companions than it has the capacity to house. Unlike the more established Emmaus Cambridge (Lovatt et al. 2004), Emmaus Village Carlton is still developing and expanding. New business initiatives have been recently implemented, while existing business activities have been expanded.

The Community’s capacity has also increased significantly in the recent years. In 2008, Emmaus Village Carlton had the potential to provide accommodation for 29 Companions, as opposed to the 18 Companions that lived there during the financial year of 2006-2007. At the time of writing this report, the refurbishment of the new accommodation block had been completed, and 27 out of the 29 beds were



occupied. One or two rooms are often empty due to Companion turnover. Therefore the present occupancy rate of 93 percent (27 out of 29 beds) can be reasonably expected to be the norm in the future.

In order to estimate the Community's ability to generate profit whilst running in full or near full capacity, the expenditure of a Community housing 27 rather than 18 Companions must be determined. This is done in Table 7 by taking the actual expenditure and income figures for 2006/07 and calculating how much these would increase if the Community provides for 27 Companions ($27/18 = 1.5$). Increasing the number of Companions does not necessarily affect all types of income or expenditure, and only costs that are likely to be affected by increasing the number of Companions are inflated.

Table 7: Emmaus Village Carlton: Expected Surplus in a Normal Year

	Expected with 27 Companions
Actual Income	£277,392
Companion Subsistence and Support Expenses	£257,630
Surplus	£19,762

Although the estimated income that Emmaus Village Carlton could be expected to generate in a normal year would cover all of the Community's expenses, leaving a surplus of £19,762, it would not be sufficient to meet all the imputed costs of property rental, volunteer input and donations of trading consumables. Instead, Emmaus Village Carlton would actually incur an annual loss of £119,121, even when running on full capacity, if it had to pay rent and replace volunteers with paid workers.

Wider Benefits and Outputs of Emmaus Village Carlton

Stage Five: Beneficial Outputs and Savings Arising from the Existence of Emmaus Village Carlton

Emmaus Village Carlton does not operate purely as an end in itself. There are a range of potential benefits to the public purse that arise as a result of the activities of Emmaus Village Carlton. The ones that it is possible to place a value on with available data have been identified as relating to housing, state benefits, the justice system, health, recycling and charitable giving.

Housing: Even when the fact that Emmaus Village Carlton accepts Supporting People funding and accommodation contributions from Companions who are eligible for Housing Benefit is taken into consideration, the annual savings from housing 27 Companions in Emmaus rather than in alternative accommodation are approximately £408,937.

Benefits: Most of the Companions were previously dependent on state benefits, but Companions who live in Emmaus do not claim any benefits. Savings from Companions no longer claiming state benefits total approximately £73,960 per annum.

Crime: Several Companions had broken the law prior to coming to live in Emmaus Village Carlton. Social Exclusion Unit's 2002 statistics state that 58 percent of former prisoners re-offend within two years and some re-offending may also be expected from those who had offended in the past but had not been imprisoned. Emmaus Village Carlton saves the justice system approximately £158,140 every year by reducing ex-offenders' likelihood of re-offending.

Health: Homeless people have a below-average life expectancy and can be expected to use accident and emergency facilities more often than people who have a GP. Because all Emmaus Village Carlton Companions are registered with a local NHS health centre, they are now more likely to use GP services than A&E services. This saves healthcare service providers an annual amount of approximately



£2,070. Some of the Companions felt that Emmaus had literally saved their lives, and had they not come to Emmaus, they would be dead by now. This finding echoes the previous evaluation of Emmaus Cambridge. Their death would have incurred a one-off expense of approximately £700 per person.

Recycling: Emmaus Village Carlton earns the majority of its income from recycling other people’s unwanted goods. In 2006/2007, Emmaus sold 130 tonnes of goods for re-use. Bedford Borough Council saves an annual amount of approximately £8,220 through Emmaus Village Carlton’s recycling activities. There is also a benefit to the wider environment from people reusing items rather than buying new ones, although the measurement of carbon savings is beyond the scope of this research.

Charitable Giving: In addition to all of the above, Emmaus Village Carlton supports people in need by giving money and assistance in kind. In 2007 Emmaus Village Carlton gave away £6,500 in charitable donations, and an estimated £1,200 worth of furniture was donated to people in need who could not afford to pay for it.

The wider benefits, particularly through savings to the Government, accruing from the existence of Emmaus Village Carlton, are listed in table 8. These are measured in monetary terms, and do not include the direct benefits to Companions or the immeasurable benefits to the wider community.

Table 8: Emmaus Village Carlton: Measurable benefits to the wider community

Source of Benefit Saving	Measurable value per annum
Housing (including Housing Benefit & Supporting People)	£408,937
Non-Housing related State Benefits	£73,960
Legal / Justice System	£158,140
Health and Death	£3,820
Recycling of Waste	£8,220
Charitable Giving and assistance in kind	£7,700
Total	£660,777

Stage Six: The impact on the public purse of the cost/input of Companions who leave

Emmaus is not just providing alternative housing and employment for Companions for a certain period of time and then returning them to the same situation they were in before. Instead, it seeks to take in damaged people with a range of problems and difficulties in their life, helps them to address these problems, and eventually in many cases helps them move on to the outside world in a better state of physical and mental health, better equipped for independent living. In other words, Emmaus is benefiting both the people who are there at any one time, and also has a lasting and significant impact on the lives of some who have now moved on.

Emmaus Village Carlton benefits society by helping a number of people every year to sort out their lives, gain some work experience, and move on to paid work and independent living. It is therefore appropriate to include some measure of the impact Emmaus has had on Companions, by comparing the situation of Companions moving in to Emmaus with that of those moving out on the following measurements:

- Employment status (estimate of tax paid).
- Benefits claimed.
- Housing costs (estimate of Housing Benefit claimed).

On average, 15 Companions a year leave Emmaus Village Carlton and move on to paid work. Those people who leave Emmaus to take on paid work will not go back to claiming Job Seekers allowance, and claim less Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. The work that Emmaus does in helping people to sort out their lives and return to the outside world as productive individuals generates some significant savings to wider society. Those savings that can be quantified are listed in Table 9 over the page.



Table 9: Annual Savings Resulting from the Changed Status of Former Companions

Employment-related Contributions	£57,688
Benefit Savings	£46,623
Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit Savings	£78,727
Total Savings	£183,038

There are also several other likely sources of savings to the public purse from the activities of Emmaus Village Carlton, but these are very difficult to quantify with much accuracy from available data. These are discussed in more detail in the full report.

Benefits of life at Emmaus Village Carlton

Companions at Emmaus Village Carlton

The key objective of Emmaus Village Carlton is to help the Companions to make the changes that they need to make in order to improve their quality of life. There is much emphasis on personal growth. Emmaus Village Carlton seeks to function as a stepping stone to mainstream society, although the role that Emmaus performs for the Companions varies according to their personal circumstances.

The Community has adopted a holistic approach to its work, and accepts only Companions who are ready and willing to address and sort out their problems, and who it can realistically support. The problems that the Companions face are often more fundamental than the need for a bed, and the circumstances of each applicant are carefully considered in the light of the circumstances of the existing Companions. Because the number of applicants supersedes the number of available spaces, aspiring Companions may sometimes be turned away because of lack of space.

As Companion interviews and earlier research undertaken at Emmaus (Randall and Brown 2002; Lovatt et al. 2004) make apparent, there is no such thing as a stereotypical Companion. Individuals who become Companions are from all ages and socio-economic backgrounds with a wide-range of skills and experiences. Each individual has a different path that has brought them to the Community and a variety of needs and problems. There are however, some interesting points to make: the majority of the Companions at Emmaus Village Carlton are white, British, and male; most are over 25 years of age. At the end of 2007, all 29 Companions were white and all but two were men.

Many of the people who come to Emmaus have experienced life on the streets, sleeping rough and relying on nightshelters. However, this is not the case for all of the Companions. The interviews that were carried out with eleven Companions revealed that where people slept whilst they were homeless,



as well as the reasons for their homelessness, were extremely varied.

Interview questions for local agencies addressed the issue of whether interviewees felt there was a particular type of individual who suited Emmaus. Similarities between agencies in the descriptions of the suitable characteristics for potential Companions, suggest a form of informal filtering process may take place. There were some common themes. The nature of Emmaus means that it is suitable only for those individuals who are prepared and able to work and give up benefits, and who are willing, able and motivated to address their problems.

Several agency representatives praised Emmaus for enabling people to change their lives 'in a way which works where nothing else does'. One of the best aspects of Emmaus Village Carlton was seen to be the fact that it enables ex-offenders and other people whose employment opportunities in mainstream society would be poor, to get back to work and the structured lifestyle that comes with it. It was also agreed that Emmaus is a very suitable option for people with mild learning difficulties. For them, Emmaus is often one of the few possible avenues to employment of any kind, especially if they have a history of homelessness and lack familial support networks.

Realistically, filtering is an inevitable and probably positive aspect of matching homeless individuals to services and accommodation by referring agencies. A good match will result in more positive outcomes, whereas a bad match may only shift responsibilities and fail to resolve core problems. Interviews with local agency representatives suggest that Emmaus is recommended for people who are believed to be suitable for the lifestyle, and who are expected to benefit most from it. Because Emmaus offers a unique model in Bedfordshire, the filtering may be more readily identified than is the case with mainstream models of provision. However, in light of the fact that many of the people who are referred to Emmaus by different local agencies know about Emmaus beforehand and ask to be referred, and others self-refer, the profile of Companions is most likely to reflect the type of person who chooses to live at Emmaus, regardless of the views of local agencies.

Benefits of Emmaus Village Carlton for Companions

An important aspect of the qualitative element of this study was to understand how Companions themselves see Emmaus; how and why they came to Emmaus; what they think Emmaus is doing well and what could be improved and how they think Emmaus has changed them and their lives. The Companions were asked a series of questions about their past, present, and future aspirations. Qualitative, semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were conducted with 11 Companions.

The sample of 11 Companions included ex-servicemen, ex-offenders, individuals who had spent most of their lives as manual labourers, former entrepreneurs, drifters who had spent most of their lives travelling around and doing seasonal work, and people with learning difficulties with very little work experience. Most of the 11 Companions had left school at 15 or 16, without any formal qualifications. Two out of the eleven respondents had some college education, and one had been to university. Two of the interviewees had worked in the construction business for extensive periods of time.

A notable proportion of time and money in Emmaus Village Carlton is spent on training, ranging from personal skills such as cooking, literacy, manual skills and driving, to more specific work-orientated courses focusing on areas such as computer-literacy, customer relations, groundsmanship and woodworking. Training is available to all Companions, and actively encouraged as part of their personal development.

Six out of the eleven individuals interviewed felt that they had learnt something new, both formally (with a certificated course) and informally since coming to Emmaus. Several others were fairly new and hoped to benefit from training courses in time. Two Companions had acquired better computer skills, and two others spoke of their aspirations to enrol on different training courses in the future to improve their computer, building and woodwork skills. Two Companions were receiving assistance in basic literacy. Other skills developed were those centred on the Community's business activities; recycling, cooking, food hygiene and customer service skills. Two Companions with very little previous work experience felt that the skills they had acquired during their stay



in Emmaus might help them to access paid employment outside the Community later on.

In addition to skills and personal development, Companions, staff and local agencies highlighted the importance of working, not only to provide meaningful occupation throughout the day but also as a form of therapy, 'giving a purpose to life'. The fact that people are given the opportunity to work, to acquire new skills and higher self esteem without all of the complications (such as paying rent, bills and finding a social network) that independent living would often require was positively viewed by nearly all Companions. Many Companions appreciated even the very basic skills that they had acquired during their stay. This was the case especially when these new skills were seen to improve people's future prospects of being able to live independently. Having a job was also seen to help the Companions to regain their dignity and self-respect by making them feel useful, and by enabling them to stop claiming benefits.

Much of what the Companions felt they had learnt during their time in Emmaus was focused on personal and interpersonal development. Several Companions spoke about making friends in the Community. Many Companions also talked about learning to get along with different people, and an increased awareness of others and their feelings was frequently mentioned. Life in Emmaus had made many of the Companions care for others in a way that some of them had never done before. Companions themselves identified this as a major positive change that made them feel good about themselves.

The fact that Emmaus Village Carlton is a closely knit community where people live and work together day in and day out divided the Companions' opinions. Over half of the interviewees said that they really liked living in a place where they felt they were part of a community. A few thought that the community aspect of Emmaus was one of the best things about it, and living in Emmaus was like having an 'extended family'. In contrast with other accommodation options, the Community was seen to provide a 'home' and a place to live for 'as long as you need it'.

Improved eating habits, reduced alcohol intake, drug free environment, meaningful activity, the structured day and the confidence obtained when signing off

benefits were all identified as having a positive impact on the Companions' general health. One of the key issues identified by six of the Companions with past substance abuse issues was the impact of Emmaus on their drinking and drug use.

Emmaus has also helped Companions with past medical conditions and mental health problems to access appropriate healthcare. Over half of the eleven Companions had received counselling after coming to Emmaus, and all agreed that its impact on their mental health and psychological wellbeing had been significant. In particular, counselling that the Companions had accessed through Emmaus had helped them to come to terms with things that happened in the past, which were probably at least partly responsible for their homelessness and/or substance abuse. While some of the Companions highlighted the dramatic effect that coming to Emmaus had had on their health, one interviewee stated that he believed that he would be dead had he not come to Emmaus.

Benefits of Emmaus Village Carlton for Volunteers

Volunteers are an essential part of the Emmaus Village Carlton Community. Without their input, the Companions would struggle to do all the necessary work, the business would suffer, and more paid staff would have to be employed. The four volunteers who were interviewed represent only a fraction of the 60-70 volunteers working at Emmaus Village Carlton. The reasons for volunteering at Emmaus Village Carlton appear to be quite varied; some see volunteering purely as a hobby, while others volunteer for religious/ethical reasons and others because they see their work in Emmaus as giving them 'a reason to get up in the morning'. Some of the volunteers are highly skilled, and take pleasure in being able to pass on their skills to the Companions. All of the four volunteers agreed that they enjoy the work they do, partly because it makes them feel useful, and partly because of the opportunities it offers for interaction with other people. The volunteers value the Community for giving homeless people a job and a place to live, and for the environmental benefits caused by its recycling activities.



Emmaus and Multi-Agency Working

While Emmaus Village Carlton does not participate in 'formal' statutory and voluntary sector partnership working, one of the Community Leaders has worked hard to establish links with support services outside the Community in order to improve the Companions' access to support services. At the same time, the shift in approach to multi-agency working and the increasing documentation and resources available to agencies about this issue means that multi-agency working as a label has widened to incorporate the many different ways in which organisations work together.

Because Emmaus Village Carlton's trading activities have not yet produced notable profits (largely due to the ongoing repairs, maintenance and renovation work on the site) it has not created as supportive relationships with local charities and other agencies that provide services for homeless people as the more established Emmaus Cambridge, which supports some local service providers with sizeable donations every year (Lovatt et al. 2004). The Community does, however, interact with other agencies and service providers in the area on a fairly informal basis. One of the main aspects of the inter-agency work involving Emmaus Village Carlton is the acceptance of referrals from local agencies.

While the Community identifies that it does work with other agencies in an informal way it does not recognise these relationships as partnerships. The local agencies and service providers are, however, welcome to make use of the services provided by Emmaus, and the Companions are encouraged to interact with members of the mainstream community by, for example, getting involved with the local churches and charities.

Social Enterprise

In having a variety of characteristics found in both charitable organisations and businesses, Emmaus Communities can be described as representing a type of 'social enterprise'. However, the very term 'social enterprise' has a wide interpretation and there is a good deal of debate over its meaning. The

role of Emmaus as a social enterprise was therefore also discussed fully in the Evaluation of Emmaus Cambridge (Lovatt et al. 2004).

The study of Lovatt et al. (2004) concluded that there is a range of approaches to defining the social enterprise sector. Central to this is the nature of the organisations operating within it – social enterprises. These are businesses that exist between the traditional private/business and public/government and charitable sectors. Despite the fact that social enterprise is so diverse in format, three features are apparent in the range of descriptions of a social enterprise: they are enterprise orientated; they have social aims and they are autonomous.

Emmaus Communities fit easily into the model of social enterprise:

- they rely on an enterprise orientated approach;
- they have specific social aims beyond providing accommodation, including the capacity-building of individuals experiencing poverty, exclusion and homelessness;
- they are very much autonomous social organisations.

All these elements are included in the Government's otherwise general definition of a social enterprise: "A social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally re-invested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners" (DTI 2002:7).

Conclusions

The Emmaus Village Carlton case study clearly illustrates the fact that Emmaus Communities have the potential to provide a unique and successful approach to homelessness. The study has found that the savings and benefits of having an Emmaus Community in Bedfordshire go beyond employment benefits and expenses that are saved by accommodating previously homeless people in Emmaus rather than rented flats, hostels, nightshelters or supported housing projects. There are also considerable savings to the justice system, the health service, and local authorities due to savings made by recycling activities.

The overall estimate is that Emmaus Village Carlton is responsible for savings and benefits to society in the order of at least £660,777 – an output of around £24,473 per Companion. Most of this represents a direct saving to the Treasury and therefore the taxpayer. When the fact that many of the people who have lived in Emmaus as Companions regain control of their lives and move on to paid employment after leaving is taken into account, the estimated total saving and benefits generated by the Community total £843,815. However, possibly the most important effect of Emmaus Village Carlton is that it dramatically improves the quality of people's lives.

The Emmaus approach to homelessness clearly has a good deal of potential, based on the research carried out. However, it needs to be stressed that the development of a successful Community is a long-term goal that in the shorter term requires both a massive amount of dedication and hard work from people motivated by the Emmaus ethos and significant financial support. Financial support by way of investment is important initially when constructing the Community and also to support it in the first few years, before the core enterprise becomes profitable. Emmaus Communities cannot be established to provide a short-term solution or a quick-fix approach to tackling the issues of homelessness. Emmaus should be seen as a medium to long-term, practical approach, with substantial financial and social rewards.

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A full copy of the research can be downloaded from www.emmaus.org.uk/sharing-in-success or by contacting Emmaus at the address above

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