The concept of community has been explored within many disciplines. For example, in sociology, anthropology and geography the creation and evolution of community is commonly understood in relation to shared geographical, ethnic, religious, occupational or leisure elements (Crow & Allan, 1994). By contrast, in psychology the focus is on community as an experience of belonging and interdependence (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Echoing such concepts, retirement villages are often marketed as communities ‘of like-minded people’ offering ‘exciting leisure activities’ with ‘as much or as little social activity as you want’. Findings about community from the LARC study of Denham Garden Village are drawn from the wave 1 survey (2007) and a directed writing exercise (2009). To date, these highlight three key themes: social relationships, social activities and mixed tenure.

### Social relationships

102 residents (84%) reported having friends in the village. 96 (82%) residents were in at least weekly contact with their neighbours in the village (n=117). 26 residents (21%) suggested that they felt isolated in terms of their social relationships (n=122), while 15 residents (12%) reported not having someone to confide in (n=121).

**“We all look out for each other and help where we can with shopping and giving each other a lift to hospital or to the shops”**

**“Everyone mixes all together, and you get lots of laughs”**

### Social activities

37 residents (31%) reported that they had become involved in more activities as a result of moving to the village (n=118). 56 residents (48%) suggested that their social life had improved since moving to DGV (n=118).

**“Many people know one another by sight or name and if one walks through any of the communal areas, there is usually someone to have a chat to”**

**“If I had more money I would be able to enter into many more activities”**

### Mixed tenure

51 (43%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “If people in the village were planning something, I’d think of it as something ‘they’ were doing rather than ‘we’ were doing” (n=120).

**“I do not feel that there is a real community feel to the village at present. There is a lot of them and us i.e. original residents and newcomers and also leaseholders and tenants”**

**“I do not mix with other people as my health does not allow me to go out”**

**“I have made some good friends who share my own hobbies and thoughts on most things”**

**“If I had more money I would be able to enter into many more activities”**