

## Community

The best way to run anything is to ensure that the people who are affected by decisions are as closely involved in making those decisions as possible, and are not merely told what to do by some remote official.

The Values Party is opposed to the development of impersonal, centralised, powerful bureaucracies and as a general policy favours transferral of centralised governmental and commercial activities to local communities - where this is made possible by the desire of the local people to take them over. We believe that the local community, and not the many government and corporate bodies and institutions, is the most important unit in society.

The Values Party believes in an alternative society made up of decentralised, self-sufficient communities, in which people work near their homes, have the responsibility of governing themselves, and of running their economic enterprises, schools, hospitals and welfare services. These real communities would be much happier and healthier places in which to live. We believe local community units should be the basis of social, welfare and support services and be the basic units in economic and political decision-making procedures. Such units would encourage individual liberty and enlarge personal choice.

At present there is considerable tension between an overly individualistic approach to personal identity and freedom and the proliferation of controls and administrative regulations laid down by large institutions and government bureaucracies. Our impersonal, centralised mass society, in which important decisions affecting us are made by people very remote from us, has little to recommend it as a type of human organisation.

In communities like these we would be able to develop an identity of our own, which many of us have lost in the mass society we live in. We would tend, once more, to find an aim in life, to develop a set of values, and take pride in our own achievements as well as those of our community.

While this is a long run aim which obviously cannot be achieved overnight, a start must be made.