



24th November 2006

THE AGE OF CHIVALRY – DEAD OR ALIVE?

Gumtree survey reveals that Londoners are least community minded in the UK

Chivalry and community spirit are alive and well in the UK, according to a new survey. Gumtree.com, the UK's busiest community site polled over 1,000 people to find out their views on what is and isn't acceptable when it comes to modern society - and the findings revealed a Britain that is far from unfeeling, uncharitable and self-serving.

However this is not the case when it comes to Londoners, which the Gumtree.com survey reveals as the least community minded place in the UK, with only 44 per cent saying they think community is a great thing – this is compared to a 50 per cent national average.

League table of the most community-minded places in the UK:

- 1) Wales
- 2) Scotland
- 3) Midlands
- 4) South West
- 5) North West
- 6) East Anglia
- 7) North East
- 8) London**

Only 25 per cent of Londoners would offer to look after neighbours' kids compared to the national average of 30 per cent; with a further 13%, the highest in the country, admitting to stealing their neighbours Wi Fi on a regular basis.

Further stats for London include:

- 70% of Londoners are less likely to help a neighbour now than they would 5 years ago
- Only 41% would take the responsibility to look after a neighbour's house whilst they were away with only a further 53% helping their neighbour by feeding pets and watering plants
- 21% of Londoners would not help a neighbour they did not know if they had been locked out of the house
- A quarter of Londoners think it is acceptable to use their neighbour's bins from time to time without asking them
- 66% of Londoners are not interested in setting up initiatives to make the school/work run greener
- 45% feel indifferent about their community and wouldn't really care whether there were others around

Sophy Silver of Gumtree.com says: "Community spirit is really hard to define. Some people see it as a simple act of kindness, like helping a neighbour with some heavy shopping; others see it as setting up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme or initiating a school run.

What we saw from the survey was that social factors are playing a key role in how we perceive community. People are working longer hours than ever before and are often too tired to commit to extra activities. Others say that we're moving home more frequently than we used to, giving us less time to meet and get to know our local community."

Top tips on making the most of your community:

- Get a dog! Taking it for walks and being part of a larger dog owning community will create lots of conversation and reasons to meet up
- If you take your child to school by car, try getting other parents involved in a school car pool. That way you can share the responsibility and get a lie in sometimes too! Or check out the Rideshare section of Gumtree.com, where you can find out about the different rideshares and schemes in your area
- Elderly people rely heavily on their local community for help and company. If you live near an older person, have a chat about what you can do to help them – perhaps you could grab some shopping for them or take their pet for a walk
- Cities are communities too! If villages can do it, so can you
- If something is missing from your community – a green initiative, a resident’s association, a kids’ playground – don’t assume someone else will take care of it. Think about what you can do to involve other people and get something useful started

Silver concludes: “What was really interesting about the survey was the passion it evoked in people. We saw a real split in opinion, with some people arguing that they saw acts of kindness happening every day in their local community; and others complaining that their area wasn’t as sociable as it used to be. I think this shows how much people care about the issue!”