



#ConnectMe – Resource Pack 3

Celebrate your street – together!



Unit 10 – Listening to what wants to be and building the plan – together

Having put the work into extending an equitable and relevant invitation to your neighbours and facilitating a fun, friendly meeting you should be beginning to get a sense of what kinds of things are of interest to the residents of your place. But how to bring those ideas together into a plan?

Preparation

This is where the work you did in the first five Units will help you. Not only did that investigation into the hidden histories of your place give you some “hooks” for your initial contact but will also have suggested some themes, stories or strong characteristics of your place that are ripe for celebration.

A note on tone

You might want to write up the question

“How shall we celebrate this place – together?”

and display it somewhere prominently. This is because discussion can quickly reduce to problems of a place, i.e. traffic, littering, anti-social behaviour.

It’s helpful to remind people that that isn’t the purpose of your meeting. Your activities may well positively impact on these things but your main purpose is to create connecting celebrations of your shared place.

One useful way of prompting active engagement is to ask people to come to the meeting with a “Proposal”, an idea for discussion based on the histories that you’ve uncovered. The sooner you embed the notion that THIS IS NOT A CONSULTATION, the better. A consultation is where other people come into your place and ask your opinion about what should happen and then they go away (often never to be seen again!). The difficulty with this is that people are consultation-weary. Poorly run consultation exercises in the past have left people in the expectation that their only role is to give an opinion and then that they probably won’t be heard.

That’s the exact opposite of what you’re trying to achieve. You’re trying to solicit active, sleeves-rolled-up, engagement and you want everyone to feel heard.

So giving people the task of bringing a Proposal to the meeting sets the right tone from the beginning. Acknowledging and validating every single Proposal is just as important.

Collect each proposal in – write them down as suggested. Don’t re-interpret.

Let every idea BE

All of us are most inspired by our own ideas and there’s nothing more de-motivating than being out-voted...

..... **so don’t vote! Let every idea BE.**

Encourage everyone to run with their own idea and to invite other people in the room to join them in a sub-group. With everyone working on their own ideas in this way though, how can you bring it all together into a joint, connecting, celebration?

This is where we’d like to introduce the notion of “**Interweaving**”. This is a technique developed by Interwoven Productions CIC where you can have the full benefit of motivating people to follow their hearts but also weave it all together to produce a jointly owned street celebration.

It might be helpful to use this routine:-

- 1) Display the Proposals as given.
- 2) Ask each Proposer in turn to describe their proposal. Making it clear that each CAN happen. **THERE WILL BE NO VOTE.**
- 3) Validate each idea – lots of positivity but don’t go in for group discussion as yet.
- 4) Now comes the clever bit. Pose the question “What’s the best way to bring all of these ideas together on the day?”

- 5) Conduct a “Round”. A Round means going around the room and asking every single person to make a contribution in turn. Ask each person to make a suggestion for how all of the ideas can come together.
- 6) Conduct a Consensus Round – this means asking each person in turn “Can you live with this proposal for bringing everything together into a street event? Is it good enough for now?”



It’s OK to leave some things a bit ragged and unformed at this stage and to leave for ideas to continue to form. The important thing is to set a date for the next meeting when you’ll be asking people to feedback on their ideas, one at a time.

Then you’ll ask the question “Does this change our plans for the street event?”. Inevitably some people will have left the first meeting full of zeal and then not done any more. Others might have gone away on slow boil and have come up with something great in the meantime.

The trick is to stimulate the energy to participate, reward that participation and then follow the energy. Make it clear from the beginning that you’re not there to make other people’s ideas happen

– if they want to see it on the day then they need to roll their sleeves up!

Looking outwards and upwards – taking inspiration from elsewhere

Another tendency that you might find is that people tend to limit their ideas to the familiar. Sometimes they need to see some other examples to stretch their imaginations and really get their creative juices going.

Eden Project Communities - <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/make-it-happen> have some great stories and examples as well as resources that will help you make your street celebration happen.

Validate ideas – unless it’s illegal, unsafe or likely to cause division, then you can encourage your neighbours to see if they can bring their idea to life.

Interweave ideas – work with your neighbours to find the best way to bring everyone’s energies together.

Expand ideas – invite your neighbours to look upward and outwards for inspiration



Stretch your imaginations - is there something you can do on your street that is out of the ordinary?

A note on TTROs

Temporary Traffic Regulation Order

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/make-a-request/special-events/temporary-traffic-orders-for-events/>

In Devon you can make a request to temporarily stop traffic on your street at the above website. You need to give 3 months' notice but, if it's a not-for-profit community event, then there is no charge.