



#ConnectMe – Resource Pack 3

Celebrate your street – together!



Unit 9 – Sharing memories safely

Reminiscence

You will more than likely find that there will be some individuals on your street you really just want to share their memories and aren't too concerned about building a bigger project.

Making space and time for them to do that safely is important. Letting people speak and feel heard is a huge gift and building those relationships will enhance your project even if those individuals aren't in a position to take up other organisational tasks. However, it can be difficult to balance letting people talk with more dynamic project planning so it's useful to be make a separate space specifically for reminiscence.

If at all possible, bring people together just for this and create a specific reminiscence mini-event without any other agenda. Pulling them together into a small group means that they can jog each other's memories and reminisce together. The liberal application of tea and cake will oil the flow of conversation as will as any old photos and maps that as you can gather. It may not only be older residents, younger families can be keen to gather and hear these memories too, so put your invitation out widely.



Again, think about making the space as comfortable as possible and recruit as many listeners as you can from friends and possibly your local Community Builder or *Squillometre* team.



The purpose of your reminiscence event will be to ensure that anyone who simply wants to share their memories of your place can do so in a happy, friendly environment.

We would recommend that you don't try to record these reminiscences so that conversation is uninterrupted and free-flowing. However, if you recruit your "listeners" from those who are actively doing the local history research of your place then you will soon find that the reminiscence greatly informs your project, fleshing out the document research and providing further project inspiration.

Memory corners

Alternatively you could provide a Memory Corner at a larger meeting or event where people can step aside from the main meeting for a moment and join an assigned listener in another part of the room.



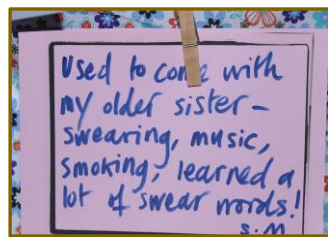
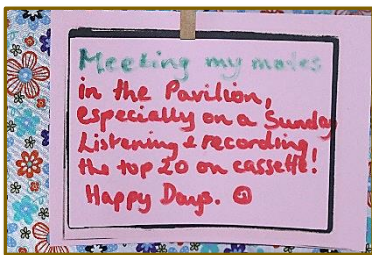
Again, stock the area with prompting images. In this circumstance it may be appropriate for the listener to also scribe (or ask the residents to) some of the memories but care should be taken not to detract from the important role of listening.

Pop up events

If you're celebrating a local park or open space you might even consider a pop-up event. This one was themed around the 1960s and local residents attended to share their memories of using the park in their youth.



You can find fun and easy ways for them to share their memories of place and display them. However, if you are recording memories then it is important to be clear in your own mind about why you are collecting them. It is also important to be explicit at the point of collection about exactly what you are going to do with them. You don't want a situation where people are looking later in the project for their input only to find that it has been discarded. If you don't have a specific purpose for them in mind, be open and clear about that.



Oral history recording

The formal recording of stories from your older residents falls under the heading of **When to Ask for Help**, covered in Unit 11.

Essentially, this help is needed because in making a recording of an extended story you are undertaking responsibility for how that recording is to be made, stored and shared into the future.

There's a technique for collecting this kind of qualitative material without influencing it too much with your questioning and for setting the conditions to allow a relaxed but formal interview.

If you are interested in Oral History recording then the National Lottery Heritage Fund have an excellent resource page - <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/oral-history-guidance>

The screenshot shows the National Lottery Heritage Fund website's 'Oral History guidance' page. At the top left is the logo, and at the top right are language options (English, Cymraeg) and a login/register link. A search bar is also present. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, About, In your area, News & stories, Our work, Funding, and Help & resources. The main banner image depicts a man and a woman in front of a vibrant, abstract mural. The text 'Oral History guidance' is overlaid on the image. Below the banner is a breadcrumb trail: Home / Good practice guidance / Oral History guidance. A 'Contents' section lists three items: 1. Introduction, 2. Scoping your project, and 3. Planning your oral history project. To the right of the list is a definition: 'Oral history is the recording and archiving of people's memories, feelings and attitudes.' Below this is the heading 'Introduction'.

On the whole though, their guidance refers to larger, ongoing projects and our advice would be to ask for expert help.