



Community-Led Research Network

Session 1 – 19th April 2023

Welcome and Overview of Session

- We have invited you to join this set of 6 conversations and skills sharing, looking at how we build local capacity to influence decision makers, authorities, change
- In this session we will give you some background to the funding and how we are proposing to work with you over the coming weeks
- We'll also begin to look at what research is – and how it can be used to influence those with power to make changes
- The team is Andrew, Jenni and Alice and we're really looking forward to working with you over the coming weeks

Opening Circle

- We're all here because of our interest in nature - make a pair, close your eyes, imagine you are in an important natural space, tell your partner where it is and how it feels.
- Turn to neighbour and tell them what you felt.
- Go round the room: give your partner's name and 3 words to describe what nature means to them.

How We Work Together

- Respect for each other
- Listen to everyone's point of view
- You can think about what you want to share - and don't have to do any of the exercises
- Let us know if you can't make a session or are going to be late
- Phones on silent
- anything else?

Introduction to this community-led research project:

- Two organisations – Together 4 Peace and Leeds, Love it, Share It applied for funding from UKRI.
- The funding is about why some people and places lose out from the way the system works – and what we can do to change that.
- We see that too often those with power (council, businesses, housing providers, large construction projects, landowners] do not talk to or listen to different parts of communities when making decisions
- **If local groups and partnerships are given equal recognition and value, it could lead to more equal access to resources - and to influencing decisions.**
- Funding for pilot project over 6 months
- Includes working with two geographic communities [Otley and Seacroft]
- We hope these conversations can be the start of communities having more control over what research needs to be done - and who does it.
- We hope our Stage 2 bid will be successful and that we will be able to continue working with you – if you want us to! – but that isn't guaranteed so we want to make sure these 6 sessions make sense to you, give you some skills and support you to do a small piece of research.
- This also involves trying out a community-led research network: how can we support community organisations to support local community-led research?
- These 6 sessions will include:
 - looking at what you know and how you know it
 - what issue you might like to investigate further and how to come to a consensus
 - looking at some standard research tools
 - thinking about how different tools might provide a framework for what we are doing here
 - how to analyse the information you get from your research
 - and how to tell others about the information you have gathered

What is community-led research and why is it important?

- It is what is says on the tin: it is about recognising that you are experts in living, working and playing around here. You are experts in your neighbourhoods and communities of interest or identity. You are the experts on nature around here.
- Community-led research is about local people setting the agenda: what are the issues that need further investigation? What are the issues that need a different solution?
- If the research is rooted in the community - then the knowledge stays in the community. It can then influence what happens in the community.

Intro to doing it here in Otley - and what it will give us.

We already have a headstart in Otley because of the Otley Nature Network, that has produced the Nature Recovery Plan and encouraged the Town Council to declare a Biodiversity Emergency. We also have the pioneering work of Wildlife Friendly Otley to thank for giving us a lead.

What is research?

What is research/ what its not:

- taking the bus
- buying a Tshirt
- selecting a school

- buying a phone
- writing a report / essay
- deciding where to go on holiday
- buying a bike / car /house
- what to have for dinner
- deciding what mobile phone plan to take
- buying a pint
- whether to build a drive rather than have a garden

Research isn't always a big formal thing. It is a tool that most of us use every day. We now want you to think about when you last made a decision - what did you need to know and where did you get the information from?

In small groups of 5 or 6 -take 20 mins to think about:

- Where does information come from?
- Where do you go when you have a question you need answered?
- How you know what information can be trusted?

Review of the session:

- started to get to know each other
- heard that Otley has a nature recovery plan
- looked at what research is and how we get information - and how we know when to trust that info
- what information we need to reach a decision - which might also make you start thinking about what information others eg: politicians or council officers might need to make decisions and how they can be convinced that they can trust the information you are giving them.

Reminder of session next week:

- what are the issues affecting nature in Otley?
- how do we agree on an issue to investigate further?