

## Draft Notes on Ilkley Sustainability Plan meeting, 26.09.2020 by Zoom

Facilitators were Mike Daw and Helen Steward, leading on Health and Happiness, Culture and Community and Travel and Transport

Breakout Groups were visited in the order: 3; 1 and then 2

### **Theme 1: Health and Happiness**

- The document does not currently mention the important role that can be played by the arts (especially community arts) in combating loneliness and improving mental health. It was mentioned in connection with this point that Sarah Thomas who runs the Ilkley Cultural Co-operative might be approached about this.
- It was stressed that Ilkley is a destination for visitors, as well as a place to live - and that Ilkley thereby contributes to the health and happiness of people beyond its boundaries. Activities designed to help them discover and navigate the town's resources should therefore also be within the purview of the plan.
- One participant mentioned Good Gym (link here: [GoodGym.org](http://GoodGym.org)) - an organisation which encourages people to get fit while doing activities which benefit the community - e.g. planting trees, community gardening, running regularly to visit a lonely old person.
- Good Grief - an organisation which helps people deal (amongst other things) with anxieties related to eco-distress was mentioned as being a helpful mental health resource.
- It was urged that the plan should make more explicit mention of the proven health benefits of time spent in the natural environment.
- It was noted that health generally (and not only mental health) is affected by isolation and loneliness which has proven impacts on life expectancy.
- One participant mentioned the Climate Psychology Alliance which has hubs in Leeds where people can bring concerns related to the ecological emergency.

### **Theme 2: Culture and Community**

- It was mentioned that many Town Council meetings are only attended by councillors, and that ways to increase awareness and participation might be investigated.
- It was stressed that the possibility of making many kinds of improvements which have been mooted (e.g. the suggestion that the Town Hall might be used as a Community

Hub) depends upon consultation with Bradford Council which is often slow and frustrating.

- It was noted that the pandemic has led to the recruitment of 400+ volunteers in the town - a source of energy and community spirit which might be harnessed in future.
- It was also noted that the pandemic has led to the creation of a number of small neighbourhood communication networks (such as Whatsapp groups) and that these very small, very local units are a promising basis for the development of measures which expand the sharing economy (e.g. the sharing and swapping of garden tools, kitchen equipment, etc.)
- It was urged that the plan should mention libraries of books in addition to libraries of things as an important community cultural resource.
- It was mentioned that St John's Church in Ben Rhydding is part of a national 'eco-church' scheme and has achieved 'bronze' status for its ecological approach. Are other Ilkley churches participating in this scheme?
- It was suggested that the details which are included in the place promotion app to which some Ilkley businesses have now signed up might include information about the environmental credentials of businesses (e.g. Fairtrade, plastic-free, etc.). The Waste Not shop was commended as a model of good practice. We need to develop the 'Discover Ilkley' brand.
- One participant noted the possibility of encouraging a community approach to insulation via "housewarming parties" where groups of individuals come together to help insulate one another's homes. As well as insulating the housing stock, this approach builds community and broadens the skill base of residents.
- It was pointed out that recently, visitors to Ilkley from elsewhere had been described on Ilkley Chat as 'scum' and suggested that Ilkley Chat needs to be a kinder place than currently.

### **Theme 3: Travel and Transport**

- It was questioned whether Ilkley should continue to have such a large central space devoted to a car park and suggested that we need to develop much more shared transport (e.g. to try to support the expansion of car clubs).
- It was pointed out that many young people volunteer abroad and that it might be good to encourage more of these people to volunteer closer to home to decrease the carbon impact of their volunteering activities.

- It was suggested that frequent measurement and prominently disseminated information about air quality might help people understand more clearly the impact of fossil fuels on their health and well-being.
- One participant mentioned that she had installed cycle planters in the Courtyard space and that businesses could make a difference by catering for cyclists.
- Several participants stressed the importance of cycle paths if people are going to develop the confidence to cycle as part of their daily activities.
- The suggestion previously mooted of hosting a talk on 'Cycle-Friendly Ilkley' was endorsed.
- Enthusiasm was expressed for having a car-free day at least once a month.
- There was a discussion of the new proposals for a 20mph zone for Ilkley and Ben Rhydding and one participant argued that a 20mph zone for the whole town would be a simpler and cheaper solution than that being proposed currently by Bradford Council which covers only certain of the major thoroughfares (e.g. Grove Road and King's Road).
- The benefits of nationally joined-up public transport timetables and information systems were mentioned, as well as the incentivisation provided by schemes where tickets become cheaper the longer they're used for.
- It was mentioned that it is currently extremely difficult for people to access Airedale Hospital and the Yorkshire Clinic by public transport - it involves several changes of bus. These difficulties have been compounded by the pandemic.
- One participant pointed out that we need to consider what is realistic and feasible for us to achieve on the transport front in a community which is (i) hilly and (ii) only relatively small. With the best will in the world, many elderly and disabled people cannot walk far uphill; and we cannot expect public transport to be as good in a small town as in a large city.
- One participant mentioned the importance of trying to help people reduce their need to travel - e.g. by encouraging home working, places in which those working remotely can work together locally, etc.