

Walking Interconnections meeting, The Vassall Centre, 26 May 2013

Attending: Courtney, Karen, Sue, Suze, Dee and Anthony

Purpose of meeting:

- (i) using feedback from the pilot, to help prepare potential participants for their walks.
- (ii) to plan an introductory workshop for representatives from the disabled and the sustainability communities who are interested in the project and might become possible future participants/walkers.

It was exceptionally helpful to have Courtney and Karen as volunteers for a pilot walk and the feedback from the two walks has proved really useful in terms of future planning as well as providing 'on the ground' information for others participating in the project in the future. These pilot walks have also proved incredibly revealing and have already brought to the table many insights and surprises as well as significant issues.

'Karen's walk' proceeded along Bristol Harbourside from MShed and 'Courtney's walk' was taken from The Vassall Centre, Fishponds.

During the feedback meeting, our discussion covered a lot of different territory but the main points taken from the pilot are summarised here:

1. Based on feedback from Courtney and Karen, it was agreed that if we are very clear with participants about what is expected of them, then someone from the research team *does not* need to attend the walking partners' pre-walk planning meeting. However, for this to work, we need to use the workshop to arrange pairs, so that pairs can begin building a relationship which will make their planning meeting easier.
2. Courtney and Karen noted that the Guide was useful in the beginning, but that they forgot about it as the walk progressed. They suggested that there be more structure/instruction for the walk – e.g. 4 very clear instructions to be carried out over the course of the walk. Based on this observation, an Information Sheet is to be attached to the Guide, with a set of check lists for the participants, reminding them of what is required for each stage as well as a request to pre-select some 'moves' from the Guide to do on their walks. The Information Sheet should also contain information on points of contact: e.g. in an emergency, phone 999; in a situation, contact Sue to inform her.
3. Courtney's and Karen's walk was already very rich in terms of what it might reveal/make apparent. For example, they curtailed its length because it was very cold and Courtney in particular was cold – his hands were frozen. Of course, the rhetoric of walking is that a brisk walk will warm you up. But Courtney's embodied experience of the walk was very different to Karen's because of the climatic conditions – Karen could feel the cold but walking, as an

activity, could mitigate to some extent the climate conditions; Courtney could not 'walk' his way to warmth – he just got colder. Key, too, is that in light of Courtney's embodied experience of the walk, the decision was made to shorten it.

4. We also talked about how the route chosen (Karen's walk along Bristol Harbourside) was meant to be accessible, and it was clear where, on the walk, 'accessibility' had been addressed –because inaccessibility was recognised e.g. the need for ramps in certain places. But beyond these obvious interventions, the accessibility of the route seemed to have been given little thought. More than once, Courtney's wheelchair was unbalanced. There are different versions/notions of accessibility.
5. Again, building on feedback from pilot, it was decided that the pre- and post-walk questions should be revised so that they are not able to be answered with a simple yes or no – and to make it clear to the walking pairs in the introductory workshop that we're looking for anecdote/discussion.

Ends.