

**Greening Chiddingly Monthly Meeting  
19.30 – Tuesday 21 January 2025  
Village Shop, Muddles Green**

## Agenda

| Item |  | Who             |
|------|--|-----------------|
| 1.   | <b>Welcome, introductions and notes of last meeting</b>  | <b>Dave</b>     |
|      | <b>Items for Report</b>  |                 |
| 2.   | <b>Reports on meetings/events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wealden Climate Change event (3 December, Uckfield)</li> <li>• Greening Herstmonceaux (14 January, online)</li> </ul>   | <b>Dave</b>     |
| 3.   | <b>Restoring Nature Initiative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on Project Consultation Meeting 14 January 2025</li> </ul>  | <b>Sally</b>    |
|      | <b>Items for discussion</b>  |                 |
| 4.   | <b>Response to Consultation on Wealden’s Climate Green Paper</b><br>Green Paper here: <a href="https://letstalk.wealden.gov.uk/wealden-climate-green-paper">https://letstalk.wealden.gov.uk/wealden-climate-green-paper</a> . Section on Communication and Engagement (pp.38-39) & consultation questions to be discussed at meeting is attached as separate paper | <b>All</b>      |
| 5.   | <b>Agreeing dates and scope of future events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seed Swap</li> <li>• Guided Bird Walks</li> <li>• Church Fete</li> <li>• Green Weekend</li> <li>• Tour de Chiddingly</li> </ul>  | <b>Mark/All</b> |
| 6.   | <b>Green Mapping activity</b><br>Please review brief extract from Enzo Manzoni’s insightful book “Design, When Everyone Designs” for possible approach to green mapping (attached as separate paper).  | <b>Gail</b>     |
| 7.   | <b>Any Other Business</b>  | <b>All</b>      |
| 8.   | <b>Next meeting</b><br><b>Annual General Meeting - 19.30, 28 February 2025, Village Shop, Muddles Green.</b>   |                 |

**Future meeting dates:** Thursday 27 February 2025 (with Annual General Meeting).

## Climate Action Plan

### Communication and Engagement

Building on the work that the Council has been undertaking with New Local, we wish to co-create Wealden's Climate Green Paper. This will help to ensure that the voices, needs, and ideas of residents, communities and local organisations are integral to the planning and implementation process. This collaborative approach not only creates a sense of ownership and commitment but also leverages local knowledge and expertise to develop more effective and innovative solutions. By working together, we can create a Climate Green Paper that is inclusive, actionable, and reflective of the diverse perspectives within our community, ultimately leading to more sustainable and impactful outcomes.

#### A Call to Action Example:

"Together, we can create a greener, more sustainable future for everyone. By staying informed, getting involved, and supporting each other, we make a lasting impact on our community and our planet.

Follow us on our Climate Change [Facebook](#) page and join the conversation on [Let's Talk Wealden](#) to stay updated on our initiatives, share your ideas, and connect with others who are committed to positive change. Your voice is vital let's build a resilient, thriving environment together!"

To achieve lasting and transformative change, it is essential that all residents and communities understand the urgent need for action and the benefits it brings. Creating opportunities for community engagement and partnerships is essential for generating impactful climate action projects and initiatives.

By engaging with and tapping into local knowledge and wisdom within our communities, we can collaboratively work towards a common goal, accelerating local climate action and creating a deeper understanding of the challenges and solutions. Communities have a unique insight into the impacts of climate change at a local level. By cooperating, sharing knowledge and skills we can all help to identify innovative solutions and take action to tackle climate change. Our collective efforts allow us to address challenges, celebrate achievements and pursue shared goals.

Encouraging behaviour change is essential for addressing climate change. By changing our behaviours, we can contribute to a collective effort to mitigate climate change and build a resilient future together. Simple things like turning off lights when not in use, car sharing, using water mindfully and going meat free once a week collectively make a difference.

## Goal (Draft)

Empowering and supporting climate action across the district ensuring a just transition to a low carbon and resilient future.

## Objectives (Draft)

- Build community awareness, engagement, and motivation to address the challenges posed by climate change.
- Support communities to deliver climate projects.
- Support communities, business, and individuals to access the capacity, skills and investment necessary to accelerate climate action.

## Our Actions (Draft)

- The Council will build on its previous engagement efforts, such as the residents survey, Let's Talk Wealden, as well as developing a climate action training programme for its staff and local groups and organisations and continue supporting and expanding networks and grassroots initiatives.
- We will keep our digital platform up to date and continue to promote simple climate actions we can all take through our climate communications such as our social media pages.
- We will develop and deliver engaging community campaigns linked to national and international campaigns and pilot innovative new ways of engaging e.g. couch to carbon zero.
- We will launch a Crowdfunding platform with a Climate and Nature Action Fund to help support and build low carbon communities by supporting projects and initiatives that facilitate grass root, community climate action and net zero plans in the district.

## District Wide Actions (Draft)

- Let's Talk Wealden climate change hub and local action map.
- Support and promote local groups and organisations.

## Consultation Questions on Communications and Engagement

### Climate Action Plan: Communication and Engagement

41. Do you agree with our goal and objectives to empower and support communities to deliver Climate Change projects?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

42. How would you prefer to engage with the Council on climate action?

- Online newsletter
- Email updates
- Public meetings
- Community workshops
- Councils' online engagement forum Let's Talk Wealden  
([www.letstalk.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.letstalk.wealden.gov.uk))
- Social Media
- Other (please specify)

43. Are you aware of any local initiatives, unsung communities, groups, or people that are already making a positive impact on climate action that you think the Council should support?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

44. Any other comments regarding the communication and engagement theme?

**Cont..**



## Climate Action Plan: Governance and Leadership

45. Do you agree with our goal and objective for the Council to show leadership and ambition to prioritise climate action?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

46. Do you have any ideas how the council can create opportunities for community engagement and support partnerships for positive climate action?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

47. Any other comments regarding the governance and leadership theme?

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## Open questions

48. If you work with community groups or in the Climate Change space, we'd love to hear about your experiences. What have you found to be most effective ways to make a difference? Please share your thoughts with us here.

49. What bold and creative ideas can we explore as a community in Wealden to tackle Climate Change together? We're seeking imaginative, forward-thinking solutions—no idea is too big or too small!

50. How can we work together as a whole community in Wealden to address the challenges of Climate Change? We'd love to hear your experiences, and suggestions for collaborative approaches.

51. Please use this space to tell us any additional comments or suggestions that you think are important for our Climate Green Paper?

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**[Ends]**

## 6 Making Things Visible and Tangible

The field of possibility within which people define their life projects is determined by the context in which they find themselves: by the characteristics of what we have called their enabling ecosystem. How can expert design contribute to making this ecosystem one in which active, collaborative, sustainable behavior is more probable? The first answer to this question does not deal directly with how to change the state of things. It concerns how to make it visible. The possibility of steering one's life project toward ways of being and doing other than those dominant, and to opt for active, collaborative behavior, depends first and foremost on what one is able to see from one's own vantage point: how one interprets the state of things and what opportunities one recognizes. So the first stage of our journey starts here: how can we make sense of the complexity of the present and the dynamics that stir it? How can we make viewpoints and wishes explicit? How can we imagine what doesn't exist but could? In short: how can we feed social conversation about the future?

### Mapping and amplifying

The question of designing for visibility is a broad one, ranging from catalogs and instruction manuals to maps and infographic systems. In our case, given that we are dealing with complex problems and equally complex solutions, the issue of making them more accessible is certainly a crucial one. We can move from the mapping of prominent features and the physical and social resources in a given area to the mapping of highly complex social-technical phenomena.

"By rearranging numeric data, reinterpreting qualitative information, locating information geographically, and building visual taxonomies, we can develop a diagrammatic visualization—a sort of graphic shortcut—to describe and unvell the hidden connections of complex systems. Our



visualizations are open, inclusive, and preserve multiple interpretations of complex phenomena."<sup>1</sup> This is how DensityDesign, one of the research labs in the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano, presents its work. In the same direction, the philosophic and practical work that Bruno Latour and others<sup>2</sup> are carrying out around the issue of representation appears noteworthy. No need to say that what expert design can do on this theme is a central topic from many points of view: for discussing democracy and complex societies, as Latour does, but also, and more specifically, to give people tools to orient their own life projects.

Here we shall consider another family of visualizations that is more directly linked to design for social innovation. They are widely differing cases but with a common denominator: in them the visualization process is also, and directly, a tool for community building.

### Mapping and place making

First I would like to draw attention to the Green Map System: a nonprofit organization which, since 1995, has been using local mapmaking as a means to promote inclusive participation in sustainable community development (example 6.1).

Twenty years of experience indicate that this kind of mapmaking, both the resulting Green Maps and the process of making them, has effects that go far beyond the strict function of a map (even though they are important from this point of view too): "we support locally-led Green Map projects as they create perspective-changing community 'portraits' which act as comprehensive inventories for decision-making and as practical guides for residents and tourists."<sup>3</sup> The making of these community portraits strengthens local-global sustainability networks, expanding the demand for healthier, greener options and helping successful initiatives replicate and spread. What makes this case so interesting, both in general and for our present discussion, is not only that this participatory mapping process leads to a clear and effective vision of sustainability-related issues in a city or region, but also that, having created a kit that enables these maps to be created in open source and by nonexperts, it transforms the mapping into community building and therefore into a *place-making process*: a process that produces a new (or renewed) sense of place by connecting a space with the communities that inhabit it. "Many kinds of community mapping projects, when they are based on inclusive and creative learning processes and diverse partnerships between community, institutions and the private sector, can effectively bridge learning to planning, and space to place."<sup>4</sup> (I will come back to this point in chapter 10.)

### Example 6.1

#### GREEN MAP SYSTEM, WORLDWIDE

Green Maps are locally created environmentally themed maps which use a universal symbol set, adaptable mapmaking resources, and an interactive mapping platform provided by the nonprofit Green Map System. Based on the principles of cartography, a Green Map plots the locations of a community's natural, cultural, and sustainable resources such as recycling centers, heritage sites, community gardens, and socially conscious businesses, along with such hazards as toxic waste sites. This movement started in New York City in 1995 and has since spread to over 885 cities, towns, and villages in 65 countries. Its general aim is "to connect the booming 'go local,' green development and ecotourism movements, empowering widespread participation in critical local environment, climate and equity issues worldwide."<sup>5</sup>

Each Green Map is a local project, created by people who live or work in the community. Each is independently managed, and all the involved groups share experiences to benefit others.

All projects receive help from GreenMap.org's continually expanding Tool Center, other members of the Green Map network, and the global office. In 2009, the Open Green Map was launched. Now used in 40 countries, this mapmaking website is based on open-source and familiar mapping technologies like Google Maps. The Open Green Map aims at creating "an interactive space for everyone to share their insights, images and impacts about local green sites of all kinds."

### Amplifying and dynamizing

A second way to use visualization as a social organization tool is what we might call *weak signal amplification*. This process highlights little-known cases, with their characteristics and results and their underlying values, which may then feed the wider conversation on socially recognized values. To all intents and purposes, this too is a design intervention, and not only because it calls for the designing of communicative artifacts to make initiatives visible that would otherwise remain hidden. It is a design intervention also because a design choice underlies the decision of which cases to highlight: that of choosing the criteria by which to look at social dynamics, and on the basis of which to "extract" the promising cases.<sup>6</sup> This design activity, like many others, does not in itself need to be conducted by design experts: gathering these initiatives together, making them more accessible, and putting them forward as "promising cases" is an activity that can be done by any curious, attentive person who wishes to do so. However, expert design can play an important role in making this operation of amplifying weak signals more effective and more capable of sparking social conversation.



This can be done through relatively simple actions like preparing formats for presenting cases to be collected in dedicated archives. However, it can also be the result of more complex design initiatives, which connect the design of specific communicative artifacts (websites, films, exhibitions, festivals) with the organization of occasions for exchange and co-creation (workshops, seminars, courses) in which these promising cases can stimulate and suggest directions for new initiatives.

One example of this kind of approach is the DESIS Showcase. The aim of this project is to collect social innovation design initiatives from design schools across the globe in a dedicated repository, and to organize special events in which they can be shown and discussed.<sup>7</sup> Another, more complex activity, which gives a clearer idea of how amplifying weak signals may become a strategic move for promoting new initiatives, is Amplifying Creative Communities (example 6.2).

Eduardo Staszowski and Lara Penin, coordinators of the project, write: "Innovative grassroots practices are often below the radar of the general public and need to be acknowledged and sometimes 'normalized' to be

#### Example 6.2

##### AMPLIFYING CREATIVE COMMUNITIES, NEW YORK CITY

The project Amplifying Creative Communities in New York City takes a localized approach to new ideas that can make the transition to more sustainable cities. It is led by Parsons DESIS Lab at Parsons The New School for Design, in partnership with Green Map System, the Lower East Side Ecology Center, and the design firm IDEO. The project has been funded by the Rockefeller Foundation's NYC Cultural Innovation Fund 2009.

Its starting premise is that sustainable social innovation is present in less evident forms, in small self-organized groups that seek to improve their lives and environment through collaboration. The project offers insight on how designers and planners can stimulate sustainable and socially innovative solutions to urban everyday problems. In practice, the project proposes an *amplification* method to improve and expand the capacity of neighborhoods to identify, design, and diffuse social innovations at a local level, to *amplify* them to larger audiences. The amplifications are articulated around three main actions: (1) mapping of diffuse sustainable social innovations; (2) designing scenarios to promote synergies around shared visions and toolkits to stimulate the startup of new initiatives; and (3) communicating sustainable social innovations through (a) exhibitions, (b) workshops, and (c) websites to stimulate strategic conversations, create awareness, and promote change within communities.<sup>8</sup>

accepted as valid and desirable. In order to achieve this goal the project aims at defining and experimenting with a so called amplification method."<sup>9</sup> Different design strategies have been employed, such as an interactive exhibition of innovative practices in the local area under study: "the exhibition ... more than a space for showing final results is a research tool and a method of interaction with local communities where mapping and designing activities can also take place and the content can change before, during and after the exhibit."<sup>10</sup>

#### Creating stories

One tool that enables us to deal with difficult topics, putting together what is there now and what we would like it to be, is storytelling: "a specific structure of narrative with a specific style and set of characters and which includes a sense of completeness. Through this sharing of experience we use stories to pass on accumulated wisdom, beliefs, and values."<sup>11</sup>

Storytelling is an age-old activity, but today it is acquiring a rather special importance. It enables us to communicate the complex ideas and values that today's co-designing processes must often deal with. It is also true that the new media have made it easier to produce content and therefore have greatly increased the number of people who have become more or less able storytellers.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, precisely because of this increased capacity to tell stories, the space for action in this field has also grown for design experts. By this I mean that design experts can support storytelling both technically, by integrating it with professional skills, and culturally, by proposing socially and environmentally sensitive contents. At the same time, they also help those engaged in social innovation to recognize the value of this tool and try out new ways of using it.

#### Reconstructing local identities

One example of this type of initiative is the project Imagine Milan promoted and developed by Imagis, a research group in the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano in collaboration with Milan's city council (example 6.3).

Imagine Milan is an important initiative whose aim is to reconstruct the identity of some of the city's neighborhoods from the bottom up. An important part of the work was the creation of a series of short videos in which local citizens told stories about their neighborhood. By talking about what it used to be like, what it is like now, and what it could be like, they provided a vision of the city that is at once rich, multifaceted,



**Example 6.3****URBAN STORYTELLING, MILAN**

Imagine Milan is a didactic and research program started in 2009 at the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano by Imagis research group. Its original aim, in collaboration with the Milan city council, was to experiment with the use of visual communication in processes of urban transformation. One specific project was to conceive and enhance a communication strategy based on 20 short videos related to 20 city zones. The background idea was that "the identity of an area is built from the personal and collective histories of its inhabitants, a set of polyphonic images, faces, voices, gestures and characters in a continuous juxtaposition (sometimes, stressful and conflictual) of historical memory, present complexity and future expectations."<sup>13</sup> These videos are instruments for dialogue among citizens, decision makers involved in the design of infrastructure, and, above all, promoters of a new idea of Milan as a sustainable city. Different audiovisual formats and genres have been produced to achieve different communication goals: in particular, brief documentaries using footage, iconographic repertoires, and interviews to present people's individual stories and record transformations in progress and the good practices already being applied; and video scenarios for envisioning how the city would look if certain behaviors were to be supported and become common practice. Since 2009 the Imagine Milan program has been evolving, and it is now experimenting with the integration of transmedia narratives and social media advocacy.

and profound. This experience, like many others, shows how storytelling, especially video storytelling, can contribute to the rebuilding of relationships between people and the space they live in, and thus rebuilding the idea of place.

**Digital storytelling**

Another example of using video storytelling with reference to a local community is Life Stories, a series of videos created by Mobile for Development (a section of the association of mobile operators worldwide, GSMA).<sup>14</sup> On the Life Stories website there is a vast catalog of stories about how specific, concrete problems have been solved, using mobile technologies, in communities described as underserved.<sup>15</sup> Together, these stories give a positive vision of how these technologies (especially the mobile phone) can help to solve problems, especially in difficult situations. Obviously the actual social and cultural implications of each of the solutions require

verification, but the communicative effectiveness of the storytelling is immediately evident. Using this technique makes the solutions proposed far more understandable and attractive than they would have been if presented in another way.

This effectiveness is easily verifiable for a global public interested, in this case, in the potentialities of Mobile for Development. The same is not necessarily true for the local people, meaning those more directly concerned with the problems and their possible solutions. This is not only because the videos are in English, but also because they have been shot with a style and rhetoric typical of professional filmmakers from outside the local communities. Would it be possible to tell stories in the first person produced by people directly concerned, using the new media but adapting them to the specifics of their local culture? Experimentation in this field means, in cases like these, verifying the possibility of moving directly from the oral storytelling tradition (still alive in these societies) to a contemporary way of telling stories, capable of dealing with the various issues involved in the transformations under way, and supported by the new media (which can be seen as a kind of *cultural leapfrogging*).<sup>16</sup>

An example of this kind of experimentation can be seen in the Story-Bank project conducted in India. This was led by David Frohlich at the Digital World Research Centre, in partnership with a number of other UK universities and an Indian NGO called Voices.<sup>17</sup> The aim of this initiative was to verify whether and how the new media might be able "to support non-textual information sharing." More precisely, the project team said, "we wanted to see whether a cameraphone application could feasibly be used without text to create audiovisual stories for sharing on a community display" (example 6.4).<sup>18</sup>

The results of the project showed that "the system was usable by a cross section of the community and valued for its ability to express a mixture of development and community information in an accessible form." The research team members concluded: "this only scratches the surface of what might be done through more complex forms of story creation and distribution over a wider area network." With reference to another project with similar aims and talking about how much is still to be done in this field,<sup>19</sup> Mugendi M'Rithaa, professor of design at the Cape Peninsula University in Cape Town, said: "I have to admit so far we have been driven by passion and zeal, rather than by knowledge. Now the next step will be to say: we have a good story, but we need some technical inputs to make that storytelling effective."<sup>20</sup>