

Art and the Outdoors!

Positive About Young People 2006 Summer Project Report.



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North Warwickshire Borough Council



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

Contents: ***Getting creative Outside!***

Introduction	pg 5
Objectives	pg 5
Outreach and Attendance	pg 6
Expenditure	pg 7
Methodology	pg 8
LVT-Session Expectations & Evaluations wk 1-5	pg 9-30
Community Evaluations	pg 31
Overall Project Reflections	pg 32
Key Recommendations	pg 33

Introduction



This project was funded by a grant from

Positive About Young People fund. It was originally designed to bring children and adults together on an allotment site for mutual learning. Since issues with leasing and clearing of the allotment site became an obstacle an alternative outdoor site was chosen. Daffern's Wood became the new main location of the outdoor activities.

The project ran for 5 weeks and the activities included:

Week 1 – Willow Weaving

Week 2 – Painting, collage and group mural

Week 3 – Bird box building and tree Id session, paper bird mobile making

Week 4 – Woodland Storywalk, paper animal engineering

Week 5 – Song and Storytelling Performance

Objectives

- To use a diverse selection of Artforms in an outdoor environment in New Arley in Partnership with the Gun Hill Allotment Association with the aim of broadening environmental awareness.
- To provide structured summer activities for parents and children of New Arley and foster intergenerational work
- To target children ages 10-13 of New Arley
- To familiarise local with Daffern's Wood as an important personal, social and environmental resource.
- To use a new method of visual communication (Logo Visual Thinking or LVT) to investigate qualitative performance indicators of community development project work.
- To encourage creative thinking skills
- To encourage group thinking skills

Outreach and Attendance

Outreach Efforts

Direct

Assembly with Herbert Fowler Junior School Year 6s – 43 children given flyers and schedules

July 22nd Arley Fun Day – Flyer distribution to local parents and children

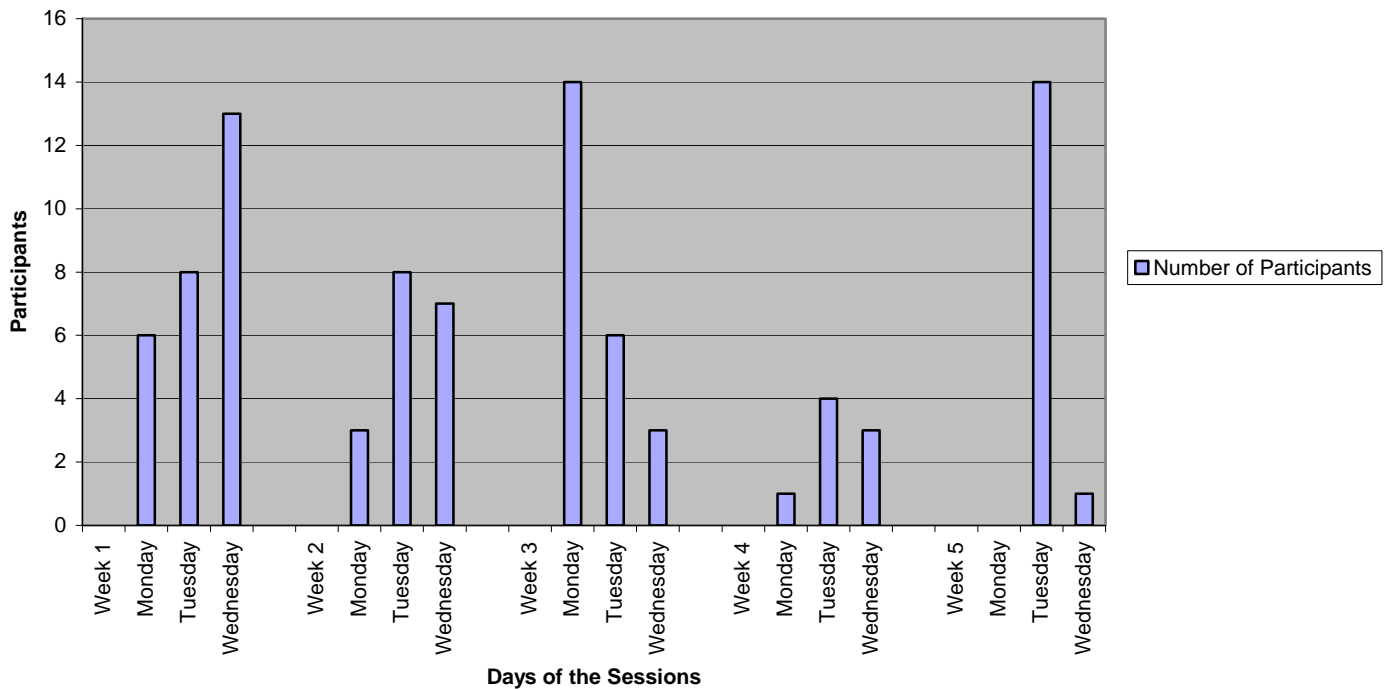
340 Flyers hand delivered to homes in New Arley mid project

Mail out

1295 Flyers distributed with the local newsletter ‘Arley News’, distributed to both Old and New Arley.

Attendance

Total Attendance of Summer Art and The Outdoors PAYP project



Expenditure

External Funds Expenditure

Hall Hire: Total = **£75**

Accommodation for one artist: = **£ 30.00**

Equipment: Total =£381.75+£126.47= **£508.22**

Artists and Environment Facilitators:

£564.00 British Conservation Trust Volunteers +

£853.00 Willow Weaving Artist and materials+

£365.20 Barry Patterson 'Green Man performance'+

£ 584.80 Chris Salisbury 'WildWise'

Total = £ 2367.00

External funds total expenditure = £2980.27

North Warwickshire Council Expenditure

Flyers & Posters: Estimated Total = **£170.00**

Staffing:

Leader: (£7:33 *3) x 2 = £43.8

Community Project Officer: (£8.67*3) x 9= £234.09

Community Project Officer: (£8.36 *3) x 1= £25.08

Community Development Officer: (£ 10.83 * approx. 5) x 15 = £812.25

Total = **£1115.22**

Transport: Total = **£138.24**

NWBC total expenditure = £1423.46

Grand Total expenditure: **£4403.73**

Total PAYS Grant spent = **£4200 - £2980.27= £1219.73**

Donations and In-Kind Assistance

1. Rural community Council distributed flyers through the Arley News free of charge.
2. Creative Management Centre, originators of the LVT method donated hexagonal post-its to the project which were used in a group mural design session as well as additional assistance and advice with the LVT facilitation method.



Methodology

LogoVisual Thinking* was used throughout the project as means of engaging project workers, artists and facilitators in collaboratively establishing objectives for the various workshop sessions, and qualitatively evaluating their effectiveness.

The specific methodology adopted, is outlined below:

1. The question; *What are your expectations for this workshop/ series of workshops?* was posed to each workshop leaders group, in advance of the start of a session.
2. The group was then given instructions to write in full sentences whatever came to mind regarding their thoughts and feelings on the matter. Each of these thoughts was written on a single Post-it and placed on the same large piece of paper.
3. Once the group had made as many contributions as it could, the individual thoughts were placed into common groupings or 'clusters'. The process of clustering the ideas shows where people are in agreement and where they have a difference of opinions or expectations.
4. The clusters were given titles that were formulated by a group consensus process. The process of titling the clusters enabled the group to bring their groups of complex but similar thoughts together into one common concept.
5. The cluster titles were arranged in circle, and the group discussed how the concepts related to each other across and around the circle, and how the dynamics would change if as a group a decision was made to make one concept central to the project aim. Often it was enough to go through the exercise without concluding that one concept was overriding all others, with the discussion itself allowing the group to see how they could organise the session delivery.

After the project sessions had been delivered an evaluative session of individual Post-it writing was conducted with the aim to making observations which the group could classify as either Positive, Minus or Interesting. This process enabled the group to gauge how successful they have been at meeting the previously agreed on session aims and expectations.

The overall process allowed the group to define the goals and solutions to the project and also allowed all session leaders to feel engaged with the meaning and development of the work at hand. This increased focus and time spent in a group thinking activity enhanced the teamwork ethic.

The following report outlines five weeks of LVT session work on this project with all the artists and facilitators. It shows the overall outcomes as well as the problems and attempts at solutions. More importantly it shows how qualitative analysis of community development work can be carried out and be useful for overall project management.

**LogoVisual Thinking*: Centre for Management Creativity www.logovisual.com

LVT Session Expectations and Evaluations- Weeks 1-5

1. Facilitator Evaluations using LVT - Artists, SI&A Officer & Community Project Officers

Week 1 Willow Weaving

Margaret Cooper, Camille Archer, Helen Earp and Steph Lawrence

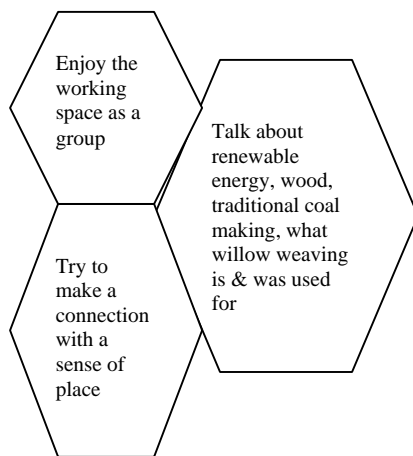


Pre-Session LVT Step 1. Focus Question

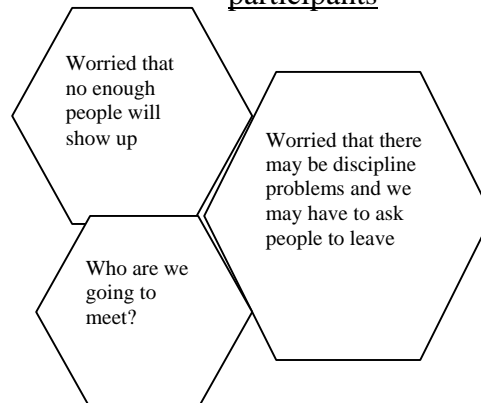
What are your expectations for this series of Willow Weaving workshops?

Steps 2& 3. Ideas were put into clusters of similar meaning and then titles were chosen for each cluster

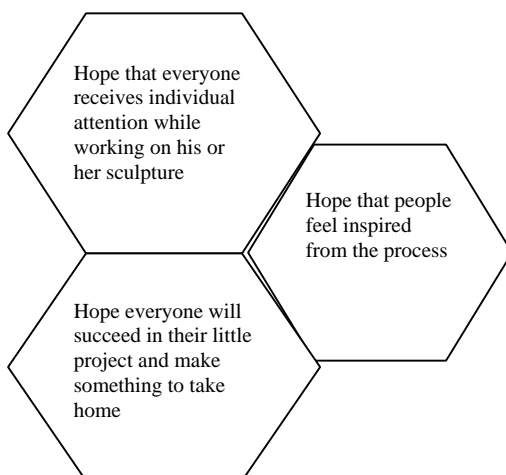
Make connections between people and the woodland



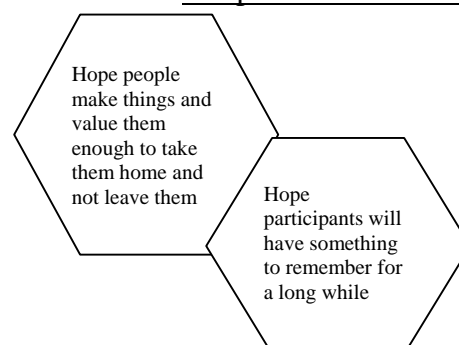
Feeling a bit apprehensive about potential participants



Hoping for positive outcomes in work and time spent with each other



To enable participants to feel a sense of ownership and pride in their work





Connect with local history

Hope people learn something about the past.

Hope that people enjoy their willow work (working with natural materials)

At the end of the first session I hope people will feel a sense of achievement

To provide an opportunity for thinking beyond ones normal activities

Be creative oneself

Hope participants will learn something about creativity

Hope that by sculpting and designing something manageable, people may gain confidence to try to do different things

Hope to foster new and deeper friendships

Providing a space and focused activity so people can get involved with each other

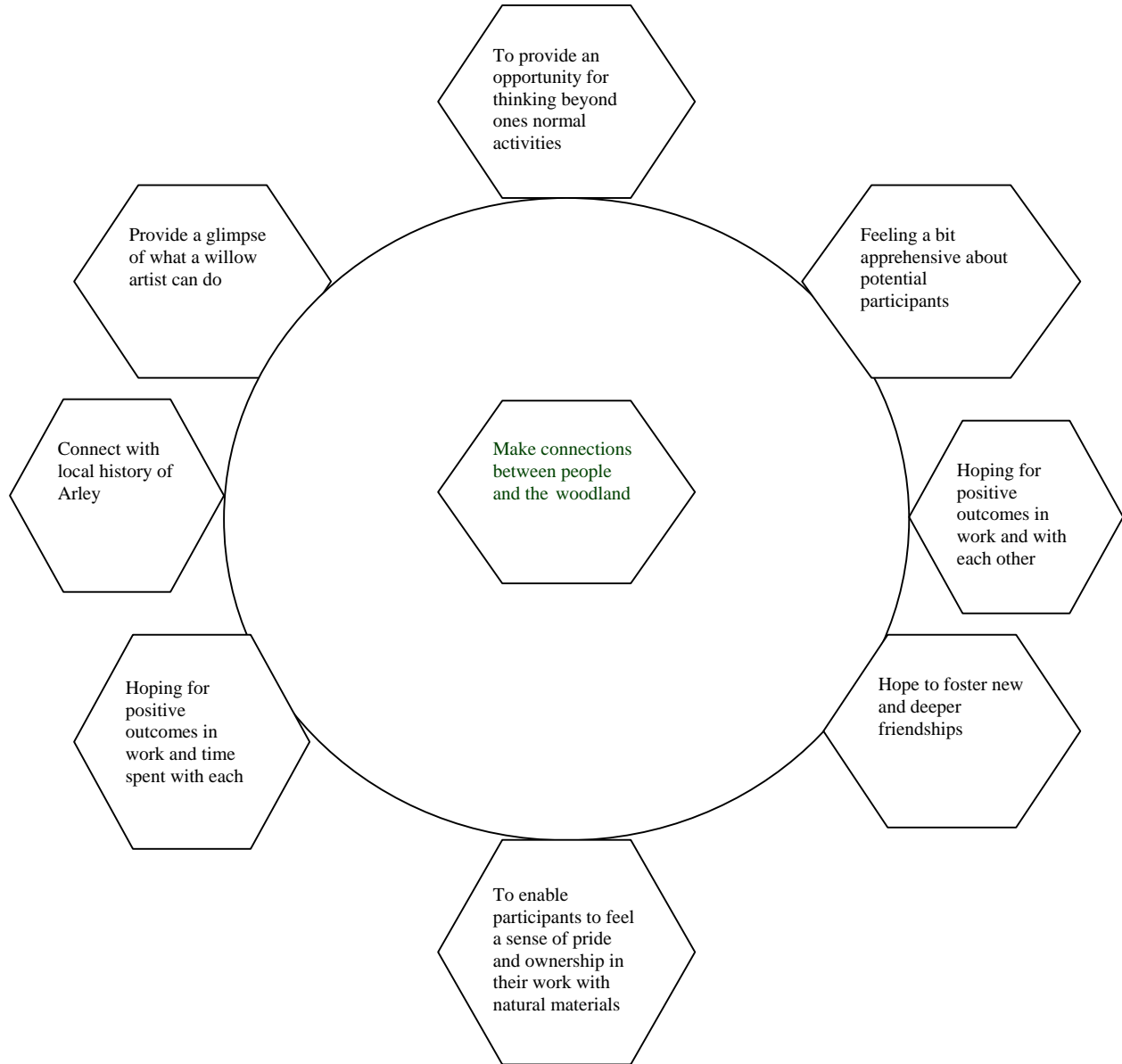
Provide an engaging activity so parents can have fun with their children

Provide a glimpse of what a willow artist does

Hope the participants will be interested in 'my angle' as artist/craft person

I will assist the artist and anyone in making things to provide support to the group

Step 4. Looking for connections, flow or conflicts. We arranged this with the strongest connecting idea in the centre. It was decided that if we kept that as a main objective we could keep a specific focus to the workshops. While it is a simple idea it seemed to be the underlying purpose for all the other aspirations for the project.

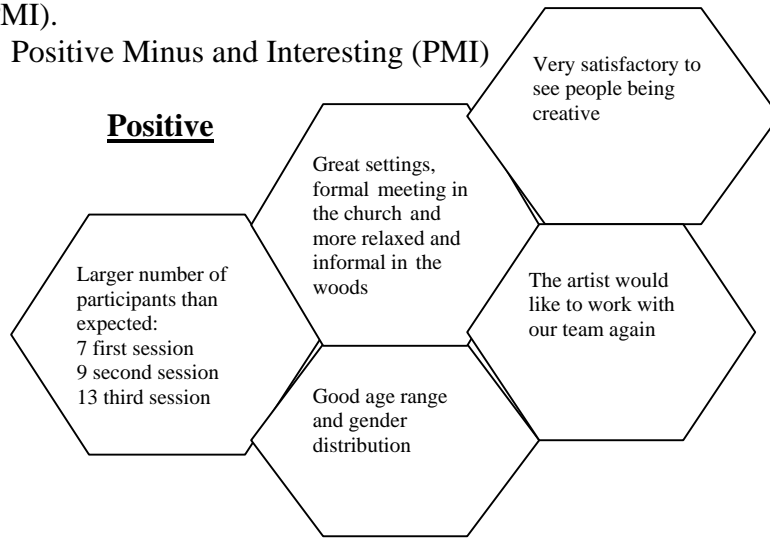


Post – Session LVT Step 5: End of willow weaving session Evaluation

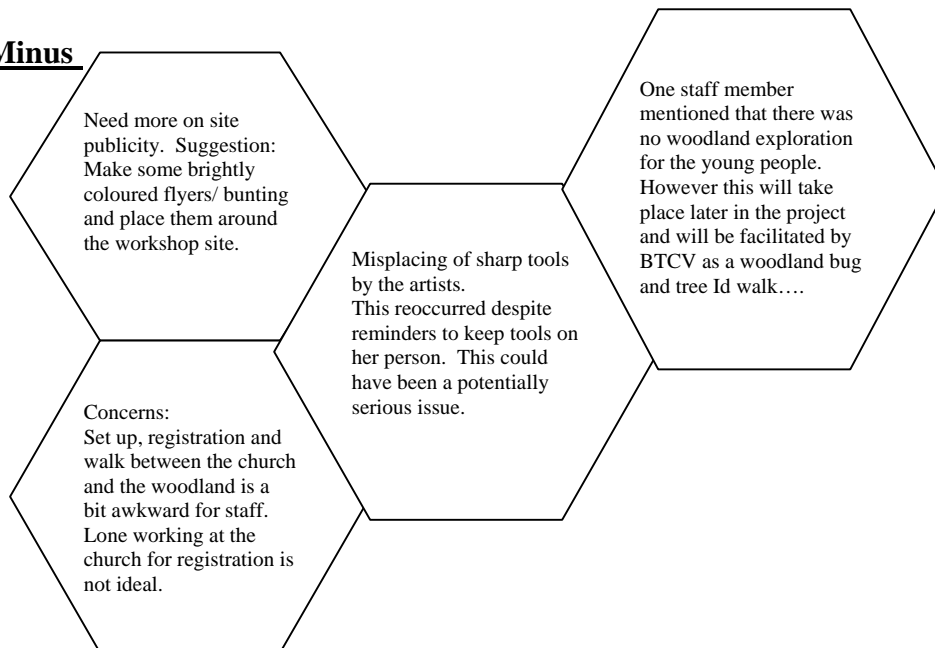
As a group we reviewed our thoughts, feelings and observations about the past three sessions. We then sorted these observations into three categories Positive, Minus and Interesting, (PMI).

Positive Minus and Interesting (PMI)

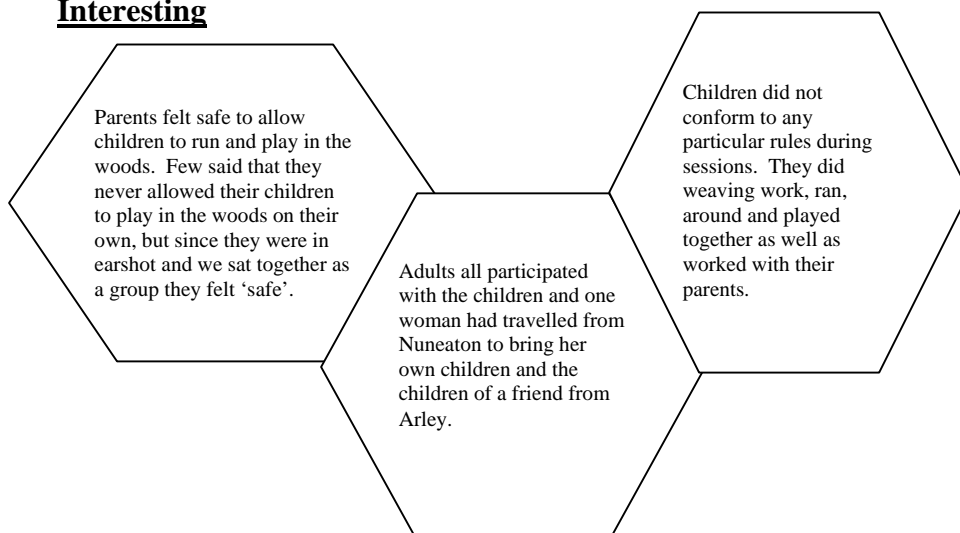
Positive



Minus



Interesting



Conclusions Week 1



The group consensus was that the week was a good start to the project as a whole. The weather was very good for every session. Based on attendance in this week it seemed likely that we would attract participants who would attend

consistently. They would then have the opportunity to shape the outcomes of the project and make suggestions for future improvements.

The working relationship with the artist was a positive one for most of the duration of the project. The use of the LVT was very helpful in this regard as it provided an open framework for discussion about concerns and about how to direct the workshops themselves. At her suggestion we made some banners for the exterior of the church to attract some attention and hopefully increase attendance. This did work for some of the local young people later on in the project when asked how they heard about the project, at least one child made reference to the banners.



This was the first use of the LVT process on the project. It helped to clarify a number of issues in terms of the directions and aims of the workshop that the artist did attempt to adhere too. However, some difficulty arose with the artist not being very consistent in her delivery of our agreed upon goals. In this regard LVT demonstrated that it can be used to foster a good working

relationship in project development but it can still be difficult to hold to the process during project delivery. On the whole the participants enjoyed the novelty of the willow weaving and had good discussions about the woodland, willow, coppicing, shelter building and design.

Facilitator Evaluations using LVT - Artists, SI&A Officer & Community Project Officers and Group Mural Design and Painting using LVT method

Week 2 Mural painting, self –portraits, collage & paper animals
Camille Archer and Steph Lawrence

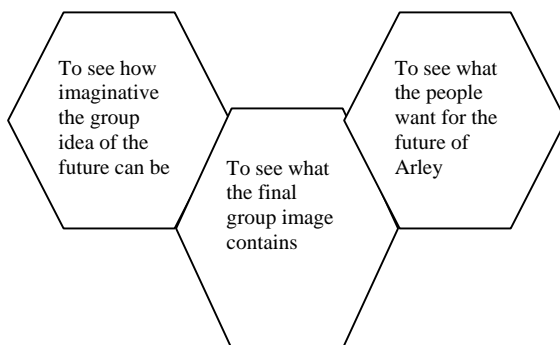


Pre-Session LVT Step 1. Focus Question

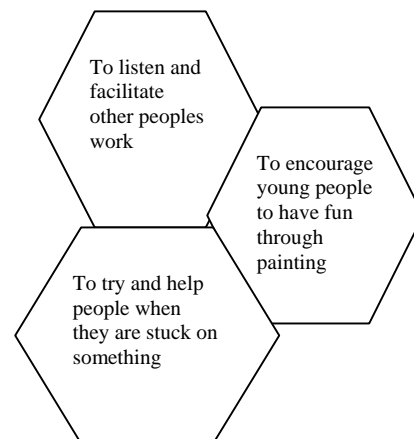
What are your expectations for this series of painting, collage and mini-beast workshops?

Steps 2& 3. Ideas were put into clusters of similar meaning and then titles were chosen for each cluster

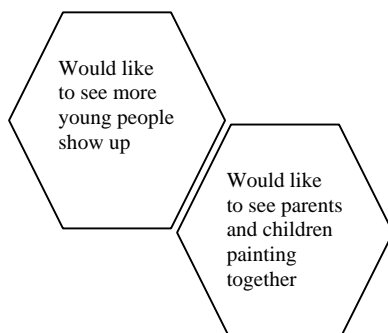
To see what the group thinks the future of Arley might look like



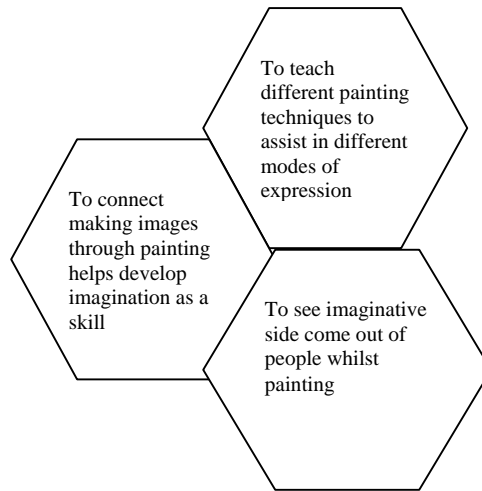
Provide a space for people to work together



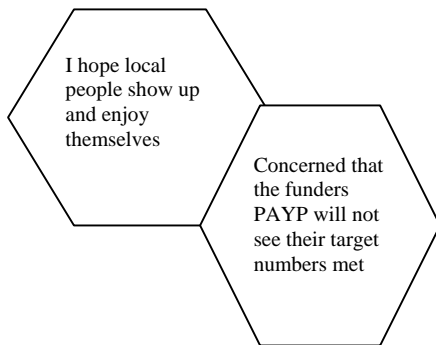
help and support



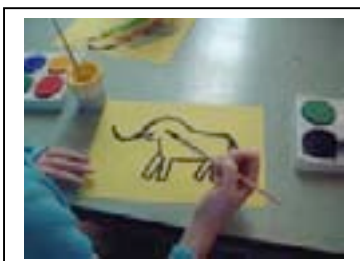
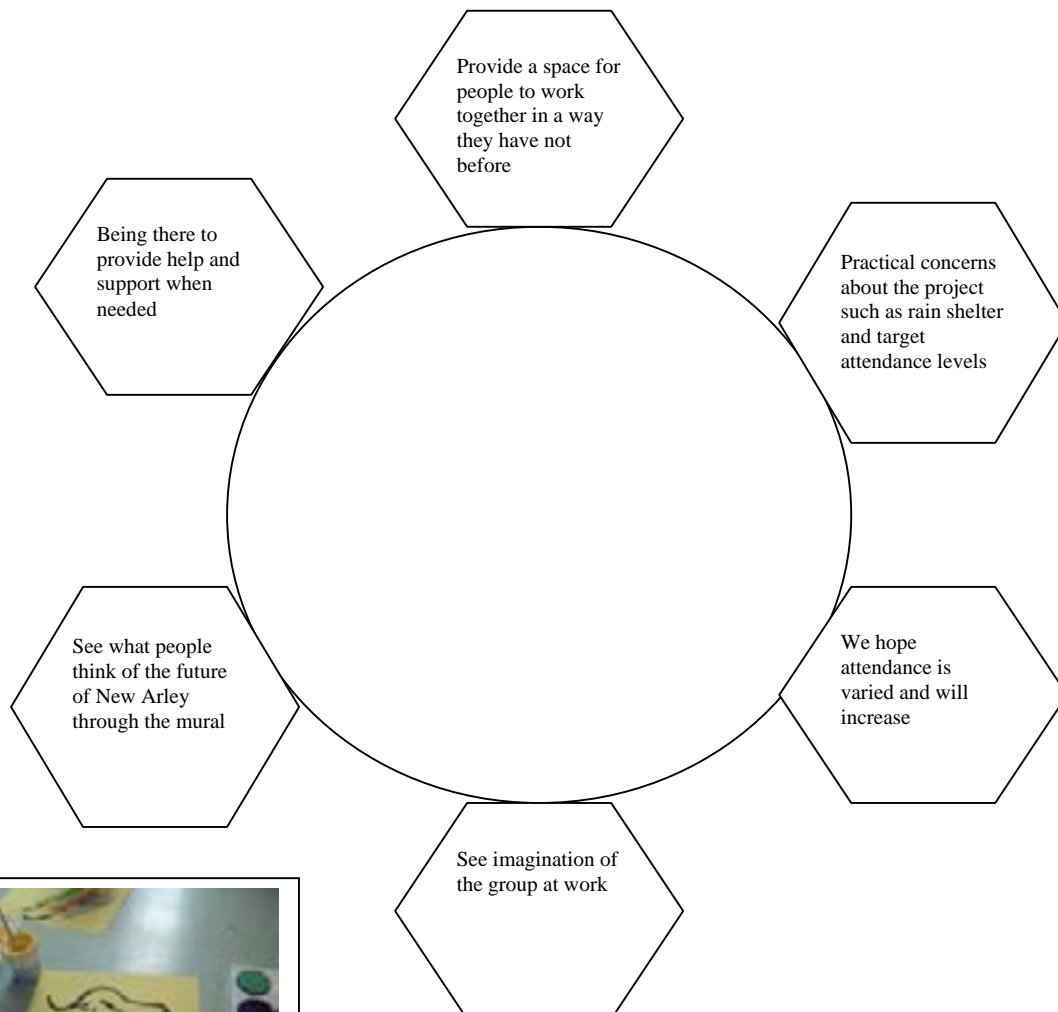
Allow for imaginative exploration through art



Concerns about the project



Step 4. Looking for connections, flow and or conflicts.



Group Mural Design and Painting using LVT method



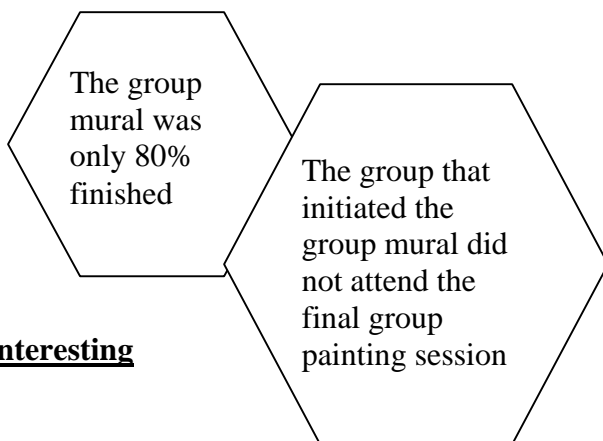


Post –Session LVT- Step 5

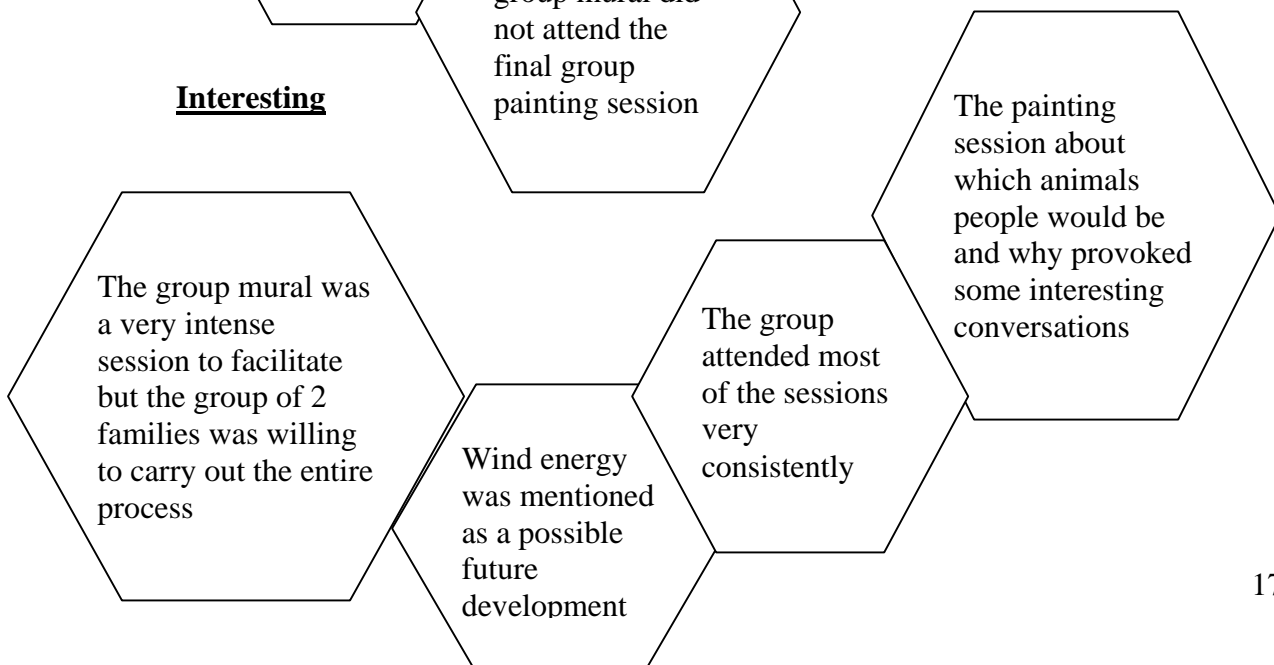
Positive



Minus



Interesting



Conclusions Week 2

The individual self-portraits worked well with the children and the parents. The group Mural was more difficult to pull together after the individual post-it stage but



the end image was about 75% filled in and contained all the ideas from the group. The most important step was to ask the children and parents to explain their drawings to the rest of us so that we understood how all the ideas could work together.

Once that was done we tried as a group to place each post it in a specific area on the paper. All the post-its centred around the 'more houses' post-it which was

immediately placed in the centre. It was at this point that I thought it might have been better to have a pre- outline drawing of the actual map /boundaries of the town as it exists today as the beginning of the canvas.

The group ideas for Arley the future indicated that there was a need for the very basic things that larger settlements take for granted such as an inter-net café, a supermarket. Other ideas showed the response to increased density of population with more houses, roads and office buildings being predicted for the village. Novel ideas were also part of the enjoyment and inspiration of the process and the children came up with ideas such as: the Snail park, where things have a chance to be slow. The children also had new engineering ideas such as football stadiums in the sky and new cars which would require 8 exhaust tail pipes due to their fuel combustion needs and resulting speed. This was an interesting opportunity for a discussion on fuel and energy needs of the future. Finally there were images that played no role at all but were a series of spirals that one child was quite happy to create on her own.



The mural was partially completed since participants who showed up on the first and second sessions did not attend on the third and final session. However, the local vicar has expressed an interest in displaying pictures and art work from the project as some point in the future, which would be a positive outcome for the entire session and project.

Week 3 Tree Identification, insect Identification and Bird Box building
Lucy Hawker and Camille Archer

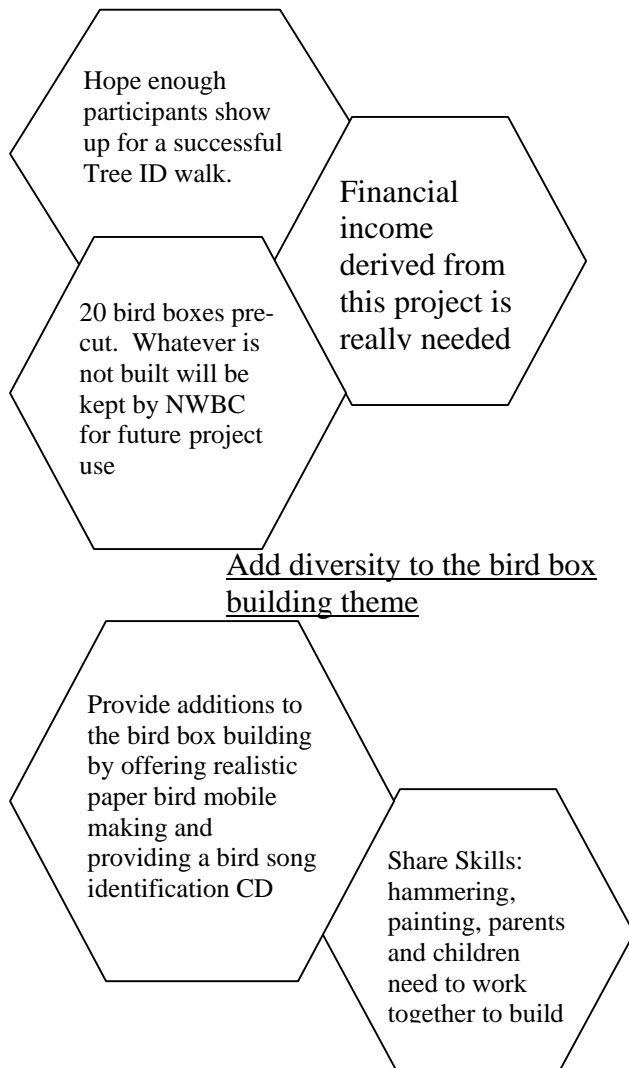


Pre- Session LVT 1. Focus Question

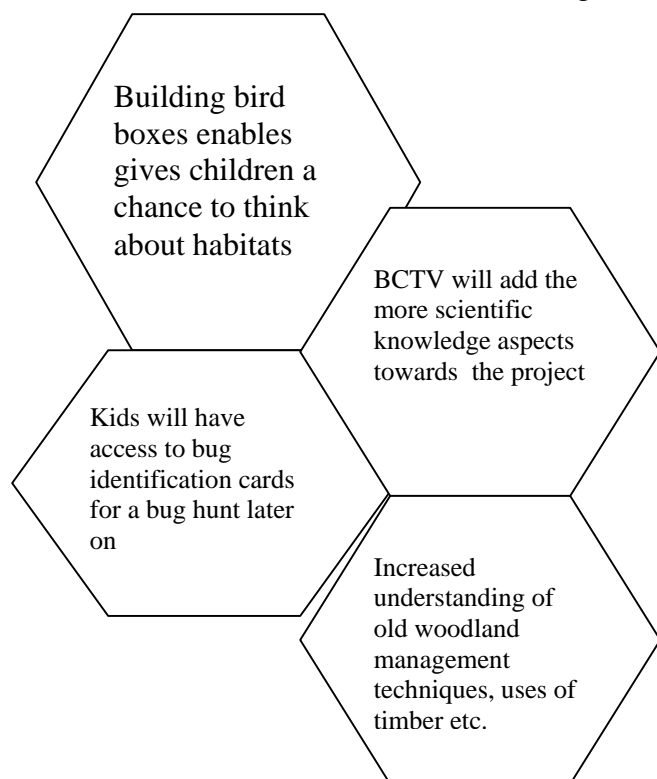
What are your expectations for this series of Tree Identification and bird box building workshops?

Steps 2& 3. Ideas were put into clusters of similar meaning and then titles were chosen for each cluster

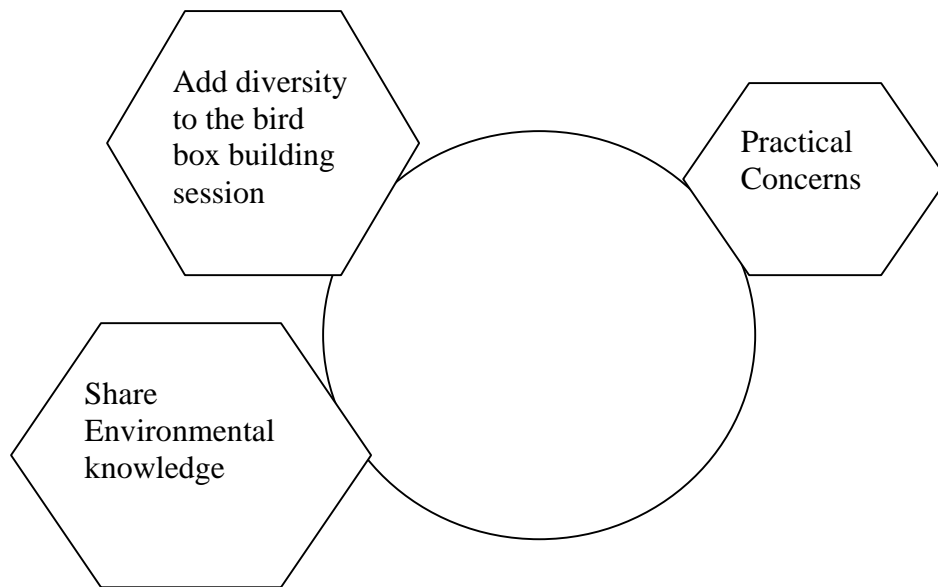
Practical Concerns



Share Environmental Knowledge

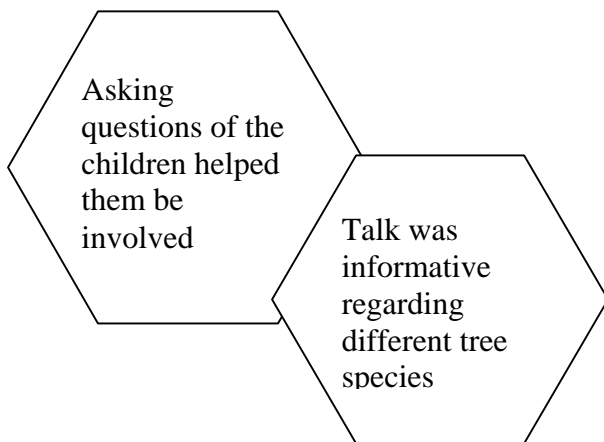


Step 4. Looking for connections, flow or conflicts.

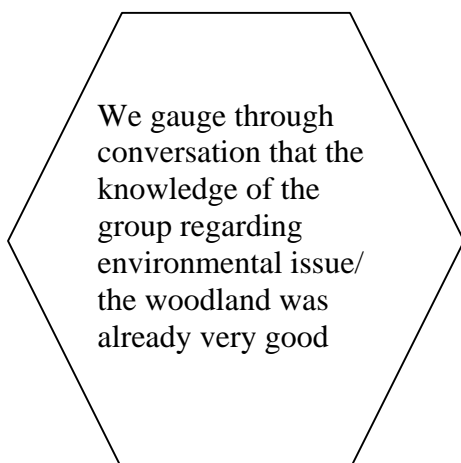


Post Session LVT- Step 5

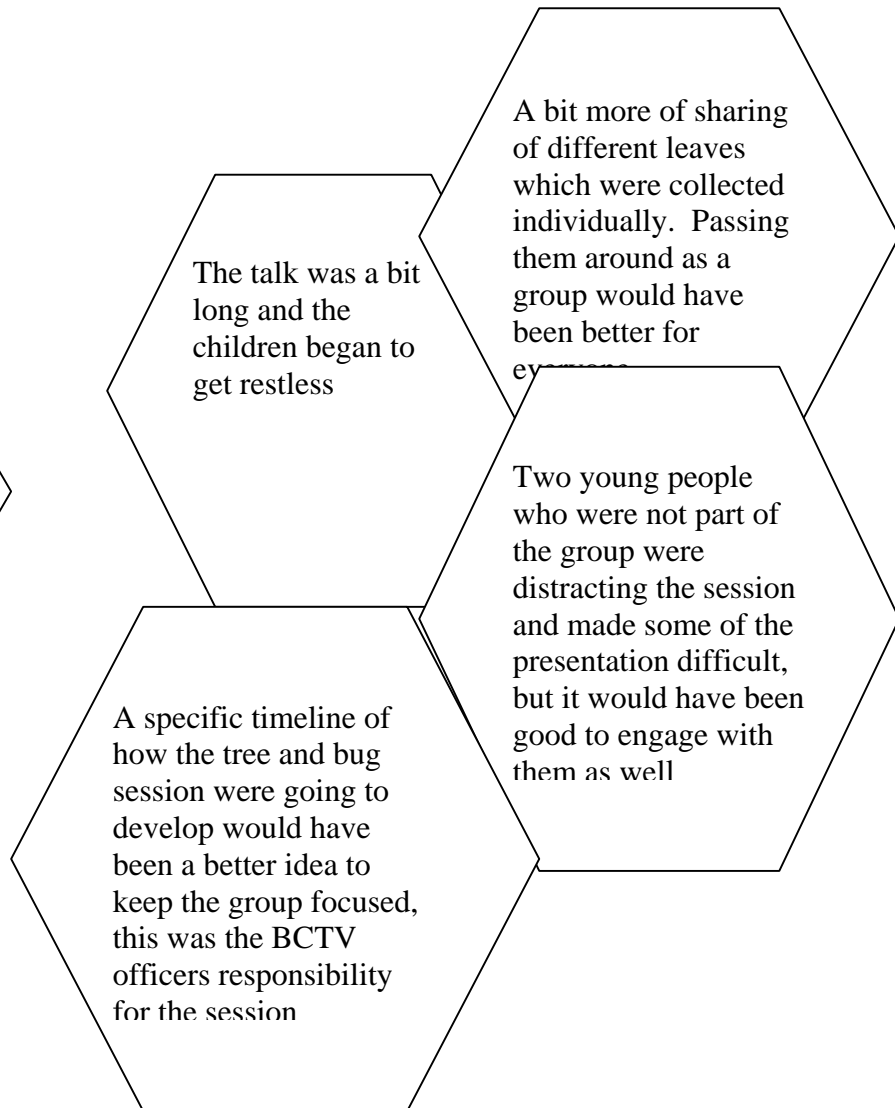
Positive



Interesting



Minus



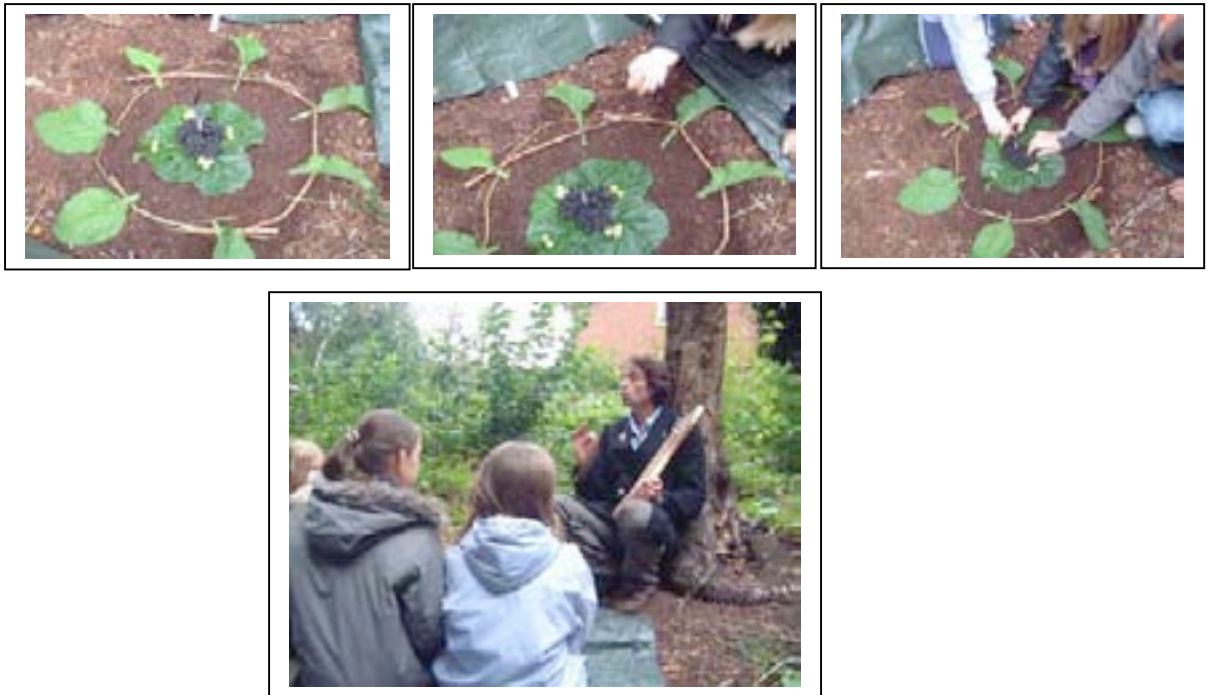
Conclusions Week 3

The overall impression of the staff who assisted with the third 3rd session were that BCTV did not deliver their sessions very well. The LVT sessions were meant to stimulate ideas of how the sessions would run and if art could be included in some ways but the lead BCTV officer was disinterested or exhausted at best and did not bring much of her expertise to the sessions.

However, this was a very popular session and had a very high attendance and the young people were very happy to take the bird boxes home with them. Painting the boxes was a good continuation of the process as some children used the bird mobile pieces to stick onto the sides of their boxes. Everyone enjoyed their time doing wood work and the bug session was a success in some ways but not very educational in other respects. It would be my recommendation that another environmental agency be used to fulfil the more scientific aspects of this project in the future.



Week 4 Story Walk and Story telling
Chris Salisbury and Camille Archer, Zoe Evans, Louise Cashmore

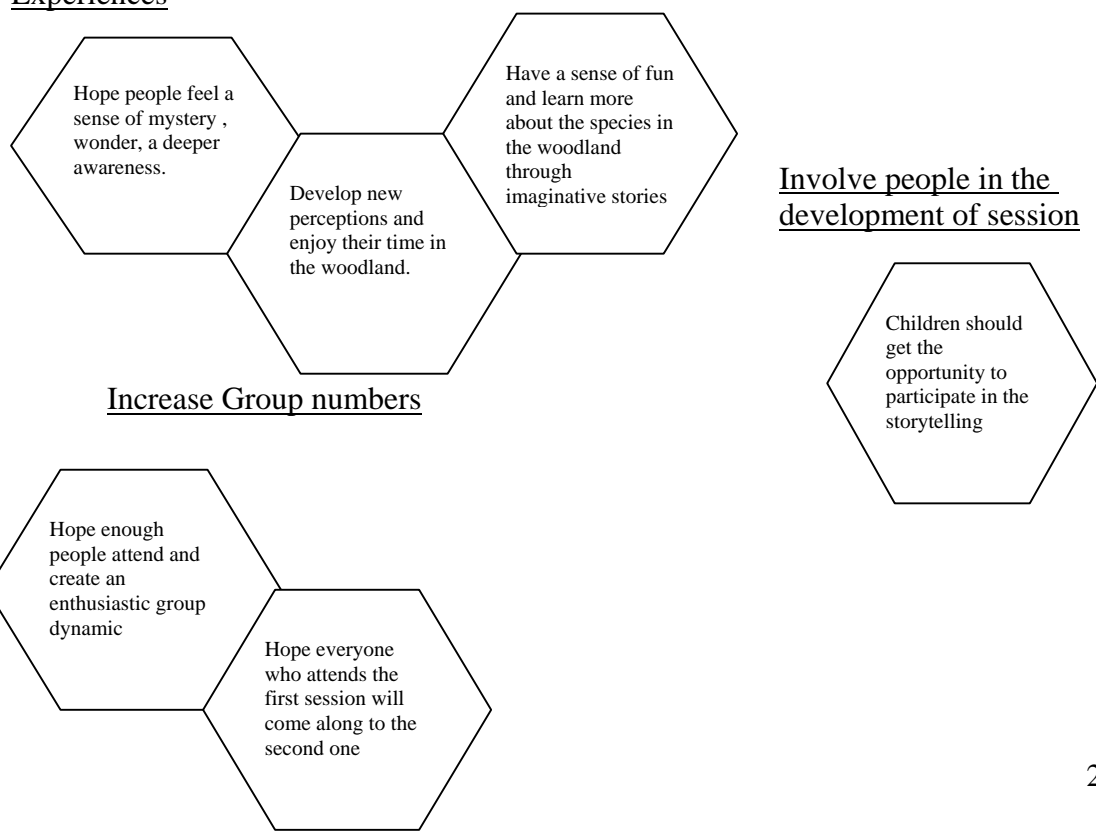


Pre-Session LVT 1. Focus Question

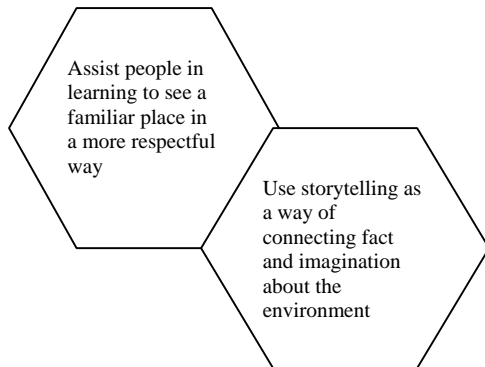
What are your expectations for this series of storytelling walks?

Steps 2& 3. Ideas were put into clusters of similar meaning and then titles were chosen for each cluster

Enable participants to have positive Experiences



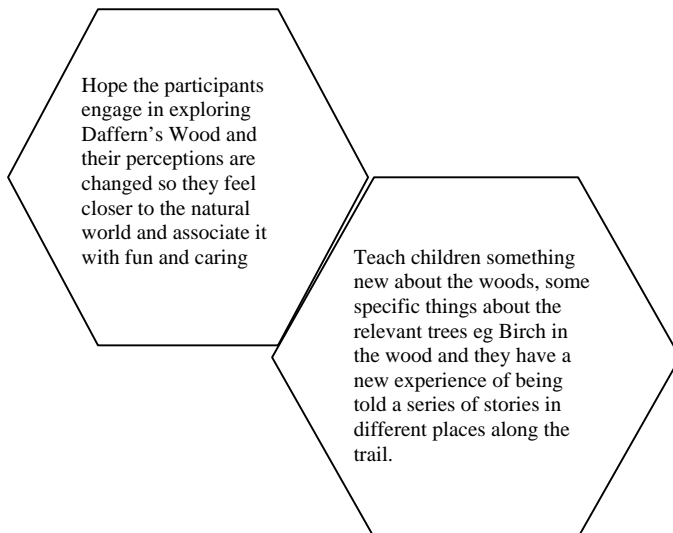
Develop a wider understanding of the environment



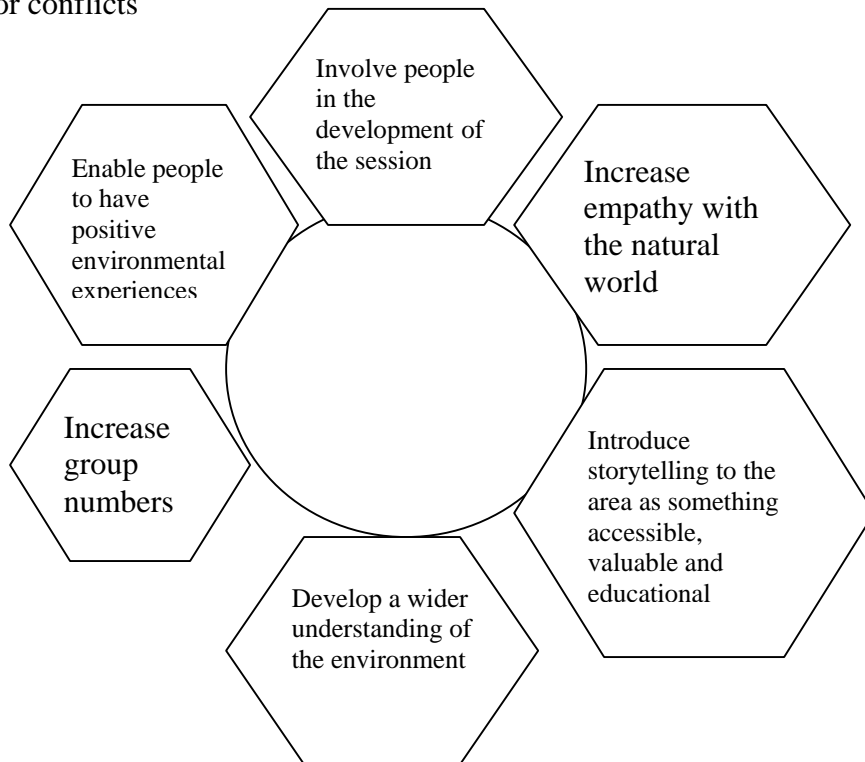
Introduce storytelling in the area as something accessible valuable and educational



Increase empathy with the natural world

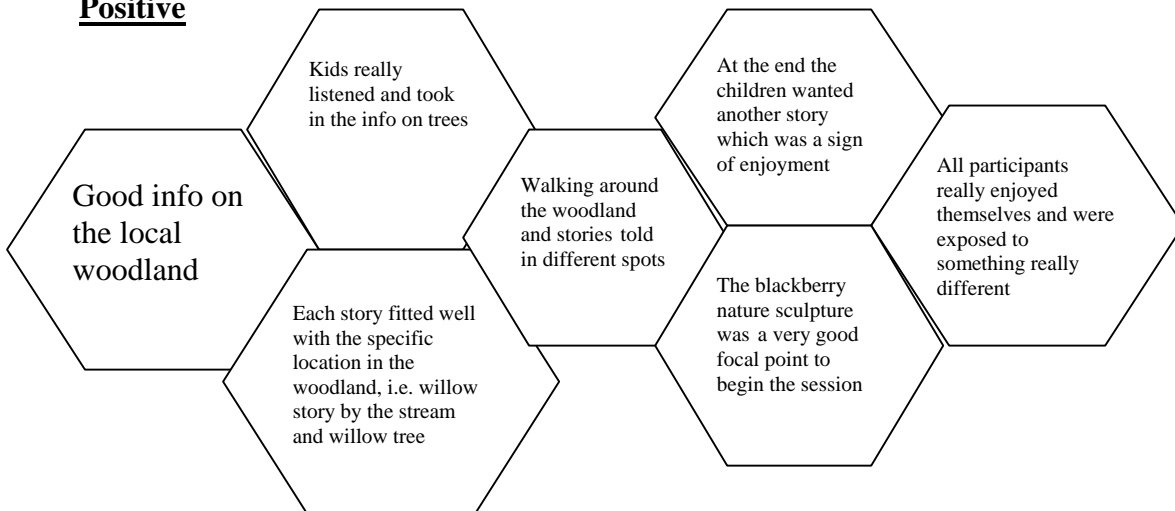


Step 4. Looking for connections, flows or conflicts

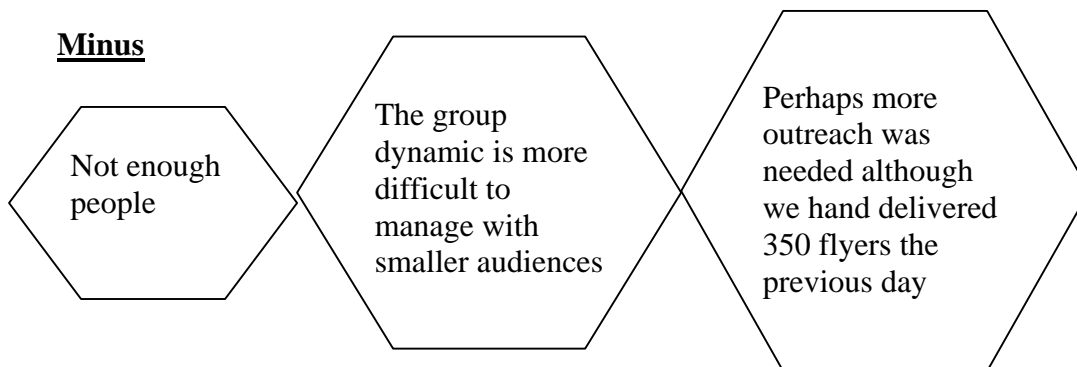


Post-Session LVT- Step 5

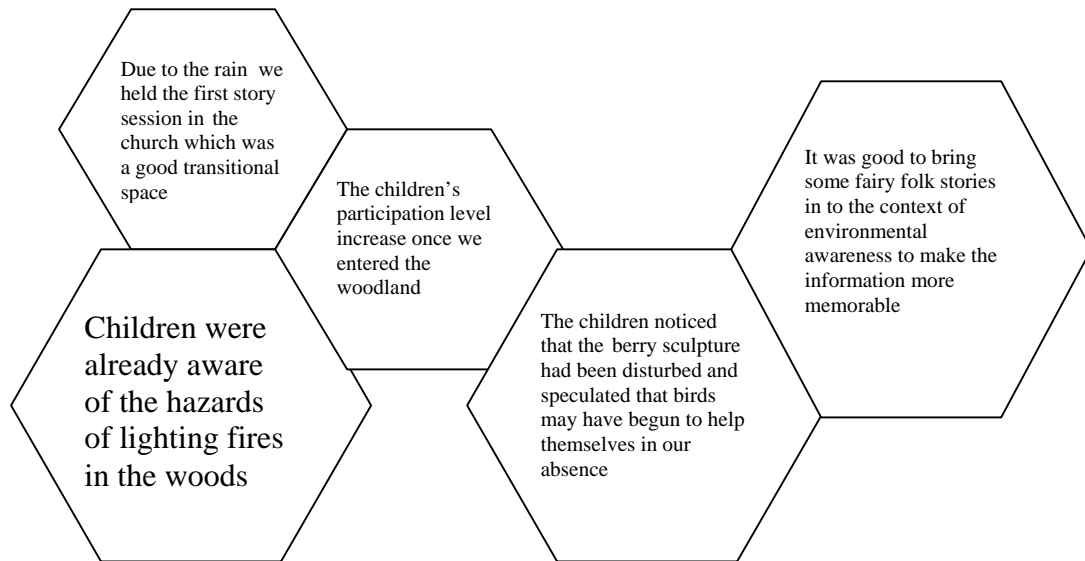
Positive



Minus



Interesting



Conclusions Week 4



The storytelling walk was very well done and the children and staff were very happy with the direct linking of the stories regarding specific trees in the woodland. The walk along the paths in the wood gave Chris the chance to tell woodland facts regarding how wood rots and creates habitat, oak trees as native tree create the best habitats for native species. The walk ended with a more fictional and classic story, 'The Lorax' by Dr.

Seuss that was very different in tone and content. This was a good way to end the



session as it was an imaginative tale about sustainable use of woodland and the consequences of persistent pollution. The children had a good opportunity to experience the woodland in an imaginative and meaningful way that hopefully will serve to enhance their personal appreciation and understanding of environmental issues.

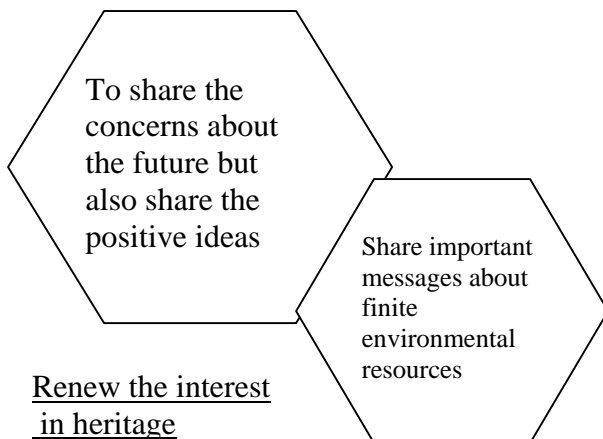
Week 5 The Green Man performance
Barry Patterson and Camille Archer, Zoe Evans



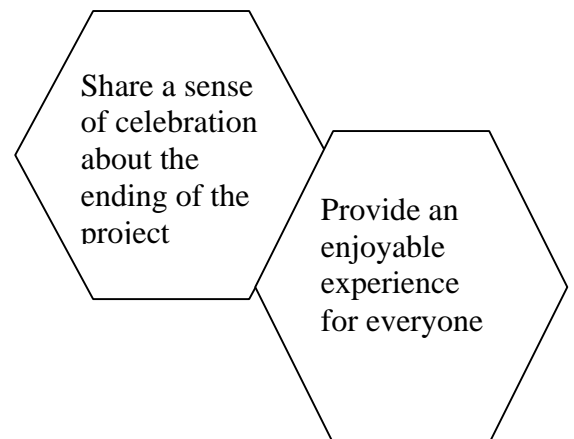
Pre-Session LVT Step 1. Focus Question: What are Your expectations for this series of ‘Green Man’ performances?

Steps 2& 3. Ideas were put into clusters of similar meaning and then titles were chosen for each cluster

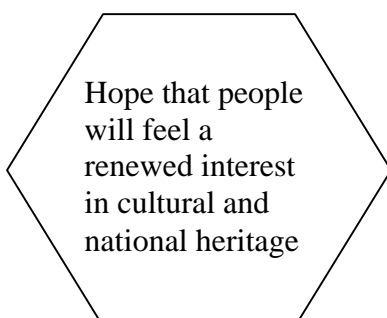
Increase awareness and engagement
About sustainability and the environment



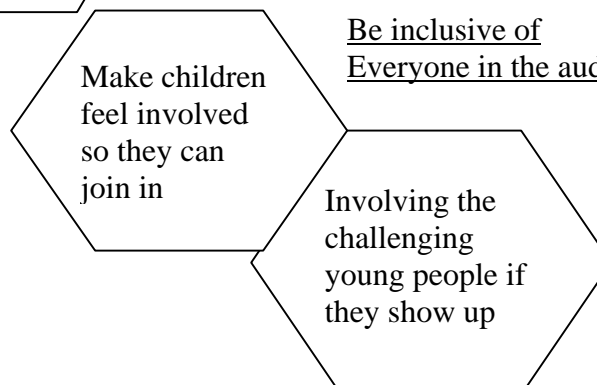
Have a shared celebration



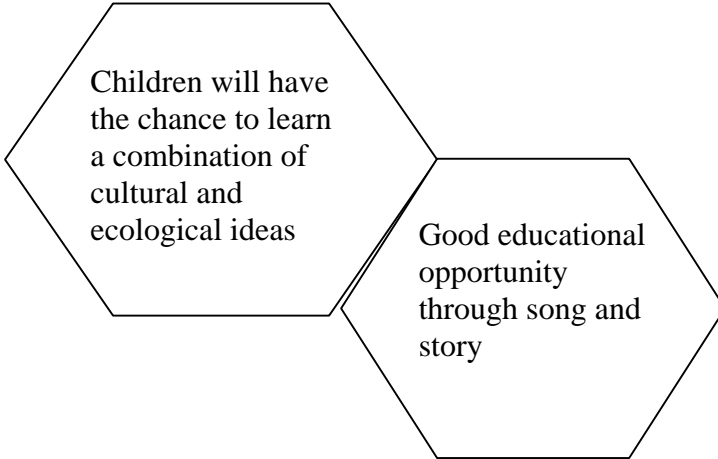
Renew the interest in heritage



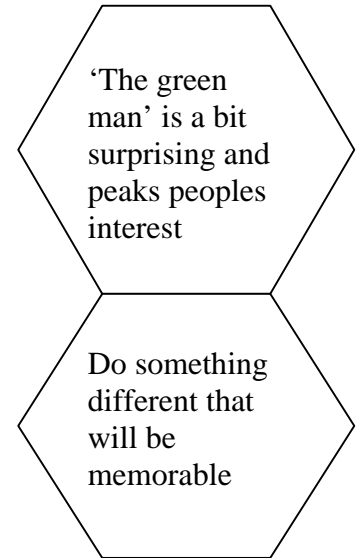
Be inclusive of Everyone in the audience



Educational performance
In and about Daffern's wood



Provide a new experience
in familial surroundings



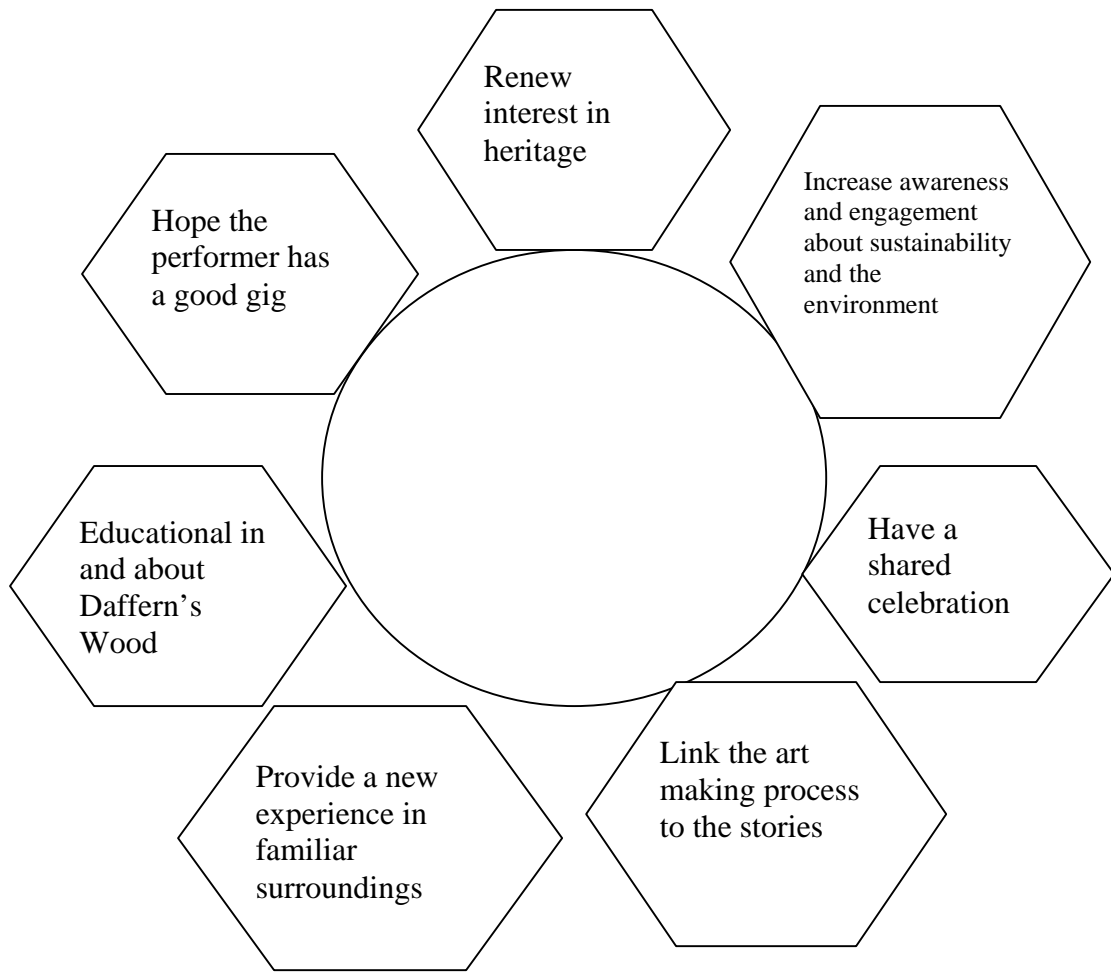
Link the art making process to the stories



Hope Barry has a good gig

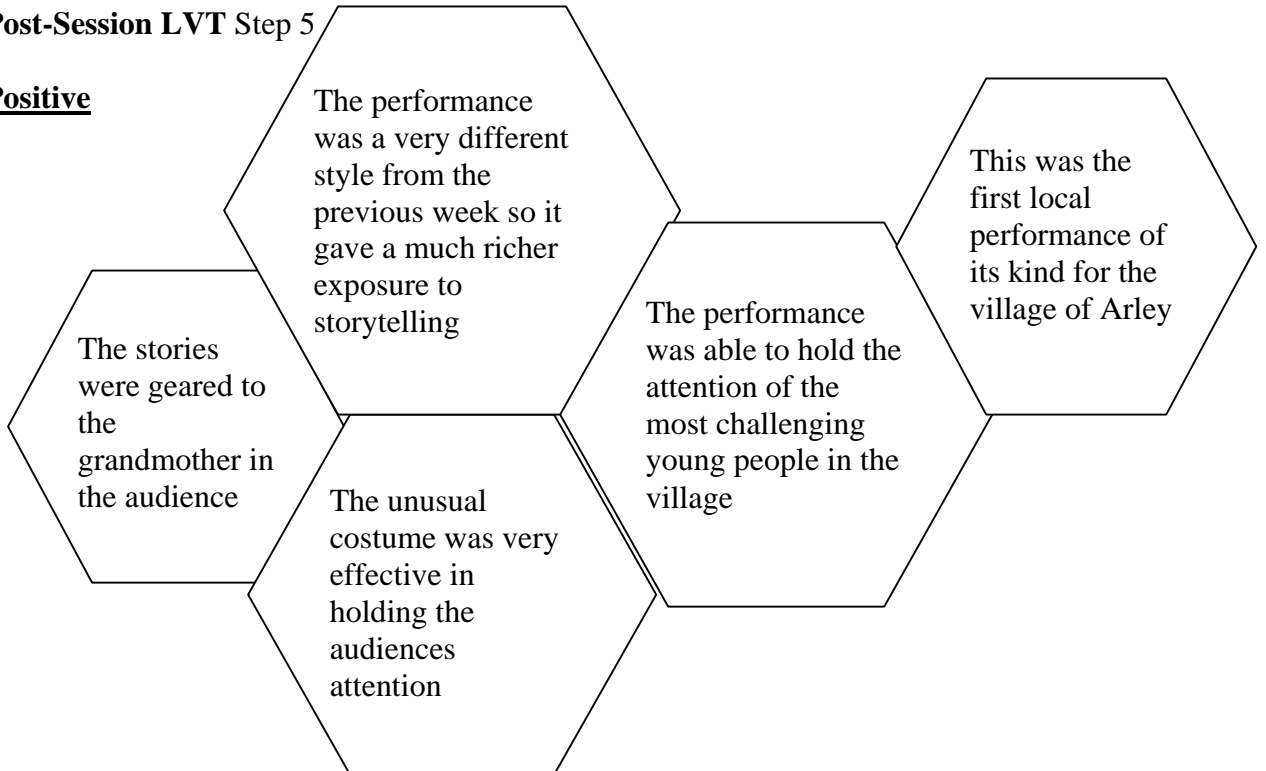


Step 4. Looking for connections, flows or conflicts

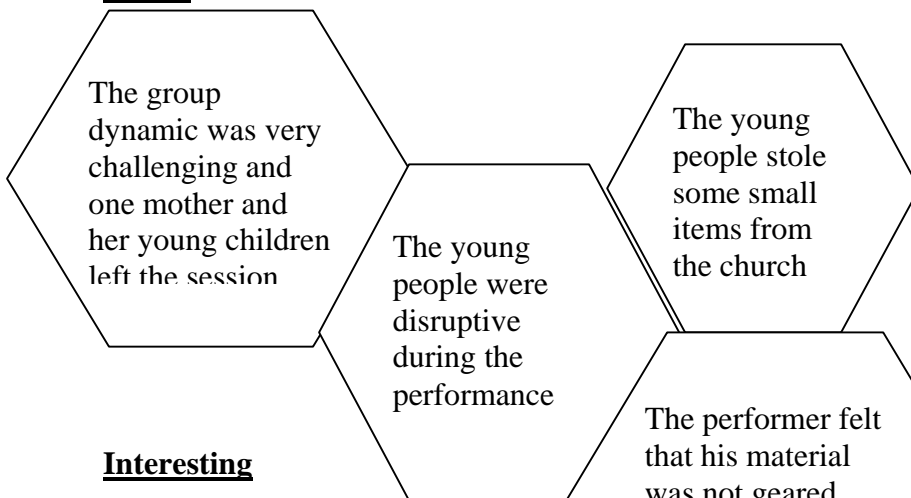


Post-Session LVT Step 5

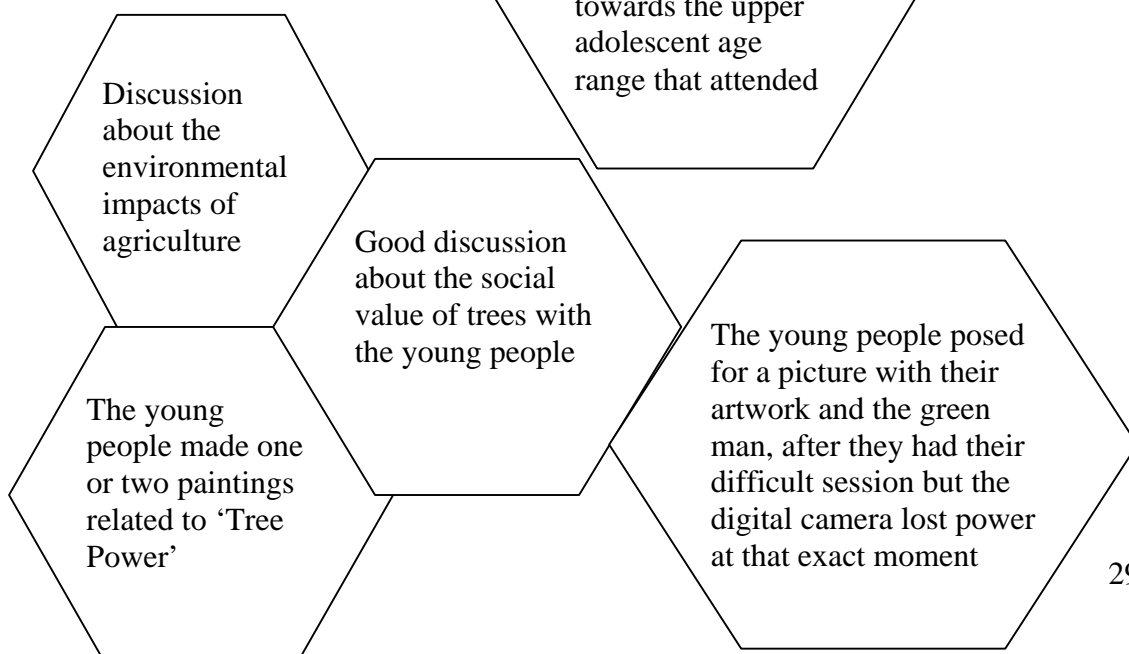
Positive



Minus



Interesting



Conclusion Week 5



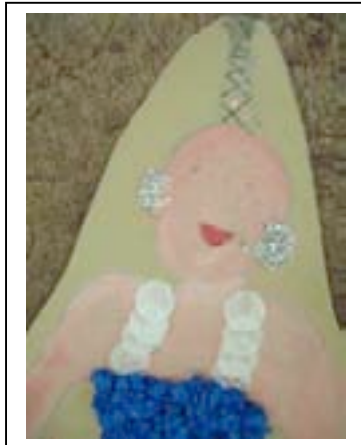
The first 'Green Man' performance was attended by a grandmother, her daughter and the newborn baby. This was a very small turn out but it worked very well since the performance was then geared towards ideas such as generations inheriting the earth as well as the generations symbolising and representing social change. This Barry called this the story of the 10,000 Grandmothers. They were very pleased

with the history of what is Known about the 'Green Man' as it pertains to the many stone sculptures found in and around English Churches. This was a fascinating session and it lead to conversation of church sculpture and architecture and the worth of preserving such heritage pieces. The conversation also turned towards environmental conservation and protection as one of the many purposes of the 'Green Man' and this turned to discussion of daily matters of choice, the most pertinent being the choice a new mother has to make when purchasing nappies. Disposable or reusable? The consequences of using both types were talked about as well as the difference in the expense and possible long term environmental effects. This session was a very good example of the strength of storytelling and performance when it is combined with a meaningful and socially relevant topic.

The second session was more challenging since the audience was made up of the challenging young people of New Arley who are well known to the safer communities staff and the local police. They arrived after a small group of parents and children had been listening to him sing for a few minutes and began to be disruptive. However Barry is quite experienced working with young people and audiences and did a very good job of gaining some measure of control over the session. However one mother and her two children left after she had a tuft of grass thrown at her by accident and this made the entire session somewhat more difficult. They eventually did listen to his song about different tree species but continued to be disgruntled. We broke the tension by offering a painting session in the church that was a risk but I decided that painting would be a good focusing activity to try with the group. It worked for a short period but deteriorated into boisterous play and some petty theft of church stationary. So we got the group to leave and concluded the session outdoors with the remainder of the children and families. This was a good way to end the session as Barry again engaged in conversation with a father who was a refuse operative for the area who was there with his two daughters.



Community Evaluations: Children and Parents



This project was designed for easy access as drop-in afternoon summer sessions. The overall benefit of this was that parents and children were not discouraged by pre-registration timelines, payments or cancellation fees. The disadvantages of this format were in the preparation for unknown numbers of people or for facilitating a group evaluation session which was not possible. Evaluation of the project using LVT would have been the better option but evaluation forms from PAYP and from NWBC were used instead due to the numbers of participants who turned out in the final weeks.

New people attended in the final week who had not attended any sessions previously so we gained their input rather than from participants who attended more consistently in the first weeks who did not return in the final weeks. This was also due to keeping most of the evaluation forms for the final two weeks which in hindsight was not the best course of action.

However based on the evaluations received and documented in (appendix 1) the overall enjoyment and engagement of the project by participants was positive.

The depth of the evaluation process was not thorough enough to gain a full understanding of whether some of the different aims and objectives were met.

However this very difficult to do because generally participants just want to do the activity and leave and not really invest time in a group process. This is especially true where the group members do not know each other or know each other but have little social associations outside the project. This was one of the larger aims of this project was to get children and young people together simply to share a common space and see what developed.



Overall Project Reflections



The project was well received by the people who participated. It provided a wide range of activities some of which the young people experienced for the first time. The local vicar was very supportive of the project and indicated that he hoped it would have the chance to happen again next year given all the things the children learned this year.

The use of the LVT process as a means of project management and qualitative project analysis was very beneficial. It provided a means to making specific group aims visible and a context in which to state how the project was progressing and how the aims were met at the end of the sessions. It also facilitated a positive group dynamic between NWBC staff and the artists and facilitators who had not worked with us previously. I hope that the report shares some sense of the time and effort all of the staff put into the process in order to provide meaningful and successful sessions. LVT also provides a record for the public of what was done in their community.

Overall, the greatest set back to the project was the low number of participants. This could have been due to any number of factors: some of the families who attended first sessions went on holiday by the end of the summer, there maybe a lack of motivation to attend very new activities such as storytelling was in that area, some people may have been hesitant to associate with some participants. Based on staff reflections of each session (appendix 2) participants really made their own experience and felt free and relaxed to create whatever they could with the materials provided.

The project was meant to build skills cumulatively and provide a space for young people as well as intergenerational work. This could be enhanced if we worked with any already existing groups in the area and the Gun Hill allotment association was meant to fulfil this role. However as is the case with many community voluntary groups there was a lack of commitment and participation on their part even though they had been consulted before and during the project design process and we received their verbal interest in the project. Since the lease of the land was not given to the group the matter of choosing an alternative outdoor site perhaps lessened their interest in the outcomes of the project. Numbers of participants would have increased if there was a renewed commitment from the group.

Given a similar project outline I think the group will be more inclined to participate if sessions were delivered on the allotment site as was previously hoped. If the grant were to be awarded next year then the land preparation would be well underway by the summer months and we would have the success and experience of this years project participants to build on.

Key Recommendations

If this project were to be done again the following ideas based on the experiences of this year may be useful.

- If possible use the LVT process with artists before you sign them to a contract. Based on an initial contribution it might be possible to gauge the level of interest, creativity and enthusiasm they may bring to a session.
- Remember to look outside the Positive, Minus and Interesting indicators for an overall picture of the success of a session. The example being that people can show up and get a lot out of a session depending on the activity itself and not be completely reliant on the abilities of the facilitator.
- Carry out the specific suggestions that come out of discussion during the PMI sessions because they can provide the optimum solution to the problem at hand and one might never be able to recapture the ideas that come up.
- Refer to the specific concepts agreed upon in the initial LVT session with the artist if things are not going accordingly.
- Involve as many staff as possible in successive LVT sessions as they will add more dimension to the observations of the sessions and will connect all the people on the project as working towards the same outcomes.
- Allow the sessions to actually unfold without analytical reference to the LVT session. LVT is useful to the point of defining objectives and meaningful ideas but should not be used as a directive but as a method of forethought that can yield to the situation at hand.
- If possible carry out a final LVT session with participants in a group as this will give a final picture of the entire group experience. Although questionnaires are useful if the group cannot be brought together again it would be far better to use the LVT in this case as well.

Appendix 1

NWBC Staff who assisted or worked on various stages of the project.



Clockwise from the top:
Fran Poole & Stephanie
Lawrence.
Louise Cashmore
Kirsty Lowrie
Zoe Evans
Helen Earp
(Not featured) Evan Ross
& Cheryl Bridges



Social Inclusion and Art Officer Remit- NWBC

Camille works in the partnership and development division as a community development officer. Social inclusion and art remit means using community arts to engage with hard to reach groups, to educate and to undertake capacity building activities. She develops and contributes to the delivery of projects, arts strategy and other initiatives designed to improve the quality of life, access and choice for people in the Borough. The overall aim is to help develop more cohesive communities through creative group exploration and expression using the arts.