

# **Open Space Sessions – Towards Carfree Cities IX – York**

(held on Day 3, Wednesday 30 June – 9:00-11:15)

## **Schedule**

### **9:00-9:30 - Open Space introduction and sign up**

Open Space is a way of organising a conference or meeting so that there is maximum participation, self-management, energy and focus. Open Space meetings allow everyone to discuss the issues that are most important to them. At the beginning of the session, the facilitators (Randall Ghent and Anna Semlyen) asked people to propose discussion topics, each written on an oversized Post-It. All participants then helped to narrow the topics down to 12, by combining similar ideas and eliminating the least popular ones. (Everyone got to allocate three tick marks amongst the proposals, and then the tick marks were counted up.) The 12 chosen topics become 12 separate half-hour discussions.

### **9:30-10:00 - Open Space time slot 1**

Discussions 1-6 identified in the Open Space introduction took place simultaneously in designated break-out spaces. These should ideally be all in the same room, to enable people to move from one discussion to another. Participants decide which discussion group(s) to take part in, according to their interests. Discussions are led by the people who identified the topics, or others if preferred. Volunteer reporters took the notes that formed the basis of reports to the plenary, which also appear below.

### **10:00-10:30 - Open Space time slot 2**

Discussions 7-12 identified in the Open Space introduction took place, following the same process described above. The only rule of Open Space is the "Law of Two Feet". This encourages people to move groups if they find they are in a discussion to which they cannot contribute.

### **10:30-10:45 - Tea/Coffee Break**

### **10:45-11:15 - Reports from Open Space groups**

Each of the 12 discussion groups briefly reports back to the plenary. Notes from each discussion are posted on a wall for viewing. Over lunch, people had the opportunity to add written comments to the notes of any group(s). Time and space in the afternoon was made available in case any discussion group(s) wished to continue their work.

## **Topics**

1. How to Cycle Safely
2. How to Organise Carfree People
3. Women & Transport [not original full title]
4. Changing Language
5. Freedom of Choice

6. How to Avoid Young People Buying Cars
7. Pedestrianisation [not original full title]
8. Gentrification of Carfree Areas
9. How to Make Public Transport Sexy
10. Pay Per Mile
11. Influencing Decision Makers
12. How Fast Can We Start the Revolution?

## Notes

### **Group 1: How to Cycle Safely**

Notetaker: Piers M.

Discussion summary:

Infrastructure, visibility, low speed, behaviour of driver and cyclists

Street geometry/design. Driver education outmoded – as fast as possible. Is there analysis of driver concentration abilities? – overloading, multi-tasking.

Fear is an over-riding obstacle – fear of traffic, crashing

Passive measures – helmet wearing

Active measures – driver awareness aids

Conclusions and outcomes:

Infrastructure – road design, planning

Education – of drivers, and cyclists

Legislation

Advanced design of vehicles – active safety, object detection

Behaviour – cyclists' attire

### **Group 2: How to Organise Carfree People**

Notetaker: Alexis G.

Discussion summary:

Data on numbers and distribution important (cities)

Collecting carfree people is positive (not guilt)

- Leverage existing groups (create a project)

Formed organisation & publicised with starting money.

Working to provide member benefits and carfree area projects, identity

Incentive programmes to become carfree, information/news

Social networking mechanisms (Facebook)

People's interests:

Grocery shopping, post office...(services) ← getting what carfree people need

Sponsorship, benefits

Switzerland: 1,300 members of carfree organisation (out of 1 million)

Germany: weak carfree organisation exists

UK: starting

### **Group 3: Women & Transport [not original full title]**

Notetaker: Ian F.

Discussion summary:

It is vital to include women in the planning process, but also class is an important aspect.

Children and personal risk aversion.

We can and should segment society to understand everyone's needs – especially those with the greatest needs/smallest voice. AND we're all individuals too.

### **Group 4: Changing Language**

Notetaker: Ralph

Discussion summary:

Language is difficult – we can't find right words to bust out of a ghetto

It's traffic (other people's cars) that people want to get away from – not their car to be taken away

People get strange reactions if they 'out' themselves as 'carfree'

Conclusions and outcomes:

Don't like 'alternative brand'/transport carfree (backlash on this morning's radio call-in)

We need to hear other side – is language a carrier to talk with other side?

### **Group 5: Freedom of Choice**

Notetaker: Aurora

Discussion summary:

Should we use the discouraging of freedom of choice to reduce car use or get to carfree cities?

Conclusion and outcomes:

Different messages in different situations

Care using the word choice and not forget that the choice of car drivers often cancels the choice of other road users

## **Group 6: How to Avoid Young People Buying Cars**

Notetaker: Anna S.

Discussion summary:

Dr William Bird (GP / medical doctor) – originator of Health Walks, works for Transport for London and Natural England – How to get kids on buses

Contraception method – prevention

Liken it to smoking, stop young people from starting smoking – is better in terms of cost-effectiveness

Eg, in Australia, 30 years of policy of getting young people not to start

Sex and cars – issues of why children/young people want a car? Any research done?

Smoking in order to rebel was answer in ‘truth’ campaign in Florida

Kids were asked to ring tobacco companies

Truth campaign as on in-car pollution being three times worse than outside, and diesel is so bad in cities because of PM10’s

Conclusion and outcomes:

Raise the license age for driving

Children cartoons/images to have other modes than driving

Environmental education

Add Up Your Car Costs – Excel sheet on the National Curriculum and educational packs

Non-ownership is better

‘Truth’ campaign on cars

Curriculum with Science, Maths, Geography

Plant the seed with young children

Mexico took away ‘gun’ toys

TV programmes aimed at children and non-car-based living

Applications / mobile phones to have maps / green travel info

Facebook / Twitter

Time costs (indirect) – Ivan Illich, ‘Time Pollution’ by John Whitelegg

How cars isolate people

Living Streets research – walking to school is sociable and children like it

Problem is with parents, not wanting to walk to school

Teaching other modes of transport when young

Involve Scouts & Guides (other youth groups)

Provide games

Sponsor badges

Resources – eg, watch video then discuss – how much does a car really cost you / the environment

## **Group 7: Pedestrianisation [not original full title]**

Notetaker: Franz S.

Discussion summary:

Methods to control car access

Start with closing streets around school

Involve retail and businesses and show benefits of pedestrianised areas to initiate their implementation and enlarge existing ones

Start with residential areas, possibly adjacent to central pedestrianised business areas

### **Group 8: Gentrification of Carfree Areas**

Notetaker: Piers M.

Discussion summary:

Luxury item = expensive

Increase scale → reduce shortage of availability

This is a bigger problem than high car usage (to some people)

Important to recognise where gentrification is a big risk

Conclusions and outcomes:

Solutions – make cycling more affordable – tax-free bike sales

Start carfree areas in less-desirable neighbourhood (out of town)

### **Group 9: How to Make Public Transport Sexy**

Notetaker: Aleksandar L.

Discussion summary:

Many positive aspects of using public transport → the question is how to communicate them?

Does public transport operate in a competitive market (like cars)?

Many examples of sexy public transport options: San Francisco cable cars, Mersey Ferry in Liverpool... but used mostly by tourists (and some locals) + open top tourist buses

Conclusions and outcomes:

Are we asking the right questions? → public transport should be efficient, clean and functional

Public transport offers benefits and they should be communicated

Must ban diesel – noise, vibration, pollution

### **Group 10: Pay Per Mile**

Notetaker: Anna S.

Drivers don't see cost per mile costs.  
Payments are made by downpayments/direct debits  
Fuel tax escalator  
Trucks in Germany pay per mile GPS  
Technological payments structure  
Make public knowledge the costs of driving, e.g., wars  
Cap and trade vehicle registrations  
Supply side rationing  
Gas guzzlers would be traded down  
Tax additional cars per family

#### \* CAP & TRADE VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS

Conclusions and outcomes:

In Stockholm, declare a one-year trial of congestion charging then a vote on it  
Ken Livingstone got it done in London  
We want car users to pay full costs of driving  
Pay more for parking spaces  
Pay taxes not on ownership (road tax) but on mileage (helps rural poor)  
Real cost of parking + pay for it  
'The High Cost of Free Parking' book is recommended  
30% asphalt by acreage in cities

### **Group 11: Influencing Decision Makers**

Notetaker: Roger B.

Discussion summary:

Carfree UK has worked at local and national level. Fairly easy to open doors, e.g., got some commitments to carfree neighbourhoods in Eco Towns. We worked through CPRE, Campaign for Better Transport, Sustrans – in coalition. We volunteered to co-ordinate. Being an organisation that's registered helps. Getting to talk doesn't guarantee action/persuasion. Make sure people who go know as much/more about it. Don't send loose cannons. It doesn't happen overnight. You have to build relationships, be on radar. Go armed with concrete evidence on the issue. Don't get obsessed with the LT [local transport?] goals. See what they want to achieve: maybe to save money, reduce obesity. Will be more receptive for 'carfree' in new developments – not re-design of old. It's cost-free at design-from-scratch stage. Distinguish types of decision makers. Politicians say "you are right but people will not accept it", i.e., they may misperceive what people actually want. Therefore media should be used and local media are fairly easy to influence. Lone pro-parkers do similar in local papers – successfully! Carfree UK wants to set up similar in UK. Organisations are key to achieving LT gains. Try to ensure that issues are included in all Council communications.

They have to work in a democracy – so they have to balance. Learn how they operate. They need feedback to work out what they need to do.

Try to sell them the benefits that they want to hear, but stick to your long term aims.

At the same time they should demonstrate vision – and be prepared to carry through on a vision. Communicate your vision!

## **Group 12: How Fast Can We Start the Revolution?**

Notetaker: [not listed]

Discussion summary:

Radicalism in ideas but also in actions → direct action making changes by oneself, taking space, risks, etc.

What is *in* at the moment? e.g., urban cultures

Strong message in stickers for unrespectful drivers

In ideas, don't be shy in the message

Personal radical changes

Direct action – make it fun, but how to sustain the movement?

Conclusions and outcomes:

How to build/strengthen an international movement?

Die-in/Carmageddon day? (die-in is particularly relevant in cities in the South)