

Showpiece

Lock-In Workshop: Book of Wrexham

Element

Community Agents Bank

July 2024

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Brief:

A facilitated workshop, bringing together key consultation and community engagement professionals from (and undertaking work pertaining to) Wrexham, to share and collate insights, identify gaps in collective knowledge, and co-create a 'Book of Wrexham' insights report over the course of a full day. Led by the University's Civic Mission Team, the workshop could also provide opportunities for students, recent graduates and post-grad researchers to assist in the design and production of the 'Book of Wrexham' report.

Engagement evidence:

Eight professionals came together on the 22nd of July 2024 for the Lock-In workshop (in person and online). The group determined how a community of practice could support the newly formed Wrexham Town Board and explored the commitment, purpose and values associated with this practice. At the heart of the discussion was an important representation of Wrexham's diverse and inclusive committees. The workshop established a community of evidence-based engagement through consultation with professionals from and undertaking work about Wrexham. The Lock-In workshop shared insights, experience, and extensive knowledge, identifying where the gaps in evidence currently exist.

Workshop Aim & Objectives:

Aim: Establish a community of evidence-based engagement.

Objective 1: Bring together key consultation and community engagement professionals from, and undertaking work pertaining to, Wrexham.

Objective 2: Share and collate insights, experience, and knowledge.

Objective 3: Identify where the gaps are in our collective knowledge.

Objective 4: Agree next steps to define and co-create a 'Book of Wrexham' insights

Summary/ Main Findings:

1. There is a strong commitment and purpose to propose the development of a Wrexham Town Board (WTB) Community of Practice (CoP) to represent the diverse and inclusive communities we serve through citizens' lived experiences.
2. Harness the potential of the Community of Practice (CoP) to undertake active citizen inquiry through collective and contextualized interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data to inform Wrexham Town Board's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) strategy.
3. Consider implementing a Community of Practice (CoP) Feedback Loop (FBL) for Wrexham Town Board and Local Government to engage active citizenship and deliberative democracy at the heart of solution-focused co-creation.

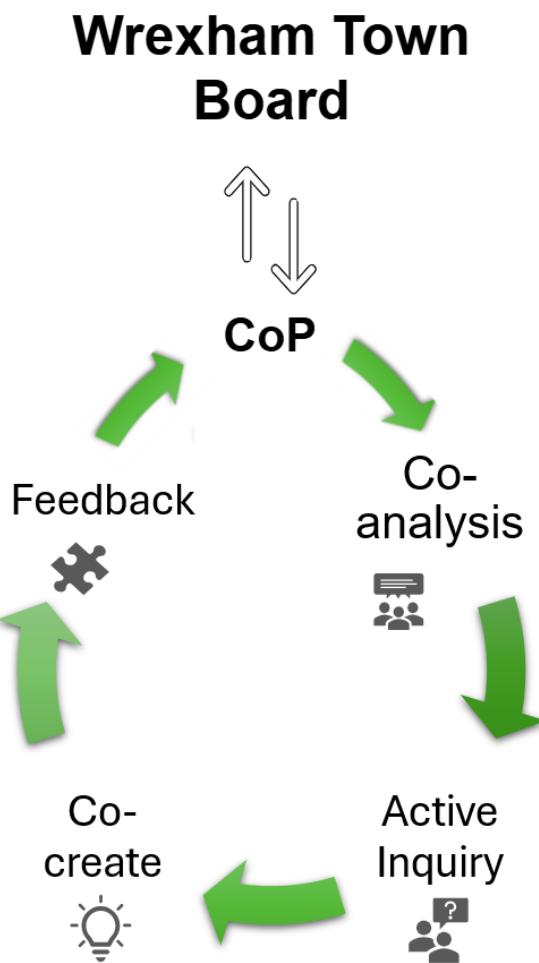


Figure 1: Example Community of Practice (CoP) Feedback Loop (FBL)

Activity 1: Group work to discuss what the statement means to Wrexham “*Commitment purpose and value of a community of practice*”.

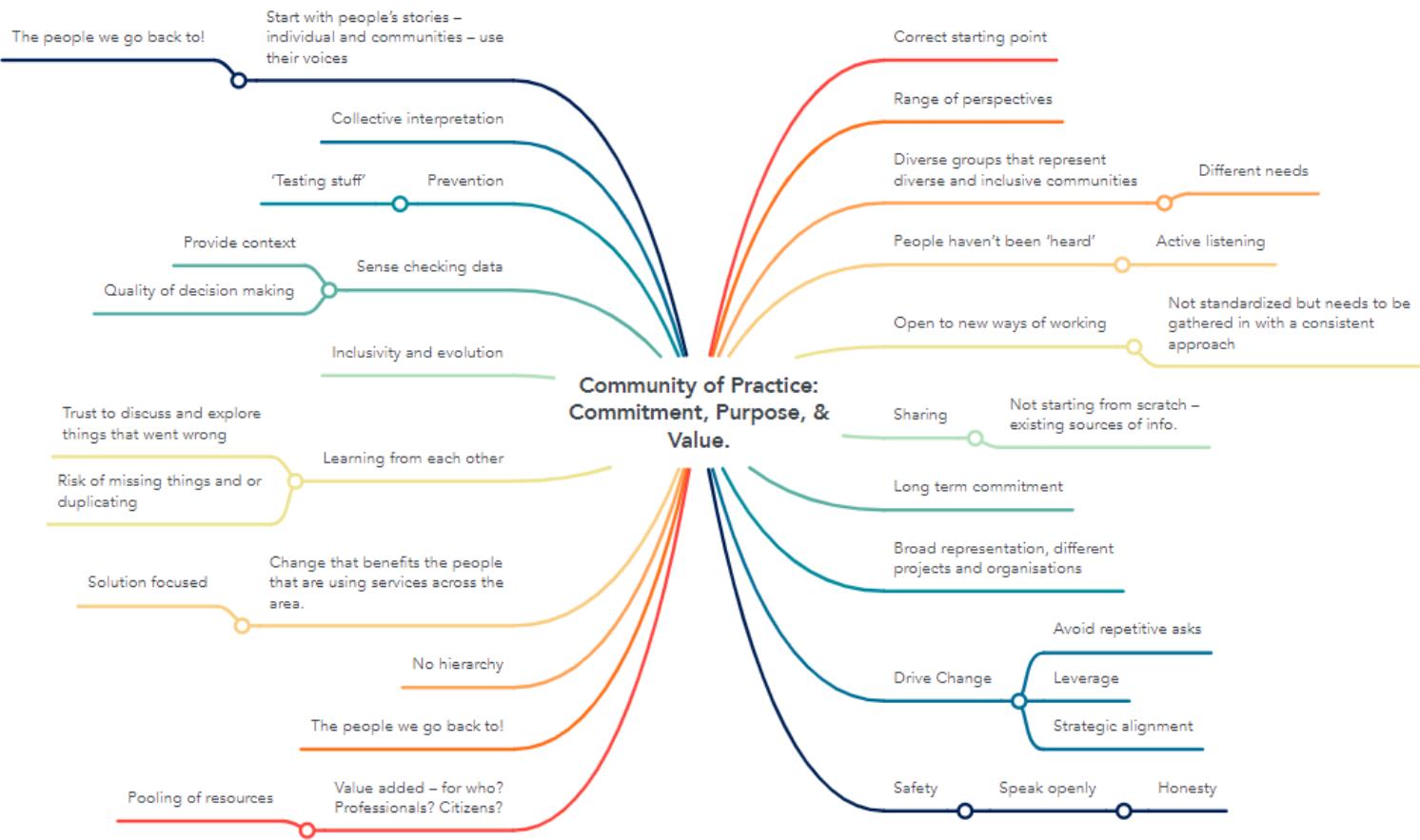


Figure 2: Lock-In participants interpretation of *commitment, purpose and value of a community of practice*.

Activity 2: Participants worked individually to identify where their strongest evidence base is (2.1), established gaps in knowledge (2.2) and where voids/blind spots are (2.3).

2.1: STRONGEST EVIDENCE BASE

1. Wellbeing Assessment Data for council plan, Population Need Assessment, Engagement reports on the above
2. Prevention and early help. The value of rather than intervention later on.
3. People who want things to improve. People with good links and experience.
4. Tenant voices work. Poss in Wrexham
5. Co-produced community narratives – Jars with Artist
6. Census
7. 2025
8. Leadership learning and storytelling for CYP / Early Years
9. Wellbeing assessment
10. Perception survey 2021/22 > 2000 responses
11. Local 'agents' with high levels of deep community insight
12. High-quality independent reports / engagement projects
13. Embracing of creative engagement methods
14. Financial Data. Mobile phone data
15. TED Talks
16. Evidence based – well-being assessment – but this is pre-pandemic
17. Wellbeing plan for Wrexham and Flintshire
18. Listening – engaging, thorough listening, identify issues
19. Lived Experience – authenticity
20. People – Stories, individuality, communities.
21. Lots of plans already – need to map them
22. Robust and recent data e.g. census 2021
23. NW Insight Partnership – Research, Engagement, System Change
24. Evidence of lack of / need for public transport (see council plan consultation report)
25. Identify community memory – e.g. there are people in Plas Madoc who just know what is happening
26. Consultation for council plan (consultation report available)
27. Multicultural Hub
28. Civic Mission projects e.g. Future leaders & Cymrogi
29. Impact through stories. WIN storytelling support for more of this.
30. YLAB – MOF Lottery funded
31. Local area plans NRW
32. Thematic areas of focus / need (e.g. transport)
33. People's stories / conversations. How are we capturing ongoing everyday conversations and thoughts.
34. We have good evidence, data, engagement – the key is how we bring it together
35. Young Wrexham Engagement

2.2: ESTABLISHED GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE

1. Understanding many creative methods to drive change
2. Engagement – how it feeds to the reg partnership landscape
3. Engagement 'skills' - For us all to do it.
4. Clarity of who decides and why – elected members don't represent me
5. Fear – drives lack of honesty. What we can and cannot do?
6. Community involvement in analysis and decision-making (co-analysis / co-production)
7. Children and young people who are disengaged
8. Marginalised groups (especially due to language / IT literacy / confidence etc)
9. Knowledge (lack of) about what sort of community venues we need / entertainment venues eg theatres, performance spaces.
10. Better ways of interpreting creative data and evidence (amongst decision makers)
11. Local regional connections
12. Feedback loops
13. Data re value of preventative work
14. Preventative approaches – evidencing there
15. People and Stories – as you can't reach them all
16. Views of older people
17. Transport what are transport needs and for which groups in our communities
18. The 'why' when it comes to most trends
19. Evidence for storytelling methods best ones to use and how to analyse / understand
20. Community conversations are dynamic – playground or the public or with neighbours and fast moving – current engagement is too slow/sterile
21. Rural communities are possibly less heard but could contribute to the city centre effectively e.g. if transport was better
22. Causes of perceptions of safety?
23. Underlying sub-themes barriers / enablers
24. The 'rich picture' built around multiple reports and perspectives

2.3: VOIDS/BLIND SPOTS

1. People that don't need services often or at all (their views)
2. Drivers of population change (the reduction)
3. Insights which have never been written down or shared beyond their communities
4. Open opportunity to always engage
5. Money, cuts. When we do have money to use, people can be angry.
6. Completely open questions – building in scope to deal with the unexpected
7. Health services – knowledge about no. of GP's really needed in our communities to meet demand.
8. Active listening and action? Lack of funding should not be an excuse
9. 'Informal engagement' – led by grass roots, limited distribution – How much is cut here?
10. Access – exclusion, in-person, digital.
11. Apathy.
12. Feeling 'voiceless'
13. Whether data is illustrating change or weakens in collection / gathering / reduced funding.
14. We are not capturing wisdom of communities from people getting on with lives and too busy to fill in a questionnaire about what we want them to tell us.
15. We get started and then stop – we need to commit to keeping momentum up.
16. Majority of population who do not engage (consultation / election / etc.)
17. Not all communities are heard. However not all people want to have an opinion.
18. Support for young people's wellbeing and social skills.
19. Skills for staff to provide the support needed
20. The long-term impact that poverty is having on children and young people.

Activity 3: Using reflections from the session, participants considered the following three key questions to understand how a community of practice can engage citizens in developing insight and intelligence to support the Board.

