Temporal Belongings
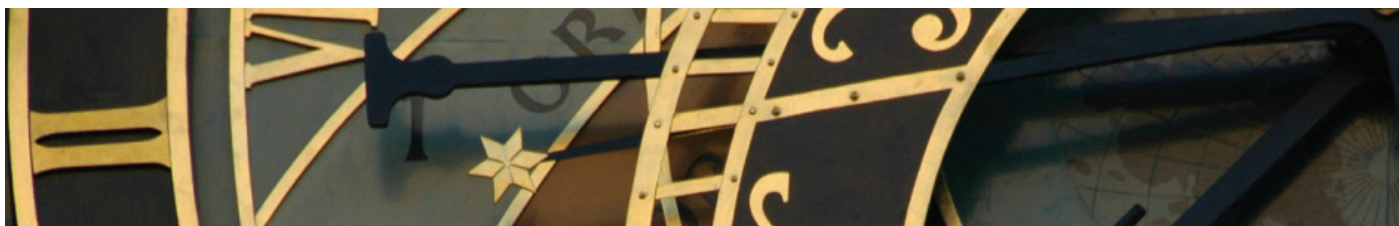
Mandy Wilson
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Mandy Wilson is an independent facilitator and researcher in the fields of community and public policy and practice. She has a background in community development, as a practitioner, manager, policy developer and evaluator, at local, regional, national and international levels. Mandy has extensive experience of working on 'both sides of the equation' i.e. with decision makers and power holders as well as with voluntary organisations and community based organisations, and understands the potential and challenges of collaborating for transformational change. She is co-author of a number of publications around planning and assessment frameworks for community participation and partnership working. These include *Making Community Participation Meaningful: a handbook for development and assessment* and *Assessing community strengths: a practical handbook for planning capacity building.*

Communities and time

MB: So firstly could you tell me a little bit about what kind of work you do with communities?

MW: I do a mixture of policy, research, evaluation and delivery. So, for example, I'm currently working as a Big Local rep,[1] so that's more delivery end really, supporting programme development. I'm a learning advisor to the Community Organisers programme,[2] so that's more research and reflection. I'm evaluating a programme in Wales, a training programme for the Justice sector, so that's formative evaluation. I also do unpaid work as well, which is more facilitation and I'm active in my own community. So I'm involved in a mix of straightforward community action and facilitating community action, as well as some research and programme development.

MB: So drawing on that experience, what kind of issues to do with time have you noticed coming up in your work?

MW: Well there are the things that I talked about at the Temporal Conflicts seminar.[3] So a constant issue in evaluations and learning work is always around people wanting examples of good practice well before

[1] Big Local operates in 150 communities across England. It is funded by an endowment from Big Lottery Foundation and managed by Local Trust. Areas have 10-12 years to use £1million to make their areas even better places to live.

[2] The government funded Community Organisers programme aims to employ and train 500 Community Organisers who will in turn support 4,500 volunteer organisers. The process is based on dialogue with and between residents who will then collectively mobilise to make change happen.

[3] A workshop hosted by the Temporal Belongings project in October 2012, which looked at role of time in community development work. For more details see: http://www.temporalbelongings.org/temporal-conflicts.html

they should really be able to expect them. In some programmes, there are also issues around not having enough time to deliver what they want to deliver. So funders want [positive, promotional] stories and they want targets to be met much sooner than you could realistically expect targets to be met. Community development takes time.

MB: Thanks. So firstly I wanted to ask you about assumptions around the 'time of community'. Some work tends to assume that communities are social formations that are quite static or stuck. So interventions and programmes become understood as tools for shaking things up and enabling communities to become more dynamic. On the other hand, there's also interest in rethinking what it means to work with communities when you start from the premise that they are always already dynamic and changing. Have you come across these kinds of ways of thinking in your work?

MW: Well I don't think communities are static, whether there is an intervention or not they are always dynamic aren't they? They're always changing and people's roles within communities change as well.

MB: But perhaps sometimes from the point of view of policy or government there can be an assumption that communities are static and that then shapes how interventions are developed and implemented?

MW: Absolutely. Absolutely. But I suppose I would dispute those kinds of assumptions. I don't think communities are ever static. They are always changing. People's roles within communities change and their capacity to be involved in community activity changes, whether or not there is a programme there. Usually, what programmes provide are some resources to provide a bit of impetus to help make things happen, but it would be arrogant of programme funders to think that things only happen if they provide some resources. That's not to say communities don't need resources, but things happen with or without resources.

MB: Have you ever noticed there being any clashes between those two ways of thinking about community, as either static or dynamic? For example, can you remember any projects you've worked on where there was some kind of implicit assumption that a group or community was unchanging and static, or too tied to a particular heritage or history and so stuck in the past?

MW: Hmm. I have worked in certain programmes where their underlying theory of change assumes that things haven't worked before and therefore we need to do things differently. Funders like innovation, something new. I don't accept that. That's not to say that it's not important to try different ways of working, but after thirty odd years, I see things coming round a second or third time, and sometimes ways of working aren't given

enough time to work before we move onto something else.

So, you've got to be very careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water. Part of this can be due to unrealistic expectations around the pace of change, so some programmes assume that stages such as recruitment and action can happen very quickly, when actually it takes much longer than that for things to happen and things to change.

Multiple times of community

MB: Thanks, so just to push the idea of shifting from static to dynamic communities a bit further, I wondered if part of that move would involve questioning the idea that a community operates according to a single timescale that is all-encompassing. Do we instead need to think of communities as being characterised by multiple and conflicting rhythms and speeds?

MW: What a lot of programmes ignore is that actually we're not talking about one community which is some kind of entity; we're talking about people and individuals in those communities. So for example, a lot of programmes are focused on areas of deprivation where people live in poverty and they've got all sorts of things going in their personal lives. In order for things to continually progress, people need a huge amount of personal support.

But equally because they've got so many other things going on in their lives, key people will drop out just at the point that you need them. So there will never just be some kind of constant, ongoing progression. There will always be things going back and going forward. There'll be conflict arising in communities, particularly when you're talking about there not being enough resources. People will drop out for a bit, or they'll have other things to focus on and they won't be able to continue on this ideal upward path of capacity building and action and development and whatever else.

The Big Local programme is an interesting example, because it's based on around 11 to 12 years of process. So it's a long programme, and that's good because it recognises that it takes a long time for things to happen. There aren't any timescales built into the programme, so there's no deadlines by which you have to submit various applications for funding and so, it's absolutely up to the pace in the community.

But even then, there's a real question there, isn't there? When funders talk about the pace of 'the community', the pace of what community, of which community within a particular neighbourhood, of who within that neighbourhood? For place-based projects, the idea that just because people live in the same place, they're all working at the same pace is nonsense really and I don't

think government and other funders understand that enough. Do you work at the pace of the fastest, do you work at the pace of the slowest, you know, whose pace are we talking about here?

MB: Yeah, so another thing we were talking about at the Temporal Conflicts workshop was the time of 'the project', so the idea that the project itself has a certain kind of temporality attached to it that assumes a particular kind of flow between beginning, middle and end. It seems that Big Local is trying to challenge this, but I wonder what kind of project framework would be needed to work with the kind of temporal complexity you were just talking about?

MW: I think Big Local does it as well as you can, to be honest. I think there are aspects of the programme that are still evolving and developing as it starts to embed at community level but I think the fact that they have no built in deadlines or timelines, apart from the programme's own timeframe of 12 to 15 years, is really helpful. On the other hand it does mean that sometimes things go very slowly and there isn't enough outside or external momentum to push them along. The communities involved can go as slow as they want and sometimes that actually holds things back.

Certainly there have been examples in Big Local areas that I've worked in where because we've taken a long time, we've missed certain opportunities. So for example there's a group I've been working with for nearly 18 months now and really a year ago there were some opportunities that we could have taken advantage of, but we missed the boat because we weren't pushing them, we were working at the pace of involved, and so involved, residents.

> *WHEN FUNDERS TALK ABOUT THE PACE OF 'THE COMMUNITY,' THE PACE OF WHAT COMMUNITY? WHICH COMMUNITY WITHIN A PARTICULAR NEIGHBOURHOOD? OF WHO WITHIN THAT NEIGHBOURHOOD?*

MB: So the openness is good, but then sometimes it might be quite helpful to have deadlines? It seems like you think it's important to have some kind of balance between them?

MW: Yes. Although, to be honest, I don't have any insights into what the balance would be. I think that Big Local is really pushing the boundaries by saying there won't be any pre-set timelines and that's really, really helpful. But sometimes without the deadlines you do lose momentum and I know that there have been things that we've missed because we said, "Oh we're not ready for that yet," and it's a shame that we've missed them.

Perhaps if Big Local had said that we needed to get our first plan to them within a shorter period of

time, we could have pushed the group more and I would've pushed them to take action on some of the opportunities that were becoming available. Having said that, if we'd done that we probably would have lost some people and we wouldn't have got as many different kinds of people involved that we have. So it's difficult to know really. I don't think there's a right or a wrong, but you can lose momentum if it's completely open-ended.

Pasts and futures

MB: Okay, thanks for that. So we've talked a bit about pace, and about multiple rhythms, another aspect of time that comes up in relation to community is the movement between past and future. So for example the way local senses of the past might contradict national histories, or more specifically, issues to do with community projects not paying attention to the histories of a group, particularly the kinds of projects they've previously been involved in.

MW: I think that happens all the time. New programmes and new projects assume that they're the first, if you like, and they don't take any account of what's gone on before. I think that's nearly always the case. I know that I've written in several project evaluations that the different levels of success, the different paces at which groups have worked, are in large part due to their past experience of community activity and participation. But when new programmes or projects come along they don't really take that into account at all.

MB: So do you think there needs to be more coordination between different projects? Perhaps making it easier for people that are running newer projects to contact whoever ran the last one, or perhaps more continuity between projects?

MW: Well quite often there will be documented evidence on previous projects anyway. So, for example, if it was a spatial project based within a particular geographical area, you would need to look at the whole context for that area and particularly what projects people had been involved in before. There's always a context of some kind. We know from lots of research that we've done that a previous history of very poor community involvement will quite often make it difficult for newer projects. On the other hand, where there's been a high level of community activity in the past that will help projects develop new ones. But it seems to me that, rather than taking this into account, there's always a kind of starting again from zero.

MB: And so what about the future? How does the future come up when working with communities? It seems that there are many projects around future visioning, etc, but sometimes these kinds of

consultations can feel as though community perspectives are developed only to then be ignored. So I wondered whether it might be important to actually pull back a bit from being too future-focused?

MW: Well I don't know. It seems to me that you always have to have a vision of where you want to be, in order to know what it is that you're going to be doing now. And most people do have aspirations and visions of where they want to be. I think they are the things that you work towards. So I think it's always worth thinking about the future and where you're trying to get to in order to know what it is you need to be doing at this point in time. Is that what you mean, Michelle?

MB: Well I was thinking about certain regeneration projects in particular, where different groups might be imagining different kinds of futures. So, for example, local government might have quite a different vision to the local community. You can see this happening a lot in Liverpool, for example, with all the debates around what should happen with the huge amounts of boarded up houses. So there can be clashes around whose future is supported.

MW: But then that's down to the role of the community worker or the consultant or whoever it is to mediate between those two and to bring the people holding those different perspectives together and to have some proper discussion about it, isn't it?

MB: Yes, but some groups might have more power than others to push through their agendas, and sometimes consultations around future visions can turn into box-ticking exercises.

MW: But for me that comes back to what is good community development work. And I suppose I don't do consultation, I would never do a plain consultation, but I would focus more on how you involve people in that local area. There's lots of ways to involve people and you can find ways of bringing people together so that you talk through different ideas and aspirations. But also I think it's really important that whoever you are, that you don't manage communities' aspirations, that's not our role. We need to support communities in their aspirations otherwise you're just managing what they can achieve really.

Years ago I was involved in working with a group of tenants who actually ended up changing national housing policy. Lots of people would have said, "Well there is no way that they can achieve what they want to achieve, so we need to focus on things that are more manageable," but if we'd thought that way they wouldn't have achieved what they did. We'd have 'managed' what they could've achieved. So while obviously we should bring a sense of realism around resources and how decisions are being made

to communities, I think it's really important that we absolutely don't try and hamper and get in the way of people's aspirations for a better life really. Who are we to do that? I don't think we have a right to do that really.

MB: So maybe you'd go the other way and rather than pull back from being too future-focused you'd say "dream as big as possible"?

MW: Yes I would say think big. Yeah, I do say that…

Time and power

MB: Thanks. So I guess that connects up quite nicely with the next issue I wanted to discuss, which is about the link between time and power. Often time, specifically clock time, is understood as objective; just a simple fact of life that is not really political. But in our Temporal Conflicts workshop and in our discussion today, we've seen that in social life, time can work in ways that support some people's ways of life over others. For example some people might be understood to be living in a way that uses time 'properly,' while others are criticised for not approaching time in the same way. So I just wanted to ask you a bit more about this, and whether the idea that there are some people living in a kind of dominant time, while other people are excluded from it, whether this idea resonates with your work?

MW: Yeah it does. A lot of the people that I work with, who live in communities, lead quite stressful lives in terms of how they manage other aspects of their lives apart from their community activity. I think this gets in the way of what they can then be involved in. A good example is all the current issues in the UK around welfare reform, which is really getting in the way of people being able to give their time to local community activity because they're trying to manage very difficult lives, personal lives, family lives. Their timescales and timelines are completely different from a Council officer, for example, who is trying to get a particular plan developed and in action by a certain deadline. People come in and out of community activity often depending on what else is going on in their personal lives.

MB: I'm particularly interested in the way this lack of time, or time poverty, doesn't always get recognised as such, but a lack of involvement can instead be interpreted as laziness, or a lack of interest. Rather than it being recognised that there are actually conflicts between different kinds of 'time' which can have the effect of stopping people from getting involved.

MW: Yeah absolutely. People don't have the time that others assume they have. So particularly at the community level, those with a certain amount of power see these people and think "Well what else have they got to do with their time, they're unemployed," etc. But

we know that people who live in poverty are more likely to have ill-health, they won't have access to the childcare that lots of other people might have, they might also be caring for other people in their family. All those kinds of things take up people's time, but it's not very visible.

MB: There is also the expectation that looking for work and processes of applying for welfare, including attending courses, should be taking up the bulk of people's time.

MW: Well absolutely and actually not being able to volunteer at all because you've got to show that you're looking for work and all the rest of it. So there are loads of things that get in the way of people being involved.

MB: Yeah that's interesting, so you can only really have free time for community projects if you're already working full time, which then of course means that you actually have hardly any free time.

MW: Absolutely. But it's also about how you manage the time as well. If you're not working (and even for some people who are working), things like having a diary is completely unknown. Not everyone will use the kinds of things that I rely on every day like my diary and making lists and all the rest of it. Most people don't do that. So, for example, you can fix a meeting in three weeks time but if you don't have a diary to write it down in, when the time comes around for the meeting, then you'll have forgotten that you have one.

MB: Yes well, perhaps you often start using those kinds of tools when you have lots of things happening, particularly things that aren't organised organically because it's not with family or people you see on a day-to-day basis.

MW: Yes. People organise their lives on a variety of different bases really and it can be much more day-to-day. You and I probably plan our time, but an awful lot of people don't do this, that's not how they live their lives.

MB: No, and it's really interesting that that way of living life often isn't seen as being valid. It's not seen as being compatible with efficiency or productivity. But maybe there's a lot to learn from being more connected with the people around you and so being able to tell the time in different kinds of ways.

The time of success & failure

MB: So moving onto a further way of thinking about the relationship between time and community, I wanted to ask you about the temporalities of success and failure, and more broadly, the temporality of social change. Maybe this speaks more to the work you've been doing on evaluation. For example we were talking

before about the need to think about communities as dynamic, but how does this fit with shifting back to the more static time assumed in evaluation processes that need to be completed if you are to prove the success of a programme or progress in a community?

MW: Well except that it doesn't have to shift back to being static does it? An evaluation shifts back to ask what was the starting point. So what's often ignored, particularly in national programmes, is that there's an assumption in the programme that everybody's starting point is the same, when clearly this isn't the case. That's the key point I'd make. And this needs to be taken into account not only in evaluation, but also in the delivery of projects. The starting point for different communities is different; they're not all starting at the same place.

MB: And so that then seems to imply that the kinds of things you track along the way would be different?

MW: Yes. Yeah. And measures of progress would be different.

MB: That's really interesting, because the ideal of "Progress" often assumes a single timeline where different people are spread along it at different points. For example, there would be certain members of Western cultures at the front and everyone else trailing behind in different ways. But part of the problem here is that there is an assumption that there is only one pathway to progress and everyone else needs to catch up. Do you think that's something that maps onto community work as well?

MW: Yes. I think it's really important that, whenever anything new is starting in a community, you look at what their past history of involvement and activity has been and recognise that it will have a positive or negative effect on the progress that they're likely to make over a fixed period of time. So where there is a history of poor involvement and communities are feeling that nobody listens to them anyway, that is going to have an effect on how quickly they progress in a new programme. Conversely where people have had real successes they might progress much more quickly because they'll have more confidence in the process and in their own ability to make things happen.

Having said that, in my experience of working in the UK (on place-based programmes particularly), we tend to talk about "the community," when actually we're talking about a whole range of different people in that community who will all be progressing at different rates. So when we talk about "the community" doing this or "the community" doing that, who are talking about? Are we talking about the fastest or are we talking about the slowest? And I think there's a real tension there actually.

MB: Yeah, perhaps also there is a tension with the idea that progress is an incremental journey, rather than something that can happen in a non-linear way. So for example instances where it can seem like nothing's happening and then all of a sudden everything changes.

MW: Absolutely. Because it's those invisible things that go on beneath the surface that, quite often, will make the difference to how quickly transformation of whatever kind can take place at a community level.

MB: Perhaps the Transition Towns movement is a good example of this. They are really interesting for being explicit about the fact that their model of change is based on a complexity or systems model, rather than a linear one. So you find lots of advice around 'following the energy' and remaining mobile and adaptive, all the while not assuming that change will automatically follow on from what you do, but that often you have to get to some sort of tipping point before change becomes visible. There seems to be quite a different philosophy of time in that approach. Though of course, sometimes this way of working can be a bit disheartening because it can be hard to tell if you are actually achieving anything.

IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT WHENEVER ANYTHING NEW IS STARTING IN A COMMUNITY YOU LOOK AT THEIR PAST HISTORY OF INVOLVEMENT…AND RECOGNISE THAT IT WILL HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE PROGRESS THAT THEY'RE LIKELY TO MAKE OVER A FIXED PERIOD OF TIME

MW: Hmm, no absolutely. In evaluations I sometimes do a snakes and ladders game with people where I get them to look back over the last three years and pinpoint what, for them, have been the 'snakes' and what have been the 'ladders'. So what has helped them to move forward and what has taken them back a few steps. People write these out and we then make up a snakes and ladders game with them and look at where there might have been tipping points along the way or how different processes might be connected. What's interesting, of course, is that what might be a ladder for one group might be a snake for another group. What works and what doesn't work and how long something will take you to achieve in one community compared to another can be very complex.

MB: What happens when people discover those differences between each other? It would be interesting to hear what kinds of conversations arise in that process.

MW: Well an example would be on one project where for one group getting a local paid community

development worker was their ladder, while for another group that was their snake. When people share their experiences around that kind of experience you can learn more about what actually makes for a good local community development resource.

MB: And then even if you can recognise more clearly that you're intervening into complex systems, processes like that allow you to find patterns, but without assuming that they automatically apply everywhere?

MW: Well it's about learning, isn't it? So it's about forewarning people about what kinds of things they might come across. I don't think there are patterns as such, but if you are talking to a group about getting a paid community development resource then you can share that learning about what has happened in different projects and what the group needs to put in place to make this work for them.

MB: Oh okay. So, to return to the idea of the future too, is it partly about each group developing an understanding of the future as, to some extent, unpredictable? That is you can't just put pre-determined building blocks in place and everything will work out, instead you always need to adapt as you are going along?

MW: I think that's right. Things evolve differently in different circumstances and you don't know exactly what's going to happen. But you do need to have something to aim for.

MB: But if you're clear about that kind of unpredictability with the people you are working with, do you think that helps the process?

MW: Yes I think so. Yeah, and the example I gave where people changed national housing policy, actually they never thought that they would manage that. It was something that evolved, but it would not have been expected at the start of the project. They wanted to change their housing conditions, but they never thought they'd manage to achieve nation-wide policy changes. The thing is you get unanticipated outcomes that are positive as well negative, don't you?

MB: And perhaps you could take advantage of that unanticipated development in the project because it wasn't already determined in advance exactly what would be done?

MW: Yeah. None of us would have ever guessed we could have managed that, so we could have never planned for that. But what residents did plan for was an end to them having to live in these awful tower blocks, and that did happen.

MB: Yeah. So there was a future goal, but the way towards achieving that goal wasn't set out in advance?

MW: No it wasn't. No, it was evolving all the time and that's why it's important to keep periodically reflecting on what is happening and where the project and the group are now and to help people own some of the planning process.

The feeling of time

MB: Great. Thanks for that. I wanted to now ask about how time feels in community work. So here I'm trying to get at the way time is not actually experienced as a smooth steady flow, but can be high pressured, relaxing or exciting. And perhaps also that some experiences of time can feel more connected or connecting, while others might contribute to feelings of isolation. Time can also feel stretched, like you are being pulled in lots of different directions, etc…

MW: Yes, I agree with what you've said really. Sometimes time does feel stretched and sometimes things all seem like they have loads of time and so are all going really well. But again, when we're talking about communities it's really difficult because it is about all the different feelings, perspectives, pressures and ambitions of the range of people that are involved at any one time.

MB: Yeah, I suppose to emphasise again the importance of thinking about communities as having multiple times and rhythms?

MW: Absolutely yeah, definitely.

MB: And so if that's the case, I suppose some people can feel as if they're in the flow and other people will feel like everything's jarred and not working for them. Then in becomes important in community work to try and pay attention to these differences?

MW: Yes, absolutely. I was at a meeting last week where somebody said that they felt like nothing was happening, and then various other people shared what they had been doing and, clearly, a great amount had actually been happening. The sense that things had stalled was more about how that person was feeling, than it was about the group's development. The trouble is if this person goes out and talks to lots of people and says, "Well actually nothing's really happening," then others will start to believe them. So you always get multiple perspectives on how quickly things should take place. Particularly in Big Local areas, people say to me, "Well we should've been doing this by now and we haven't got very far," and I point out to them that they've done absolutely loads in the time that they've had. So it is about different realities to do with time, I think.

Recognising change

MB: That's really interesting that the feeling of moving through time isn't something that happens automatically, but you have to have some kind of feedback about the changes that have taken place, and these also have to fit with your expectations of the kind of speed or pace change should have.

MW: Well quite often in groups like that I see my role as trying to keep motivation going. So it's important to challenge people who are saying nothing's really happening, if I know there are things happening, because I want to keep people motivated. There's nothing more demotivating than everybody going around and saying, "Well nothing's really changing, nothing's really happening." And sometimes you have to reinforce what actually is happening.

MB: So is part of it the timeframe you are using to see the difference between a 'before' and an 'after'? So what you pick out as the points that allow you to contrast where you used to be with where you are now?

MW: Yes absolutely. And part of it is questioning what it is that's happening and what is change. So some people will say, "Well I could've done this in no time," and yes they could have on their own, but when you're trying to get lots of people involved in doing something then that takes time.

MB: I remember when I was working with Transition Liverpool, we were making an appliqué banner and it just took months and months to find a pattern and to organise the meeting for people to actually make it. I couldn't believe how long it took. It's an organisation trying to respond to climate change, and in a period of time where we're pouring all this carbon into the atmosphere, we're running around trying to make an appliqué banner!

MW: Absolutely. Actually in one of the groups at the Temporal Conflicts meeting we shared experiences around this. There is the example of someone saying how frustrated they got when they organised a meeting to do with some work they were doing in southern Africa, and nobody turned up for the first two hours. So this person was getting really annoyed and said that they were sick of people not turning up when there was something really important to do. And someone else said to them, "Look, we've waited 150 years for this, two hours makes not a lot of difference."

MB: Yeah. Ah that's brilliant, that's really good.

Synchronising communities

MW: And I sometimes work with a group here in Sheffield on an unpaid basis and we organised an open meeting a couple of months ago and it was meant to start at 6:00pm. I'd allowed in my timescale that probably we wouldn't kick off until about 6:15pm, but people weren't there until 6:45pm. That was that community's sense of time, and so we have to work with that really. So yes, people's concept of time is very different.

MB: Would that mean moving away from the idea that there's some kind of 'proper time'? When you are keeping to regular clock time it can give a certain sense of validation that you are on the 'right' time and everyone else is getting it wrong somehow. So I wonder if part of this is challenging that dominance of clock-time and moving towards a more relational sense of time?

MW: Yeah. The difficulty is that, of course, some people do turn up at 6:00pm and they will have to go at 8:00pm. They shouldn't be penalised by having to wait around when that was the advertised time. So it's difficult managing all those things because there are times when you want everybody in the same room at the same time.

MB: Yeah, the idea of synchronisation, or being in synchrony is quite important as well.

MW: Yes.

Critical temporalities

MB: So the last thing I wanted to ask you about was around what kind of possibilities or potential you might see around working more actively to challenge or transform how we think about and experience time. So I was wondering if in your work there are examples of where you try to do time differently. I suppose Big Local is a good example of that isn't it?

MW: Yes, I think it is. And some of that came from learning that came out of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Neighbourhoods programme that I helped to evaluate. One thing they did – which might seem quite a small thing, but was really significant – was that they gave out some very small grants to the groups that were involved in the programme, so maybe it was £5,000. Over the four years of the programme they could use that money at any point they wanted, it didn't have to be spent by March the 31st. We found that groups really valued the fact that nobody was saying when they had to spend their money by, it was up to them. And, in fact, some of the groups never really spent their money. It just gave them confidence knowing they had it.

But the point was that nobody was saying to them that they had to spend their funds by a certain time. And that's one of the things, amongst others, that Big Local has taken on which is that there are no deadlines for when groups need to get their money spent by; it is completely up to them.

MB: Thank you. So was there anything else that didn't come up in our discussion that you wanted to mention or anything I haven't covered?

MW: I don't think so. Just to re-iterate what I said in the Temporal Conflicts workshop I suppose, which is that things take time and we have to be patient. I want to focus on that because I get so fed up with funders and policy-makers wanting everything immediately and not allowing the time it takes, not understanding process really. But on the other hand I do think we also need some momentum. In academic publishing for example, it can take a really long time to get research to the stage when it's actually available.

MB: Yes, the time of academic processes... And that's interesting, because often there is the idea that it's communities that are slow, when often it's institutions and bureaucracies and ethics approval boards that are moving much too slow. Perhaps with new publication models, we'll all be able to publish straight away and use post-peer review models rather than pre-peer review, and perhaps speed it all up that way.

MW: It's difficult though, isn't it, because online versions can publish much faster, but I'm one of the people holding out to keep publications in print.

MB: There are particular people you miss out if you haven't got a print version.

MW: Yeah absolutely. And, to be honest, I prefer to read articles in print rather than read them from a screen. But, on the other hand I'm one of the people who says that things should get out there much earlier. It's all full of conflicts though, isn't it?

MB: Yeah, that's true. Ok well we'll have to leave it there. Thanks so much for your time. It's been lovely talking with you.

Temporal Belongings

The Temporal Belongings research network supports the development of a more coordinated understanding of the interconnections between time and community. We provide opportunities to share research and practical experience and to develop new collaborations. We also produce resources that will support the development of this research area. To find out more about our activities go to: **www.temporalbelongings.org**

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