

Green Roots first hackathon, Thursday 28th May 2020

Attendees - Jocelyn, Debbie, Ellie, Emily, Farhana Yamin, Abi Roberts, Greg Hitchcock, Nature Conservation Officer at Camden (within Parks), Julia Leino, Ben Pearce PUNL, Tom Parkes, Park the Plastic, Rachel Wrangham, Nichola Daunton, Astha Johri, Khoa Pham, Ali TKT, Ann Wong KTCC, Sarah Astor, Francesco Cagnola, Dee Searle, Charlotte Adams, Alessandro Paone, Jacqueline Saunders, Lucan Creamer. Apologies for any names missing in error.

Introduction

- Green Roots is one of the original projects from phase 1 of Think and Do.
- It proposes to generate a series of walking routes in the borough, and arose to address the following three aims:
 - 1. Find attractive ways for people to walk for local journeys instead of driving (and, in these days, reducing the strain on public transport
 - 2. Draw attention to 'greening in LBC' in all senses of the word. ie. include eco street art, solar panels, etc.
 - 3. Build appreciation and link up informal greening of Camden's streets, eg planted tree pits, front gardens, community gardens...
- How can this be citizen and community lead? What support can the council provide?
- This session was aimed to brainstorm the project.

Update from Abi (Camden Council Sustainability Department):

Camden's sustainability department is working on a comms plan based on consumption-based emissions: how people can reduce their own carbon emissions. The Green Roots project aligns with several of the Citizen Assembly recommendations: Creating more green spaces on residential streets/Campaigning to make CO2 reduction fun/Planting trees and retaining public spaces/Mobilizing existing community groups.

The council have also embarked upon a Commonplace campaign seeking to engage residents in active travel.

How can Green Roots link into this?

- pavement widening
- encouraging active travel / transport plans
- air quality

Greg Hitchcock (Nature Conservation Officer at Camden):

Consultation for the forthcoming LBC Biodiversity action plan was put on hold due to Covid-19. There are synergies with Green Roots and changing the inequality with access to green spaces in Camden. A Commonplace consultation platform will be launched for the biodiversity action

CONVERSATION

Jocelyn: What does everyone think we should include in the walks?

Debbie: How many walks do we need? Where should they start/ end?

Farhana: Loves multiple walks idea, mapping is one idea (one which we began doing at Think & Do phase 1 & 2 with the map on the wall) a few iconic locations, linking together things for a 'green tourist' maybe having a key strand from Kentish Town high road but perhaps have lots of routes rather than focusing on one in case people want to make their own way.

Rachel: Suggested we create points of interest rather than a specific walk - would this be technically possible(?) People tick/ choose the ones they want to go to and then the software could make the best walk for them. Any way of doing this?

Adrian: This would be possible

Ian: We could highlight commuter routes that have low pollution.

Farhana: Should we create sub groups for the different idea themed groups?

Dee: Important to think about stories, thinking about what happened here in different places, also making it really inclusive so it's not just us but everyone in the borough feels included.

Jocelyn - How are we going to do outreach? What visual markers can we put on the street so it's not just online/ on phones. In order to create mini walks, some that link up we would need signposting.

Asked Jacqueline (from transport on the council) what is possible from the council?

Jacqueline - Reminded the need to adhere to social distancing

Jocelyn - post Covid do we have to have planning permission to put up a sign?

Jacqueline - explains she's not a planning person but structures that aren't permanent there shouldn't be an issue. But if there is maintenance, the council will not have budget for this.

Joceyln. Ideas on how to increase engagement? So far we are thinking of contacting schools /community groups.

OTHER IDEAS/COMMENTS:

-Partnership with Castlehaven is key.

- Ann: Spoke about a map of walks around London ("TimeOut London Walks - 30 walks by London writers"), each walk is written by a different author, they have different themes so that people can choose the best walk for them.

- Sarah: Asks if we have linked up with the Camden walking tour guide people? <https://camdenguides.com/>

- Lucan introduces 'WeGrowFor': It's a start up, Airbnb type space to link people who have unused gardens and people who don't have a garden but want a space to use. Camden/Kentish town is a priority for this project. How can we add front gardens to be more visible, who's our audience and how do we get this to them?

Debbie - really interesting, can we discuss how we can tie in the front gardens to the maps

- A sign-posted green walking route exists around the Euston area. The BID might have paid for those?

(<https://eustontowner.london/2019/06/05/walking-the-euston-green-link/>)

-RCA Students introduced

SUMMARY: IDEAS THAT CAME OUT IN THE CHAT

1. We need to generate a digital database on which salient features can be mapped. Filters will be needed to highlight route features. We need to choose a suitable digital platform for this, and find a moderator to input data.
2. We should identify a specific green route to develop as a pilot. Volunteers are needed to form a sub- group to facilitate this.

POTENTIAL ROUTE FEATURES/POINTS OF INTEREST

- Arts spaces
- Street art
- Parklets
- Playgrounds, play street
- Food - sustainable/vegetarian/vegan independent cafes/shops
- Eco-businesses
- Green architecture ie passiv houses
- Identifying and signposting trees (and other biodiversity/nature features)
- New walking and cycle infrastructure (like Camden Cyclists infrastructure ride)
 - green roofs and walls
 - green spaces managed for biodiversity
 - solar panels (e.g. PUNL)
 - well managed habitats e.g. gardens
 - Camden Forest trees
 - Cool front gardens

Ideas for walking routes

- Create a “web of walks” based on individual interests and themes
- Plot points on a map that people can connect to also create their own walks (no need to get to the starting point)
- Local history (e.g. blue plaques)
- Kids routes - nature trails, treasure hunts (e.g. small painted animals to find along the route.
- Air Quality measures on routes, signposting on streets
- Alternative lunch break walks
- Stories, quirky narratives that accompany the walks
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Technical points

- How to bring the routes offline (so that we’re not walking around looking at our phones)
- Is there a platform that can link points and create a walk based on an individual’s interests?
- Can we add a feature to the map that designs a “least polluted” route (rather than “least time” preferences etc.)
- Leverage existing mapping tech e.g. GoogleMaps, CityMapper. Can we approach these companies?
- Can we plot GR points that can be imported to people’s personal Google Maps accounts?
- How can we crowdsource place ideas? Crowdsourcing from notable people in Camden?
- Crowdsourcing routes - use technology like the running app Strava
- Soil contamination - can we work with gardeners, people in the field of phytoremediation, council biodiversity officers...

- Create an audio guide?

OTHER ACTIONS

1. Camden Council to provide a map of the most-used journeys within Camden, whether for commuting, shopping, school, leisure etc and the key groups who use them. If data not available perhaps obtain from TfL.
2. Astha and Francesco (students on Service Design at the RCA): Camden Land Bank: Students are Developing a map of open spaces in LBC which they will share with the Green Roots project team
3. Council to provide update on plans for wider pavements and new cycle infrastructure around the borough
4. Everyone to consider ideas/actions from these minutes

FOLLOW UP MEETING:

18/6/20: 5-6pm.

Links

- <https://www.lovecamden.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/The%20Camden%20Democracy%20Walk.pdf>
- <https://lotlandbank.wixsite.com/camden/adopt-a-lot>
- <https://www.geocaching.com/play>
- <https://www.londonair.org.uk/LondonAir/nowcast.aspx>
- <https://consultations.wearecamden.org/supporting-communities/greening-phoenix-road/>
- <https://www.treasuretrails.co.uk/>
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- https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/18708392/1925.7+Camden+Transport+Strategy_Walking_FV.pdf/fac2cb35-83ac-be83-1dcd-636f76628b69
- <https://eastendtradesguild.org.uk/>
