**Salford CVS Annual Conference**

**30th October 2024**

**Salford Community Stadium**

**Dr Emma Geen, Bristol Climate and Nature Partnership**

Emma shared a presentation on disability and climate, emphasising that this is a topic that isn’t often talked about, and that people don’t know the relevance.

Emma is a disabled woman with a chronic health condition. She works freelance pushing for disability climate just transition and has coproduced the world’s first community climate action plan by and for disabled people.

Disabled may be by means of mobility, mental health, neurodivergence, sensory impairments, which makes up 24% of the population. Climate change can, and has, led to mass disabling events such as Long Covid, affecting 3% of the population. Thus, upping the amount of disabled people within the population. Emma explained that the equality issue is relevant of making a society we will all need in the future. Disabled people are four times likely to be killed or left behind in disasters. Within an inaccessible society there is a lack of disaster planning for disabled people which results in disadvantages in areas and buildings are more at risk in such occurrences as flooding and heatwaves. Lack of resources limits the ability to prepare for climate disasters, communication is not accessible and disabled people are then thought of as an acceptable sacrifice.

Emma stated that the most influential climate activist, Greta Thunberg, is a disabled woman. Her autism has given her insight into things that she wouldn’t have if she wasn’t a disabled woman. Ableism means that we are losing out on many voices and activists from disabled people who are experts at adaption.

Climate action can create barriers. Emma explained that such decisions as the plastic straw ban is a small change but has resulted in a huge barrier for assisted technology for the use of them safely. This has left some disabled people feeling that the climate action movement is ableist. These barriers could be reduced by inviting disabled people to the table to give insight into research and understanding.

Emma is part of the Community Climate Action, which is a Lottery funded project to help Bristol become net zero by 2030 using a plan by and for the community of disabled people. This is updated by a forum of disabled people and is a plan that covers nature, food, jobs, energy etc. The plan includes projects such as an energy project with the Centre for Sustainable Energy, transport work with Sustrans – ensuring that electric vehicles are accessible as well as making walking and cycling accessible, nature commission – bringing nature to people who can’t leave their homes, roundtable discussions, creative projects and raising awareness. Emma felt that more areas of the country should be doing this work alongside disabled people.

Emma suggested that the Third Sector approach should be that of allyship. It should involve raising awareness, educating and training, informing funders, designing programmes and schemes for disabled people and creating understanding that disabled people might already be their main audience. Coproduction is rewarding engagement and is the biggest opportunity to make society accessible in our lifetimes.

Emma closed with a suggestion that this is the moment that we can make the world a place we all want to live in and quoted from the Cambridge Dictionary: “a moment during a serious illness when there is the possibility of suddenly getting either better or worse.”

Further reading on Emma’s work:

**Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership:** [www**.**bristolclimatenature.org/projects/community-climate-action/climate-and-disability/](http://www.bristolclimatenature.org/projects/community-climate-action/climate-and-disability/)

**Sensing Climate**: [www.sensing-climate.com](http://www.sensing-climate.com)

**Pam Warhurst – Incredible Edible – Keynote Speaker**

We all have a part to play in the ‘jigsaw’ of creating better communities, part of the bigger picture. People in the community have solutions to issues, but they’re not round the table.

Incredible Edible started 16 years ago in Todmorden, where the group set about changing ‘grey’ spaces into ‘green’ spaces around the market town. It was and is a movement for everybody – however Incredible Edible is just one piece of the ‘jigsaw’.

A ‘top down’ approach does not work – we need people [from the community] around the table from Day 1. We also all need food, which means everyone should be involved.

3 Spinning Plates Model

* + **Community** – find spaces and make them (‘propaganda gardens’)
  + **Learning** – use local people and their skills, learn from each other, huge amounts of funding are not needed
  + **Business** – it has to be infrastructural and contribute to the local economy through farmers, engineers, local businesses etc.

We all have a role to play in supporting our local economies by:

1. Shopping local
2. Supporting farms
3. Promoting community

There are challenges to growing food. Council policy / land ownership / responsibilities are vague.

We need to be campaigning for the right to grow [on community land]:

* 1. We pay our taxes
  2. It builds trust in the community
  3. We have shared land to which we have a right
  4. It will improve biodiversity

Incredible Edible need people in power to work with communities to achieve this.

**Q&A**

**Ben Whalley, Gaddum and Trustee of Salford CVS**

How do we deal with the “what about” processes that we face when mandating under resourced groups?

Emma - I am intrigued by the number of people who become passionate advocates of disabled people. Many use marginalised communities as their bargaining chip to not do anything. If marginalised groups are part of the discussion, it will be better. We have to make changes and include us in the room at the same time.

**Lisa Dickenson, Aspire**

There has been many an issue with allotment sites in Salford. A protest group was formed and approached Salford City Council. The Council failed to give any solutions and created barriers for growing in unused places. I, and my VCSE colleagues, attend lots of health and wellbeing Board meetings and we must bring this up in any meeting we have and get it on the agenda.

**Jane Wood, Incredible Edible Salford**

We have a thriving Incredible Edible project in Ordsall. We are having to let go of raised beds that we established due to people neglecting them. Pam, how would you maintain large number of volunteers?

Pam – If we do the wrong thing in the wrong place it won’t work. Raised beds demonstrate how we do things differently.

**George Tapp, Ordsall Community Arts**

Salford City Council built shopping precincts which won awards for green spaces, unfortunately builders now build tower blocks and create parks which are less green than how they were previously. How can we combat this?

Pam – It’s about getting the voices around the table and saying what we need.