## APPENDIX F: INTERVIEWS

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Interview 1: 29-07-15 West Offices Max

[I emailed Max on Harry’s recommendations to see whether he’d be free to chat (twice actually, the second time was a change in approach, just to invite for a chat rather than shadowing) We sat on some sofas the other side of the West Offices third floor that I am familiar with. This was an unstructured pilot interview taken with notes—areas of missing/fractured content indicated by [...]. These were shared with the participant afterwards.

As a way of introducing his role, Max explains that he (his department-DM) deals with statutory planning, planning permissions, listed building consent. He gives an overview of the structure of the DM, how it has changed throughout the last decade in terms of personnel and job roles. Potential to change again seems likely, almost every 2years (rather than every year as with other depts.) Three processes are mentioned –commercial applications, housing applications, and enforcements and appeals. The DM is governed by act and legal requirements set at the national level (NPPF, Listed Buildings). It is their legal duty to determine how applications go forward based on a number of material considerations and with a view to minimising the potential of harm to ‘heritage’—unless there are imperatives which outweigh this.

[Max gives [the Maltings] as an example

Though the building stood empty and not used for many years, since planners have taken over the site locals feel excluded from the process (as indicated elsewhere by press). The residential scheme outweighed the harm against the building which was at risk (the interior structure being degraded). The ‘planning balance’ was in favour of turning the [Maltings] into houses.

At the mention of planning balance I ask a bit more about this and the concept of ‘weighing’ up considerations. I propose that ‘weighing up’ is the job of DM officers—

Max agrees. It’s about pros and cons. And Max adds that as long as this has not been carried out unreasonably (and here Max searches for another word which later turns out to be ‘irrationally’), then the job is considered done and a decision is made.

I move onto the aspect of objections and queries made by the public.

Max states that on the day to day they don’t get inputs from groups on the processes—although there is nothing to stop them from being included. [...] Max suggests that local group involvement is often defined by a wish to use the building (in question) for different purpose than what is proposed. ‘Heritage’—(and here I am later confirmed by Max that he believes this to be the architectural style of the buildings, the fabric)—is not necessarily taken into consideration. Another example, the Bonding Warehouse, had hardly any objections by local groups.

I mention this is interesting, because it used to be a music club (some others I have spoken with remember this).
Max replies: The NGO's and heritage organisations on the other hand, were ready to make
comment. No local people made comment about the heritage but were more interested in
impact on noise (during construction) and car-parking use.

I comment that there is maybe no pattern to say when a community is charged to be
involved (but reflecting on this, later I wonder what defines involvement? Is it always officially
logged?)

[...] I discuss the concept of hot and cool decision making by Uzzell. Max later engages this
term below. [...] I ask about whether there is a hierarchy of decisions' between planning applications and
listed building consent?

Max explains that really LBC needs to come first (can't say how you can even change a
building's infrastructure for overall purpose without this)—and the process will need an
inspector who can read the building to understand possible steps forward. But planning
proposals are also really important [...]—bit of a catch 22 I add to this (Max agrees).

Max gives an example regarding the planning process of a wood yard. Max states that
although the wood yard caused lots of problems for the locals in terms of noise pollution
and traffic, when an application for an extension [...] assumed residential, not in notes] by
planners was put forward which got rid of these issues, the residents went 'ballistic'. The
wood yard specialised in the renovation of wooden architecture and fixtures (like door
handles). Max reports that the residents felt there was a loss of heritage in terms of the
function and the use (industrial, craft?) which was on their doorstep. Max declares that in
terms of the 'cold' disinterest, the planning balance saw the proposals as ok. However the
Council was swayed by the local feeling, and although the planning proposal was appealed it
was dismissed. Max also adds that an inspector brought up the mention of the sights, smells
and use of the wood yard as a consideration—the use of the place being something that
Max had never before or since heard of as a determining factor. And to consider also that
this wood yard was within a conservation character area amongst grand stately homes (so it
didn't fit in). Max mentions that he saw posters from local groups with the slogan 'save the
wood yard'. There was a ground swell of heritage groups that became involved in the
process—[...] This was before the introduction of public speeches in councils.

This 'ground swell' affect does not often happen with regards to individual residential
applications. Often people are concerned about living conditions and the loss of light.

I make mention of my own dad's filing against a neighbour regarding a roof extension, and
so I ask if the issue of light is a frequent issue.

Max agrees, adds this along with loss of privacy, and increased sense of enclosure. It's more
likely that an area of new building (with reference to its mass and scale) will lead to more
objections. Rarely will people get concerned with the heritage in terms of the architecture.

With LBC, specific heritage assets are defined. Defined by NPPF as being any application that
is made regarding an asset within a character area. The issue lays in undesignated assets; for
example WII structures [B] still structures of merit and of heritage, although they are not
designated. Have to regard these although there is no statutory protection. If something is
being done that is considered as damaging, it is hard for [and this brings back to role of DM]
to negotiate. Max states that he would feel uneasy if the assets’ [character] were not taken
into consideration, despite their being no statutory support. It would be tough to refuse
planning on this basis though.

I bring up local lists.

Max states, there is no Local List—although there is a list that has been put together by the
[YOPF]. This has no status in the decision making process. A while ago, a process was started
that looked into how the local lists could be incorporated, but Max is not sure where this
went. Even so, the local list will still have no statutory status.

[...]

We discuss local plans and neighbourhood plans.

Max states that the latter will have statutory status, and before the local plan is brought
forward there is a window for these to be powerful documents.

I state how the evidence in the local plan and the neighbourhood plans differ (the latter
being public opinion).

Max answers that he does not consider these as ‘evidence’, and are rarely evidentially
considered. However he notes that some groups have used population statistics to enforce
their views. But these steps do not stand up to a great of scrutiny. He continues that NPs are
generally geared towards blocking/minimising development, although there is a recognition
that if they do not allow for some development that they will not be adopted. Often
planning proposals (via emerging local plan) are reductive. Max suggests this like a cat and
mouse game. [...]

I ask whether there are more objections made regarding residential planning applications for
immediate areas, (e.g. with regards to lighting etc) then perhaps for plans involving wider
areas? Bit of a tricky question. [Also should have asked, how these objections are received
and logged].

Max tells me this will be impacted by the nature of consultation: i.e. in the case of a
residential house, letters will be sent to all those in the surrounding affected areas, and a sign
put up (on lampposts); in the case of wider developments, this depends on the nature and
scale of the site. Generally the bigger the scheme the more letters/leaflets get sent out and
there is more publicity. Max thinks generally the Local Plan has had more comments on than
the accumulation of comments from residential applications but it is hard to tell without
seeing the numbers. [...] The Local Plan comments on the significance of York [...] some
argue that it cannot grow further infrastructure, which raises the question of why we need
houses. This is linked to the economy, and poises wider questions [...].
Written supports for developments are a very small percentage, and are often solicited by ‘agents’ themselves [not sure who he refers to as the agents?]. Max states that objections are in general quite low; if DM get 10 they consider it quite a high number.

The figures indicating the number of objections to developments are skewed depending on cases. For example [S] housing development produced 100’s of objections [...] Local arguments were that there was not the infrastructure to support development (no shops etc). Max suggests that those who moved to [S] had done so in order to get the ‘village’ experience outside of York. Indicates this is part of the demographic of the population. Max suggests also that the response conforms to a pattern whereby a new housing development is located on previously un-used land. It’s about the perception of the impact. He compares this case to the one in [C], where there was an increase in housing (250?) on a brownsite within an urban area. The latter was not considered to have as much impact (except perhaps to traffic) and the infrastructure is more likely to be perceived as able to cope by residents.

I then engaged Max in a discussion about what defines heritage, and its link to place. I explain that place is considered an important part of heritage by theorists, and how people are connected to place. I talk about my ethnographic design, in terms of sample groups and my wish to speak to students about their experience with the places they study in.

Although critical about the link with heritage to place [...], Max responds with his own experience of being a student in Newcastle and the affinity he felt for the city because of what he was doing there (i.e. studying urban planning). He did not think that his peers (doing politics, law etc) would have had the same experience with the city. He continues that people are in these cities to study, or work, and if these activities are irrelevant to the buildings, they probably wouldn’t have the same perception, knowledge, and experience with place. They would not go around looking at buildings or road structures. I ask if he felt the same way about York, and he agreed but said that if he worked at Aviva he perhaps would not. [...] Max mentions his experience cycling through the area in front of the Minster; on one occasion, late, when there was no-one around, he found himself ‘looking up’ [...].

I add that contemporary archaeologists are also interested in how close we are to the past. Max responds that this will be a difficult to undertake, and points out that that is maybe why we keep to the certain concepts of designated heritage assets, the practicalities of listing everything would be highly problematic. He raises the question of ‘where would it end’? I think of Holtorf at this point and indicate aloud that this point has been raised.

Unprompted, Max adds something concerning the nature of local groups; he explains there is a lack of knowledge regarding buildings, they don’t think of the internal spaces. He brings the Red Tower in as an example and suggests that, in turning it into a café, the incurred interventions could end up making it looking like a 1980’s building [I am not sure what he means by this example, but take his point]. Max states there will be interpretational differences between private and public approaches in such a project (I think of SPAB).
[Rapping up, I ask Max if he would be interested in coming to a group interview in which some of the concerns from the themes raised in notes could be discussed collectively—not necessarily to combat issues but see where it leads. He suggested that perhaps this was possible but he would have to consider how he would approach such a discussion, as elements of what he has spoken about today have been personal interests (in accordance with background, and training etc) whilst his professional role may more likely to comment on what may or may not be feasibly achieved. This is really important.]
Interview 2: 04-08-15 West Offices Mike

I invited Mike to take part in the research through emails. We met initially on 24-07-15 to discuss how I could potentially shadow his activities. He was interested to take me along to a couple of meetings in the future, and we agreed we could have a chat about his work which he referred to as joining-the-dots together. After several attempts elsewhere at the West Offices to work out how participatory activities and interviews coincide, I decide to simply interview Mike but will tag along to some of his group meetings in the future. Mike and I agree to meet in the West Offices and Mike sorts out a side room (for privacy purposes). I ask permission to record the interview, and he agrees. After some introductions, I ask him my first question.]

INTERVIEWER: Can you just explain, how we know each other? How we sort of, met?

RESPONDENT: I can’t remember the first time we met but I think it was at the Red Tower, which is a tower on the city walls and I was attending an open day to assist the local resident association and the local group seeking to re-open the tower, to hold an effective engagement day, I think that is the first time we had a conversation

INTERVIEWER: Yeah

RESPONDENT: And subsequently we met at the various working groups that spun out of TIM in York who started the idea to have some kind of café or community resource in the tower, and then you started working here, on your placement and asked me if I wanted to be involved in research, and I said yes.

INTERVIEWER: That’s great, and after, we sorta, you said yes and we had a talk about as I said, a sorta programme, of how we could work at first sort of looking at looking at during shadowing but leaving that to one side and doing an interview first. Some of things that came out of that initial conversation I’d like to pick up back on, and it was, just basically you said something along the lines of your job is about joining the dots, and I wrote that down and I’d like to pick up back on that that phrase, because I think that’s really interesting, could you explain what you mean by that?
RESPONDENT: It seems to me that my job is about facilitating action but the action is usually by other people who are the dots. So I would join them up to try to make things happen, those dots would be sort of residents the general public if you like, organised community groups, councillors, in particular ward councillors, officers of the council, perhaps funding bodies, or advice agencies, and informal groupings as well, with the overall aim of advancing sort of aspirations or objectives in a particular area, so usually that would be wards in my case.

INTERVIEWER: So when you say, aspirations for areas, how do they, yeah can you explain what you mean by an aspiration?

RESPONDENT: I think an aspiration I would see as being a desire or hope or a positive vision to achieve or to create something in an area. I think you might look at it differently you might say that there is a vision of some sort and then there are aims underneath the vision and then to achieve those aims you have a series of objectives and those objectives might form particular projects to be undertaken, so at a practical level we might seek to establish or to maintain a number of projects which would contribute to the aims, which would realise the vision, and hopefully that would address the aspirations of the people who live in the area or the council’s aspirations hopefully that would be the same thing but not necessarily, and [pause] the question of how we arrive at what those aspirations are or what those aims should be is really a question about how we engage, how as a council which has you know formal action plans and priorities how we engage residents to understand what those aims and aspirations should be, and whether they are based on objectives needs or sort of more subjective desires.

INTERVIEWER: So do you find, I’m getting this idea of a sense of aspirations that there are different aspirations between the council and communities. Is that always the case?

RESPONDENT: I would I don’t think it’s normally the case I think that the aspirations are largely the same sometimes they are expressed in different ways sometimes they are ranked in a different order. [pause] The council is I suppose is more constrained by financial or legal reality whereas residents would think somewhat more outside the box because they’re not constrained into particular a way of thinking or into a particular budget line. I think everybody wants to see greener cleaner safer areas, better health, better education, more
sort of cohesiveness, think the council and the residents have the same wishes in that regard. Sometimes perhaps the resident are interested in more what you might call grass roots, pavement politics if you like. Whereas the council might be more concerned in the underlying economic factors that create those conditions which is usually wrapped up in, in some kind of jargon or red tape. And I think that this is where the problem arises that perhaps people have the same ideas but communicate them in different ways or start at opposite ends of the system.

INTERVIEWER: So can you give me, I think that idea of pavement politics is quite fascinating, and do you, with this idea of like, expressing in different ways, the problem or aspirations ways that people are trying to get towards, what are the example of like tangible things of ways that people try and express their desires.

RESPONDENT: Well, an example would be that a lot of residents feel that they don’t have enough contact with the people who live around them and that perhaps is exaggerated for people who struggle to get or who don’t already have social contacts or limited mobility or whatever. A resident might see just spending more time with people at the local shops, in the local pub, at the local fair, outside the school gates, as being a way of addressing that problem. The council may have a problem with care of the elderly for example or looking after people who are socially isolated and that may be expressed in more complex language or in more as part of a sort of larger system, but actually the actions that would be needed to address the aspirations of the council in dealing with its care difficulties and the local residents who don’t see enough of each other would often be the same they’re just coming at it from a different point of view.

INTERVIEWER: And I mean is it, you get these different points of view just, how do you get these different points of view? I know it’s a very simple question, like sort of really

RESPONDENT: I think that a large organisation like the council deals with systems and assets and services and often that will include large numbers of policies and procedures, whereas a residents will largely be thinking of his or her own daily business or routine, and perhaps the daily business and routine of the people around them their immediate family or friends or neighbours or colleagues at work. SO it’s a question of scale perhaps. You start with
the person and then you have somebodies' immediate neighbourhood and then you have
their sort of local sphere of influence, and then that builds up into wards and then into the
whole city so the council has a responsibility for the whole city, and to provide services
equitably across the city in a sort of strategic way and to achieve economies of scale whereas
people exist in their own day-to-day zone.

INTERVIEWER: So do you find your role, I mean where do you find your role fits in within
those different scales?

RESPONDENT: I think in some ways [pause] councillors but also officers who work with
neighbourhoods such as myself or who work with residents directly, are in the middle and I
suppose when I was talking about joining the dots I see myself as a sort of conduit for
information to travel between residents and the council or between the council and residents
to satisfy the needs of both so when, I'm sort of in the middle, em my actual job title, which
may or may not be changed is Community Involvement Officer so it's the involvement of the
community in the council I suppose but it could be looked at the other way round, where
the council seeks to engage the community.

There are different sort of tiers of participation, so I think the academics refer to it as the
ladder of participation it runs from information sort of through to actual direct influence or
engagement…

INTERVIEWER: I've heard of that yeah

RESPONDENT: ...So I'm dealing with that ladder and deciding which rung to stand on for
different issues if you like. And the direction of travel seems to be climbing up further up the
ladder, so moving away from just information or consultation to actual resident involvement
in decision making and in some cases in actually providing services so once the need has
been established then residents themselves either alone or working in partnership with the
council will design a service and potentially deliver it.

INTERVIEWER: So the sharing of information that's sort of seen as a low rung of the ladder in
this case?

RESPONDENT: Yes, I don't think it as a lowly in terms of being unimportant or seedy...
INTERVIEWER: Yeah but it’s a start

RESPONDENT: It’s a start because all it really is, is information going one way. You’re seeking to communicate your message to a certain population and the aim of the objective, the aim of the objective I suppose is to ensure that the recipient of the information is able to think about the information in the same way as you have, so you’ve imparted the message or the knowledge.

INTERVIEWER: That’s yeah that really a really comprehensive way of thinking about it isn’t it

RESPONDENT: Sometimes the message will not be received in the way you intended and I think perhaps that is the root of a number of problems in the city perhaps the lack of communication or miscommunication, it’s not necessarily intentional it’s just that sometimes people perceive things or receive things in ways that were not not intended, or see things in a different way.

INTERVIEWER: Can we talk about how the way that information […] goes up the ladder, how do those pieces of information get communicated?

RESPONDENT: Well this is a changing area, because I think over the years, most of the methods in the book have been tried at one time or other, but they come into fashion and go out of fashion, for example this year as of Thursday of last week, we are looking to strengthen and reintroduce direct communication, whereby we invite people to a public meeting and have a conversation with them, and then they go away and hopefully take that information back to their own family or community or residents or whatever. So that quite that could be looked at as quite an old fashioned way of communication but it is felt that there is a role for that. In the last maybe 10 years the internet has become increasingly important, so almost the opposite end of the scale really from talking to somebody face to face we now communicate and engage a lot through the internet be that through the website or through social media or through email and the related technologies, the intermediate sort of channels would be telephone, interactive media, other paper-based forms, such as questionnaires perhaps focus groups, erm I mean they would be direct conversation but they would probably be selected in some way they wouldn’t necessarily be open. We’ve taken some of our engagement actually out to where people are, so for
example consultation was done on the buses, consultation is sometimes done outside
particular buildings or inside particular buildings or with particular groups?

INTERVIEWER: So, they were done on the buses?

RESPONDENT: Yeah I think about 6 months ago the council did a large survey and it decided
to talk to people in a number of different environments so they were people based in the
council reception, they were people based at the libraries, on the streets, outside the school
gates, etc etc, but one of the things that was decided was to have a couple of interviewers
located on some of the main bus routes, and to talk to passengers while they were riding on
the buses.

INTERVIEWER: And how did, do you know how that went?

RESPONDENT: I think it went quite well I think it was very hard work for the interviews who
were in a, in an unusual situation and had to contend with the various stopping and starting
and lumps and bumps of a bus ride, but actually I think that people were quite happy to talk
while they might not necessarily have had anything else to do, they were in the middle of
their daily routine, so it seemed a good time to discuss what was working and what wasn't
working in the city. They certainly came back with lots of material and it was all written up
into er reports.

INTERVIEWER: Do, does that material, what happens to that material after it's been sort of
gathered? Do you have an insight into that?

RESPONDENT: Most of the council engagement material, if, if it is written up, will go onto the
website, and will form the basis of reports to council committees committees on whatever
the topic is, and the professional officers who are involved in any particular service or in
communication or in engagement generally will seek to learn, to learn from that feedback,
and where possible to try to, [pause] compare it [pause] with other data to make sure that
the message is consistent or if it's not a consistent message to understand why the message
is not consistent. So if for example if a particular community has a particular viewpoint that's
not shared by others then that's an interesting insight.
INTERVIEWER: It might be worthwhile so this is sort of the after data collection, , to sort of, have you , any sort of er off the cuff examples of when data, you know that action or that activity of considering comparing has actually instigated something else like an action from that.

RESPONDENT: there will be countless examples, its difficult to think of one of the top of my head. I think I can think of projects, where I’m fairly sure that engagement of one sort or another has provided an evidence for a need, for examples the Clemence hall project in the South bank area has taken a semi-derelict church building and brought it back into use as a community centre, so there would have been a need to assess whether or not that was likely to be an viable enterprise and now that that centre has been established, a recognised need to have a meeting place for older people where they could socialise and receive a hot meal has been established in the centre, and that has been very successful, and you know it has erm a full house. We're now looking to engage with residents again about how local community organisation and local people can commission and provide services that meet the prevention and early intervention needs of older people to either stop or slow down the need for formal care at a later stage, so we'll be engaging again to understand what [pause] facilities or services could be provided in a given area to address that, and I could foresee similar projects arising from that research and engagement to the Clemence Hall Luncheon club.

INTERVIEWER: Sounds like a really interesting project

RESPONDENT: That project started before I was, in fact no I think it started while I was working in York but the groundwork for that project started before I was employed here. So I couldn’t say for certain that we will have the information that sits behind that particular project, but that is an example of where I think there will be information and there will be countless others across the city. In fact I know that the Methodist church for example has worked with the council and other partners to undertake similar projects, and is currently working on one for the Central Methodist church at St Saviourgate projects like [in Copmenthorpe] similar to one I've just described at Clemence Hall relied on a mixture of focus groups, comprehensive surveys of the local population to arrive at what the issues were in that particular area, New Earswick, Less Loneliness initiative developed out of a large
scale engagement exercise taken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and housing trust
which compared social isolation in two neighbourhoods in York and in Bradford, and a lot of
concrete projects have developed from that work in New Earswick, including a community
cinema and a community café. So there is a definite correlation and probably causation
between talking to residents about what their needs and desires are in an area and services
being provided facilities being provided to address those. Sometimes there is a time lag
because often the things that people raise are the knotty difficult projects that haven’t been
tackled because they are quite difficult to achieve or quite complex.

INTERVIEWER: So I mean, these examples that you have given me, they’re er, there’s a
prevailing theme, in that they’re places [extractor interruption] yeah so, this is what I’m
getting from you’ve said, that there’s a lot of places that seem to be popping up as
something that can cater for people’s needs, is that a trend that happens across your team,
are they any other […]

RESPONDENT: Yes it is , I’ve spoken about examples in the areas I serve, albeit
Copmanthrope, Liggitgrove, Methodist are not in my areas, there always have been important
institutions and centres in each village town ward, whatever, and the city centre too. But I
think that both by accident and by design the need for those centres and the importance of
those centres has got greater in recent times, and those centres are now being looked upon
to provide points of information, collections of services, social provision, on behalf of or in
additional to council services. And I know that goes on across the city some places are more
advanced or further ahead in that than others, I mean you’ve, sort of, in round-about way
we’ve got onto the subject of community hubs, there is a network of community hubs where
the council has identified venues in the community which already provide meeting place,
networking space, a range of services under one roof and has asked them if there would like
to recognised as sort of official community hubs and I think the aspiration is that some of
the council services would be available in those buildings in the future so we can take those
services to where people are, where they live, rather than expect them to come to us as a
council, now in some cases the buildings in question will be owned by the council and
perhaps in the past would have been run by the council, but not all some would be church
groups, or social clubs or village halls etc, and the community centres that the council has
historically managed which tend to be in areas with higher concentrations of council housing because they were built to serve those estates, those centres have been asked to develop a more independent or semi-independent management structure so if you like they would, all of these premises whether or not previously managed by the council would provide a sort of intermediate stage between the informal and the voluntary groups and networks in an area, and the public services so they would sort of provide that intermediate community stage, sort of organised groups operating from a building that they manage themselves whether or not they own it.

INTERVIEWER: Does you work, is this essentially the kernel of your work to try and help these hubs?

RESPONDENT: [pause] Yes, that that is a very significant aspect of your work to encourage and to facilitate citizen action if you like whether through a hub or informally or through an organised association [pause] not all of the work the work will go on in or through a community hub but some some of it will and I think that will become an increasingly important aspect. I think we talked earlier about the role of an involvement officer being to act as a sort of joining of the dots between residents and public services particularly the council, and thats stil true on the sort of the ladder of participation if you like. But increasingly, the role is about helping people to help themselves either as individual or as part of group, formal or informal, in a building or not in a building, to address needs which we have to try to identify through a robust engagement strategy. So in order to understand what needs to be done we have to understand what their needs are which requires engagement, and then in order to address the needs though encourgaing people to help themselves we have to engage further to put power and money into the hands of the citizens, and I think that is part of the drive behind the new council committee structure which will involve ward councillors working in their local areas as part of a ward committee with a budget which has been top-sliced if you like from existing council budgets

Katrina Foxton: Top-sliced?

RESPONDENT: So that the councilllors will receive a fraction of the portion of the council budget to use at the local level at their discretion working with citizens to achieve mutual objectives
INTERVIEWER: Ward fund?

RESPONDENT: The ward fund, the ward budget; it goes by various names it is has existed for a long time but has gone through various different incarnations and last year last year the budget was quite small and it was quite [pause] although its application was quite broad the way it was administered was quite restricted and specific so it was available only to constituted voluntary and community groups or groups who could make use of the constituted groups to achieve whatever it was they wanted to do, and the funds were quite so probably on average the grants may have been £500-1000 each whereas the larger budget [pause] is designed to actually provide services in a variety of different council departments on a ward basis. The previous system did allow commissioning of services by the voluntary sector or by lower community groups but this is now much broader. So going back to the example of the Luncheon Club for old people at the church hall it might be that in a particular say the is no such provision currently and identified need is to encourage greater socialisation better nutrition [] better mental health perhaps amongst the over 60’s some of the budget that has been provided by the social care department to a local wrd could be used by the ward committee working with say for example a church to provide that provision in an existing people so it is devolving resources to people in a more flexible way.

INTERVIEWER: Devolution is tied up to a lot of politics and this is what the last government and I imagine and this current government is looking to do more of?

RESPONDENT: Yes, it is without doubt political and perhaps sometimes party political but I am not aware currently and haven’t been during my time working in local government of a party which has opposed or anybody who has opposed greater local decision making so whether you are form a green liberal, labour, conservative, independent perspective or any other perspective I haven’t come across anybody who has resisted greater local discretion. I think that there are pros and cons to this approach I think that this is recognised across the board, there are risks and there are some downsides to localisation and to discretion but it seems that people of the various political persuasions have decided that on balance it is worth doing and it is on balance a good thing to put power into people’s hands and to devolve resources, to meet locally agree needs. To some extent this isn’t a new thing I think
as with a lot of public policy these things come in and go out of fashion, there were lots of approaches particularly in the 1960 and 70s about community development and then approaches about local enterprise in the 80’s and 90’s and so on and it's it's not necessarily a linear process. Nevertheless, I don't think that there has ever been in sort of modern Britain more emphasis on devolution and delegation as there is now.

INTERVIEWER: So you think there is more emphasis on devolution currently?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: and I’m assuming that your knowledge of and this as you say non-linear is process has come through mainly studies?

RESPONDENT: Both academic study and also talking to colleagues shall we say who have been around for quite a long time. They won't thank me for that [pauses with laughter]

INTERVIEWER: but it is interesting though

RESPONDENT: I've got friends who work in this area and colleagues who all say that these agendas these initiatives come and go and often it is a bit like dejavu but I do think nevertheless that the emphasis on whether you want to call it the big society or another name, I do think perhaps that emphasis is greater than it has ever been before. Or certainly for 30 years. Now you could argue that people have more access to resources and more power now but the resources are fewer.

INTERVIEWER: that’s interesting what you mean?

RESPONDENT: for example they may have a larger slice of the cake at the local level or at their disposal but the cake is smaller so therefore the actual buying power of that resource is smaller.

INTERVIEWER; okay let’s backtrack a little for me for my sake here. When you say resources What do you, what are you referring to?

RESPONDENT: it could be Money, budgets if you like, I suppose that origin of those budgets in one form or other would usually be taxation not always be usually. It could be buildings it could be people. Be that volunteers or paid employees. It could be the power to make up
rules or regulations, could be the power to do something, a service, to provide something, to build something. To trade, it could be any of those things. I think when I was talking about the cake I was referring in particular to the money because although some assets have have been sold into private hands or demolished or whatever or closed, as a result of financial constraints, most assets have never been more available to local communities and to residents. The red tower would be a good example. Probably volunteering is healthy, the level of volunteering is healthy, and although people look back with rose tinted spectacles I would suspect that the level of volunteering in the country is, it probably compares quite favourably with the last 40 years. I would think that the ability to make rules, to build, to trade, is all greater then has been under the more centralised systems of the last 30-40 years.

I think without doubt the number of paid employees undertaking public service or community service activities has declined it may be that some people have moved sectors from the public sector to the voluntary sector but the overall number of people and the terms and conditions of those people is probably lower, smaller than the past. So perhaps that puts more of a strain on volunteers and community organisations perhaps that’s why people don’t necessarily have time to call upon their neighbours et cetera because on top of their family and their day-to-day jobs, there are more and more people than working ever before, they also have to pick up some of the tasks of the services that would previously provided for them by paid employees in a public service organisation.

INTERVIEWER: which causes some tension...

RESPONDENT: Yes yeah I mean sometimes, I mean that goes back to the issue about whether or not local discretion, citizen action, devolution is a good or bad thing. I think, even if you accept as most people do that on balance it is a good thing, it might not always be a good thing for something to be provided at the discretion of a volunteer where previously it was carried out by a full-time, permanent, qualified employee.

INTERVIEWER: yeah I see what... So there seems to be this, two sides of a coin perhaps whereby you offer...would you say that localisation is an aspiration? Who, who... Bearing in mind everything you say, what is localisation... who is localisation an aspiration to?
RESPONDENT: Right yes I understand. I think this can be looked at in a very complicated complex way or a very simple way so we'll stick with the simple way. I think that If you ask people "who knows best about their own neighbourhood" they will invariably tell you that it is the people who live there, who know what is best. And if you ask people who should take decisions about their local area they will usual say the people who live there, and if you ask people "who is best placed to provide some grassroots services" they say somebody with the local knowledge who they know such as the traditional policeman who walks the beat in the local area. So I think that in a nutshell suggests that where possible decisions should be taken locally people should be accountable locally, discretion should be applied locally. However, I also think that does not necessarily mean people do not obtain value from large organisation or from some decisions being taken by experts or by bureaucracies if you like removed from their day-to-day for example, well just to think of three examples the BBC, the health service, the council. Some services people are quite happy to allow to be provided for them by people who know what they’re doing, potentially in a distant office so long as the quality of the provision is good. So I think that what has happened is that people have tended to feel that services should be localised where they feel that quality is eroded because of the lack of local knowledge or where they feel that they don’t get their fair share or ignored or overlooked or where people feel that the decisions taken by a large organisation or by somebody who is removed from them whilst all very well in theory do not work very well in practice on the ground in their area and they find that very frustrating.

INTERVIEWER: Like, you said, you mentioned the word value …for services which is quite interesting. My research started off as being, looking to social communal values for heritage but for my own reason the word value is extremely, it’s become a professional tool in a sense…and you’re nodding here. So I wonder if you could explain what you meant by the idea of value for expertise?

RESPONDENT: I think I said value for money. I suppose usually value in the sense that I mean is a balance of costs and outcome so do you get a good outcome for the costs. Or if you like do you get bangs for buck, do you get good, do you get something out of the system or the service worth than what you put into it or better than worth what you put into it. I think that
people are quite happy, if they feel that they get good value, if they feel that the service that
is provided to them is a good quality service for the money that it costs them.

INTERVIEWER: Which is, yes, ok

RESPONDENT: so you might for example whilst the NHS is a large bureaucracy and a lot of
the decisions are taken in a place far removed from the average person that many people,
not everybody, but met many people people's experiences of the service provided of the
range of service provided, the quality, is sufficient for them to be satisfied that it is worth it.

INTERVIEWER: there's sort of like, trying to pull some of the strings of what's been said here
today, there is a feel for the value for money of service but at the same time localism is as
you say there's a large emphasis on localism and most people anecdotally as you say would
say that they are happy, or that their local knowledge is also something that is seen as
important.

RESPONDENT: yes perhaps I could clarify that. When we talk about how do we know that
people want localism, devolution et cetera, I think that to some extent that the localism
devolution big society agendas are driven by reducing budgets and the assertion, which may
well be true, that providing services locally and using volunteers more and looking at
prevention early intervention, citizen action, is overall cheaper. So there is perhaps a financial
incentive but nevertheless I do feel going back to what I said before about people liking to
have control over their own lives or over what is happening in the area, is the other reason.
So we've sort of got two agendas if you like which may arrive at the same place but
potentially stem from different, [pause] different objectives. And we discussed that localism
and devolution are not always the solution to a better service or to a lower cost and I think
the council is at interesting and exciting, albeit risky, stage of working out which services are
best provided locally, which services are best provided in the traditional, more sort-of
centralised way, which services it should stop, which services can be picked up by the
voluntary section and which can't and within the constraints of the law. Because For example,
sometimes an unintended consequence of allowing people to decide what they want in their
own area is a postcode lottery. So it might be that it turns out to be bad for an area because
people suddenly realise that, you know, X is provided in one place but not in another, or is
provided in a certain way in one place and not in another. And if that is considered to be
basic service of the universal need it will cause upset and friction people find that it is
provided differently or not at all in one place or another. And we already know about that in
terms of medicine that are available in different parts of the country on the NHS where the
NHS has localised some of its decision making.

INTERVIEWER: yeah you get like institutions.

RESPONDENT: yes stop and at risk of going on at too great length about this it occurs to me
that it is possible to deliver services and facilities centrally or in a large-scale and still involve
people in determining how those services are provided through engagement. So it might be
that people are involved in the provision of a service such as a specialist health service or the
future of the BBC or whatever, because the institution is engaged with the population and
the population is engaged with the institution. It doesn’t necessarily have to be provided
locally or decided locally for there to be that communication but usually that’s the best way
because people feel that they are more likely to want to engage and to be listened to if they
do so at a smaller scale and a more intimate scale particularly if you are looking to do more
face to face work. The practical reality of engaging somebody face-to-face is that you need
to go to them, not expects them to go to you. Therefore it works better at the local level. But
You could just as easily organise a paper-based survey through every door, every door in the
country from a central location as we know full well from the census.

INTERVIEWER: Census...makes me sad. I'm sort of dividing the interview into three sections
whereby we talk about first off what you do. And I think we've kind of gone on to your sort
of general information about what localism is, a general important theme to you and to your
team. Yeah. So when I'd like to talk about now is to move it more to this idea of your
personal views on York as a place of work but also somewhere, we mentioned it a bit at the
end of our conversation we talked about because you don’t live in York do you?

RESPONDENT: that’s right

INTERVIEWER: where do you live again?

RESPONDENT: Bradford.

INTERVIEWER: ok
RESPONDENT: District. I don’t live in the city itself.

INTERVIEWER: so a lot of the talk here has been about sort of local knowledge, and you mention sort of these ideas of places that are really important for communities to engage each other with you at the school gates, this idea of pavement politics. Do you ever in your work come across those places and do you have any relation to those places yourself?

RESPONDENT: frequently yes. I have used them as a venue to provide meeting space or services as a team or we engage with them as a valued community partner or in some cases we socialise there because inevitably relationships develop. We use them as a place to leave or to root information, communication and we might some cases work from these buildings. There is an expectation that people who are involved in front line services such as ours will spend some of their time working from and in the places that they are assigned to. Now it just so happens that I cover the city centre which means that I’m already in well, I’m directly in one of the places that I serve, I’m very close to the other, so a lot of my work is around the building that we are in now the council offices. But I also do cover two of the sort of semi-rural parishes so it might be that I would go out to there and base myself in one of those buildings for an afternoon or for a morning to make sure that I’m in touch with the day-to-day goings-on in those places.

INTERVIEWER: okay so you do then, so continuing from this idea you being, using the buildings that are used as community centres centres and hubs and you get a feeling so there every day goings-on. Can you talk about that a bit more?

RESPONDENT: I think that there are three aspects to it. First of all people who are based there who work there or volunteer there, have their finger on the pulse because they see here discuss what is happening in a particular neighbourhood as part of their day-to-day job. So keeping in touch with those people is very valuable and insightful. If you go to spend time in a building like a community centre or library or church hall or whatever you invariably come across people using the building either in as an informal venue for example some of them have cafes, so you might be able to chat with people in the cafe or you overhear things or bump into people, people might be using the facilities for semi-informal activities like an interest group, I don’t know a knitting group or a drama group or whatever it happens to be. But the buildings are also often the base for organisations for more formalised activities so
that might be a particular society or a particular charity, or an organised event such as a gala or a fair or a fete. So you come across different aspects of local life in a particular place if you spend time at that centre. I also get value from just wandering around somewhere and looking at things and reading things and talk to people and overhearing things generally, it doesn’t have to be in a building necessarily but often the movers and shakers or the powers that be in an area, be it the parish council or the local Residents Association or the community or civic group or whatever is based in one of these buildings and people use these buildings as somewhere to socialise somewhere to receive and disseminate information so it seems the obvious place to go. And as soon as I started working here I immediately started picking up the names of places some of which I’ve never been, some of which I still haven’t been, but I know that there are important places in a particular neighbourhood because I frequently hear the name of the place mentioned or the name of the person who manages the building mentioned or an activity that goes on there mentioned. So you quickly learn these things because its, York is not a huge place by city standards but it’s still a city so as somebody who doesn’t live here and who hasn’t worked here that long (I think one and a half years going on to 2 years) I still haven’t been everywhere but in the areas that they have been I do know I do serve I would say I do know most of the meeting places because it’s inevitable. You have to, really.

INTERVIEWER: and do you, do you sort of talking about local place in the sense, yeah, local place is heritage place. Do you feel that York is a heritage place in its, you know, it’s a city, but it seems that through what you’ve been saying that there’s lots of different hubs that interact with each other?

RESPONDENT: They some do they can do. They are doing increasingly. For example, there is now an association of community venues you learn from each other and receive training about best practice on think a monthly basis. There has been a long-standing residents Federation is a federation of all of the residents Association in the city or all of the ones who wish to participate. I think there is a lot of scope for additional joint working in networking, I think too often people can be inward looking or can be absorbed or preoccupied by their own organisation or building or activity. Depending whether it’s in the city or within the village or town located around the city is perhaps something that makes a difference
because in a village I think it is more likely that organisations will come together as part of 
the community of that village, possibly centred around the parish council and all of the 
villages in York have parish council. They probably all have a village hall which is probably a 
central point. In the suburbs and the city centre the geography and the dynamics of the 
place are different so there are lots of cross city organisation that work on certain projects 
across the city so they’re already geared up for that sort of wide networking. But there are 
two lots of neighbourhoods within the city centre and the inner suburbs if you like. The 
extent to which they engage with each other within and between areas, I’m not wholly sure. I 
think, My experience tells me that some do but many don’t. I think many haven’t yet 
exploited the links between organisations in a particular area or between areas, the 
opportunities for learning, the opportunities sharing resource, for increasing buying power, 
for problem-solving. We’ve tended to find that residents associations don’t always link up 
with each other and help each other with common problems. Probably because it’s enough 
of a job keeping an organisation running without necessarily considering or worrying about 
what other people are doing but sometimes that is actually part of the solution. So working 
with another person who has already had the same challenges or might the challenge that 
you experience could help, so I think the idea of community hubs is interesting in that it 
might bring organisation together service providers together, and I mentioned earlier the 
central Methodist Church. So there is an example of a building which potentially has a lot of 
space for local charities and community organisations to work from the same building.

INTERVIEWER: so because of its size?

RESPONDENT: it’s a very big building which is I think only about 8% of it is used currently. 
And the aspiration is to have the whole building used.

INTERVIEWER: yes

RESPONDENT: and you could foresee that, for sake, small enterprises or local charitable 
organisations that could be a very creative place to work. The digital art media arts centre 
that was proposed to the Guildhall (thinking of heritage assets here) was a similar idea for 
small and medium-size enterprises that might need sort of incubation and might benefit 
from being located near each other in a building where infrastructure and facilities are 
already provided such as Internet, conference space, cafeteria etc.
INTERVIEWER: what about the building itself, I mean, just stick on the Methodist Church for now I mean, I'm assuming you've been there and?

RESPONDENT: I have, I have been in quite a bit of it yeah

INTERVIEWER: yeah, What is your impression from the building itself? Or do you, is it just that it could it is that which you've sort of explained already a space which has potential to be used?

RESPONDENT: yes I think the overriding feeling is that it has an enormous amount of potential. It's quite an unusual building in different ways, it doesn't particularly look like church from the outside. Or the inside to some extent. It is more than one building really, it's almost a complex will stop the chapel itself is recognisable as a large chapel, a Methodist cathedral almost but the rest of the building is sort of multifunctional space. The inside and the outside seem quite different. Once you get inside and you've experience what appears to be a fairly standard church building then discover lots of other aspects of the building which are quite out of the ordinary, for example the basement. Which is as big as the church itself but underneath and is currently not used but could be. A large area of floor space for all sorts of things. It has accommodation upstairs some of which isn't actually usable at the moment but could be. It has a series of large meeting rooms it has a courtyard in the middle which isn't roofed currently but could be. So it's a surprising building, it's surprising in the sense that the inside is not what you expect from the outside and that the shape of the site means that from the street you can't appreciate the depth of the site or the size of its but it's also surprising when you go inside and discover all the different places.

INTERVIEWER: yeah like a tardis

RESPONDENT: yeah and its surprising only 8% of it is used and that I suppose it is surprising that that situation has been, is, well it's not sustainable I think that's the problem, but I think it's surprising that, that has happened for various historical reasons.

Kf: do you see that happening a lot with different potential buildings? An idea of potential and then, I mean the red tower as we know, it's one that has, I think people can see potential
RESPONDENT: yeah, I think that what has happened is that, over time the original uses either
through changing fashions or through changing demands have ceased to be suitable or
whatever was going on in them has ceased to be useful and the buildings have become
unmanageable without a large injection of not only money but thought as to how bring
them into modern usage so the space is there the building is there but the money or the will
or the knowledge or whatever to deal with the space hasn’t been there until now in the case
of red tower, central Methodist Church, the Guildhall or whatever. We’ve seen how the
library, the art gallery, soon to be the theatre, can all be brought back to use for their original
purpose which is a similar but somewhat different task but in the case of say the Guildhall
the red tower, the Methodist Church what we’re looking for is a new use because the space
is useful but it’s a different use. So you need the money you need them people have the
confidence to invest in. You need to reconfigure the space. So you need somebody who
knows what they’re doing.

INTERVIEWER: I like the idea of...you mentioned the word ‘will’, the will and the thought... I
think this will be the last sort of points as we are getting onto her just over an hour. I mean
what do you think having worked with community groups how does will and thought
happen?

RESPONDENT: I think some elements will be unique or unusual to York and some will be sort
of be universal. What seems to happen is that long-standing decline or a long standing
challenge becomes almost a crisis so for example an organisation will realise that if action is
not taken it will lose whatever it is that it holds dear so has to do something in the sense its
forced. I think similarly a condition which is unusual to York is property values and prices in
York are so high that it is almost inevitable that every inch be used effectively, efficiently. So
people will be sitting on top of a large asset so unless they’re realising its value as an asset it
will need to be sold or demolished or whatever. Local groups are looking for premises and
are not able to afford space so if you have an empty space then that demand is there that
will is there to do something about it. It’s it’s not a surplus it’s a necessity, it becomes a
necessity. I think it does also sometimes require all the right people being in the right place
at the right time, some people just have vision or have the will to see something through or
to get something going or to forge alliances with others to make it happen. So perhaps
some of these large projects have started because those three things have come together at once so suddenly you've got a large building that isn't affordable any more or maintainable, you've got a demand from the property markets, you've got the space and someone else's got the need and perhaps also you just happen to have the right people there at that moment to realise the opportunity and to realise that the opportunity outweighs the threat the pros outweigh the cons. I think in the past people have been so busy either managing service or managing decline or just keeping an asset open keeping it standing that they never really have the energy or the resource or the will to fundamentally deal with it or fundamentally deal with the problem. But it becomes a necessity, they have to do it they can no longer keep investing in something that is either going to become unaffordable or fall down.

INTERVIEWER: yeah I think that's really interesting it kind of comes back we don't have to talk about it if you don't want to because I know you said it's a kind of problematic term but that the idea of apathy is almost the opposite to this you know energy, will thought that goes into it.

RESPONDENT: Well I think the reason that some facilities and services and building in the past have been lost or neglected is because fundamentally there wasn't the will to stop that from happening. Sometimes people did care deeply and they didn't have the skills or the resources or the power at their disposable to do something about it, but perhaps really that underlying fundamental problem was that it was just easier not to do anything about it or to hope that somebody else would and they never did. Whereas if you find a body or a group with the will then even if they don't end up with what they wanted or completely what they wanted, they end up with something more than they had when they set out. A group that springs to mind is the Your space project in Bishop Hill where the group wanted to create affordable shared living space in a council assets which was an old people's home. And whilst it seems unlikely that they will achieve their objective to have that that sort of cooperative housing in the building, they may ultimately achieve their objective of a cooperative housing arrangement somewhere else in the city because they have the will to make it happen and people have started listening. You know the problem is recognised that a lot of the housing in York is unaffordable, they had the ear of the people that may be able to help them
something about that. So they may not achieve their original objective but they may
nevertheless achieve something and may take it forward and move the agenda on. So you
could say that maybe you have two lose the battle to win the war I don’t know but, they have
the will to do something about it.

INTERVIEWER: think that… Obviously becoming… Yeah from this conversation see that as
being quite important as long, you know started talking about aspirations and desires that’s
really important yeah. Okay I’m pretty happy with that. Do you have any questions?

RESPONDENT: I suppose I was interested just briefly in we talked about heritage heritage
assets if you like. Do you have a definition that, I know that’s a bit difficult because heritage
is a broad somewhat subjective concept. Do you have a definition or examples or do you
have examples of what is not a heritage asset?

INTERVIEWER: it’s a very good question. see I’m, obviously, yeah heritage is broad area and
can encompass materials, objects, memories, music, food but I’m looking at, in this particular
project, I’m looking at the idea of the historic environment in terms of building and with a bit
of a nod to archaeology. But I’m very interested in a heritage is a heritage asset in terms of
the historic environment being essentially a place of social importance that is has historical
or has a historical trajectory, it’s been around for a bit, doesn’t have to necessarily have been
around for 1000 years, but if it’s been around and is recognisable as something that is local
and old. For the sake of this project that’s my definition of heritage.

RESPONDENT: you might possibly say that if the building or structure is older than anyone in
the city and thereby was already there…is that the sort of age we’re talking about?

INTERVIEWER: that…well I mean I think it depends on the people defining it and adopting it
as a place that they feel attachment to, I think it’s that sort of idea of attachment, it doesn’t
necessarily have to be attachment.

RESPONDENT: they just think it’s of value to them in some way

INTERVIEWER: yes, this idea of value is important that it is also problematic because it can
define a heritage asset but it doesn’t necessarily mean anything going to happen to it. I’m
looking at how values for place is linked to participation and active steps towards doing something.

RESPONDENT: to influence that space or places in some way...

INTERVIEWER: to influence, or it doesn’t necessarily mean participation could mean taking it over and using it for a community hub or it could mean making it accessible to. Because the other aspect is very important to York obviously is this idea of tourism and interpreting buildings is another way of promoting its value but it’s not as necessarily as encouraging in terms of participation so for example the city walls they’ve got all those amazing interpretation panels. Which means that there is a different kind of interaction with that that building whether that acts as a placard between participation with the building because it’s not open to local local it’s not opening the door for local use. but I think this idea of community hubs emerging network of centres that are often these old buildings that is a form of heritage that I’m picking up on very interested in. Sorry but that is a bit of a vague answer.

RESPONDENT: no that’s...

INTERVIEWER: is that kinda what you expected?

RESPONDENT: broadly what I expected

INTERVIEWER: Quite like ending it with a question to me.
Interview 3: 10-08-15 West Offices Mark

INTERVIEWER: Right, so hi.

RESPONDENT: Hello.

INTERVIEWER: Can we start off with you explaining what you do in York?

RESPONDENT: Okay. I am a Development Officer with responsibility for transport strategy. Mainly that looks at what the potential transport impacts are of the Local Plan and putting forward the infrastructure that would mitigate those impacts as far as possible. So if we look at the amount of housing growth that potentially is going forward in the Local Plan, that will generate traffic, and then we have to see how much traffic is generated and where it goes, and whether that actually adds to the existing traffic levels on the roads, and whether those roads can take it and what needs to be done so they are able to take it, or whether we need to build new infrastructure to cope with it as well.

That's one aspect of it. Then the other thing is actually looking at the means to see what else can be done so people don't necessarily need to drive. So we're looking at walking, cycling, public transport. So we're giving people the wider transport choices to make, rather than necessarily driving.

INTERVIEWER: So when you say the word 'infrastructure', it's not just roads, is it?

RESPONDENT: It's not just roads. The other thing that I'm responsible for preparing is the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. So that is social infrastructure – so like community facilities, whether we need churches, community halls, education establishments like schools, colleges, green infrastructure, green corridors. There's a whole gamut of infrastructure that might be necessarily. Utilities, whether that's water, drainage, power supply, gas, the whole lot. We need to see whether there's going to be sufficient capacity to do it or whether that capacity can be delivered if we haven't got it at present.

INTERVIEWER: So you deal a lot with the material of the city.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.
INTERVIEWER: What will be the future material in the city.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I’m going to backtrack, ‘cause I forgot to ask you (which is what I ask everybody at the beginning of the interviews) how do you know me? How did we get introduced?

RESPONDENT: We sat next to each other in the office and just generally through introductions, and then I realised what your project was by just general conversation in the office and noting that you were having a chat with Harry every now and again. So just from general workplace chat and then more into realising in more detail what it was, and then you asking me to take part in your study, and then I agreed to do it.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. Yeah, I agree with that.

So going back to the main bulk of the interview, what do you do on a day-to-day basis in the office?

RESPONDENT: Several things that I have been doing were commissioning consultants to do a transport study and then managing that study to say, ‘Are they looking at the right things? Are they coming out with the right sort of ideas of what infrastructure might be needed to take forward?’ And then really having a look at what they’ve come up with and then taking that forward to say, ‘Right, well these are your suggestions to what we need. How can we deliver those? And are they really necessary?’ And if they’re really necessary, ‘What priority do we need to put them in through?’

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So for example, one of the suggestions that they put forward was for dualing the A37 ring road because looking into the future, that would have more traffic flowing on it than it can theoretically take. So actually, there’ll be a lot of congestion on that road. It’s congested already but basically you’d be trying to squeeze too much traffic on it to what it can take, so therefore you would need to make it a dual-carriageway.
And that serves another purpose, actually. It provides a route for the traffic to avoid having to go into the city centre and back out again to get from one part of York to another.

INTERVIEWER: So you commission reports and...

RESPONDENT: A lot of studies and do the reports myself. Do my own research. Look at other people’s plans as well and provide advice on their plans. So anything that has a transport impact or an infrastructure impact, or anything on the duty to cooperate between one or more authority with others, I look at that as well.

INTERVIEWER: When we’ve been having our chats, one of the things that I think came up was this importance to infrastructure, or your sort of consideration of the infrastructure, and this idea of heritage.

RESPONDENT: Mm.

INTERVIEWER: I can’t quite remember what it was you said but it piqued my interest.

RESPONDENT: I think it was trying to have a different approach to dealing with it from what may have been the more traditional approach of maybe a few years ago.

A few years ago – maybe ten years ago, a bit longer – the approach was you did what you call a ‘predict and provide’ approach to transport and highway capacity. You would look to see how many vehicles there would be in the future and you built your roads to cope with that.

Now in that respect it could do quite a lot of harm to the city in that actually, you’d be taking up a lot of properties and actually you could end up with roads the size of which are disproportionate to their location.

The other view that started to come through and which I’m more interested in is actually trying to first of all minimise the need for travel where you can. If you do realise that people have to travel then you look at seeing if they can do it by other means, such as walking and cycling or public transport.
And then the final way is actually you then look to see what infrastructure requirement is left over. So you have the least impact, or the least adverse impact, on heritage and the environment.

It would be normally the environment that you would consider, but as York is such a historic city, then it’s the heritage side of things, like the physical infrastructure of the city – things like the ancient walls and stuff like that. You would try and keep their setting and not do anything that would actually upset that.

INTERVIEWER: It’s interesting because I’ve been leaving a definition of what heritage is to the end of the interview, to discuss with people. But I want to bring it up here. I feel like it’s the right place to talk about it here. What is your definition of ‘heritage’?

RESPONDENT: I think mine is what you inherit from previous generations. Something that leaves you feeling more a sense of things having been made better by previous generations than made worse. For whatever reason they were built, a lot of historic castles and that were built for war, but actually when you see then you think they’re very impressive and they’re still there, rather than them being demolished.

I think an example in York, I think there was a view that certainly I think the end of the 18th Century was actually, ‘We don’t necessarily need the city walls so therefore we can build through them and around them,’ and there was a very strong movement to say, ‘No’. I think it was Sir Harry Betjeman, actually, a very strong movement to say, ‘No, these are our heritage. Don’t damage them.’ I think that prevailed and thank God it did. Because actually it’s led to one of the main things that York has that people want to come and see. So it helps boost our tourism industry that actually, something from the past is something that the present want to appreciate and preserve, hopefully, into the future as well.

INTERVIEWER: So for you, it’s the physical… it’s the remnants of the walls and built structures that have been kept?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, and I think there are some places where actually you do feel the old style part of the city is something that makes it unique and attractive to people to come to.

INTERVIEWER: Have you got any examples?
RESPONDENT: Some of the old pubs. Not that I just go to pubs, but there are very old buildings. There’s the Black Swan and then just some very old buildings in Gillygate, I think – some 13th Century buildings that actually are the oldest ones in York.

INTERVIEWER: I didn’t know that!

RESPONDENT: I think there’s a jeweller’s in Gillygate that is that sort of age.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, I walk down Gillygate a lot. I can’t think, but...

RESPONDENT: I mean, there are internationally renowned places like The Shambles as well. So it’s just some unique points that there are.

I think one of the things was I grew up when I was younger in a more modern town.

INTERVIEWER: Where was that?

RESPONDENT: That was in Basingstoke.

INTERVIEWER: Oh really? I live in Reading.

RESPONDENT: Oh right, okay! And yeah, there’s a vast difference between living in York and, say, living in Basingstoke. And Reading, I would say, is an example where a heritage has been destroyed by transport. Because you’ve got, I think, dual-carriageways cutting in and around the town.

INTERVIEWER: We’ve got the IDR.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: The IDR. But we still have the canals which are quite a significant...

RESPONDENT: And those things can rejuvenate places now. They go unfashionable and out of use, and actually then when you realise that you can make use of them as waterside areas for housing and leisure and things like that, then they come back into favour.

INTERVIEWER: There are places in Reading that I’ve walked through and I’ve seen...you can see that happening. There are lots of restaurants by, and people bringing visitors, not just the people that are living there, but the visitors coming in. And I hope they make a bit more of the Oscar Wilde walk.
RESPONDENT: Mm. So when something's gone and disappeared entirely it's far more
difficult. You can't bring it back.

INTERVIEWER: So what's your opinion then on the fact that York's lost its castle? 'Cause the
castle area isn't visible. I mean, we have the Castle Museum and the prisons and the law
courts, but the actual castle that was there.

RESPONDENT: Mm. It's a difficult one, that one, because...

INTERVIEWER: That area is a bit problematic, isn't it?

RESPONDENT: The area around it is. That's part of the evolution of a place, that everything
gets built on what was built there before to a certain extent. And there's a different form of
heritage that's been left that's more Georgian or Victorian architecture left there. So there's a
different form. It doesn't mean to say we can't appreciate it. But maybe if the castle had
remained, it would have been appreciated even more. It's just...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: It's difficult to comment on something that isn't there anymore if you've not
seen it when it was. Whereas if you do see something and you think, 'That would be worth
preserving,' and it goes...

INTERVIEWER: So things being visible and being seen, is that an important aspect of...

RESPONDENT: I think trying not to unnecessarily destroy them is important. You really do
have to consider whether it's the greater good to do it or not.

INTERVIEWER: How do you get to a point where...you say 'unnecessarily destroy them'. That
sounds to me like something somebody else has said about it's things being done
irrationally.

RESPONDENT: Mm.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: You have to consider a range of options, I think, before you decide on which
one you do. To coin a phrase, there's more than one way to skin a cat. Which is not the best
one to use but it's the one that always sort of comes to mind, is where you've got potentially
several different ways of dealing with the same problem. And if you can find a solution that
doesn’t damage anything, or you weigh up the pros and cons of whichever route or
whichever measure you choose, some of them you’re balancing up what you preserve
against what the cost would be to keep it preserve, or whether there’s a cheaper option
which causes some harm but not a significant amount of harm. In that respect it can be fairly
subjective. But you try and test it objectively as best you can.

INTERVIEWER: Before we go onto the second part of the interview, could you explain to me
what you would say your concerns for York are and what your potential aspirations are for
York?

RESPONDENT: The difficulties I can see coming up would be if we didn’t put the necessary
infrastructure in to try and alleviate traffic from the city centre, there will be more pollution
from vehicles because there’ll be more of them trying to get in. Because people may not
necessarily be just going into the city centre but they might be going through the city centre
to get from one place to another. So more vehicles would create more pollution.

They’d also make the environment where other people are moving around less
pleasant for them, or more unpleasant. So one of key assets is the city centre and the places
that people want to go and see. But those very places that they’ll be in and around are being
made worse by more traffic going around. Even though there is an inner ring road, if you
have more traffic trying to get through it, that creates a sort of movement severance
problem that people are having to wait for traffic to get from one place to another.

That’s the biggest form of harm that it will do, is actually pollution and severance and
just making it generally unpleasant for people.

INTERVIEWER: The problems that incurred through Lendal Bridge, is that kind of the reason
that Lendal Bridge was proposed in the first place, is because of this severance?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, the trial of the access restrictions on Lendal Bridge were...the bus
companies were saying their bus services were unreliable through the city centre because
there was too much traffic. Air quality in the city centre was actually suffering. So the actual
trial when that was put in actually did achieve what it set out to do in that respect. It actually
made the city centre bus services more reliable.
There were fewer vehicles going through the city centre so you could have things like Exhibition Square, where they’ve actually changed the layout of Exhibition Square, you could have done more things like that to improve the physical environment for people that aren’t in cars. Because there’d be fewer vehicles going through.

And air quality improved as well. So those things, they were direct, physical effects that the actual restriction did, improving air quality and actually getting more buses through more reliably. And there were knock-on effects that it could have had. It could have helped the regeneration of the railway station area. It could have helped having more things like the Exhibition Square development, that it actually would have improved the sense of place.

So that’s what it set out to do. Unfortunately, because of the way it was done, and maybe negative reaction by drivers, that really put a lot of political pressure on the council that it was a failure in those eyes.

INTERVIEWER: Mm. It’s really interesting you saying the idea of a sense of place. I’m going to keep that to one side for a moment.

RESPONDENT: Okay. There’s a lot of importance in the space between buildings as opposed to just the buildings themselves, so it’s how the buildings and areas of the city connect with each other.

INTERVIEWER: Go on. Yeah, that’s really interesting.

RESPONDENT: Because you create the environment between the buildings. So a good example of that, I think, is actually the Minster Piazza. It’s a shared space, so you’ve got pedestrians and cyclists and I think people still have the horse and carriages going through there. There’s no actual demarcation of a kerb line or anything like that, but people have got to be aware of, and be respectful to, other people in that area. So there are actually signs up to say, ‘This is a shared use area. Be respectful.’ And for cyclists, ‘Don’t go screaming through as fast as you can.’

But it just creates that pleasant area. People can sit around outside the Minster. They can just stand and watch or they can just mill around as best they want to.
INTERVIEWER: Because I also sort of experienced, like I came through it this morning. The
Minster Piazza, it is... Yeah, I mean, do you come through it often?

RESPONDENT: I do go through there because it's one of the only... it is actually the only
strategic cycle route through the city centre during the hours of the Footstreets. So that's the
only route that you can go through from Duncan Place through to Walmgate Bar. Or you can
then branch off around the back of Barnett's, through there. So it provides a sort of link
through that way and a link through slightly over towards the Hungate way.

I think there were views that actually you could allow cyclists through the Footstreets
area as a trial but I don't think that's gone ahead.

INTERVIEWER: When you say 'Footstreets', what do you mean?

RESPONDENT: That's just generally the area that's the pedestrianised zone between whatever
the hours of it are now. I think it's 10 'til 5. So you can't actually ride a bike through the
Footstreets area between 10 and 5, but you can still ride a bike through Duncan Place,
Minster Piazza, Minster Yard and then round through to Gillygate. Or Goodramgate,
whichever one it is.

INTERVIEWER: But it's interesting also that the Minster itself is part of the history.

RESPONDENT: It's such a key building that it's there, it's in the centre of York and I think
everything else is kept below it, in terms of planning terms. It's the focal point of the city.

INTERVIEWER: The focal point of the city. And that has, as you say, a physical impact on the
rest, because you can't go higher than the Minster.

RESPONDENT: No. And it's such a major presence there.

INTERVIEWER: When you say 'presence', I'd love to hear what you think about that 'cause it's
really interesting.

RESPONDENT: I think it's imposing. From close up it's imposing. You can see it and the
medieval architecture for it. But actually from a distance it's imposing as well. There are
certain places where York is in a plain. As soon as you get up from that plain, like in the
Wolds or more towards the high end, just before Leeds, you can see the Minster from a fair distance away. So you know, actually, it’s a landmark towards the city.

So I should imagine in older times, before other areas were all built up, that was still a significant marker as to where you were going to. When you were heading to York, there’s the Minster. You can see it from miles around. And certainly within the city and the approaches to it, you can still see it, which is the importance of the Strays, is providing those viewpoints so you can see it. There are lots of other places, I would have said, that have got impressive cathedrals, but they’re somewhat lost within the urban area around them.

INTERVIEWER: I’m trying to think of Cambridge. I don’t know.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I mean, maybe not as high. The colleges you can see.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I think you just see the spires at the top, but obviously in Cambridge it’s the spires.

INTERVIEWER: Is that Oxford?

RESPONDENT: Could well be.

INTERVIEWER: Dreaming spires of...

RESPONDENT: Dreaming spires, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...Oxford, yeah. That’s really interesting. So my other question was, ‘What are your sort of intentions, your sort of goals? What would you like to see happen?’

RESPONDENT: I think York’s got to grow still. What level of growth it takes is still subject to lots of argument. Unfortunately, much as you might want York to stay as it is, it can’t stay exactly as it is. Everything has to change and evolve over time, otherwise it just literally would become...it’s primary purpose would be just a tourist destination, that’s it.

It’s got quite a good base in terms of science and biosciences and stuff like that, so there are areas around here for people to work, and I think you’ve got to provide those facilities for people to work. But as you get more people working then more people need to live in the city as well, so you’ve got to provide enough places for those people to live.
Otherwise they’re going to be living outside and driving in, so they’re going to be bringing in more vehicles. So actually it could be more harmful if you encourage people to live outside and come into York to work, rather than living and working within York.

Because at least if you’re living within York it’s a very compact city and you can get around by means other than driving. Whereas if you go beyond a certain limit, the only way you really effectively can get in is to drive. And you’re just compounding an existing problem.

INTERVIEWER: Which then obviously impacts the historic environment, as we’ve said.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But it seems like on the one hand you’re impacting the historic environment with cars and exhausts and roads, but on the other hand you’re impacting the environment with people.

RESPONDENT: People and houses. And that’s the difficult balance that me and everybody else on the planning team is trying to come up about – which one is the more sustainable option?

INTERVIEWER: Right. ‘Sustainable’ is a key word, then.

RESPONDENT: And where do you do it? Do you do it in the city centre and is there space in the city centre to do it? Or is there space in the urban area and is there land available in the urban area to do it? Or do you have to then look out more to the non-urban area? So villages – do you expand those? Or do you build on greenfield sites or reuse sites that have already had a use on it?

And if you’ve got to fit everybody in, do you build upwards or outwards? And if you build upwards then you’re starting to destroy the heritage of the Minster because it becomes diminished because you’ve got other buildings going up higher around it. It’s such a tricky balance.

INTERVIEWER: Sounds like it! But it’s a balance that has physical implications.

RESPONDENT: It’s a balance that has physical implications because we’re guided by government restrictions and advice to say, ‘You’ve got to provide housing for this number of
people. This is what the projection is. You’ve got a need for housing, therefore you have to provide for it.’ And then we’re saying, ‘Well where are we going to provide for it? And do we do it here, do we do it there or do we ask our neighbours to say, “Do you know what? Have you got some spare land? Can you take it?”’

But if you then go to that distance beyond it, you’re then compounding a different problem by having people commuting in.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and I think we can now move onto what would have been the second part of the interview but has kind of become the third because we have spoken about place and heritage a lot.

Part of my research is looking into how these kinds of decisions and weighings-up and the tussle of city management involve other people and people on the ground already. So I guess we’ll start with what you think, where you think the space is for people to have discussions about these changes to the city.

RESPONDENT: I guess the first place would be the more formal approaches to where you could get the space, in formal consultations, where you sort of suggest this is where it could go. It doesn’t necessarily mean it is where it will go, so you maybe put options forward for several approaches to how the city might change. And you can consult online, you can have physical exhibitions where you get members of the public in to come and offer their views, you can have focus groups or stakeholder meetings where you involve people that have got either a means of delivering your ideas or got a vested interest in it.

So you could invite your utility providers, English Heritage (or what was English Heritage at the time).


RESPONDENT: Historic England now. We did an example for the Local Plan where we had a series of workshops where we had developers of prospective sites for the Local Plan and basically having a massive panel interview with stakeholders from providers, highways operators, bus operators, environment groups, representative bodies, to say, ‘Right, okay, well this is what you’re proposing. Have you considered it will have an effect on this? Have
you considered doing that?’ Just to try and make their proposals going forward better and more sustainable than maybe they’d considered so far.

INTERVIEWER: Sustainable again is another...

RESPONDENT: Again. I know sustainable is always bandied around, but you’ve got the economic aspect of it, you’ve then got a social aspect of it and the environmental aspect of it, so it’s where it fits in that triangle.

At the moment I’d say in terms of government policy it’s heading towards the economic corner of the triangle.

INTERVIEWER: I’m drawing a triangle. And so that’s the direction of the government?

RESPONDENT: I think so because they’re saying, ‘We need economic growth above everything else.’ Or that’s my inference of what they’re saying.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, I’ve got two directions I could go here. I could ask you about inference. Yeah, I’ll do that first. I do kind of get the impression – and maybe I’m far off – that there’s the sense of different people working in the council, sussing out where the movements are in terms of governmental... Does that ring true?

RESPONDENT: [hesitating] Yeah... From my perspective, when you look at the changes to things like planning guidance, where planning guidance was heavily prescriptive before and the prescription was if you wanted to come forward with a development, you had to prove it was sustainable. Now it’s been reversed the other way, say, that the presumption is you will allow sustainable development.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: It’s changed the emphasis. It will say, ‘You will allow development, because it’s presumed sustainable, unless it can be proved that it isn’t,’ rather than other way, saying that, ‘You have to prove development is sustainable first.’

At the extreme scale it’s like moving from ‘innocent, presumed guilty’ to ‘guilty unless proven innocent’.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting.
RESPONDENT: That's an extreme switch and this policy has gone some way towards that. I wouldn't say it's all the way because there are still caveats to say what sustainable development is. But actually, some people have said, 'It's the developers' charter.' Because that gives them the right to build anywhere because everything's sustainable and if you as a council say it's not sustainable, then the developer goes to appeal and wins at appeal. So you get planning by appeal, rather than having planning by policy and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: So it sounds like you draw from the policy, which are kind of...

RESPONDENT: But then I'm just entirely cynical probably most of the time!

INTERVIEWER: But in a practical, day-to-day, you still have to draw from those policies...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...and act accordingly.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And that's information that you put into practice.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I mean, for one thing, going back to infrastructure now, in a way, one of the things that I've done recently is... Because in the Local Plan we had strategic allocations for land, for sites, the study that came up was, 'Well if York grows this much and you have those sites, what is the overall level of infrastructure that we need at a city-wide level to do that?' Which was fine at that point in time.

With the delay in the Local Plan, there are developers of those strategic sites that are submitting them for planning application now. So normally you would determine a site to say, 'That's that particular site's impact.' And therefore you say you have to mitigate that particular impact.

But a lot of these sites are closer together. So what we've said now is actually, 'There's the strategic-level infrastructure that we need. These sites all acting together have an effect in this area, therefore you need to plan infrastructure at a more local level – a neighbourhood level or community level – because of the impact of all these sites close together. So that's a small cumulative impact.
And then you've actually got the impact for a particular site, so how do you get access to it, the immediate junction next to it, what sort of thing needs to be done there. So that's taking a high-level infrastructure paper and broken it down into three levels to say, ‘Right, okay Mr Developer, you're coming forward with your site. There are two sites near to you that are likely to come forward at the same time. You will need to work together to see what your cumulative impacts are,’ and therefore this is the infrastructure that you need to provide to service those three sites. Otherwise you could get to the ludicrous situation where you build a piece of infrastructure for one site, which is immediately redundant when the next one comes in and you have to rip it out or adapt it.

So it's to minimise what we call [unclear – 0:37:15.9] work. You do it for one stage and then you have to change it later. And then when the third one comes in, you have to change it again.

And usually the first developer that gets in – if there were three applications all at the same time – the first one probably takes up what capacity is left in the network. So they don’t have to do the improvements. And then it’s the other two that have to come in. Because that capacity’s been taken up, they have to drive the extra capacity.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean by ‘capacity'? I think I’m losing you on that word.

RESPONDENT: Well normally when you have a road or a junction, you can only get so many vehicles down it and vehicles through it. So if you've got a junction which is getting so many vehicles through it and can only take a few more, if you’ve got a development shoves those few more vehicles through it, that's as far as it can go. And if you put any more in, it will start to have traffic backing up, backing up, backing up. So you can't physically get them through.

So you would say to the next development, ‘Well your traffic is going to cause this problem. You need to redesign that junction or improve that road to get your traffic through because there’s not enough room to do it.’

It's like trying to squeeze too much down a small pipe. You need to make the pipe bigger.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Sorry. I think it was just the idea that... So you're avoiding this kind of situation.

RESPONDENT: By planning ahead and looking to see what the impact might be.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So you actually say, 'There's infrastructure that we need to fund at the city level so therefore the council needs to go out and find the money to do it.' There is infrastructure where you can pool the resources of more than one development to fund it, and then there's actually what is specific to that development.

INTERVIEWER: Going back to this idea of consultation, do you organise consultations?

RESPONDENT: Sometimes I have when I was working on the Local Transport Plan because I was the Project Manager on that. Then I would say, 'These are the consultations that need to take place.' And either organise them myself or have someone in my team at the time do it. Or we did it through the communications team.

With the Local Plan team, then other people in the team did it and organised it, but actually I took part in them. So we had meetings with the public which I attended as an officer and met face-to-face with the public.

INTERVIEWER: Part of my interest is about information-sharing and how effective it can be, and how useful it is for both sides. What do you think is an effective piece of information-sharing?

RESPONDENT: Now I'm trying to think of the wording that was used. There's a difference between 'consultation' and 'engagement', I think, is the expression. 'Consultation' is, 'This is what we want to do, this is where we want your views on it.' 'Engagement' is, 'What are the problems? How do we go about it? And have you got any ideas to solve it?' And then use the ideas that come back and it actually shapes what you do.

Consultation can be lip service, in effect, saying, 'We've come up with this idea. We'll just find out what people think but actually we're not going to take any notice of it, 'cause we want to do it anyway.' So that's the difference between letting people know what you're doing, rather than actually taking an active feedback into what you do.
So if we go out with, 'These are the issues and this is what we could do,' like we did with the Local Plan issues and options or preferred options consultation, we got thousands of responses back. Some of those responses have actually come up with things that have affected policy, so we've changed policy because of some of the responses that came in. Because we either got responses from the public or we got responses from prescribed bodies such as the Environment Agency or Historic England. I got the right term there.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any other NGOs, like heritage organisations like the CBA? Ring a bell?

RESPONDENT: I'm trying to think.

INTERVIEWER: There are quite a few. And there are lots of amenity societies.

RESPONDENT: Well probably York Civic Trust and people like that would have sent responses in.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And then members of the public or just other organisations have the right to... Community organisations?

INTERVIEWER: Community organisations?

RESPONDENT: Community organisations or anything. All of those responses were noted, either as support, objection or comment, and then either they were used to reinforce the policy or they were used to change the policy or measures that were put into place. So there would have been a significant change between preferred options draft of the Local Plan to the submission draft of the Local Plan.

So we track it. We actually publish the detailed responses online, so they are available; anyone can see. They're anonymised in certain cases – members of the public details are anonymised. Business responses aren't. So you can see what a business response was, like if it was Taylor Wimpey or someone like that, their response that was published, you could see who it was.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: Same as the Environment Agency, same as the Highways Agency. Their response would be noted. But a member of the public would just have a reference number and what the response was.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So it’s anonymised in that way. So you can see what the responses were and people could look online to see what the responses were. Everything was then summarised and presented to council to say, ‘There are so many comments in relation this; there are so many objections in relation to that policy.’ So it was taken forward and a lot of the things were noted.

I mean, I’ve had things in my transport policies that have been advised by comments and it’s changed the policy. Slightly or in a big way, depending on what the comment was.

INTERVIEWER: So with this consultation, it happened on quite a large scale?

RESPONDENT: It was city-wide.

INTERVIEWER: A city-wide consultation?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve been talking to other people about the local boundaries that we have, like the wards and the parishes in York. They weren’t consulted or engaged with at their level. It was more of a city-wide...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I mean, the parish councils could send in responses as a parish council or a town council.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And I’m trying to think. We tried to move around the public engagement meetings to various wards or different parts of the city.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, yeah, right. I see.
RESPONDENT: It wasn’t just the caravan in parliament and that was it. We went out to different... And some of them were very, very heated. Very, very heated, that we actually had to have security in them because people were threatening behaviour.

Certainly if you’re going to be building houses in villages or areas or, God forbid, you were proposing a gypsy traveller site near somebody, they weren’t very happy at all. Very vociferous. And sometimes very nasty.

INTERVIEWER: That is interesting that this is part of some of the contentions and indicates the tensions of the changes to infrastructure in the city on a wide scale. And do you think there’s any way to avoid it?

RESPONDENT: You can try as best you can. You can try explaining to people why you’re doing what you’re doing. And sometimes you can give space for people to vent their feelings, and then once they’ve vented their feelings you can then try and engage with them to say, ‘Well, this is why we’re doing it,’ and maybe explain some of the history of the areas that actually where they’re living now was an area of expansion in the past. All that tends to wind people up!

I think people are very protective of where they live and they don’t like change around them.

INTERVIEWER: Would you feel the same if that happened to where you live?

RESPONDENT: I think I’d be more willing to accept it because I know what goes on. You don’t just randomly pick places to put housing. There are reasons behind it. If we didn’t do it then we’d just be exacerbating the housing problem that people can’t afford to buy anything.

The difficulty with the housing market at the moment is the demand far outstrips the supply, which is why it’s so expensive.

INTERVIEWER: I’m interested by this idea that letting people voice their heated tensions and then coming back to them...

RESPONDENT: It doesn’t always work.

INTERVIEWER: ...doesn’t always work...
RESPONDENT: It doesn’t always work but...

INTERVIEWER: ...but it does sometimes work?

RESPONDENT: If you try and argue with them while they’re venting then that doesn’t work.
That just riles people up more.

Some people will just sort of make their feelings known and then calm down, and then you can maybe talk to them in a more rational way. Others you just can’t. You can’t talk rationally at all. In which case it’s probably just to say, ‘We agree to disagree,’ and offer a response through the consultation channels, through the leaflets or whatever. Otherwise...

I mean, I’ve got to the point where I’ve tried to argue with someone and actually, probably upset them in a way.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think that sometimes arguing doesn’t help?

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: No. And you mentioned leaflets. So they’re used as part of this process?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. They were taken out to all the consultation events so the officers could make note of the comments that you made in the event, or you could take a leaflet, fill it in, give it back to the officers there and then, or post it in.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But I think overall for the consultation on the Local Plan we got about 19,000 responses. But that includes...

INTERVIEWER: 19,000?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. That includes signatures on petitions.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Petitions, then, are another interesting one.

RESPONDENT: Not that we put them out, but people...

INTERVIEWER: No. No, people put...

RESPONDENT: ...make petitions.
INTERVIEWER: ...make petitions.

RESPONDENT: And the problem with petitions is the petitionnaire can put whatever question they like and phrase it in whatever way they like, depending on what their perspective or point of view of what they’re sending the petition on is.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, so the key in that case is the question.

RESPONDENT: And they’re usually loaded in to make sure that the respondents see their point of view. Which is usually against what we’re suggesting!

INTERVIEWER: Thinking about the council’s standpoint, and in your role, what kind of comments, feedback would you... I mean, petitions, you obviously see that as a bit skewed. But you’ve also said that you’ve actually taken on board stuff.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So...

RESPONDENT: We have to be neutral, as officers. So everything there’s a response that is actually beneficial to the plan, we would say, ‘This is the change.’ As long as there’s an audit trail as to why you’ve done it and what you’ve done – which there is – you can say, ‘Actually yes, that comment is agreed with,’ as officers. ‘That goes forward into the next version.’ But actually, it has to be approved by the political structure of the council. The political structure could still say, ‘We disagree with that policy. Take it back and change it.’ But that’s through a process that the Local Plan went through. Actually where we are now, it went through the Local Plan Working Group, which is an advisory group of members. It went through Cabinet, which is the decision-making group. It then got through scrutiny, which is something that scrutinises the decision that’s been made. It went to full council, and because of two defections within the Labour membership of the council...

INTERVIEWER: Just two.

RESPONDENT: ...just two, then the opposite had more of a say in that decision and they put a motion forward at full council to say, ‘We think you need to re-look at your housing numbers again.’ And that motion was carried. So that was at the point of releasing a plan.
INTERVIEWER: Was that last...
RESPONDENT: That was last October.
INTERVIEWER: Last October, yes.
RESPONDENT: When we due to send out the plan for another round of consultation.
INTERVIEWER: So what’s the plan now? What’s the status of the plan?
RESPONDENT: Well the status of the plan now is we are doing technical work on housing numbers, as the motion said, and we are looking at that in relation to that motion and also the latest household projections that came through the Department of Communities and Local Government.

So that’s the basis of where you do your household projections and that’s the basis of what your objectively assessment need is for the plan. That’s what we need to look at.
INTERVIEWER: So you’ll do that.
RESPONDENT: Yep.
INTERVIEWER: You’ll do that work. You’ll put that forward...
RESPONDENT: The various stages of the work now have to go through the Local Plan Working Group. We’re doing very much a step-by-step basis to say, ‘You asked us to look at the housing figures. This is the technical work that’s been done. Using that base, using the impacts of the economy, using the impacts of market signals, this is what we recommend as the housing numbers that you need to go forward with.’
INTERVIEWER: And will there be another consultation?
RESPONDENT: Once the political make-up has agreed that’s the number that you need to go forward with, we can then do all the additional work that’s needed to be done around that number, which includes looking at the transport infrastructure again on whatever that number is. And then we prepare the submission draft, which then goes for consultation, provided it gets through all the council processes.
INTERVIEWER: Right. And so it’ll all happen again.
RESPONDENT: It’ll all happen again.

INTERVIEWER: I’m interested that the responses and the comments and feedback are all online, which will be quite interesting to look at. I guess seeing how those comments have potentially made impact, that’s going to be a harder thing to look at, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: The easiest way to look at it is to look at...I think one of my colleagues is doing a report at the moment on the consultation responses. And I think it’s the...oh, what’s it called? The statement of consultation, I think it is. I’ll get the precise thing for you.

INTERVIEWER: That’d be really interesting to look at.

RESPONDENT: But at the moment all that’s doing is listing what the comments were, or the responses were. There is the audit of policy to say what they were and how we’ve dealt with it. So you might see an example of that. But that was more so from the preferred options to the submission draft that was due to go out in October.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So you can see how we might have dealt with it at that time.

INTERVIEWER: But it just gives a bit of a history as to how you sort of see the process working through.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I’ll try and get you the links to the folders and you can have a scan through those and you can see.

INTERVIEWER: The crux of the issue is that people are protective of the spaces that they live in, which is something you said at the beginning.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you said yourself that if you were in the same situation that you would be a bit more understanding. You would understand the needs of...

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I may still not like it but I could understand it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. But do you find that sometimes in that situation where you have an understanding of the dislike that people hold, the concerns that they have, how do you deal
with that? You understand potentially where they’re coming from but at the same time your professional role means you need to be neutral.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. That’s the difficulty, is where you try to explain to people, yes, you can understand why they’re concerned, and then you try to explain to them, ‘This is why it has to be done or why we’re doing it this way. There’s government guidance or there’s a legal requirement that the council has to do certain things.’ And...

INTERVIEWER: Sorry, I’ve given you a killer question, but...

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Some people would still refuse to accept the need for certain things, even though you’ve set out the reasons for it. And you can never overturn everybody’s objection.

INTERVIEWER: No matter how much information...

RESPONDENT: No matter how much information you’re going to give. They’ll always say, ‘Well why can’t you do it over there?’ And you go through all the sites and say, ‘These are the ones that are the best location for access to services or transport or...there’s a landowner...’ I mean, you can...

You’re getting back to the Local Plan again but it’s an example to describe it. You can have two approaches. You can say, ‘These are the best places we think things should go.’ And then you hope that there’s a landowner can deliver the land for it.

Now that might work, provided you can guarantee that the landowners will bring the land forward. But sometimes it doesn’t always happen that way and you can’t deliver the plan. So we reverse that. We say, ‘Right, well we’ll invite landowners to submit sites that they would potentially like to see for whatever use they want, primarily housing.’ And you assess those sites to see whether they deliver what you need, in terms of, ‘Are they in the right place,’ in terms of services, transports, primary constraints like flood risk or greenbelt or whatever the primary constraint would be. And if they pass all those tests and they deliver what you need, you then look for it as an allocated site.

So you’ve actually now made your allocation based on evidence and land that’s available to deliver it.
So that’s what you then need to try to explain to people, is actually, ‘We need to provide these and the land’s been put forward to do it,’ rather than saying, ‘We’ve identified land that can deliver it but we haven’t got a guarantee that we can use that land.’

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting.

RESPONDENT: We turned that process on its head. Rather than allocate the need for what your land is going to be and then hope the landowner will come forward, we’ll have the landowner coming forward and then see if it meets what we need.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Okay. I’m going to stop the thing for a second just because it had got to an hour.

INTERVIEWER: Right, so the third and final part of the interview is for you—because you’ve brought in…how many documents have you brought in?

RESPONDENT: Oh, I’ve brought in loads, but this is sort of like all the sort of things I have been involved in.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, I’m going to take some photos.

RESPONDENT: Probably these were the best ones to put together.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, this big red one that I’m taking a photo of now looks quite meaty. Do you want to start with that one?

RESPONDENT: Well, this is the one that we consulted on last year…no, sorry, 2013. So this was the preferred options version of the local plan, which was where we went to various places and people got a bit heated about. So it sets out where the level of housing and other land uses was going to be and the maps that went with it showed where the allocations were. So that’s what was produced then and it has changed a fair bit from then until now and will continue to change until we put it into submission.

INTERVIEWER: Did you take these documents? Did you just take them as they were, and people could access them that way?

RESPONDENT: People could access them, read them, look through them.

INTERVIEWER: Online as well?
RESPONDENT: It was online as well, yes, plus all the supporting documents behind it were online.

INTERVIEWER: Can I have a sneaky peak? I should probably have read this before. I've opened a page, 127, and the first thing is student housing.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Student housing, which is obviously relevant to me. Can you find the place that would be relevant to what you work from?

RESPONDENT: So it would have been, well, [unclear – 0:02:05.5] but also mainly transport and infrastructure development contributions. This was the one...so it would have been the transport section. So we would have had a policy on this was what the commuting patterns were in 2001. So you could see, we get quite a lot of people coming in to work in York. We've got 5,000 people coming in from East Riding in the morning.

INTERVIEWER: East Riding, right, wow. And these are all the commuters, basically?

RESPONDENT: These are all the commuters, yes.

INTERVIEWER: So what does this number around the edge total up to?

RESPONDENT: Right...oh...

INTERVIEWER: Maybe about-

RESPONDENT: 70,000 in York...there should be a number in here somewhere to say how many trips there were overall. So actually this is a two-stage diagram. This is people coming in and this is how many went out. So you could see from East Riding we had 5,000 people coming in to work and 1,600 going out from York. So there was a net of 3,500 coming in, whereas in Leeds we had 5,000 going out and 2,000 coming in. So York can be seen in this respect there's quite a lot of people living in York and working in Leeds.

INTERVIEWER: Is this travel to work movement, it doesn't divide between commuters by train and commuters by car?

RESPONDENT: No. In this instance, this was just the movements in and out. If you looked at the census information you can break it down by mode.
INTERVIEWER: Why did they stop the census?

RESPONDENT: I think they’re still doing it. They will do it in 2021.

INTERVIEWER: Will they?

RESPONDENT: Mmm.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, well that’s good to hear.

RESPONDENT: They’re sending the question sort of pro formas out now to say what did you think of the last questions and how should the next questions be.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, okay. I have noticed that York does its own survey, the York big data-

RESPONDENT: Yes. I’m not quite sure what’s in that and how it’s used. In the local transport plan we used to have a mode share target. So you used to measure people, how many cycled, how many walked, how many did that. And we had that for two plans but in the third one we said, ‘Well, the only way to reliably measure that is through the census every ten years,’ and the plans are only five years anyway so what’s the point of having that as an indicator if you can’t actually measure it?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, right.

RESPONDENT: We’ll come onto that one in a minute anyway. But this was used as the basis of what the travel patterns were in and around York. It’s very similar now from the 2011 census as well, but they’ll probably have to update that based on-

INTERVIEWER: Is there a section in here that details the impact of the transport infrastructure in the plans to the historic-

RESPONDENT: Not in relation to the historic or the heritage of the city, but what we did do is we had these tell you how much more traffic or how likely the roads are going to be more congested in the future. So you could try and get an impact on the...

INTERVIEWER: You obviously, in your work, in your role, you’re aware of the impact that this will have on the historic environment but there’s nothing actually in the local plan?
RESPONDENT: No. There's nothing to say, 'You will make these transport measures to have this effect on the historic environment.' What you do is you put transport policies into place that reduce the level of traffic or its impact overall.

INTERVIEWER: On the environment?

RESPONDENT: On the city as a whole, and therefore it should have a beneficial...the other way that that would be done is through the sustainability appraisal which is a massive document that backs this up and then heritage, I think, is probably, or environment is one of the considerations in the sustainability appraisal. And then you say, 'Does it have a positive or a negative or a neutral effect?'

INTERVIEWER: That's the one with all the big tables, isn't it, and you have all the green and red and yellow coding?

RESPONDENT: Yes. So if you say you have a policy that promotes the use of public transport, for example, it could have a whole load of greens in terms of reducing pollution. But actually, it could say you’ve got visual intrusion in the city. Official amenity was one of the considerations of heritage. It could have a neutral or a negative effect. And a lot of people have said in the past that big buses around York aren’t the things we need. But actually, if you’re considering the movement of people which is what it’s there for, the big buses actually move a lot more people in one go than lots of little buses would do.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe we should just get nicer looking buses.

RESPONDENT: Well, we did. We had those purple ones that got a lot of people in and had air-conditioning on the inside and people didn't like them so we got rid of them. Or I should say the bus operator moved them elsewhere.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So this particular document...

RESPONDENT: Yes. So if you looked at this, this would be showing the amount of linked roads in the city centre that would be operating above capacity. So actually they’re going to have queuing traffic on them and they’re going to be standing still, largely. So they’re going to be guffing out a load of muck, compared to what they are at present.
INTERVIEWER: Is there no study with data about the impact of pollution on the fabric of buildings, or is it a nationwide...

RESPONDENT: I think really you’ve got to look at the level of repairs that have been needed on the minster to see the impact of traffic, would be one thing. Is it a £30 million restoration? And if you looked at stonework around the minster say 25 years ago it was black because of all the soot and God knows what else. I’ve got some pictures of traffic going past the minster before we did the outer ring road.

INTERVIEWER: That would be interesting.

RESPONDENT: Where minster piazza is, is the route of the main A64 through the city centre.

INTERVIEWER: When was that?

RESPONDENT: Up until the ‘70s. So I’ve got some stuff in terms of a presentation I did of transport in a historic city which I can show you...

INTERVIEWER: That would be fun.

RESPONDENT: ...to see what the impacts of traffic were.

INTERVIEWER: And there’s no study or consultation about not so much the local plan at a general level but transport and the infrastructure as being something that the local people have a say on? There’s nothing-

RESPONDENT: Again, mainly it’s citywide stuff but at a local level it’s things like neighbourhood plans now, which should be devised and be in accordance with the citywide policy of the local plan. But the problem is now the plan has been delayed you’re getting neighbourhood plans being prepared in advance of the local plan.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. I have been speaking with others about this issue. I’m picking up two major facets of your interest, and this is the idea of transport having an impact on the heritage environment which is something that the Council is investing in.

RESPONDENT: Should be.

INTERVIEWER: And the tussle between the local feelings and-
RESPONDENT: There’s a word I’m reticent to use so I don’t want to lead you down that path which is nimbyism.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, we actually discussed nimbyism in my master’s, discussed it but never sort of dealt with or got immersed into it. I mean, it’s interesting. I’ve been to Boston’s Bar, just for a day out, and I noticed all the new housing around that area because I’ve obviously got my PhD eyes on, on my day off. And then coming back through town, through the village centre rather, saw in the window a sign which was basically Boston’s Bar neighbourhood planning, we’re not dinosaurs, we’re for the future and there’s a little dinosaur, Jurassic Park icon with a big stop, you know, like you have to stop smoking? It was like that but with a dinosaur. So I thought that was interesting because that’s almost the opposite of nimbyism.

RESPONDENT: That’s - yes, pro-

INTERVIEWER: It’s pro- yes, so that’s really interesting. I think it’s something that- that’s a more common word, I think it’s more complex than nimbyism. So what else have you got here? It’s the local-

RESPONDENT: Just the local transport plan. Up until 2010/2011 there was a statutory duty for local authorities to prepare a local transport plan every five years. That got changed to say there’s no statutory duty to produce it every five years but there’s a duty for authorities to keep it under review as and when they feel necessary to do it. So it’s a longer term transport plan because it’s set to 2031 which tied in with the time scale for the local plan, and the idea was being that the two sat side-by-side. And this was more of the evidence and the measures to put in, this was more of the evidence and the policies to enable these measures to be put into place.

INTERVIEWER: So there’s a sense of them being connected?

RESPONDENT: There has to be, yes. They’re intrinsically big documents.

INTERVIEWER: Part of my interest has always been about the way that information is conveyed and articulated and I can see here like you’ve got a nice picture. I’m going to take
a photo of it. I'll probably go through this again, visualisations and so on. Are these effective ways of understanding the situation?

RESPONDENT: Trying to be, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Trying to be.

RESPONDENT: Yes, hopefully they are.

INTERVIEWER: And this is accessible to the public as well?

RESPONDENT: Yes. That's on the internet. It doesn't generate as much interest as this does.

INTERVIEWER: As this document?

RESPONDENT: It didn't generate anywhere near the level of responses as this one did.

INTERVIEWER: So every time you put a document out you can actually see the amount of responses and the amount of views?

RESPONDENT: Yes, more or less.

INTERVIEWER: More or less?

RESPONDENT: Yes. I mean, that generated maybe a few hundred responses at most. This generated the 19,000.

INTERVIEWER: I quite like the layout of that one. It seems quite- whereas this one is more...

RESPONDENT: I have to say this was very much a new approach to the local transport plan is to get it very succinct and just have it in very high level terms. The previous version of the local transport plan was that thick in four volumes so you cut down a lot. But the previous version's guidance was very prescriptive and basically you had a lot of repetition in the documents, whereas it was less prescriptive in this one and you can be more high-level strategy with it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel like in making these it's kind of like a craft?

RESPONDENT: It is, yes. It's an art form almost to get it right.

INTERVIEWER: What are the- the drive, the intentions of getting it right?
RESPONDENT: I would have said the previous version of the plan, the Local Transport Plan 2, was scored by government and it had a scoring of excellent, good, satisfactory and poor, I think. If you got excellent, you got an extra 12½% funding because of it. So actually there was a financial incentive to make sure you wrote an excellent local transport plan. I think if you had an excellent local transport plan and an excellent annual progress report, you got 25%. So there was that financial incentive for doing better. If you did poor, you got a 12½% deficit cut in your funding. So actually there were incentives to write good ones.

INTERVIEWER: So what would be excellent?

RESPONDENT: So what they judged it to be excellent, so-

INTERVIEWER: Is there a way of understanding- is there a web page?

RESPONDENT: I would say it’s difficult to find it now. If anything, it would have been archived by the DFT or it would have been sent somewhere unretrievable. Unless we’ve got copies of their response. It might just have been a letter to say, ‘Your local transport plan has been judged excellent because of…’ maybe, that’s probably about the best I could find.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting. I say that a lot, the word interesting.

RESPONDENT: And I think cynically speaking it was done on a word count basis, so if there were certain trigger words, and there’s no proof of this in any way, but this was sort of like conjecture, rumour and hearsay. But actually, if there were certain words that they wanted included in a plan they did a word search and counted how many times it was mentioned. So like sustainable was mentioned, and the more times you had sustainable in it, the more you scored.

INTERVIEWER: I guess it would be easy to see how that could be done, because otherwise you’ve got people thumbing through every page.

RESPONDENT: And that is very much the slim line version of an LTP. If you imagine LTP 2s of 164 authorities and you’re paid to go through them and score them, and each one is about that thick, you’d have a nightmare trying to score it any other way.
INTERVIEWER: Yes. What really interests me about this album, TP, I’m going to use that word, it has a lot of pictures of York’s visible streetscapes, river scapes, the minster’s features, and these are all part of what I would consider to be the historic environment.

RESPONDENT: Mmm. It’s to create the feel of the place and just some selective photographs in there.

INTERVIEWER: The feel of the place, yes. Okay. Yes it would be useful if I- am I allowed access to them? They’re all online, aren’t they?

RESPONDENT: That one is. The other thing that should have been online but isn’t, and the reason why that one is slimmer is because a lot of the evidence and the background stuff is contained in here.

INTERVIEWER: So that’s like an appendix.

RESPONDENT: That’s an appendix to it. So there’s more graphical information in there, potentially, things like our bus routes and usage and stuff like that. There’s still some nice graphics in there.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Great. I think that’s about covered everything that I- I’ve got a lot.

RESPONDENT: Well I hope it’s been useful.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, it has.

RESPONDENT: Excuse me if I’ve gone on a bit, but-

INTERVIEWER: No, no, it’s when digressions become actually like really good leads into other conversations which are really fruitful. I’ve hopefully got maybe 6 or 7 people I’ve been interviewing here and I quite like the idea of bringing everybody together and having some kind of discussion. Would you be up for that?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Just around sort of the idea of what heritage is and what it means to this city, but also the way that information is shared and this whole consultation issue. They’re all really key things and they all came up, too. So thanks very much. Do you have any questions? Are you going to do the whole-
RESPONDENT: No, I think I'll spare you from that one.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
INTERVIEWER: Great. So what I normally do with these interviews is I ask first off, ‘How is that we know each other?’

RESPONDENT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: So your account of that, please.

RESPONDENT: How do we know each other? Well, through the PhD. I think we first encountered each other probably when we interviewed you for the actual course, when we’d advertised the research opportunity for Within the Walls. It was at the office, back in the King’s Manor.

So that was the first time that I met you and then I’ve got to know you as the project has unfolded, after you were appointed.

INTERVIEWER: When was that initial interview again?

RESPONDENT: Oh, that must have been June, July...where are we now? ’15...’14...’13? Yeah?

INTERVIEWER: That’s what I...yeah.

RESPONDENT: About June or July 2013.

INTERVIEWER: Slightly...I actually think it was in September.

RESPONDENT: Was it?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Well it wouldn’t surprise me. My grasp of time is loose, to say the least. In future it’ll just be the first quarter of the 21st Century, won’t it? In archaeological terms.

INTERVIEWER: It becomes obscure, doesn’t it, after a while?

My most significant step of getting to know you a bit more was the chat that we had in December 2013, I think it was.

RESPONDENT: Okay, right.
INTERVIEWER: And you sort of explained what you do and some of the information or the knowledge you have of York.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It’s kind of going to be a similar kind of chat here, I think.

RESPONDENT: Okay, no problem.

INTERVIEWER: So could you recap on what your role is in York and what relationship you have to York?

RESPONDENT: Okay. I am a city archaeologist, so I’m employed by the City of York Council to give advice through the development management process...to give advice to the strategic management process, i.e. the production of the local plan.

I also give advice to anybody who is looking to carry out some form of development in the city, look at what steps they have to take so that they can ensure that they get what they want but that it isn’t at the expense of destroying lots of archaeology.

I’m also responsible for the city walls. I also have a role in promoting and encouraging engagement with archaeology by community groups. I’m responsible for managing the historic environment record. And I give talks and walks around the city about the archaeology of the city. So it’s quite a wide-ranging job, really.

INTERVIEWER: And I keep finding out things that you do through my placement that astounds me. So we’ve got varied... How do you organise your job role? Do you just throw yourself into it?

RESPONDENT: How do I organise? Well a lot of the work I do is demand-led. So in terms of development management there are two areas that sort of drive my work. One is pre-applications, people coming in and asking for advice on planning issues relating to a particular development that they might want to carry out. So that’s the best way to get involved with the development process and the best way to involve archaeology in the development process. That’s to get in there at the very beginning when people come in and
they’re saying, ‘I’m thinking about doing x.’ And so at that point you can lead them through all of the steps that they need to take. And we have no control over who comes in through the front door.

Similarly, once somebody has decided what they’re going to do and they then submit a planning application, then that comes in and it’s registered by the Plans Processing Unit. They produce a weekly list of applications and I and now my colleague Hannah go through that weekly list and we decide which applications require a comment or response. You know, if they’re going to have an impact on things archaeological. Again, we have no control over how many applications come through, so from week to week we don’t know how much work that’s going to generate, so it’s very much a reactive process.

The work on the local plan is a bit more proactive, I suppose, but again we are very much at the beck and call of the Local Plans Team, who involve me and Hannah and others in the group really when they need our inputs. And they’re not very good at saying when they want our inputs. It generally boils down to, ‘Ooh, can you comment on this by Friday?’ or, ‘Can you do this by next week...next month?’ It is a reactive process. So those workflows are definitely reactive.

Managing the city walls is more proactive because there we’re in control of the process. So I have a structural engineer who’s for the past eighteen months been assessing the condition of various sections of the walls. I have a condition survey that was carried out back in 1991. We have a conservation management plan, interpretation and access plan. So we’ve got lots of things there that guide the work that we do and me and my colleagues down in Communities and Neighbourhoods make decisions about which pieces of work are of priority in any particular financial year, and we will then apply for funding through the council’s capital programme to carry out those pieces of work, so it’s a much more structured process.

The historic environment record again is a much more proactive area to work in. So Hannah and I have got a programme of enhancements that we are looking to carry out. We’re putting together two project proposals that are related to enhancing the historic environment record, one of which is to try and create a much more accessible set of data for the city, data that is clean and comprehensible to a wide range of audiences, and which also
allows different members of the community, different audiences, to contribute their
information, their opinions, into the historic environment record. So that project proposal is
moving forwards very slowly.

And the second proposal is linked to that one, and this is to enhance the deposit
model for the city. So the deposit model has its origins back in 1989, 1990, and rather than
looking at the site as an accumulation of individual monuments and individual
archaeological sites, the deposit model allows you to look at the entirety of the material
below the city of produce predictive models for Roman, medieval, Anglo-Scandinavian,
Anglian, prehistoric deposits.

The model that we’ve got is woefully out-of-date. It was state-of-the-art back in 1989
but because of a lack of resources over the years, we’ve just not been able to keep it
updated. So now there’s the situation where there’s a lot of data that needs to be put into
the system, and of course there are a lot more innovative ways of looking at deposit
modelling and methodological ways of dealing with the data that have emerged over the
past twenty-odd years, and so we really need to build on that and update the deposit model
and bring that into this new, all singing, all dancing historic environment record, and try and
create a 3D model for the deposits within the city.

That opens up the opportunity of grafting on a 3D model for the above-ground historic
environment and we’ve struggled...there have been ambitions to do that in different parts of
the council for about five years now but we’ve not really managed to make that happen. But
I’ve got a couple of little rabbits running at the moment that may or may not come home. So
wait and see.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. There are a lot of different aspects to your role and linking to my
questions about what your intentions are in specific, different roles, it sounds like the last
one, for example, there’s an intention to try and make the [unclear – 0:10:58.9] more clean
and comprehensible. Can you talk a bit more about what you mean by ‘comprehensive data’
and why it’s important to give it to the public?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. At the moment we’ve got a lot of data in the historic environment
record but there are problems with it. It’s not particularly clean. So the data has accumulated
since 1989 and it’s accumulated in different ways. So there’s a whole package of data that
was put together as part of the Arup study. Part of their work was to produce a database for
the historic core, and that was to inform the production of a deposit. So there’s a pack of
data that relates to that.

There is then a whole series of records that relates to pieces of archaeological work
that have taken place in the city since 1989. So in theory, every piece of archaeological work
that’s taken place has a record in the historic environment record. In theory. In reality, that’s
not the case.

Also, each record ought to be recorded on GIS and in theory that is the case but in
practice it isn’t. And also, some of the cases that are recorded on GIS are in the wrong place.
So there’s a whole area of work that’s required to clean that data.

We also inherited a lot of data in 1996 as part of local government reorganisation. So
before 1996, York City Council was a very small district authority within North Yorkshire, and
you could work for really two miles in any direction from the Minster and you’d be in the
neighbouring authority. So the city was confined to within the outer ring road. And actually,
even tighter than that. So for instance, the University of York at Heslington was actually in
Selby.

INTERVIEWER: Oh wow.

RESPONDENT: So the University of York only became part of the City of York in 1996 when
the boundaries were enlarged. So it was actually Selby that granted permission for the
construction of the university, back in the day.

INTERVIEWER: So now it’s part of the council and how does that affect the HER?

RESPONDENT: Well it doesn’t. I suppose the point of that was that after 1996, the new
council that was created through local government reorganisation – the City of York Council
– it took over all the land area of York City Council and parts of Selby, Ryedale, Hambleton
and Harrogate, and the county council had held the sites and monuments record
information for those other districts (apart from York) and so they then gave us all of that
information. So that was another set of data that came through in semi-digital and mainly paper form.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So that’s another pack of data that sits in the HER, some of which has been integrated and some of which hasn’t. So we’ve got all of these different datasets sat within the HER, all of which have varying degrees of problems associated with the accuracy of the dataset.

The other that we’ve got is everything in there is written for professional archaeologists. So it is full of reports and summaries of reports and descriptions of monuments that really take no prisoners in terms of the language that they use. And that language, although it might be highly suitable for people who have an archaeological background and training to use, for the vast majority of people who don’t have that, then it’s quite difficult to actually get to grips with and make any sense of.

So there is a piece of work that really needs to be done which recasts, to a certain degree, the data that we’ve got in there and the interpretations that we’ve got in there, in a way that makes sense to the average person on the street. Or at least makes strides in that direction to make the data reports, the monument records more comprehensible than they are at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so going to my questions of...I use the words ‘concerns’ and ‘intentions’ and also sort of ‘aspirations’. Would you say that wanting to make the HER more comprehensible is something you’re concerned with or something that you aspire to?

RESPONDENT: Both, I would say. I’m actively engaged in trying to put in place a mechanism that allows us to make that data more comprehensible. And as a general idea, I aspire to having a historic environment record for York that really makes sense to anybody who comes along and looks at it. That’s perhaps too sweeping a term. I mean, it’s going to be in English, so you have to understand English. You’re going to have to have a certain literacy level. We’ll make it accessible... At the moment it doesn’t meet any accessibility standards that you would normally apply for internet webpages. So if you’re blind, you’re stuffed. If you’ve got any issues like...
INTERVIEWER: Dyslexia.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, then you're stuffed. So yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting. So this...

RESPONDENT: That's a technical, archaeological term – being stuffed!

INTERVIEWER: I'm going to write that down! So one of my other questions about the idea of making things accessible is... Would you say that making things accessible means that the HER is more effective?

RESPONDENT: Well I would hope so. I mean, we're very bad at keeping records of how the HER is used by people outside the city council. So at the moment the HER is entirely... The system that we've got is accessible only to those people who sit within the City of York Council network. So you have to have access to the city's IT network to be able to use HBSMR, which is the software that runs the HER. It's a very technical piece of software.

I've forgotten what the question is now. I've forgotten where I'm going with that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Would you say that if you were able to make the HER more accessible, would it be more effective as a tool?

RESPONDENT: Yes, I'm a great believer in the concept that information and knowledge is power, and the more people who have access to that information and that accumulated knowledge in the record, then the more powerful they can become in terms of making contributions to debates about the future of York's past, be that planning application, through a project that they want to put together, be it just in general conversation. Then I think that will be a really positive step forward. So making the record more accessible, I think for me, is very much tied up with that idea of providing people with information and knowledge that they can then deploy in the arguments that they put forward about the places that they live in.

INTERVIEWER: Right, so that's sort of like another concern, isn't it, is trying to allow people to...? Would you say that's another aspiration?
It is, it is. I think it comes back to that work that Helen Graham was doing about, ‘Who makes decisions about the heritage, about the historic environment?’ And at the moment, that decision-making class is actually quite small because there is this view that, ‘Well, you need to have a certain level of knowledge and experience to be able to make informed comments.’ And that’s at the moment. So the access to that knowledge and information which takes you down that path, is actually quite limited at the moment.

So for me, if you want to involve more people in making those decisions and you want those decisions to be informed decisions, then you need to give people access to the information they require. And it’s got to be information that they can understand as well.

Okay. I’m going to st...

I always have to remember to start it again. Okay, so in regards to... We’ve talked about the HER and I think we’ve spoken enough about that area. I don’t know if you want to say anything more about...?

No, I think that the bottom line about the HER is that it ought to be a comprehensive archive of the historic environment in the city. And, it ought to be out there so people and use it and contribute to it. Simple.

So, let’s put those that, kind of, infrastructure of intention onto something like the city walls – that’s a different ball game, would you say?

No, no, no.

It’s the same?

No, no, the city walls the city walls is a probably is the largest, single monument in the city, archaeological, heritage asset, call it what you want. And there are a lot of complex issues that arise out of looking at the city walls in that, sort of, widest sense. So there are issues around the... There are issues around the conservation of the asset, i.e. making sure it is in good condition and it doesn’t fall down. There are issues around access to the monument and that is both intellectual and physical access. At the moment, you know, there are... You’ve got to be fit and have, you know, no disabilities or few disabilities to
be able to walk around the wall, you know, is that acceptable? The level of intellectual access
to the city walls is limited because if you want to find anything out about the city walls then
you’ve got to trawl through a wide-range of disparate sources, in different places to start to
pull-together whatever it is that you want to know about the city walls. So, in that sense the
HER, you know, fails miserably to do anything for the city walls. Pretty much every website in
every other resource in the city, and beyond, you know, fails to give you a comprehensive
access to the information that is available for the city walls.

The third part of this is the city walls are owned by the City of York Council, however,
there is this immense feeling amongst people who live in the city, that the city walls belong
to them and they clearly have mixed feelings about what that actually means. So, you know,
they elect members to the City of York Council, the all pay their community charge, whatever
it’s called – the Council Tax, and the Council gets no external funding for the walls at all. So,
you can see that there is a relationship that backs-up that feeling, ‘We own the city walls
within the city.’ But there has been – up until the recent past, there’s been no real attempt to
involve the wider community in either the management or the day-to-day care of the walls
themselves. So this community interface and community interaction with the walls, I think, is
a really important area over the next few years because we in the Council are going to have
less money.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And I think realistically the only way of raising external funding is through
having a very strong community strand running through how we deal with the city walls. So,
when a councillor came and talked to me four, or five years ago about setting up Friends of
York Walls, fantastic. That was a really good idea. The Friends have gone through some
difficult times in terms of setting themselves up, with forming as an organisation and so it’s
only now I think that they’re beginning to reach a place where they have a realistic view of
what it is they can achieve and how they can be involved on the city walls. And we could talk
about that forever, really.

INTERVIEWER: Mm.
RESPONDENT: Because it’s a huge area in itself. But, you know, with the work that you’re doing at Red Tower, you know, I see that as part of the same approach which is to be in a position where groups form and want to do something on the walls and then work with them to try and, you know, see how their ambitions can be realised. You know, there’s a real problem in terms of what we can do, what I can do within the Council. You know, you’d say, ‘Well, why don’t you go out and sort of set-up groups?’ Well, that’s not the way it works Ruth.

INTERVIEWER: Mm.

RESPONDENT: You’ve got to have that impetus I think, from within the community, you know, you’ve got to have people who are committed within those particular groups to realising the ambition of those groups. You know, sometimes these groups work and sometimes they fail and sometimes, you know, within the groups you’ve got, you know, the commitment ebbs and flows according to who’s working within the group at any particular time. So, they’re complex entities, these community groups, and you can’t – my experience is that you can’t force them, you’ve just got to go with the flow and see where they are and try and respond as positively as possible when asked for help and input.

INTERVIEWER: Do you, I mean, as City Archaeologists do you get to do a lot – I mean you mentioned earlier that you had colleagues in the neighbourhoods and communities...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...section of the Council, but like do you find that you have interaction with these different groups? Do they interact with you, or like, how is the information shared between you and the neighbourhoods community’s guys?

RESPONDENT: Well it’s mainly, sort of, you know, personal interaction. You know, talking to the officer who runs the parks... Actually, to be honest I’m not sure what he runs these days, but he used to be sort of, like, in overall charge of parks and open-spaces. There’s a guy who works with him, who’s responsible for maintenance of the green spaces around the city walls. So I talk to those guys, really, as and when, you know, their inputs are required. Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: So, do you — we’ve had a conversation in the past, which I thought was really interesting, like you don’t spend all of your time in the Council, you do actually go out and see parts of York, or, you used to...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I mean I do go, I mean, I do go out but it’s generally because there’s a planning application because we’re doing work on the city walls because there’s a group wanting to set something up, or wanting to look at this, that and the other. So, I do get out and about like and meet people. But I also, when asked to give talk and walks I always respond positively because I see that as being a very important part of the work that I do, which is to get out there and communicate the, you know, what I’m doing, the work that’s going on it the city, the ambitions and aspirations that I have for this city, you know, for the historic environment and archaeology in the city. And I think, you know, for me that’s a really important part of the job and it’s one that, I think, is very well-received by people out there because there’s no end of groups wanting to, you know, invite me along to go and talk to them. And it always creates, I think, a very good... It’s an essential part of creating a good relationship between the Council and the people who live in the city, you know, because I think – I’ve probably told you this before – but when I go out and about beyond York and people say, ‘Oh, who do you work for?’ I say, ‘Well I work for the Council, or as it’s known in York ‘bloody Council,” you know and there’s a lot of hostility towards the Council as an organisation...

INTERVIEWER: I think that’s...

RESPONDENT: ...through...

INTERVIEWER: ...true of...

RESPONDENT: ...the city.

INTERVIEWER: ...most Councils.

RESPONDENT: Yes, I’m sure it is, I’m sure it is, I’m sure it is but what I try and do is try and address that through talking about archaeology. Archaeology actually cuts through all of this crap because people are really interested in the city, its past, and they set-aside all of the complaints about the Council once you start exploring these areas with them. And I think it’s
quite a powerful way of... It’s a powerful way of getting over a lot of that sort of hostility
that’s out there, apart from in Fulford of course. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I mean, I think people on a... People who...you can see it both ways. I
mean from my experience people have got some positive connection to archaeology and the
history in which they live in but also sometimes they see archaeology and heritage and they
sort of say, ‘Well, this is archaeology heritage and this is work where going to make a stand
against a decision that the Council proposes.’

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, it can, I mean, and I think, coming back to what I was saying earlier on
about this historic environment archaeology – the idea of empowering people of course, you
know, may not work in the favour of the Council. But then, you know, is that important? You
know, what is the important thing that we’re talking about? It’s not the role of the Council
and it’s not my role either, you know, the really important thing is the historic environment
out there and, you know, that’s what always got to be uppermost in one’s mind, my mind, is
when we’re looking at what is going, you know, what decisions we make, you know, the
Council is a means to an end, I think, for me.

INTERVIEWER: It’s interesting because I’ve – while you’re talking, I’m getting this sort of
impression that there’s the city and its archaeology and its historic [unclear – 0:13:15.3] and
environment, it’s all kind of merging together, like, people often view the Council as just
being the authority.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But it’s an authority that tries in various different ways, I’m sure, to work with
its [unclear – 0:13:42.8] physical communities. And this is going to be the last bit of the thing.

RESPONDENT: That’s alright.

INTERVIEWER: I just wonder what you think about this idea of, sort of, the Council and
archaeology and the relationship between the Council, the city and archaeology? I know it’s
quite a big [laughing]...
RESPONDENT: Okay, what I – the Council, I mean York’s a very interesting place to explore all of these issues because it’s the City Council in that, you know, looking back before I started working here in 1989, the City Council wasn’t interested in archaeology. It took the view that the York Archaeological Trust was in position, they had certain statutory powers under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, so why do we need to bother with archaeology? And the issue came to ahead when the Council started or developed an economic development programme that identified 35 sites within the City Centre that are ripe for office development and on the very first site that came forwards, through that programme, then archaeology blew it out of the water because the Council had failed to take into account the impact that the presence of archaeological deposits on the sites might have on the type of development that you could put on that site. So, standing back and saying, ‘We’ll just leave the archaeology to the archaeologists and then that’ll always sort it out,’ was no longer a realistic or tenable position.

So the Council then decided that, on the advice of English Heritage, that they needed to take a more pro-active approach to archaeology in the City. It needed to own isn’t the right word, but it needed to be in a position that when it took a decision about a development, it was taking that decision fully informed of the consequences that that decision might have for archaeology and the historic environment. So they employed an archaeologist. So I came along and I now do all the things that we’ve been talking about, you know, during the course of this interview. So the Council – as with so many developers – really don’t give a monkeys about the past, as such, what they’re concerned about is the way in which these different concerns have an impact on all of the other things that they want to achieve. So houses, jobs, economic development and that applies to all parties really in terms of party political approach. Labour have, in my experience, have always been slightly well disposed towards the historic environment than the Conservatives. But then nobody has ever wanted to spend any money on this area at all. I mean, York is [long pause] York has always been proud of the fact that it doesn’t spend a great deal of money on anything. So it’s always had the lowest rates, when we used to have rates, or it has the lowest Council Tax for a unitary, you know, unitary authority.

INTERVIEWER: Right.
RESPONDENT: So, yeah, so it’s, you know, it’s always been spent— it’s never really wanted to spend lots of money on anything. So that’s always been a background issue.

INTERVIEWER: Mm.

Last question, what is your definition of heritage? I ask everybody this question.

RESPONDENT: What is my definition of heritage? Well, I think for me heritage is actually it’s what we have with us in the present. So it’s everything that’s been created and, you know, now forms the world around us. I enjoy these very broad terms and definitions and for me heritage is actually pretty much everything that we have because, you know, all that we have is that which exists in the present, here and now. And everything that we have in the present, here and now, has actually, you know, been brought to us by actions in the past. So I’d say heritage is pretty much everything that we have around us and...

INTERVIEWER: That makes your work very difficult then. [laughing]

RESPONDENT: Well, you know, heritage management is the process of making decisions about what you take with you into the future and what you let go. You know, because we can’t take everything, you know? Yeah. So I have a very holistic view [laughing] of heritage and it’s everything.

INTERVIEWER: Everything. Cool.

RESPONDENT: Doesn’t help. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: No, no!

RESPONDENT: Doesn’t help you.

INTERVIEWER: It’s a, yeah, it just asking people on that point it’s sort of...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...different standpoints, quite of lot of them [unclear – 0:19:35.9]

RESPONDENT: Good.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
INTERVIEWER: The first thing that I normally ask people is how do people know me, because
normally I know the people that I’m interviewing, but this is the first time that we’ve met,
isn’t it?
RESPONDENT: Yes.
INTERVIEWER: But we were connected through Harry who gave me your name, so he’s the
one to blame!
RESPONDENT: Okay. I will roundly blame him next time I see him. No, not at all.
INTERVIEWER: So instead of telling me how you know me, can you tell me what your role is
in the council, at the moment?
RESPONDENT: Okay. At the moment?
INTERVIEWER: Sorry, the one that you had before.
RESPONDENT: Okay. So the reason why somebody suggested that you talk to me?
INTERVIEWER: Yes.
RESPONDENT: Yes, so the role I would have been in. So my substantive role with the council
is neighbourhood manager, working in the Communities and Equalities Team, so that’s
everything about connecting people, and City of York council works on a ward basis, as well
as through communities of identity, geography, interest, all of that sort of thing. But we have
quite a well-structured and well-tested ward committee system. It’s been called lots of things
over the years, but it’s just been re-established as ward committees and things are changing
and a lot more decision-making is going to happen at a very local level with residents. But
we’ve always had a really strong ward working ethos if you like. We’ve had participatory
budgeting, we’ve had lots of public meetings at a ward level, things that people can get
involved in.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. So with that role that you had before your current role, what were you
doing… Give an example of the kind of thing that you…?
RESPONDENT: The sorts of things that would happen and that would have some sort of
relevance for your project would be about supporting community groups. So we might have
community groups that are looking after or want to look after or take care of a particular bit
of land or building or… I’m trying to think what else might have a relevance there, probably
and land and the buildings more than anything else. Or preserve something or make more
use out of an area, it might be something like that. The sorts of examples would be the
group that’s looking at Red Tower currently. You might have groups that have wanted to tidy
up and make more of a feature out of Dick Turpin’s graveyard. It might just literally be about
sharing understanding and creating a better understanding of York’s history. I think as we’ve
had public events we try not to have, over the years, we try and stimulate debate, conversation, celebrate York’s very rich history.

So we’ve had things like time walks as events, to explore what areas would have looked like through various stages of history. We’ve had things where people can come and have a look at artefacts or what have you. Yeah, we’ve had history walks, time walks. I’m trying to think what else…

INTERVIEWER: What does a time walk, what do they…?

RESPONDENT: Harry’s actually undertaken those for us, especially where it’s been more city centre walks. So you can really walk into different areas and see what has happened. I can’t remember how many, it was something 100,000 years of history, or something like that, that we did, on a walk. But we’ve also supported people to get involved with consultations about maybe planning new events. Things like Reinvigorate York, where as a council we were proposing to make some changes to somewhere like…there were four areas, one of them being King’s Square, one has been the art gallery…

INTERVIEWER: Exhibition Square?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, Exhibition Square, that sort of thing, so helping people to get involved to comment and to understand why we’re doing something, what we’re trying to do and get people’s real strong feelings about different areas. It’s very emotive, isn’t it, to talk about changing something in an area that people could have walked through every day for the last 40 years and are very attached to.

INTERVIEWER: That’s a lot, yeah.

RESPONDENT: And understanding the sort of differences between conserving and looking after something and also accessibility, all of those sort of competing things that people have to think about when they’re planning schemes in an area such as York.

INTERVIEWER: Competing things – so talking about sharing understanding and the competing aspects of doing anything, really, in York that’s to do with history or place, how do you structure that opening up and sharing understanding?

RESPONDENT: Lots and lots of different ways. There’s lots of engagement tools. A lot of the time I think it’s more about supporting colleagues to design a session. So don’t just take some big pictures and say, ‘There you go, that’s what it’s going to be like.’ It’s about supporting colleagues to design conversations with people, how to have those conversations. But it’s also about utilising our networks and communication to support people to be there and get involved, to know about it, to know about the opportunities.

INTERVIEWER: How do you design a conversation, like…?

RESPONDENT: Ways to have a conversation?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah?
RESPONDENT: All sorts of things, I’m trying to think of some of the things we’ve done over the years. We’ve done quizzes, we’ve done, effectively, things like planning for real type exercises, we’ve done photo exhibitions, what’s behind you if you’re looking at this? Or where are you, if you’re doing this? So people can visualise spaces and get involved. The quiz might be how many times did you walk through anything?

INTERVIEWER: Like a personal quiz?

RESPONDENT: It can be all sorts of things, yeah. Or it can be bits of information. Did you know that somewhere was changed twenty times…do you know this piece of ground, whatever, has been remodelled or changed this many times? All sorts of ways you can get people talking. How long has that statue been there?

INTERVIEWER: Do you find that that’s effective?

RESPONDENT: It’s always been there, of course it’s been there, it’s always got to have been there. Well, no, actually it hasn’t, something else might have been. So yeah, they are effective and it can just be as simple as being at an event so that you can start a conversation with people, not everybody…I mean if you’re skills are about design, if your skills are about all sorts of other things, it doesn’t mean to say it’s about talking to people and that’s another thing, it’s about starting that conversation, isn’t it? Spotting people, saying, ‘What do you think?’ and getting them involved.

INTERVIEWER: Well this is something that I’ve been finding very difficult with the Red Tower. I did mention the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: You did, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I mean the interesting thing about the Walmgate area is that the space on the walls generates a lot of people coming, so a lot of footfall, it doesn’t necessarily have to be tourists, it can be just locals going from A to B, although I don’t know the demographics of that. And they’re very easy to talk to. People who live right opposite, it’s very difficult, there’s a couple of people that we’ve started having conversations with connected to the residents’ association, but if you were in my shoes, how would you broach it?

RESPONDENT: One of the things that the residents’ association were really…and I know they’re not the strongest group, and residents’ associations, by their very nature, go through different fortunes, it’s cyclical. They’ll be strong because there’s an issue and everybody gets behind it and then they won’t do much at all. At one point it was fencing around that area, because people are living in flats, they wanted their areas of green space around the flat fenced off so that dogs couldn’t go on it. So it galvanised everybody’s activity and they’ve fenced all the areas now. But one of the things they were particularly proud of was an event around Red Tower that featured Red Tower a couple of years ago. They had some sort of community event...

INTERVIEWER: Oh, was it the art installation?
RESPONDENT: I can't tell you, I couldn't remember off the top of my head. I wasn't working with that group particularly at the time. But I do remember pulling some information together and we will have some template, old newsletters or something like that, that's got the information in. It's not that long ago, it's only a couple of years ago, but we will have some of that information somewhere. And that's really where interest for them started in Red Tower and I'm sure that they're interests will have been, were sparked some years ago, probably with one of the history walks or something like that that's in the area as well. So they've come together to do something very practical, but actually they're very aware of some of the unique history they've got round them in that area as a residents' association.

INTERVIEWER: As far as I know there are two people currently running the residents' association.

RESPONDENT: It's not a big group at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: At the moment and having conversations with those two and everyone who we speak to, who we manage to speak to in the area, are...they're not negative, there's no one coming up to us going, 'Grrr...'

RESPONDENT: 'How dare you?'

INTERVIEWER: 'How dare you?' And the fact that the raised bed where we planted all our plants has just thrived and everyone's...no one has damaged it at all, so that's a good sign, but it's just getting into that, putting our fingers on the pulse, that sort of thing.

RESPONDENT: And it's events happening around the Tower, then, isn't it? It's getting people to come along and see for themselves and get involved in other things and it's appealing to such a wide age range as well down there. And that's why I think the residents' association isn't possibly as strong as it could be, because it's not galvanised around a particular issue anymore, firstly because they've done the fencing, but it's also a real split of what people want to use different spaces for down there, because some people want more space for kids to play and do stuff and others are like, 'We don't want the kids, they should be in their flats or in their houses, whatever it is, out of my way. I'm old and I want to have some peace and quiet.' And I've sat in meetings there and listed to both of those opinions.

INTERVIEWER: I've seen that too.

RESPONDENT: And it is very divided, I think, about what that should be and how that should be. One of my colleagues [unclear – 0:12:06.9] who is the volunteer coordinator for City of York, he might be able to give you a bit more insight. Although he moved about a year ago, he used to live there and I think he got quite involved at one point.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right.

RESPONDENT: And certainly he is a natural citizen, volunteer, whatever, he gets involved in stuff, so I'm sure he would be happy to talk to you about very early days thinking about Red Tower and I think he was very supportive of individuals in the residents' association as well. I'm sure you're speaking to [resident].
INTERVIEWER: I haven’t actually spoken to…she’s apparently going to be leaving.

RESPONDENT: Is she?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: That’s a real shame. Okay. My knowledge of who it is, is a little bit out of date.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve been speaking to another person who lives there and it seems like there’s a bit of friction going on.

RESPONDENT: Oh there has been a little bit of friction for a little while.

INTERVIEWER: The other thing I was going to talk to you about along those lines was the Space109 project that happened there. I don’t know if you knew anything about why that…I know what it was there for, but what happened to it?

RESPONDENT: I don’t know exactly the details of why Space109 finished, but like most community projects, it was a bit of a brainchild of an individual, a few people, and a lot of it fell onto that individual to maintain and run that session and expanded because the demand was so high. So it had a lot of support from local residents, especially the residents’ association, it gave them a place to meet, it gave them a very visible place to meet, to do different things. There were different activities on there than had never been offered before down there, because there isn’t really a community hub currently in that area, apart from a pub, if you want a pub, then you’re quite lucky.

INTERVIEWER: That’s the Spread Eagle, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: It’s the Spread Eagle, yeah. And there’s a couple of others dotted about. So if you want a pub or an eatery, you’re fine, but actually in terms of a community space or just somewhere to go and do community activities, then that’s a bit difficult. And since Space109 closed down, the community have been meeting in one of the community rooms at, I can’t remember the name...

INTERVIEWER: Bretgate?

RESPONDENT: Yes, that’s right. And that’s not the most accessible and actually to go and find it for the first time I found it pretty tricky, just to find the community room. So it’s not something that’s really obvious to the community, whereas Space109 was, we were really keen on that.

INTERVIEWER: So where was Space109?

RESPONDENT: Space109 was on the run of shops, it probably was 109 Walmgate.

INTERVIEWER: That makes sense.

RESPONDENT: It’s probably why it was called Space109 I would have thought. But the row of shops that is practically opposite The Spread Eagle, so you’ve got your little post office...

INTERVIEWER: We need to go to this pub, I think, and just check it out.
RESPONDENT: So I don’t even know what it is now, what it’s become. It’s in that general...there’s a little run of shops, you’ve got the post office, you’ve got like a convenience store and you used to have Space109 right on the end. There were flats above, but you accessed to the rear. So it is where everybody went to the post office, or went to call into the little shop to get the milk or whatever.

INTERVIEWER: So it kind of made sense for it to be there.

RESPONDENT: It made loads of sense. And so a lease was negotiated to use one of the shops and it ended up being expanded, I believe, to two shops at one point. And the main push behind it was about community facility, but mainly about somewhere to undertake things with an art type relevance, art background, making things, doing things and painting things. All of that sort of stuff, with a community hub and feel about it. I think the local police used to use it as a drop down space so that they could have a cup of tea, just somewhere to gather their thoughts, have a comfort break, have a cup of tea and set off again. And also through them doing that, that offered a little bit of security, a little bit of safety feeling for the community hub, Space109, didn’t it.

So they used to do that. We’d use it for public meetings, that history walk that I think Harry did for us that time, we used it as a drop off point to have tea and coffee. People could make a tile or something while they were there and then they moved on somewhere else. So it was just about establishing it as a place where people felt comfortable and could go.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it would be weird to try and replicate that kind of thing at the Red Tower? Would it be...?

RESPONDENT: I don’t think it would be weird, I think if you’re very, very local to the Red Tower, you know where it is. If you’re a very new resident or you’re not that conversant with the area, you don’t know where the Red Tower is, I don’t think. I don’t think everybody knows and I think that’s the difference, isn’t it?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I mean it’s kind of...

RESPONDENT: It’s nice by the fact it’s tucked away a little bit and it feels like a bit of a...I’m in the know, do you know what I mean, if I know where it is. It’s one of those that you feel there’s a bit of a hidden secret and it’s quite lovely.

INTERVIEWER: I hadn’t really thought about it like that.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, it’s quite nice to know about it. So therefore as a community venue or something like that, would it serve that purpose? Could it serve that purpose? How would you let everybody know that it’s there?

INTERVIEWER: Because it’s not quite embedded into that, as you say, the sort of community footfall.

RESPONDENT: No, it’s not on the footfall, so therefore it’s not very familiar...And also you don’t have that familiarity. If it’s a building that you’re used to, even if you used to go in it
because it used to be the old book shop or it used to be the...it’s a little bit of confidence that comes with that familiarity, isn’t it?

Public perception, I don’t know what the public perception is about what you’re doing, because I’m not working in that area now, but...

INTERVIEWER: I think you’re right, I think it’s come in on this idea of...because I went to the Bretgate complex and I met some of the people that go on a Wednesday and I sort of talked to them, ‘Do you know where the Red Tower is?’ And they were like, ‘Uh, yes...’ you know and even though it’s like what I would see as maybe a quite short walk, I could see that even having...

RESPONDENT: If you never walk that way...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, if you don’t walk that way, it’s not...

RESPONDENT: If you’re walking that way, you’re going to the Red Tower, aren’t you?

INTERVIEWER: Or Morrisons or the Waitrose café, that’s the other thing, it is kind of...there are people that walk through...

RESPONDENT: Do they even notice it?

INTERVIEWER: Well they are now, because we’ve got this edible bed and they’ve started talking, whenever we’re there and there’s somebody pottering around, they’ve got that kind of interaction. We had one lady go, ‘Oh, so you’ve got some clippings of those. Can I use those for...can I borrow some?’ And then that happened and that’s always nice. The local kids have taken an interest, they see it as sort of a den. So it would be quite good to tap into that kind of thing, but then of course there’s that issue with the kids and the older generation who want to have peace and quiet. But I wonder if there’s a way of...because if the Red Tower is enclosed, that could potentially solve an issue, rather than...I don’t know.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, or maybe it needs to be in conjunction with something else that runs at a similar time or offers another choice to a different age range. I don’t know.

INTERVIEWER: Well it’s got two storeys, that’s the other thing. So there’s an upstairs and a downstairs and although the upstairs is not accessible to all age groups and those with access disability and so on, what we’re hoping for is if we manage to get a bid, we’ll be able to solve that issue and then we could open it up to people...

RESPONDENT: Do you think that’s going to be possible then?

INTERVIEWER: We’re not giving up yet. We’re not giving up. We’ve had two bids that didn’t succeed, which was a pain. I don’t know why, because I wasn’t involved in them, but we still think there’s potential for something. I think we’ve all become quite attached to it and we also feel quite a social commitment now that we’ve started that we don’t want to back away from it, just because winter is coming. So, yeah, we’ll see. Anyway, I wondered if I could ask you a bit more generally about what your sort of, I guess it would be maybe your professional aspirations for the city of York are?
RESPONDENT: Oh, my goodness.

INTERVIEWER: Or you could put your personal...

RESPONDENT: I don’t think that they would be that different, actually. My aspiration is probably more about participating, people getting involved at a level that suits them. Having a say on what goes on, that we find that magic formula that actually supports people to understand if you want something you need to get involved and support it in some way, whether it’s just saying yes or whether it’s turning out and picking litter or not. Whatever it is, that people need to get involved and get away from that sort of, I’ll use a really old-fashioned term, but I still hear it and it makes the hairs on the back of my neck stick up little bit, people say, ‘Oh, well, it’s the corporation’s job’ or, ‘It’s the council’s job to do stuff.’ And I just don’t think that’s right – where’s the citizenship, where’s the personal responsibility, where’s the…? Just get involved. Care about where you are and what…so I don’t think that’s very different between a personal and a work-based sort of aspiration, really.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Does that drive your work activities then? Those sort of intentions?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I think it does and I think it’s not about…there is a big thing about value base and we can get hung up on words, get really hung up on words, don’t we, in local authorities, you’ve probably noticed.

INTERVIEWER: Are you talking about specifically the word value here?

RESPONDENT: No, just words. I mean I was looking at a report recently that said that it’s all about getting involved, working at a ward level, what resources we’ve got, how people can engage with that? What our massive plans are? And what’s the point of listening to residents? And I thought well we’re not listening to them, we working with them. So why are we calling it something that’s twenty years ago? ‘Oh, we’ve listened to you, and now we’ve done this, but that’s what you said is the most popular option.’ It’s not about popular options, it’s about do you want this or do you want that? And if you want that, you’re going to have to get off your backside and help us do it. There’s a bit of that going on. And I’m not trying to imply that people are lazy or anything like that, it’s just that they don’t always understand and we haven’t helped them to understand the pressures. And when you’re talking about preserving something or using something that hasn’t been purpose-built, that has got its own issues…this is a piece of our history, should it be revered and left alone? That’s another issue, isn’t it? And why should you spend money sorting that out when we’ve got all these pressures, I don’t know, in adult social care? Or any other of those sort of imperatives that a council has...

[START OF SECOND RECORDING] -- [MISSING CONTENT DUE TO DEVICE FAILURE. The question asked at this point is: “What is your definition of the term 'heritage'?”]

RESPONDENT: Places, buildings, things are resonant of different times of history, it’s that resonance that’s something that’s important to you, because you only look at the bits that you like or particularly appeal to you that are part of your world now, I suppose. That’s bit deep.
INTERVIEWER: Sorry.

RESPONDENT: It's part of your world now and I was going to say needs taking care of, but that's a judgment, isn't it, from my perspective, not necessarily somebody else's. It is something that's resonant, something, yeah resonant of a particular time, isn't it. I'm trying to think, everybody is different. People would laugh at the sorts of things that I would think I love that, I'm keeping that. I'm a complete '70s nut and I don't mean in the sort of cheesy kind of way, but the sort of gold-rimmed half pint beer glass with a picture of an Austin car or galleon on it, that sort of thing, because that's what I remember and that's what I think is really important. And my ideas of heritage might be completely different to somebody else, but it is stuff that's resonant of a time or a piece of history. It's not all of it attractive.

INTERVIEWER: I like that word, 'resonant'.

RESPONDENT: Just have that one, don't take anything else! [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: [laughing] Well I mean I think what you say about being different for different people also rings true with me. When I first started this project, I would consider heritage to be my grandmother's wardrobe. I used to rummage through it as a kid and I used to look at all the weird bits and bobs she had in there...in the bottom you've got all the like boxes full of old jewellery and there was a weird teddy bear that used to be a lipstick holder. It was fascinating. And I didn't actually find buildings that interesting. Especially National Trust buildings where you walk in and there's all this grandeur and you're like, 'Wow, this means nothing to me.' Because it doesn't...I prefer the gardens. So it's hardly surprising I've fallen in with the [unclear – 0:02:50.6] but I just wonder whether you think that heritage has anything to do with what we've been talking about with the participation thing?

RESPONDENT: It can do. People do get...I mean if you put out something that said we're going to knock down the Red Tower and put something a bit more like Space109 there, you'd have absolute, they'd be up in arms, people would be like, 'Protect our Tower.'

INTERVIEWER: Maybe we should do this!

RESPONDENT: I'm not suggesting that you do that, because it wouldn't be true, but it is that use it or lose it or necessity being the mother of invention, all of those trite sayings, but actually they're true. Until you threaten something, and it's a bit like the thing that is forcing our hand as a council now, it's a bit like we have to say, 'Sorry, unless you're prepared to come and help us prune that rose bed or whatever, then maybe we'll just cover it over' or, 'If you want the parks open all the time and to be happy places, we open the doors now, we don't lock them up, walk through them occasionally and just have a look round, make sure everything is alright.'

END OF TRANSCRIPT
INTERVIEWER: So the first question I normally ask people is, ‘Can you explain to me how you know me and how you met?’

RESPONDENT: Harry actually mentioned before you came, ‘cause I was talking to him about plans, and he said it might be something that you might be interested in. And then when you came... I don’t know, was I sat next to you and I spoke to you then?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And I think Harry had – on my side of how I know you – is he mentioned that you’d be someone to speak to with regards to neighbourhood planning, and then we had that informal meeting...

RESPONDENT: Meeting, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...and you just explained your...

RESPONDENT: Role.

INTERVIEWER: ...your role. And I’m really sorry, but I’m going to ask you to do that again, if that’s okay, if you can just summarise what your role is, just for the exercise.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So neighbourhood planning was introduced...well I say recently but it was 2011 under the Localism Act and it’s basically bringing another tier of planning that kind of sits below the Local Plan to bring it down to the community level.

It’s meant to be led by the communities, by the parishes, but obviously the city council needs to guide that and provide advice, assistance and deal with the statutory processes. So that’s my role.

So I usually meet with... In this case we’ve only got parish councils, doing them at the moment in York. So I’d have like an initial meeting with them, just to see if it’s something they’d like to do. Then they quite often just put in an application, which is just for the initial boundary. We consult on that. I don’t know how much detail you need on that. Is that enough?

INTERVIEWER: It’s fine. I can consult with the other notes that I took.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So in the regulations it sets out our role and it is mainly to advise and assist, which is a bit hard to interpret. People interpret it in different ways. We have clear statutory duties which we fulfil, in terms of the consultation, contacting statutory consultees, that sort of thing. But essentially we meet with them, we look at drafts of their plan, we advise them on strategic and environmental assessment, more the technical issues, I suppose, that we have more knowledge on.
And then as it progresses we would appoint an inspector, mutually agree one with them, and arrange the examination and the referendum and basically pick up the bill! So they pay for their consultation if they want a consult and stuff like that.

But I was at a meeting last night and I think the average Neighbourhood Plan for parishes costs about £12,000-15,000...

INTERVIEWER: Wow.

RESPONDENT: ...whereas for a local authority it’s about £40,000. I mean, you can claim some of it back from central government but it’s obviously quite an expensive process.

INTERVIEWER: So is your role with the council, it’s very much focused on places in York.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you?

RESPONDENT: Well, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And have you lived here for...

RESPONDENT: Nine years.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And this is a semi-structured interview so I have three areas that I go over with you and then we deviate! Which is natural. So this is a kind of deviation of sorts. Do you find that within your role, that you see parts of York that nobody else would see? Or that you get a view of York that nobody else would see?

RESPONDENT: In terms of working with parish councils, I think this is my first experience of working closely with parish councils and seeing the way they work and what they think about the council really. So that, I suppose, from an outsider, they wouldn’t see that. And I’ve been quite appalled by the ways things are kind of run and what they think. And they feel that they’re representing the communities but it’s just so insular. They have very set ideas. Dare I say it, they’re all older, retired people, very set ideas. The Neighbourhood Plans that we’re doing, that have approached us, are outlying villages, the parishes, so they’re quite rich little villages. They just don’t want anything to change. They don’t want any more development. They want to protect the greenbelt.

And I think when the government brought in neighbourhood planning, I don’t think this was how the envisaged it being. I think the idea was it would promote regeneration, community cohesion and things, but it really hasn’t shown that in York yet.

INTERVIEWER: So would you say that part of your concern about the way that the Neighbourhood Plans are working is that they’re not working, potentially?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I think in all the guidance and information about Neighbourhood Plans it’s about shaping developments and shaping your neighbourhoods, not about stopping developments. But in somewhere like York where we don’t have the Local Plan adopted but
we’ve got one emerging, all the communities that do Neighbourhood Plans are basically using the neighbourhood planning process to fight against the Local Plan. They think if they can get in first, they can allocate the land for sites that they like, or allocate nothing at all. They’re doing what their communities want.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: And in some cases, yeah, that might be the case. But it’s very much the view of that small group of people that are in the parish council that really don’t represent whole communities, is what I feel.

INTERVIEWER: And so what would your sort of ideal situation be? If you were to go to a community group parish council and work with them, what would you look for as a step forward or a step in the right direction?

RESPONDENT: In York?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So it would be the situation where there isn’t a Local Plan and things. I suppose it would be a parish council that recognised that not so much the Local Plan because it’s not adopted, but there’s a lot of evidence that sits behind the emerging plan, especially housing assessments, site assessments and all things like that. If they would just accept that these studies have been done and they’re accurate and they’re honest and to trust them, and therefore accept that there might be some new housing in their village and then really embrace that by saying, ‘Oh right, we accept that we’re going to have housing in the village. What kind of housing do we want? What style, design, what density? What type of open space? What other facilities?’ And going at it like that, as opposed to looking at the space going, ‘Oh, it’s all rubbish. We’ve done a survey and 90% of our village say they don’t want any more houses. Therefore we’re not going to support that.’ What they’ve failed to say is their survey, the only people who responded were the over-60s who live in their nice five-bed houses with views of the greenbelt. I suppose that’s it. But I don’t suppose it would ever happen.

I mean, some villages more than others are accepting certain sites that are coming forward and having an influence over, say, access roads in and putting across their views, which are valuable. But they just have to stop the whole blinkered, nimby view that so many of them have.

INTERVIEWER: That word’s come up a couple of times. And it’s interesting because what my research is about is it’s looking at heritage values and then considering what people feel is the social worth, I guess, of heritage. That was the initial brief I was given. But what I’m finding is that it’s a lot about aspirations and concerns about space, living space. And I wondered if you can see whether aspirations are just like the council aspirations and the community’s aspirations, whether they’re just not able...

RESPONDENT: Compatible.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah, to be compatible.

RESPONDENT: Mm. I think that is the case in most cases that the amount of housing that we would need to provide to fulfil the need is going to always upset someone. We haven’t got the same amount of brownfield space that Leeds, Wakefield, places like that have. So inevitably we’re going to have to look toward greenfield and some people are just dead against that and can’t see past that, and therefore I just can’t see how they’re ever going to be compatible. Neighbourhood plans and the Local Plan.

I mean, the sites in York that historically they got permission a decade ago and still – like [unclear – 0:10:06.6] and places like that – they’re still taking them to High Court and they won’t let it go. And there’s always going to be sites like that and neighbourhood planning’s not going to make any difference, I don’t think.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting. Well how about, say vignette-style, if there was going to be planning near where you lived, do you think you would get involved in the same way?

RESPONDENT: Well I think there would be a conflict of interest. As my job I couldn’t. But I talk to my parents because where they live, they live not in York, they live in a different authority, but there are housing allocations near them, and they’re obviously fighting against it ‘cause they’ve got a nice view of the greenfield. And I just think about it. All the traffic and stuff like that. But they’re still going to be...’Do you not think that the planners will design it and the highways engineers and...’ I genuinely think if there was a housing development proposed near me I wouldn’t fight it. I would be glad of the things that come with it. You know, a lot of money comes when... This is what we’ve been trying to lay with plans. When you get housing developments there’s all that 106 money and in the future you get SEA money. Do you know...?

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: Oh sorry. Section 106 is a planning obligation. So if you’re building new houses you’re going to have an impact on the schools. You might need to expand the schools or the facilities, so some money will go towards education. You might need to put money towards open space – that’s always a very popular one. And all this money gets put forward and it’s called Section 106 money. It’s just part of the schedule.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: And that money will go directly to the community, ‘cause it has to be spent within a certain radius of the development site. So things like that come and yeah, they get new parks. They get better bus services, potentially, if it’s a big development, and I think I would look at it like that. It’d be different if it was a big waste incinerator or a gypsy/traveller site or something. But if it’s housing I genuinely don’t think... I think because I know all the work that goes behind it...

INTERVIEWER: Ah, yes.
RESPONDENT: You see that’s maybe when you said, ‘Do you see it from a different way?’ because I work in it, I see all the environmental studies, transport studies, drainage capacity. Everything like that, that you apply to these sites. And you don’t just pick a site at random and go, ‘Stick some housing there.’ There’s a lot of thought behind it and we wouldn’t let it go forward if it’s going to completely snarl up the roads.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there’s any way of conveying that, the work that goes into it to the people?

RESPONDENT: Well it’s all published but people tend not to believe it. I mean, I’ve responded to an FOI. They don’t trust us. So I had an FOI about fracking, so I responded.

INTERVIEWER: What’s an FOI?

RESPONDENT: Oh, Freedom Of Information Act.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right, yes, yes.

RESPONDENT: So when people want information we can’t say no. Unless it’s commercially sensitive. So I put this long response together, all very factual. And she responded, ‘Thanks but I don’t believe you. I believe the scientists over the government any day.’ I’m like, ‘Oh right. Well why did you ask me, then?’ You know, and she was the extreme. But if you’ve got people like that, that just hate the council for whatever reason, think that any information we provide is all lies, of course they’re going to think, ‘Ooh, what are the council going to get out of putting housing here, here and here?’ You know, ‘They don’t care about the communities, blah, blah, blah.’ But it’s not true. I don’t say that just ’cause I work here and I see the work behind it. But a lot of people just have that view. They think that it’s all skewed, all the evidence, so it’s not independent, objective assessments.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting. I think part of this has been... It’s an on-going process. It’s never anything new, it’s just that we have new ways of talking about it maybe and new Acts that we have to abide by and so on.

Going sort of back to this idea of the evidence and what is used to be objective, I know we talk about the SE...

RESPONDENT: Oh, the SEA, the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

INTERVIEWER: That’s it. Yeah, and that’s part of it. Can we just talk a bit about that and how that features within...

RESPONDENT: Neighbourhood planning.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Okay. Well it’s not... I mean, it was brought in ages ago as part of Local Plans and Core Strategies, their predecessor. But now it’s been transferred onto Neighbourhood Plans as well. Basically any plan needs to do this SEA. And it’s often combined with a sustainability appraisal.
So the SEA is obviously environmental-related, Strategic Environmental Assessment. So what it does is... Oh, it’s blimmin’ complicated! There’s a first stage, which is screening. So you would screen your plan, so the policies within it and the allocations, to see if there are likely to be any environmental effects.

As soon as you think that there might be, it triggers the next stage, which is where you scope it, which is looking at all the potential environmental effects it might have and you scope in and out. So it might have heritage impacts but it might not have impact on nature conservation, for instance.

And then the final stage is this environmental report, where you actually properly look into the detail of how your allocation... I mean, it’s easier to look at with allocations, I suppose. If there’s a site and it’s very close to a [unclear – 0:16:28.9], then it’s going to have significant environmental effects and you need to demonstrate whether those environmental effects are so significant that it deems the site unsuitable or whether they can be mitigated against so they can live side-by-side. So essentially that’s as far as that will go.

And then an essay, a sustainability appraisal, looks at whether the site or policies are sustainable. So it looks at environmental, economic and social impacts in the same sort of way. It’s all done in like a matrix, so you’ve got all the little aspects of the environment that it might affect: all the social side of things, all the economic side of things. Initially I think it’s just like a grid with ticks.

INTERVIEWER: In different colours.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, different colours.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve seen it, yes.

RESPONDENT: So you’ve got red, yellow, green, depending on the impact.

INTERVIEWER: And where it’s red, that’s bad impact.

RESPONDENT: Exactly. And if it’s mostly red then you can pretty much say it’s unsuitable and you would have to change the site, move the site, delete the site, or in the case of a policy, change the policy.

And then there are different balances. So if it’s red but mostly yellow or something then you’re like, ‘Okay, it can be mitigated against.’ And you just focus on the red things. ‘How can we mitigate against these damages?’ And obviously green is good to go.

And the reason why it’s objective is there’s a long, long list of criteria and indicators that have been set independently – so not by us – probably by Natural England, Historic England. So those are the ones that we use, so they can’t be deemed as... I suppose when you actually do the assessment it could be subjective if you think it has less of an impact than it would. But you have to look at proper scientific...if it was about the [unclear – 0:18:41.9] you’d need to look into the detail about if it’s the drainage between the two, if the water’s going to affect it. So there’s evidence behind that about how to assess it.
INTERVIEWER: It's more physical attributes than...

RESPONDENT: Mm.

INTERVIEWER: And then I guess you have to... It's actually a quite similar debate with archaeologists who have to... They are some of the time scientists. They kind of bridge both. There's bio-archaeologists who do chemical work in labs and that is considered a science.

RESPONDENT: Well yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But on the other hand there's looking at the more human interactions with heritage. And I'm sort of...

RESPONDENT: You're on that side, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I'm personally more on that spectrum. But I think that the accounting for different kinds of knowledge in the role that you work or the accounting for different kinds of data, I guess, that's something that also does intersect with having to deal with the social aspect of it.

RESPONDENT: I suppose the data, it's quantitative and qualitative. So the quantitative is hard to argue with and... I say they tend to accept that more but not particularly.

INTERVIEWER: No. Do you have any quantitative stats on that?!

RESPONDENT: Quite! It's not the qualitative stuff that... it's just entirely dependent on who's writing it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And who it's been done for. I hate to say it but if a consultant's doing it for a developer, it's probably quite different than a consultant doing it for, say, the local authority or environment group.

INTERVIEWER: It's choosing an audience, though.

RESPONDENT: It is. And it's bad but...

INTERVIEWER: I think the same thing happens with academics. You choose your audiences depending on which lecture you're going to or which conference. It's exactly the same thing. And I wonder actually whether this is leading onto the core area of my research, this idea of information-sharing. I'm just going to stop this here 'cause...

[START OF RECORDING 2]

INTERVIEWER: I was going to ask about this idea of qualitative and quantitative data and how people are receiving that. Are there ways that you share that sort of information? Can you talk me through how you share information with community groups and parish councils?

RESPONDENT: In the context of plans?
INTERVIEWER: Yes, in the context of neighbourhood planning.

RESPONDENT: So if we have the evidence, so say the housing assessments that we’ve done, the documents themselves, it’s hundreds of pages thick. But what we have been doing for them is pulling out like the introductory chapters and then in terms of the sites we’ll pull out the stuff within their parish and give it to them like that. So this is published information. I suppose if they asked for the background to it we could give them it but it’s blimmin’ lengthy and complicated.

So they seem to be fairly happy with that. But then they might do their own assessment and interpret it differently. So that’s with the housing stuff.

Then from a nature point of view it’s mainly we just take extracts from... I mean, we can give them full documents but they’re quite happy if we can narrow it down for them and just provide the stuff relevant to their area, as opposed to York.

INTERVIEWER: There’s a term that I’m thinking of that’s popped into my head. Is it ‘Executive Summary’? Is that...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, that’s generally something that’s been published as an executive summary but yeah, we can provide... It’s more extracts, isn’t it? ‘Cause if you put it all together it doesn’t form a document in itself.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: The information’s just for them to pull out and piece together in their own way, I suppose. In the past we’ve just provided links to documents. ‘Cause all our evidence is published online. But a lot of them find that quite hard ‘cause it’s not printed and stuff, especially with the parish councils where they’re a bit older. So we provide paper copies and share it that way. So yeah, the Biodiversity Order we’ve pulled out all the sites in the various parishes, flood risk assessments. So all the maps, all the data that’s mapped we provide to them.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve been speaking to a number of people about maps and they seem to come up quite a lot. Do you think that they’re quite effective as a way of conveying information?

RESPONDENT: Mm, very much so. Although very hard, unless you have the skills, to do them. So a parish council wouldn’t necessarily be able to draw their own map electronically. So that’s why we’re happy to provide that as part of my duty to assist. But yeah, they tend to like it spatially. It makes it very clear for them. So that’s why proposals, maps always accompany a local plan because it sets all the allocations out and you can see the full picture. So that’s why it’s quite useful. And to see it in context.

So we’ll put nature conservation sites on, so all the [unclear – 0:03:14.4] and the sinks and stuff are all mapped alongside all the allocations and stuff, so people can see that, how close (if they are close) they are to nature conservation sites and kick off if it’s too close and
stuff like that! But the important thing to remember is we haven’t got to this stage without speaking to the likes of Natural England and Historic England.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Did you know, Historic England came and did like a coach trip around York with our team? I wasn’t invited, unfortunately. But basically they had quite a few concerns about the impact that a lot of the peripheral development will have on the historic character of York.

So what they did, to put it in context, on this bus there was George and Mike and a number of other planning officers. People from your team, so Harry and the Trees Conservation Officer [unclear – 0:04:06.0], all that sort of thing. Plus people from Historic England. And they would literally drive around. ‘Right, this is one site.’ And they would all look at it. Almost like a planning application but well in advance because this is for a potential allocation.

And they had their own views on that and came back to the council afterwards with a map of, ‘Oh, you might want to change this boundary or put a buffer in here or avoid damaging that vista,’ and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So there’s a lot of work with specialist bodies whose only remit is the historic environment or nature conservation. And then it’s our job to put all those views together and come up with a balanced approach to site development.

INTERVIEWER: And when in the context of discussing with the community group or parish council about these...I’ve heard the word ‘competing’ bits of information about the land, you know, you have your historic environment and your natural environment and greenbelts and... Do they interact with the... I mean, does it happen that people actually go, ‘Yeah, I understand this,’ and you see people working through the process of neighbourhood planning there and then, in that consultation process?

RESPONDENT: You mean people at the parish council?

INTERVIEWER: Do they just take... Well, the parish council. People you’re consulting with. Do they take it away and then come back to you or do you actually have a conversation?

RESPONDENT: A bit of both, really. So again, it’s like map-based quite often when it’s related to sites. So can I use names of places and stuff? I suppose that’s okay, isn’t it?

INTERVIEWER: I can always...

RESPONDENT: Change them.

INTERVIEWER: ...change them, yes.
RESPONDENT: But say, for instance, Site A. They have a large development site in their parish. And so we’d look at it on a map. There was that one and another big development site.

And they’ve come to a compromise with the developer 1 to create somehow a buffer between one area and another.

By talking it through with the developers and looking at the maps, they’ve said, ‘Well we really don’t want access from this road ‘cause that will cause a rat run etc. Have you thought about putting it here?’ And they’ve also, to their full credit they’ve spoken to the two developers (1& 2) and they’ve met with them, had email exchanges and stuff, and they’ve come to a compromise, an agreement.

So I suppose it’s showing that Neighbourhood Plans are working even as they’re emerging – they don’t even need to be adopted. Because I suppose the site A is still emerging, because obviously we haven’t allocated yet and the Neighbourhood Plan’s emerging. So between the two we can come to an acceptance of the site provided X, Y and Z are met.

INTERVIEWER: Kind of working out a compromise, as you said, yeah.

RESPONDENT: And that’s worked, surprisingly. But some of the other areas we’ve got developers basically responding to the consultation objecting substantially to the emerging Neighbourhood Plans ‘cause their sites aren’t in, and those are the Local Plan sites. So that’s the other extreme and they won’t budge on that. That’s another area.

So I think it depends very much on the people sat around the table, how big the impact is. I mean, Developer X, yeah they might not like the access to it but at least it’s a brownfield site. We don’t have many of them in York. Whereas the other one – Site Y – it’s all currently greenfield land, draft greenbelt, that housing developers have put forward and we’ve assessed, and there were draft allocations in the previous plan. And that’s what the parish council are fighting against. They prefer this other site the other side of the village, which is deemed unsuitable using our assessment. So that’s the other extreme where there’s a conflict and I don’t think it can be resolved.

INTERVIEWER: What’s going to happen then in those instances where those conflicts can’t be resolved? Do you just go round and round and round?

RESPONDENT: Well we have been for a few months now. The parish brought in new consultants, independent consultants, to advise them and we met all together and the consultants basically said, ‘Your plan won’t make it through examination. It’s not sound. It hasn’t got a strong evidence base behind it. You haven’t done the environmental assessment.’ That sort of thing.

And so it’s gone all quiet now because they’re like, ‘Oh, maybe it really isn’t okay.’ So that’s where we are with them. We’re seeking legal advice in terms of, ‘Do we have to proceed to examination?’ Because it seems from the regulations that we do. Providing they submit all the relevant documentation, regardless of its content – so our role is not to...
INTERVIEWER: To challenge it, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Then we have to proceed to examination. But we have to pay for that. Examination can be £10,000, £15,000. And George, who deals with the budgets, is saying it’s very irresponsible. Of course we wouldn’t take that risk that it won’t get through. ’Cause you can’t claim your money back if it fails.

So that’s the situation we’re at. We’ve asked for our own legal advice from the council and we’re going to DCLG actually. We can’t be the only authority that’s having these sorts of problems, I wouldn’t have thought.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ’Cause it’s still a [unclear – 0:10:19.1] new process, we keep seeing articles in Planning magazine and things where, ‘Neighbourhood Plan Beat The Developers’ or vice versa.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: You know, and there’s no clear direction.

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting. With those kinds of case studies that you see elsewhere there’s nothing... Do you find that they are sort of comprehensive accounts of what’s happened?

RESPONDENT: Yes but none of them are in exactly the same situation as York in terms of the lack of a Local Plan or the lack of a greenbelt. Just trying to think what else. It’s quite a unique situation that we’re in. And the fact that our communities seem to want to protect all their land, whereas other communities want to allocate land and the council don’t want them to ’cause it’s protected, and that’s going to the High Courts and stuff. So it’s a real mixture.

INTERVIEWER: It’s fascinating.

RESPONDENT: So they’re not particularly useful, these case studies, because they’re very different. Well they’re big, important situations but all slightly different so you can’t go, ’Ah look, three out of four have lost this case so that must be what’s wrong.’ ’Cause as far as I know none of them have gone to the Secretary of State because of Strategic Environmental Assessment, for instance. So we could be the first! And Eric Pickles had a lot to do with things and he’s gone now so it’s quietened down a little bit.

INTERVIEWER: Oh wow.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so we’ve covered your role and we’ve covered the way that information gets shared and the quantitative, qualitative and some of the difficulties and challenges that are arising.

To wrap it up, ’cause we have got a lot of information that you gave me from the last chat that we had...
RESPONDENT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: ...what I’m doing is asking people what their views of heritage is. Do you have a professional view of what heritage is and a person view of what heritage is? Or are they one and the same?

RESPONDENT: Well I think they’ve become the same now, really. ‘Cause believe it or not, back at uni I specialised in conversation – the historic and environment side of planning.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: In my fifth year. But that’s all gone now! So that was looking not just about the material heritage – so the things you might think of straight away like the listed buildings and things like that – it’s about the community heritage and the value of place, I suppose, rather than the physical buildings. It’s more the context of everything together and the historic events that might have happened there.

So things like battlefields that are just a field. They’re important because of what happened there. But it’s a personal thing, I think, depending on your views and what’s important to you as a community.

I found that from the neighbourhood planning point of view, that they use heritage to their advantage in terms of, ‘Well look at our pretty little village. It’s so historically important we couldn’t possibly have any more housing ‘cause that would ruin it.’ I’m like, ‘Yeah, but if it’s done right – and Historic England would never allow some kind of housing development to damage that heritage, if that’s what their argument is...’ So I think it can be used in different ways. I don’t know if that really answers the question.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it does answer the question and a lot of people have said along the same lines of it being quite personal. But I guess in the realm of neighbourhood planning, I guess it’s an instrumental component.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So buildings and things that aren’t projected as listed buildings, they’re not in a conservation area, but they have an important relevance to the community. It might not be really old but it still has heritage significance for them, then they’re looking at, ‘Can they preserve that through the Neighbourhood Plan?’ And did we talk about local lists before?

INTERVIEWER: We did mention it very...yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, ‘cause I know some areas have basically been created by communities, so what’s important to the community. It doesn’t have to be a recognised historic asset from an outsider but people know things that have happened that are relevant.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I suppose like houses that it’s just a house but because Paul McCartney grew up there or something like that, does that have heritage significance? I don’t know.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that’s interesting.

RESPONDENT: ‘Cause you have other houses. If Charles Dickens lived there, ‘Oh yes, definitely.’ ‘Cause of the age of the property.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But just ‘cause it’s any newer, is that still heritage? It is, isn’t it? ‘Cause it’s their own...a kind of heritage is arts and music heritage. Like Elvis Presley’s house. That’s of huge importance for some people.

INTERVIEWER: The site of a pilgrimage, I guess.

RESPONDENT: Well quite.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I used to live near... You’ve mentioned Paul McCartney’s house. I actually used to live near George Harrison’s house.

RESPONDENT: Oh really. Is that in Liverpool?

INTERVIEWER: No, it’s in Henley-on-Thames.

RESPONDENT: Oh really?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. But yeah, I guess you’ve picked up on this idea of social value but then age value.

RESPONDENT: And they don’t always come...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And I guess maybe...is this a division between quantifiable and quality?

RESPONDENT: I see what you mean. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Because age is something you can determine in numbers.

RESPONDENT: Whereas qualitatively it might be relevant for some and... I think most people can appreciate, ‘That’s an old building. It’s historically important.’ But there are some buildings which are listed which people think, ‘Ah, that’s hideous.’ Like the car park in Gateshead. There’s that listed multi-storey. I can’t think. But you can get some really... Or Byker Wall. That kind of thing. It’s an ugly thing and a lot of people go, ‘Oh, let’s rip it down.’ But actually, for that point in time it was a very important social remain, you know, of the time, isn’t it? And it’s a good example of architecture and things at the time.

INTERVIEWER: Well we have that in York, don’t we? With the Stonebow.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Well exactly. Hideous thing! I’m of that ilk, you know. It doesn’t have to be pretty, I suppose, but I can’t value it somehow.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. No, that’s interesting. Okay, I think that’s everything.

RESPONDENT: Excellent.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any questions?
RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: I did that to Mike and he pulled out a corker on me. I was like, ‘Oh God, I wish I hadn’t asked!’

RESPONDENT: Oh no.

INTERVIEWER: He asked me what heritage was – what my definition was.

RESPONDENT: Oh right.

INTERVIEWER: Well...

RESPONDENT: ‘I’ve written a paper on it!’

INTERVIEWER: Exactly, exactly.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
INTERVIEWER: Can you first start us off by telling me how you know me and how we met?

RESPONDENT: We know each other through the Buildings at Risk pilot study which started a few months ago last year.

INTERVIEWER: Did we start it in January?

RESPONDENT: Yes, about January, yes. And you have been working with Harry in the West Offices recently as well, so I've seen you around through that.

INTERVIEWER: So you're at the Council offices. What's your job title?

RESPONDENT: My job title is Heritage Project Officer, which doesn't mean a lot at the minute, but that's the title. But that's a relic from my first post at the council which was to do with the Characterisation Project.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe we'll start by explaining your past role at the Characterisation Project, because I actually did know a bit about you from that, through the previous Heritage Officer, because I met him and talked to him about that.

RESPONDENT: Yes, the Characterisation Project was started in the middle of 2012 which is when I became employed by the council for that project specifically and it ran for a year and a half in the end, and I was just solely working on writing these character statements and going out and taking photographs and looking through published works and maps and things. Basically that was all I was doing, just consumed with that project. So that's where the job title and job description and everything come from. But since then I've just been kept on, on short-term contracts, filling in, doing other pieces of work.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me, is that where the Heritage at Risk stuff started from?

RESPONDENT: Well, it's completely separate, really. It was just that when the previous Heritage Officer was working at the Council, he was quite good at pulling in external funding, because my post was completely externally funded by English Heritage at the time, as was the previous Heritage Officer's. So I think he just saw the job advertised to do this pilot study. It was only a small amount of money attached to it, and he put us forward for it since we'd just done the Characterisation and we won it, and that's how we got in on doing Buildings at Risk. So yes, that was just sort of given to me to do as well.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. So with the Characterisation Project you were creating character statements. Can you just talk me through it? I know a bit about it, but what did it actually entail and what were you doing on a day-to-day basis?

RESPONDENT: On a day-to-day basis – it all seems like such a long time ago – I started off with creating a load of GIS content, creating shape files to show things from old maps and then creating shape files. It's kind of hard to explain, but if you imagine the character area as one big polygon, then within that one polygon there are several layers of smaller polygons
that go to make up that character area. So the first few months I was literally sitting at the
computer with GIS defining what an area was. Was it semi-detached housing was it post-war
housing, was it this, that and the other? And I did that using Google Maps.

INTERVIEWER: So it was the character of the architecture...

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: ...and the historic...

RESPONDENT: ...built environment. I was told I could only use certain amounts, because of
the time of the project and the limits on the time and money I couldn't go off and do loads
and loads of research. I was limited with what I had on my GIS which was essentially the first
to fourth edition ordnance survey plans, so nothing further back than 1850 and aerial
photographs, modern map and Google street view which I used a lot. So that took a long
time, as you can imagine, putting all that together.

And once that was in place and I had an idea of where my character areas were going to be, I
went out and visited them, double-checked information on them, took some photographs,
noticed a few extra little interests and pieces in the landscape and then came back and wrote
a statement about it, basically, what was a general brief history of the area, what’s the current
built landscape like, are there any listed...

INTERVIEWER: So is it descriptive?

RESPONDENT: ...buildings? It was descriptive, narrative, very pithy, as the previous Heritage
Officer would say, very short and to the point and written in a very easy-to-read style,
because the point was, it was supposed to be for everybody. It was supposed to be for
members of the public to enjoy and be able to understand, not full of jargon. But it was also
supposed to be a tool for planners, which is where I always had a slight problem with it, that
it was a bit too vague for me to be useful in-house. I have used it in-house since, but that’s
because I know about it and I know how to work it. But I’ve used it more for the
interpretative maps, because we did some maps at the end of the description.

Obviously, the ones that showed where the character area boundaries were and things and
why we’d made them, but also maps that showed areas of archaeological potential and
things like that, because obviously if you’re walking around an area the archaeology doesn’t
jump out at you at all.

So I had to do a little bit of digging, basically just using the HER which is not completely up-
to-date, but using that and using what I could in-house. I managed just to sort of put
together a basic archaeology feature of the areas, which is kind of useful, it’s interesting for
people that live there and it has been useful in-house just as a sort of a quick, at-a-glance
guide rather than trailing through HER. And I did manage to go once to the archives to pull
out some maps, which was very exciting, and added some of that information in as well, but
only because I had a bit of time left. And then for the core areas, they were already written. I
didn’t write those, but I made an accompanying statement in the same style as my other
suburban areas just covering the archaeology because the core conservation area of [unclear – 0:06:43.7] didn’t cover archaeology at all. But that was mainly used in the HER again and the 1991 Ove Arup study which basically just says, you know, Roman deposits at about nine metres here, sort of thing. Quite vague, but at least it sort of put it all in one place.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I’ve had a look at them and there are different layers that involve the archaeological deposits, interventions-

RESPONDENT: Yes. Oh, you’ve looked at the HER, haven’t you?

INTERVIEWER: I’ve looked at the HER but also I have looked at the character areas and the previous Heritage Officer did...

RESPONDENT: On the HER? Because the character areas on the HER...

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see, yes.

RESPONDENT: ...are just- there’s the three layers, there’s the big one, I’ll say Character Area 16 or whatever, and then it’s got the lower levels.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I didn’t understand that it was on the HER as a layer, but also it’s on the website as well.

RESPONDENT: Yes, well those three layers are on the HER. I’ve put them on. And North Yorkshire did their HLC study which is obviously a much higher level and it just says things like post enclosure, landscape or settlement. That’s on the HER as well. But on the internal GIS systems, which you might not have seen, there are the other layers such as the field boundaries and the building heights and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: Tenement housing and-

RESPONDENT: There’s a few other bits and bobs.

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:08:08.7] really, yes.

RESPONDENT: So the previous Heritage Officer might have shown you those.

INTERVIEWER: I had a training session with Harry so I’m looking at that. I think the HER is a really interesting tool. It’s interesting that you kind of used it and then you’ve fed back into it.

RESPONDENT: Yes. So I’ve put quite a lot of the Characterisation stuff on there, and then we put a little bit on the Council website just to try and get it out to the general public. But there hasn’t been any big publicity for it or anything which was the plan originally, but it just didn’t happen. There’s been talk over the last few years of adding to it and doing more with it and none of that’s materialised. But that’s just lack of resources, really. English Heritage were talking about a second phase at one point and rolling it out across the villages, the outlying villages but it’s just all stuff in the pipeline. But I think there are other things that need to take precedence really, because it doesn’t have any weight.
INTERVIEWER: When you say it hasn’t got any weight is that because of what you said earlier about it being too vague?

RESPONDENT: No. I think to be approved as some sort of consultation document, I think it has to be approved through a committee or something.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, wow.

RESPONDENT: I’m a bit vague on how this works. It has to go out to public consultation, that’s it, to make it sort of have weight within the planning side of things. So for them to say according to the Characterisation statement X, it would have to have that process which it hasn’t had. But it’s something there to be consulted, that’s the idea. So if someone’s proposing something you could look at that statement and say, ‘Well it doesn’t fit in with the character as defined in this statement.’ But that hasn’t happened. It has been used at the minute solely as sort of something from the public, and the feedback from the general public has been really, really good. They like them.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right, so they have been accessing it?

RESPONDENT: I’ve had private feedback from it. I’ve had feedback when it first was completed I had feedback from several history groups who some of them had sent copies of them to like proofread it and things. And local historians and things had seen them. So they all provided good feedback. And then people like the York Archaeological Forum. They loved it. They wrote a letter to English Heritage to support doing more for the other villages and stuff. So on that level it’s a big thumbs up and to be honest, that’s where it works, really. That’s what it’s for.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, with those particular audiences.

RESPONDENT: Yes. And that’s when I wanted to do a second phase, because there’s talk of doing a second phase and rolling it out, and there’s talk of doing a second phase where it doesn’t get rolled out further but we enhance what we’ve started, which I think is what we need to do, really, because at the time when I was trying to get people to proofread it and ask people questions just because I had a bit of time at the end they wanted to get involved, and I wanted them to get involved. It would have been fab for them to start adding things in and doing their own research and stuff, but I had to keep it really contained and just say, ‘This is what it is and here’s some recommendations. Further study could be done on x,’ or, ‘A streetscape study should be done in this area for the ironwork and stuff,’ and that’s as far as it could go, really. I’m just sad.

INTERVIEWER: It’s been processed, it’s been a little bit accessed by the public and then you’ve had discussions with different people from different parts of York’s sort of history groups, and now it’s still there but it’s-

RESPONDENT: It’s kind of just there now and fading away in the distance, which is sad.

INTERVIEWER: It is sad.
RESPONDENT: Can’t do much about it at the minute.

INTERVIEWER: No. Okay, well that’s one aspect of your role and you’ve given me some insight into that. What about Buildings at Risk? What’s the story with that initiative and what were your sort of intentions with it?

RESPONDENT: Well, am I allowed to speak plainly on here?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, you are, and we can always revise things if you need to.

RESPONDENT: Ultimately we were testing an app and a website for English Heritage as part of their plans to roll out this nationwide tool that would enable people to go out and survey grade two listed buildings in their own time and with very little training, basically. It’s just a way of mass information gathering, I suppose, from English Heritage. Good idea in theory, I guess. So we started off doing a little bit of training with volunteers, getting some volunteers together, students and people who had come through, English Heritage called for volunteers, and some of them were mega-keen, weren’t they? And your group was quite keen.

INTERVIEWER: We were all mega-keen, or at least interested, from my point of view.

RESPONDENT: And so we gathered in a range of data and we surveyed some non-listed buildings as well, ones that had been highlighted in the core conservation area appraisal, the buildings of merit. And that for one reason was to get them to start doing something, because English Heritage kept delaying and delaying and we were worried we were going to lose the volunteers, and because several people had said they would like to do it on paper anyway. And two, as a means of us gathering some information, the Council getting this added value data so we weren’t just doing it all for English Heritage. And we managed to get some quite nice information out of that, actually. Not all of them got done but there was a lot. There were a lot of buildings. It was a big ask. But the information that came back from the non-listed buildings has all been fed back into the HER. So that has enhanced the HER.

INTERVIEWER: Wow.

RESPONDENT: Which was the whole point. Every building of merit, which was 500-odd of them individually, has been added to the HER and then maybe 100 of them have extra information that was surveyed by the volunteers.

INTERVIEWER: The volunteers, do they get to see what they’ve done because the access to the HER is-

RESPONDENT: The only way they can see that at the minute is through Heritage Gateway, and I don’t know how often that gets updated. It’s probably only updated every few months so I don’t know when that gets done. When I enhanced the buildings of merit, it was a case of saying they were surveyed as part of that study, any information that was written on the form, extra information, that was put in, and then the form itself was scanned in and linked so you could see the original form that somebody had used. And then photographs were put on there as well. So it did enhance it quite a lot, really. It would be nice to try and get, you
know, I don’t know how it works exactly but if there was another group of undergraduates or
something who were willing to go round and do that kind of thing, there’s still hundreds of
them to do.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I have contacts with the Univer...

RESPONDENT: So did that, and then the listed part of it came a little bit later when English
Heritage finally sorted everything out. But I don’t know how I feel about that. I mean, maybe
that’s not what you want to know. We got a lot of data out of that as well. Lots of buildings
were filled in; the surveys were filled in for a lot of buildings. Unfortunately, as it stands at the
minute, the information has been sent to English Heritage in that it was all uploaded by the
volunteers. So they sat at home, put it on, and that’s as far as it’s got, really, because English
Heritage were more interested in testing out the functionality. So they got that from us. But
they also got a whole heap of data.

INTERVIEWER: And you’re not sure what’s being done with it?

RESPONDENT: Well, it went through that moderation process, that’s right. So they got the
information and the Council are supposed to be able to get that information to put on our
HER. Now, there is a button on the website and it does work, but if you click on it and say,
‘Can I have this information for York, please,’ it sends you a bit table of Excel which I don’t
know what to do with. And I need to find out, actually. I need to find out if there’s a technical
way and who can do it of getting that information and putting it into the HER other than me
sitting and typing it in, which isn’t going to happen. When this thing starts properly and if
everyone starts doing it we’re going to have, how many listed buildings? About 1,600 or
something. I can’t physically do it, type them all in myself. So that’s at a bit of a standstill at
the minute. I think we’ve shelved that, how to get that data out, because we’re trying to put
this HER plan together and that would be part of that, you see.

INTERVIEWER: Will be part of that, yes, the HER.

RESPONDENT: Yes, that is a piece of information that would hopefully come in. So at the
minute, the Council aren’t really getting the benefit out of that information. But what we are
supposed to be doing is creating our Buildings at Risk register from the information that the
volunteers gave me. So once it went through all that moderation process, we came out with
a list. I can’t remember off the top of my head, but there was something like, I don’t know,
twelve or fourteen came out as vulnerable. But it was a bit awkward because some of them
came out as vulnerable just because they weren’t occupied, but they might be like- the way
that they worked it out was a bit odd. So some of them came out as vulnerable...

INTERVIEWER: So you are having to...

RESPONDENT: ...but I wouldn’t say that...

INTERVIEWER: ...moderate them again, aren’t you?

RESPONDENT: ...they were vulnerable. And there was maybe four came out that were at risk,
and you might think, ‘Okay, there’s something you might want to keep an eye on.’ So one of
the outputs was supposed to be this register, which I can see how that works. I could put the
register together with what I have now and then in the future, every time somebody does a
survey and it goes into the vulnerable or the at risk category, I get an email notification,
which is what happened every time you were moderating something.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right.

RESPONDENT: It was coming through in an email to me and it was saying, ‘This building is at
risk,’ or whatever, and then I could view it and put it on my list, or ignore it if I thought, ‘Oh,
no, it’s not.’ But I haven’t gone any further with that because, the problem with that is that
the Conservation Officer is probably the person that I need to speak to about it. I mean,
several of the buildings I’ve said, ‘Oh, there’s one here that I need you to just cast your eye
over,’ because I’m not a buildings person. I don’t have the expertise. I would hate to say
something’s fine and it not be. But the conservation officer doesn’t have the time. So I’ve sort
of taken it upon myself to make this list and try and create this list, but I haven’t pushed it
with conservation officer because it seems that the English Heritage app/website thing isn’t
happening yet.

INTERVIEWER: So it’s almost like there’s these different projects and you’re sort of stuck in a
position of not being able to move any further because of where English Heritage are, and
also because-

RESPONDENT: Well, technically the Buildings at Risk project is finished as far as we’re
concerned. I think we only got about fifteen grand or something. It was a very small project.
We got the money. It’s all been signed off. I wrote a little report, an eight/ten page report
just to say this is what we did. They’re all happy and that’s the job done as far as they’re
concerned. Obviously, when it starts working as a proper thing, I’m going to keep getting
these emails and whatnot coming back, which will be great in theory, but then there’s having
someone there to manage it, which at the minute is me. But I’m going to need a bit of help
occasionally from a buildings person. So it’s kind of just been shelved. I’m just waiting until it
all goes live and then I might get a bit busier with it. But technically, we don’t owe them
anything, if you know what I mean. We’re done.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Oh, and yes, just to clarify, I worked with you on the Heritage at Risk
program as one of your volunteer co-ordinators.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And I helped moderate some of these surveys, which was really interesting.
And we also had conversations about the functionality of the website, and because that
particular project...well, we’ll come back to that. It was about volunteers getting involved...

RESPONDENT: Yes, and some didn’t get involved...

INTERVIEWER: ...And gathering data.

RESPONDENT: ...in the end because of the technological problems from the English Heritage
site, the lack of Apple app.
INTERVIEWER: Yes. So okay, we’ve talked about characterisation of the area and the heritage or buildings at risk. Maybe you could talk just briefly about the HER. The HER project, I know that that’s emerging, having had conversations with Harry.

RESPONDENT: Yes. HER project, so we’re just trying to put together basically some ideas for a project to get some money from English Heritage, hopefully, and maybe the Heritage Lottery Fund to fund a bigger and better HER, basically enhancing the data that we’ve got, cleaning it up, enhancing it and then ultimately widening the access to it in order to widen knowledge and access to the HER in general, and also to I guess try and ease a little bit of pressure in the Council by letting people access it from outside and letting them deal with it themselves and add things to it themselves just to try and take a few tasks away from us. But that’s all in the pipeline, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, okay. And it’s also just because I have an insight into this. It’s also partly inspired by-

RESPONDENT: The Bristol Know Your Place. That’s the ultimate aim for an interface, a website/interface with the public. But Harry’s sort of split the project into three and the basic level, the first level, would simply be to clean and enhance what we have already, which is...

INTERVIEWER: Yes, which is what you’re working on.

RESPONDENT: ...what we desperately need. And I’m doing that behind the scenes already. But cleaning and enhancing that is a big job in itself. And then ultimately this all-singing, all-dancing website which is based on Know Your Place sounds like quite a good route to go down, really.

INTERVIEWER: Cool. Great, thank you. Talking about the widening of York and its historic environment, what are your concerns for York’s historic environment?

RESPONDENT: Since I came to work at York City Council I’ve been quite alarmed, actually, at the lack of resources in the Council to look after the historic environment. I’m struggling to sort of think back to specific examples, but if you take the HER as one example, I’ve worked on HERs up in Newcastle and I still do that now and I advance the HER up there as well, and just comparing the two, for example, I was just absolutely shocked when I was doing the characterisation and I was looking at the HER and I would notice that a dot was in completely the wrong place, for example. And I’m trying to make a nice, pretty map showing where events have occurred, yet there’s erroneous data everywhere. And I’m reading in a book that there’s been a watch and brief or something done and then I’m looking on the HER and it’s not there. And then if it is there, it just says watch and brief and it doesn’t say anything else and you’re like, ‘Well, this is completely useless.’

So there’s just one example which is quite worrying. The lack of resources, I mean they’re just the projects that I’ve worked on that we’ve talked about so far, but for the last year and a half, the last two years really, I’ve been working on the local plan and more recently with Harry just looking at the weekly planning applications that come in. And the amount just of the planning applications, for example, the amount of planning applications that have come...
in and I’ve said, ‘Oh, can we have a watch and brief on that one?’ and then the planner’s
come back and said, ‘Well, house went up next door two years ago, you never asked for
anything then,’ and that’s because it’s slipped through the net because there’s only been
Harry there to deal with it. So you’re never going to catch every—well, I say that, but maybe
things do slip through the net which is okay but in a city like York sometimes it’s a bit
worrying.

INTERVIEWER: When you say a city like York, is it—

RESPONDENT: Just I mean that you can barely put a spade in the ground without finding
something. I mean, it depends on where it is in the case, doesn’t it? There was one recently
that we flagged up. I can’t remember what village it was— one of the villages. And it was a
proposal for a couple of houses or something right next to a church. So we thought, ‘All
right, we want something there,’ but this was phase two of a development, where in phase
one we hadn’t asked for any archaeological condition whatsoever. And I showed it to Harry
and went, ‘Well, we haven’t asked for anything in there mind, otherwise they’ll kick off,’ and
Harry was like, ‘Oh yeah, that’s obviously slipped through the net,’ and for that particular
instance it shouldn’t have because it’s quite important. So we’re just telling planners at the
minute that we’ve got an extra resource, i.e. me, and we’re clamping down on things.

INTERVIEWER: You’re the extra resource?

RESPONDENT: I’m the extra resource. Sorry, I’ve completely forgotten your question.

INTERVIEWER: Oh no, it’s your concerns which I think—

RESPONDENT: The concerns, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: So lack of resources, really.

INTERVIEWER: And you being a resource.

RESPONDENT: And then the buildings, for example, we’ve got two full-time conservation
officers at the minute which has been reduced by I think half a post and a bit since I’ve been
there. Mark was threatened with a half post redundancy but he’s been saved, but you’d think
those two guys are working non-stop, especially the conservation officer. I feel so sorry for
her. But the amount of buildings in York and every one of them in the city centre more or
less, the older ones, they’ve all got medieval trusses in them and God knows what else, and
she can’t keep up. And again, people get away with things. I mean, there’s a hotel, isn’t there,
off Coney Street that’s in bother at the minute for doing things illegally. Not that that’s of
anyone’s fault in the Council necessarily, but things can happen and slip through the net is
my answer.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I think that’s a really key issue. On the flipside to that, your concerns are
there, what do you think with the roles that you’re doing, what are your sort of intentions
and do they feed back into alleviating the concerns?
RESPONDENT: Well one of the concerns is the green belt as well, with all the development that’s being proposed for that. Just since I’ve mentioned the green belt, when I was doing the local plan, I was doing the heritage impact appraisals for each of the proposed sites, so the big sites that are in the green belt, obviously I had my comments and my colleagues’ comments to sort of put together to say well this is not necessarily a very good thing and can you bring it in here and can you change it. So you have your input like that, your comments and things, but I don’t really feel that it’s necessarily going to save the day if you like. Things are going to happen. The city has to grow, doesn’t it?

And on the other side of it, so I’m an extra resource at the minute, so okay, we’re asking for things we might not have asked for before, things aren’t going to slip through the net now. So there’s a little bit of reassurance there. I’m trying to get myself more involved with that side of it so that there are two pairs of eyes to go out on site and things, because at the minute I’m just sort of dealing with a very small part of it and I’m still trying to learn and find my way. But I don’t feel very satisfied that I’m making a difference, if that’s what you mean. It doesn’t feel like that.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Say you had the resources and the team, what do you think you’d tackle first?

RESPONDENT: The concerns that I’ve just flagged up are kind of all littered with planning and building and the pressures of building in a city and things, aren’t they? So I don’t know what else we could do on that side of things, other than what we’re already doing, i.e. asking for evaluations, asking for excavations, because you can’t stop the development even if you do an excavation and find something. I mean Hungate is a good example of where it has been done properly, they excavated it over five years and found loads of stuff and got loads of research out of it. So I don’t know what we could do, really. I mean it’s not necessarily a concern, but I would like the people of York and the visitors to know more about the archaeology within the city centre and to know more about what’s around and about York.

INTERVIEWER: And it’s stuff that they don’t know already?

RESPONDENT: Yes. It’s hard to explain, but for example it’s not a concern but it’s just a sort of a wish. As you say, if you had a team-

INTERVIEWER: A wish?

RESPONDENT: Yes, if you had a team then for example if you think about archaeology in York just as a visitor or a layperson, you think of Vikings straight away, don’t you? And that’s just because of one place in the city whereas really the Roman stuff is probably the more important and there’s more of it, for starters. And revealing stuff like that to me is quite important. None of that’s being done. It probably is being done in a number of ways. There are books and things written on it, but for a layperson to access it easily, like a sign in the street or an app or something like that.

INTERVIEWER: Perfect. This is getting right on-
RESPONDENT: That's the kind of thing that I think we should be doing.

INTERVIEWER: Coincidentally you've gotten to the next part of the-

RESPONDENT: Oh, sorry.

INTERVIEWER: No, that's great.

RESPONDENT: It's because I'm wrapped up with planning at the minute at work because that's all I'm doing. Planning and HER at the minute is me, so there's no fancy - this is where the previous Heritage Officer was good at trying to get into these projects and getting money for them, whereas at the minute I'm just sort of being kept on as this extra resource. But for what's needed, planning and sorting out the HER.

INTERVIEWER: So you say planning is sort of like that's the necessary stuff?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: But then there's another wish that the revealing of the archaeology -

RESPONDENT: Which was part of the characterisation and I guess a little bit part of Buildings at Risk and there are 101 projects out there that I'd like to do, but it's a case of having money, isn't it?

INTERVIEWER: And time.

RESPONDENT: It's difficult not having a defined role at work. I think I find that extremely difficult, because all the work I'm doing right now is work that I've just carved out for myself so I can keep my job, basically. I know that sounds terrible but its work that needs to be done but it's not just made up work. And I know they want me to help with, you know, how the local plan all stalled and it will be coming back to life again, so I know they want me to continue with that when it comes back, but all these other nice projects and things require getting money from somewhere and having that drive which is what the previous Heritage Officer did and kind of was the previous Heritage Officer's role, whereas I have no experience in doing that. It's not really my role whatever my role is.

INTERVIEWER: This kind of revealing and the stuff that you say that the previous Heritage Officer did with the characterisation and to an extent with the Building at Risk, this is where my sort of line of enquiry is, about sharing information. I guess because of what I've been seeing through having conversations with people, you see two kinds of sharing information. There's information sharing say for the characterisation areas, that's like a mapping system which gives information to the person who's looking at it. At the other end of the spectrum the Buildings at Risk is where there's some information given but then there's also some information given back. I mean, the characterisation area could be both, but I don't know if you have an opinion on it. You said books, that's a way of like just being given information, you can't give back. I just wonder if you thought that there was room, like which one is more effective?
RESPONDENT: Well, with the characterisation, I wondered and I think the previous Heritage Officer wondered ultimately something like the Lincoln Connect, Heritage Connect or something to do with Lincoln? Heritage Connect I think it is, where they basically did a characterisation study, much smaller areas, they had much smaller defined character areas whereas ours are quite big and to be honest some of them probably could be done with being split up. But we were kind of restricted so we just had to do our best, really. But we both wanted something like that where you would have this proper website where all the information was available but then you could feed back through comments and you could comment on something or upload a photograph, that kind of thing. I'm not entirely sure from memory how it works other than literally comment on the website. I mean, you can't change a document, but maybe it could be reviewed periodically and then updated based on the comments. I don't know. But that's the kind of thing we both wanted to head for but we knew we couldn't do it with the money allocated for the Characterisation Project as it was. That would have to be a separate new thing. So obviously that's never happened. But I guess with this new HER project that we're trying to get together, we want to have a layer that's this community layer where people can add things, and it won't be defined by a character area. That will just be anything. And I'm really interested in that side of things, actually, because Bristol Know Your Place does that quite well, I think, where you turn on the community layer and then there's a point, and you look at that and someone's uploaded a photograph of something or a memory of something.

INTERVIEWER: I'm just going to stop it.

[END OF RECORDING]
RESPONDENT: Thinking about the characterisation project again so, as it stands, it’s just us feeding people information. Although there was a very, very, very small period of time when I did get some input from other people. But I think the characterisation project, as it is, works quite well as a way of getting information to people. Maybe not so much in-house but for the members of the public, they seem to like it and it’s been quite useful for them.

But it’s good as far as it goes, isn’t it really? But what I wanted to do was have some sort of workshop or something like that where people could come in and give me information somehow that could be put into that product. I know that is web based as well, in that there’s no printed copies of it available. But you could print off the PDF and have it bound in the house, couldn’t you?

That was the idea, have some sort of workshops and things but even then that’s just like a one-off thing, isn’t it? And then do you mean continuously getting information? It’s difficult.

INTERVIEWER: It would be...I think the idea of mapping is really interesting and people have done things like local maps where they’ve created characters, the visual things. And those...they’re very different to the comprehensiveness of the characterisation areas, and the way that they gather information. They’re more about communities and their...

RESPONDENT: Uh-huh. And I was interested in that. I wanted to know where my character areas differed from other peoples. And I knew that there would be instances where people say, ‘Well I think I’m in that area but I live on this side of the line.’ So I wanted to do those workshops and things if we had a second phase. But I knew I would be opening up a can of worms and asking for a bit of trouble at the same time.

I mean there was a few people that helped me who weren’t online, but it was a case of literally sending papers through the post which wasn’t ideal. But in the past, I’ve done stuff with, in a former life, I’ve done stuff like this before where we’ve gone and spoken to...I went and spoke to, was it the Women’s Institute or something? No, it was a mothers’ club. I went to speak to this mothers’ club and, of course, they were all quite old.

And they were all dead keen to do this memories of the village type activity thing. And that was all paper based, and it was literally a case of going prepared with printouts and maps of the village from 1930 and things like that. And I said, ‘Right. There you go, go home and fill in what you can.’ And they came back with all sorts of stuff. Someone had drawn the whole High Street and labelled all the shops from 1950 and things like that.

And, of course, I end up with all of this paper information which I had to sit and transcribe onto the computer basically. Or I think some of the things we just scanned in and put in the final book that we were making. So you’d be more inclusive but then you’re creating a whole load of work for yourself. And it depends how much time you’ve got, doesn’t it?

INTERVIEWER: Mm.
RESPONDENT: I don’t know what the answer is to that. It’s...

INTERVIEWER: Well this is what my PhD is kind of looking at.

RESPONDENT: There is no answer, is there?

INTERVIEWER: So there’s an answer but it’s about that thick. There’s several answers [0:04:36].

RESPONDENT: Very short answer is I want people to be involved, I want people’s opinions, I want somehow to be able to put all that together and show it, but I don’t know what the best way to do that is. And it seems that the best way really is the web, but it does exclude people. But in twenty years time, will it exclude anybody? I don’t know. You’ve got to think about the future really, haven’t you?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, got to think about the future. Right, where am I going next? So we’ve done that one. So the last two questions are probably going to be quite short. I’m working on the Red Tower Project with a group of volunteers, and we are now trying to work out whether it can be turned into a community cafe. And…which is kind of ironic because we are both sitting in a cafe in a part of the city walls and I think you recommended that we come here.

RESPONDENT: I did because I wanted to come for [unclear – 0:05:37.3].

INTERVIEWER: You came…you decided to come here. And I was very happy to because I’ve not been here yet, and this is kind of relevant to what I’m trying to do. What would you…I’m starting to ask people what, so far the Red Tower is a…it’s a brick house on the city walls. It’s the only brick house of the city walls.

RESPONDENT: How old is it?

INTERVIEWER: It’s, well, originally built 1590, had loads of renovations because it got damaged during the Civil War and the current renovations are 1857.

RESPONDENT: Right, okay.

INTERVIEWER: So, and it’s got two stories and it’s about this, maybe a bit smaller actually than the space in Walmgate Cafe that we’re sat in. So I guess, I mean the people that I’m working with, and myself as well, we’re sharing an intention to try and make it so that it’s like a community space, that it’s not excluding the people that live right next to it if we were to turn it into something.

And…but, at the same time, coming from a heritage background, I’m really interested in this kind of revealing of information about the building itself and it being a heritage aspect. Whereas the people that I’m working with are maybe a bit more about just getting people together.

RESPONDENT: Just using it, yeah.
INTERVIEWER: And not so much about the building itself. Although they do like the building itself. So I guess what I’m asking is if you were in my shoes, bearing in mind the community inclusion stuff we’ve been talking about, what would you do in my shoes? If you had all the resources and the time with the Red Tower.

RESPONDENT: Mm. You mean...you don’t mean what would I use it for? Because you want to use it as a community...so you haven’t got a use for it? It’s not going to be a cafe or it’s not going to be...

INTERVIEWER: We’d like it to be a cafe but I think we’d more like it to be a social space for people that live next to it. And I think that considering that this place is so nicely done, that might be seen as a little bit of a different class, clientele. It wouldn’t be as openly attractive to the people that live right opposite, especially as it’s on the Walls and lots of tourists come past as well. So there’s all these different...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, and you don’t want it to be a touristy place, do you?

INTERVIEWER: That’s exactly it. We don’t want it to be a touristy place.

RESPONDENT: Because you walk past this cafe, you want a coffee, you think, ‘Oh. Go for a coffee.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But you don’t necessarily want loads of tourists traipsing past there, do you, and going in. Honestly, I don’t know.

INTERVIEWER: That’s cool, that’s cool.

RESPONDENT: I mean some sort of classes, like classes or something. I mean if it’s not very big, is there a, thinking about this area of the city, I really don’t know, but I mean is there an art class or a yoga class or...

INTERVIEWER: It’s really interesting you saying that. It’s really...because the...there used to be...because we’re sat in an area that is part of my patch that I’m doing the research on. And down, up Walmgate, there’s a...there used to be a space called Space 109 and it used to be a community space where they did art classes.

RESPONDENT: Oh right.

INTERVIEWER: For young people. But it wasn’t in...it was in one of the shops.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And so we’re trying to maybe do something like that but in the Red Tower.

RESPONDENT: That’s the kind of thing that, just literally just off the top of my head, have not thought about it at all, is the kind of thing I would imagine you haven’t got a massive space. Yeah, maybe like a yoga class or something or some sort of internet lessons for old people, that kind of thing.
INTERVIEWER: There is that going around actually in the area.

RESPONDENT: Is there? Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. They have a little community club in the Walmgate area and it's...

RESPONDENT: So if you've already got a community club in the Walmgate area, can some of the classes not go there occasionally?

INTERVIEWER: It's not that kind of club. It's, and it's very, this particular community club, it's very small and they...I don't think they really utilize that space. I don't think very many people know about that space.

RESPONDENT: There isn't a history group, is there? Or is there a history...

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: Is the closest one Fulford, Heslington and...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and maybe Tang Hall.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Tang Hall's got a history club.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. They've probably got somewhere.

INTERVIEWER: Are you suggesting that maybe I...

RESPONDENT: I'm just thinking of a meeting place, if you're having meetings. I mean it's the kind of thing that if they've already got somewhere to meet, that's fine but if they're meeting in some sort of 1960s community centre in Tang Hall, then why not come there for a little bit? Like a one-off or something, have a look or...

I think it would have to be, for me, it would have to be a hybrid of the two. A community thing that's going to be used by the community members and be valued as a space, but also something that can be used...it can be used occasionally to value the historic fabric of the building as well. So not tourists, there's already a plaque outside the Red Tower, isn't there?

INTERVIEWER: There's several.

RESPONDENT: So there is...so if you're a tourist walking past, you read, I think I've read a plaque and really that's all you need to do or know as a tourist, isn't it? But I think it would be great to raise the awareness of it within the community and, yeah, but have it maybe as a hybrid. So social use, say like a yoga class or something, and then maybe people who are interested in history and things can come and use it as a meeting place occasionally. Or maybe they could practice doing some building recording or something or...don't know.

INTERVIEWER: So I mean...

RESPONDENT: It's a toughie.
INTERVIEWER: It is.

RESPONDENT: But you're right. You don't want to turn it into something like this, as nice as this is, because it's kind of quiet, isn't it? I mean and the Red, it's part of the Walls, isn't heavy footfall traffic and it's got to be something for the residents, hasn't it?

INTERVIEWER: Well that's what we're hoping. And I guess my next question is, wrapping up, where do...do you live in York?

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: Newcastle.

INTERVIEWER: You're living in Newcastle.

RESPONDENT: Mmm-hm.

INTERVIEWER: So do you feel like...I mean a lot of this is about people who live in...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And a lot of my projects are about how people who live here, what they want the historic environment for, what they feel about it. Do you feel that you've got a perspective like a resident for York? Or is it more of a work thing?

RESPONDENT: It's a toughie. It's more of a work thing I think, but I have lived here before just for a year. And I do have quite a connection to it. I think it's just a work thing but maybe it's just this general feeling that I have. Maybe like you, because you're not from York, are you?

INTERVIEWER: Not originally from York, no.

RESPONDENT: Where you just feel that the community or a community, wherever it is, should...you want the best for that community, if you know what I mean? If it's their Red Tower, then you want them to use their Red Tower and you could apply that anywhere, couldn't you?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So yeah. I do feel quite...I'm very attached to York, yeah. Sometimes I find it difficult, I think, 'Well most people who work, especially in my team, don't live in York but they would all defend everything and protect everything as best they could.' It is interesting.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, no. I'm exactly in the same position at the moment where I find myself going, 'I really want to make this a good thing, a positive thing.' The Red Tower that is.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Yeah, I think you can probably just apply it anywhere because like I was mentioning about those old projects that I'd done in the past when I was at the mothers' club and things. They weren't...I didn't live there either. It was a village in County Durham but
I had a connection with them as well in that, one, I wanted to help them, not find out about...well they did find out about their village, in terms of they probably didn't know about some of the archaeology and some of the things we turned up doing. Like academic type research.

But they had obviously far more information than we could ever find out all stored in their heads, which is all this thing about drawing the High Street in 1940 or 1950 because that isn't recorded anywhere. So I wanted to help them unlock that and put it in something presentable. And I cared about that as a thing and...but I also did have a bit of a connection with them in that I'm from County Durham as well. And it was a bit of a connection in like, 'Oh we're just a small pit village and we've got no money sort of thing.'

So I think sometimes it's nice to have a proper connection, like I've got a connection with York, but I feel that I could apply it anywhere even if I didn't have a personal connection if I moved somewhere. Because you just get to know places and things, don't you, and...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah you do.

RESPONDENT: It must just be something inside, you just sort of care. I don't want to see the historic environment trashed. I mean when I...or even just forgotten about because when I was doing the characterisation, I would go around on my little cycle and I'd just notice something like a little...not even a milestone. It was just like a little stone, an arch stone boundary marker or something, just literally in the grass verge in the middle of Tang Hall at a crossroads of two busy streets.

I was like, 'What's that?' And I went and cleared all the grass away and it was...it had a date on it with 1857 or something. And it was one of these boundary stones of something, like the edge of something. And it had obviously been left there in the '30s when Tang Hall was made, but it was just there all forgotten. And I'm not suggesting stick a big interpretation board and all that.

But I thought, 'Well it's worth mentioning though. It's worth flagging up and taking a photo of,' and you just want people to have a bit of respect for things.

INTERVIEWER: Nice that element of discovery.

RESPONDENT: There's loads of stuff honestly. I mean when I did the characterisation, we found...in Acomb I was wandering around and it's like buildings just in streets that have, you know the hay doors at the top? Like a loading door where you would throw things.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I think I know what you mean, yeah, yeah.

RESPONDENT: A high door where you would throw things down at a cart and that sort of thing, and pulleys like that on the side of walls. And I would take a photo of it, go back to Harry and say, 'What's that?' 'I don't know. It's not on the HER, it's just a thing in the middle of York.'
I mean there is hundreds of things like that. And then in South Bank, there's all sorts of weird and wonderful things which is why I suggested on nearly all the characterisation things that they need to do surveys of things. Get schoolchildren out and go and get them to do a street survey, because they're ripping up lampposts left, right and centre. 1930s lampposts, they're ripping up the paving from the backstreets left, right and centre.

I was writing the characterisation and I was saying, 'We should aim to keep this nice paving and this, that and the other. It's part of the character of South Bank.' And I'm getting an email from Leeds for North saying they're ripping up paving around South Bank. A different person in the Council. I'm like, 'Well I can't do anything about it.' It's crazy though, isn't it? Absolutely crazy.

And the lamppost thing just really got me going. It was on one of the Google Street View images. There was literally...it was the day of the lamppost change and you could see them. Like the old ones had all the bollards around them and then they were putting in new ones. Just horrible black new ones replacing green iron '30s ones.

And here's me, on the other hand, saying, 'There's several...so much percent of lampposts exist in Heworth. Can we try and retain them please?' And there they were ripping them up.

INTERVIEWER: Does that happen very often? That you just, you're saying one thing and then the opposite is happening elsewhere and just...

RESPONDENT: Not really. That's the only time I've ever come across it, but it's not...just because I was saying we shouldn't do it, it wasn't like it was a mandatory thing. It was just a recommendation, but it is pretty poor if the Council have recommended something, one person and another person is doing something else. But I don't know how you would ever stop that. Unless it was in the local plan, I don't know how you would stop it.

INTERVIEWER: Or the...is the neighbourhood plan.

RESPONDENT: The neighbourhood plan, yeah. I don't know how, I don't know how they work to be honest.

INTERVIEWER: I think you should...yeah, I mean considering you talked about boundaries, the neighbourhood plans are creating boundaries in the same way that the characterisation has created boundaries.

RESPONDENT: Neighbourhood plans, have they...they've replaced village design statements, haven't they?

INTERVIEWER: They are more...they've got weight to them.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Got statutory weight. I think there are still village design statements but I think people are assuming that, from what I've heard from other people, village design statements don't have the weight of a neighbourhood plan. So why do...why not just do...
RESPONDENT: I know they phased out, they're not doing anymore. Because that's something I would quite like to get into. I know nothing about it and it's not in any part of my area of job. But it's kind of an interesting thing that if someone does come forward and say, 'Can we do a neighbourhood plan?' Then surely they should be pointed towards the characterisation project just as a starter.

INTERVIEWER: As a resource.

RESPONDENT: As a resource, yeah, and as an idea. And they can disagree with it because that's what it's there for I suppose, but...

INTERVIEWER: Harry sent me an email about the neighbourhood planning consultation stuff that's been happening, and part of it is done by the guys that did the Heritage Lincoln stuff. And they did a consultation where they asked people what they thought about using museums, art clubs and the HER as a resource. I'll send you the email.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, that would be good.

INTERVIEWER: And you can have a read of it but yeah. Cool, that's everything I've...

RESPONDENT: Is that it?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that's, yeah [unclear – 0:20:44.1].

RESPONDENT: I suppose I should get...

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 8: 13-10-16 Group Interview West Offices Gill, Mike, Betty, Hannah & Mark

INTERVIEWER: So we’ve had a bit of an icebreaker. And you all know me through doing your interviews. I just want to pass that around in case anybody – just as a refresher. It’s the information sheet that I gave you at the beginning of the interviews. I thought this morning, I would go through some of the tactics and different community strategies that people have been using in their day-to-day practice. And I have spoken to a few other people who aren’t here today, but I’m bringing those ideas in too. Essentially, with the heritage, and I think with heritage management specifically, there seems to be three main areas (and Hannah will probably be able to help me with this a bit) that overlap. And those would be planning, the Historic Environment Record (which feeds into planning), and – Well we’ll start with those two, just talking about planning. And the Historic Environment Record.

Can you explain what the Historic Environment Record is? And how it relates to planning?

RESPONDENT 1: Has anybody heard of the Historic Environment Record?

RESPONDENT 4: I’ve heard of it.

RESPONDENT 1: You’ve heard of it?

RESPONDENT 4: I don’t know what it is! [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Lots of shaking heads.

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 1: It’s essentially, a database of all things– Well I was going to say all things historical, that’s not quite right. It started off as basically a site of monument records in the past. So a list of stuff in the city that was historic or was deemed valuable, or important. It would have started off with listed buildings, walls, the Minster – that sort of thing.

And over the years, as it’s grown over the last 25 years or so, they have become all of sorts of beasts. Most local authorities have their own HER, and they’re all slightly different, which also adds to the complexity of them.

Some Councils have their own dedicated HER [unclear – 0:02:28.8] so theirs is maintained regularly and up-to-date and is enhanced regularly. And others don’t, and rely on staff – like here, with Harry, for example, just trying to keep it up-to-date as best as possible.
So, it’s a list of things, like I said. But also, if an archaeological excavation takes place, for example, (this is where it links with the planning system) that excavation is also recorded on the HER. So, it’s basically monuments (the stuff); it records events (the digs, or any piece of research that a student might do, for example); and then it has a database of sources as well (which would be reports that link to those events). And all of these are recorded on a GIS system, which is linked to the database. Any new archaeological evidence that comes to light in a dig, that would also be recorded as part of the monument element, if you like.

So they all run along those sorts of lines. They have that those sorts of elements – the things, the events, the sources.

But as I say, different ones across the country have different levels of input. Some of them have online, fancy websites, where communities can input their own information, for example, about a place that feels important to them.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, can you talk about (are you referring to the Bristol...?)...

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, as an example.

INTERVIEWER: ...can you explain? Because I think that’s really interesting about the community aspect.

RESPONDENT 1: Basically, I think they have a GIS map system on their website that anyone can go on. And you go on a community layer, where you can see somebody might have highlighted an area, a playground even, that’s been there for quite a few years and they used to play at as a child, or something, so they value that space. And they can go on and put a point on a map and insert a little story about what happened at that playground or whether it used to have a particular name or memories linked to that place. Add photographs – that kind of thing.

That’s it at one level. Or at another level, someone might have some lumps and bumps in their background and they might highlight that and put a pin on that and say, ‘There are these interesting things in the garden. Here’s a photo of them.’

And at some point, hopefully, someone from the Council might have a quick look through that if they ever had time and that might be something of interest that we didn’t know about.

That’s an emerging side of the HER, this community involvement. Traditionally, and in York at the minute, it’s really almost a closed book. The only people that can upload information onto it are people within the organisation. There is a web-based way of accessing the information but it’s a very cut-down version and it doesn’t use GIS or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: With the Heritage Gateway?

RESPONDENT 1: The Heritage Gateway. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve used it before...
RESPONDENT 1: It's not great.

INTERVIEWER: ...it's okay. I used it for my MA, actually.

RESPONDENT 1: Oh, right.

INTERVIEWER: And I found it quite accessible and you can see descriptions of buildings in pretty layman's terms.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, it's a public version. But if you are a planner or a developer and you need information for a desk-based assessment to do with a valuation or something on a site, you would have to contact myself or Harry and get a full search done of the information available, because you can't just rely on the public site – it's not fully up-to-date. It's not real-time.

Does that answer the question?

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Thanks.

RESPONDENT 1: I could go on forever about it!

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. It’s a veritable—Harry calls it a labyrinth because it’s got so many different layers. And Hannah’s trying to tidy it up so that you can go forward with this community engagement stage.

RESPONDENT 1: They are all different. I work on the one in Newcastle as well and that’s simply using an Access database and a GIS system. Whereas here we use bespoke software that is just tailor-made for HERs. So it’s completely different.

And they are different all over the country. In some places, I think they have even stopped updating them altogether, because they were going to bring it in and then they split up the heritage – was it the white paper? Or something a few years ago? I can’t remember. They were going to make them a statutory requirement, which they probably should be, to be honest, because they are the main point of information for any development. Any planning application that I see, I look on the HER as the first point of call to see what’s important about that site.

RESPONDENT 2: So you can search geographically, can you?

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: You can do like a polygon on the map and have a look within that?

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah. So, I would look at a place and say, ‘Oh yes, there’s a Roman burial somewhere near here.’ That informs all of the decisions. But unfortunately, that Bill was never passed. They aren’t statutory. Hence, they are all in various states.

INTERVIEWER: So, they are more an information...

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: ...well that people can dip into but not necessarily...

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...if they practised every day they might be able to do it.

But I know that, thinking about how the HER potentially gets used by not only the people in the council but people outside, community groups—I know that there has been a study lately, by the Locus Consultancy, that worked on neighbourhood planning. And they have accessed, worked with, community groups on how they can access HERs and archives.

And they’re sort of saying that these kinds of layers of information, whatever state they are in, can be accessed by community groups to enable them to bolster their neighbourhood planning.

So, on that note, I wanted to ask you, Gill, just to talk a bit about your work on neighbourhood planning and the kinds of experiences you’ve had with the information that’s been used in neighbourhood planning?

RESPONDENT 2: In relation to heritage?

INTERVIEWER: In relation to heritage.

RESPONDENT 2: Okay.

You know the general background to neighbourhood planning? About it being basically an extra tier of planning at the neighbourhood level, the community level. Allowing people to develop policies and a plan that supports their community and their wishes for their area.

Quite a few of the ones that have been developed in York are with the outlying villages, and a lot of those have historic centres. Some of them have their conservation areas. And they have been referred to in the emerging neighbourhood plans. More in relation to, ‘We need to preserve this. Therefore, we don’t want any more development.’ That sort of thing.

So they are using it in that way, rather than trying to enhance the historic environment and heritage. It’s used more as a tool to prevent any change to the village.

There are others that are a bit more positive, where they are looking at locally important heritage assets. So not the listed buildings or the conservation area, but as you were saying Hannah, about things that are important to their community, with their own memories. And they have certain names, like in Bolton there is something called the Lido, and it’s not a Lido, it’s a section of the river where people used to swim. It’s just historically known as the Lido. It’s not protected through any national or local policy. But that’s something that through their neighbourhood plan, they’ve developed policies to protect it from any change.

From that perspective, I think neighbourhood planning is useful to protect areas. And it works from a natural perspective, not just heritage. Like if you have green spaces that are particularly important for local people, they can protect it through the neighbourhood plan. And of course, heritage can be as well.
I was going to ask you though, Historic England, one of the statutory bodies that I consult with, do they have access to the Historic Environment Record? Or is it just the council officers?

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah! It’s just us! [laughing]

RESPONDENT 2: Right. Because obviously, they provide comments on any emerging neighbourhood plan, and they would flag up if there was likely to be any impact on the national assets. But then I suppose it would be down to us and our officers to pull up if there is anything else on the Historic Environment Record. Especially if the communities can’t access it yet.

INTERVIEWER: That is a consideration. There must have some kind of d...

RESPONDENT 1: I don’t know how...

INTERVIEWER: ...database.

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah, I don’t know how it works. They couldn’t look at ours because, like I say, it’s an in-house system. An HBSMR system.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe they just access the Heritage Gateway.

RESPONDENT 1: They can go to the Heritage Gateway, of course, but they’ve got their...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: ...I don’t know, because they can clearly look at listed buildings records and all that kind of higher-level stuff...

RESPONDENT 2: But that’s what we rely on when we’re looking at, say, we’re doing strategic environmental assessments, we have to look at impacts on the historic environment. And we rely on the statutory body flagging up if there is going to be any impact on the historic assets.

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:12:56.0] ...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...as informed as possible.

RESPONDENT 2: Completely comprehensive, but actually there’s that extra tier, that we should be...highlighting, I think.

INTERVIEWER: So, would you say that potentially having access to the HER as a team, that might be...

RESPONDENT 3: Well I don’t mind.

[laughter]
RESPONDENT 2: Well we could put in a formal request to Harry, or Hannah or someone.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: You know, if it’s on their work programme that they will advise on emerging neighbourhood plans. Because they’ll only need to do it maybe once, to flag up any key sites and any key assets. And as the thing emerges, if it looks like any proposals or policies are going to have an effect, then we could take it further. But I think it’s just that initial sweep.

We are looking at providing, well, parishes or people producing neighbourhood plans, almost like a package of information. So, from our team’s perspective, we’re providing maps and detailed information about sites that have come forward for housing, employment and things, through the local plan process. So they can have a full view of all the sites we’ve ever looked at.

We’re also giving them map layers and information about natural sites and historic sites. So, that could be something that at the outset we can say, ‘Look, these are on the Historic Environment...’

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:14:23.0] would, yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: ...yeah, in your area.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: If you want more information. So, yeah, it could be useful.

INTERVIEWER: I wonder, the reason that I think it’s really important to have Betty and Mike here is because the conversations that you have with community groups on the ground – this is what your focus is on. [laughing]

And you have experience with the Reinvigorate York and particular things happening in your particular wards. I just wonder if there is anything that could be brought from communities and neighbourhood-like things, to something like the negotiation of local planning and neighbourhood planning?

That’s kind of where I’m going with this.

RESPONDENT 3: There are mechanisms for discussion, I think, as something that can be linked in. So, community groups, parish councils, or whatever, could work with the Communities and Equalities team through their Reinvigorated ward committee system to hold local discussions.

Because sometimes, just getting people in a room and starting the conversation is quite tricky. There’s experience within the team around how to facilitate conversations about some quite difficult things.
And I don’t see there being any difference between the two— I don’t particularly care about heritage, but I don’t see any difference between the sorts of opposing or non-complimentary views on things that you will get over things like street lighting, for instance. We spend a lot of time on street lighting, because you’d get half the village saying, ‘This village is in the dark ages and we’ve got no proper street lights.’ And the other half of the village says, ‘That’s why we live here! We like it! We like the old rusty columns, don’t touch them, don’t put new ones up! We want this.’ So you would get these opposing views.

But then we get other conversations that are not necessarily difficult, but they are about bringing people together and being able to discuss things. And the Reinvigorate York is a good example of that— such as where a statue should go or what sort of materials are used. That sort of thing was quite interesting and people were very animated about those issues. And they wanted to touch the example of the stone, and they wanted to play about the map; and they wanted to see what things would look like. So, I think it’s about that sort of thing.

INTERVIEWER: Is that like Gill was saying, a toolkit...

RESPONDENT 2: About information...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah. About having conversations and how to facilitate an event, and what sort of questions you can ask to start people talking about something, in a positive manner rather than, ‘Do you like this, or do you not like this?’ That sort of conversation that can make a lot of...

INTERVIEWER: I guess Mark, you have some interesting experience with that.

RESPONDENT 5: Probably as a team, before planning was in-house, certainly with the last round of the local planning consultations, for which we had to get security in at some point. Because the thing about local planning is your either putting housing into a village or somewhere where they don’t want the housing— So people do get quite animated about it, and they can’t appreciate the reasons behind what you’re doing, they just don’t want it. And that’s a very difficult thing to overcome.

And you get people in your face, pointing at you. Thankfully, I haven’t suffered it personally, but I think other members of the team did.

And when we were dealing with very, very angry people, how do you mediate that and actually either just let them shout at you and then try and convert them back to why you’re doing; or just let them shout and leave it? That’s the very difficult balance.

RESPONDENT 2: I think there’s just no changing some people’s minds.
RESPONDENT 2: I think certain issues– Housing is one.

Gypsy and travellers' sites is one that I deal with and people just cannot see past their stereotypical view of not wanting them living nearby. And there is nothing you can say that will change their mind.

So I think your idea of just letting them shout and not getting upset and shouting back.

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah. The more you try and convert people, then you get two angry people! [laughing]

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: And it doesn’t solve anything.

RESPONDENT 3: And there’s a critical mass, isn’t there?

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: About feeling what that room is like at the time – 600 people shouting– you’re not going to bring back down to something reasonable, no matter what you try.

Smaller groups, sometimes you can then challenge back, but it’s mixed. The issue around the Local Plan– I had lots of neighbours that weren’t talking to me for a while because I wouldn’t sign a petition against something. They would come back round, but it was almost like you were working for the enemy. You won’t get involved.

RESPONDENT 3: And it really was quite bitter at a point. And you can see how people have been motivated in some of the villages to raise fighting funds. And all sorts of things where they’ve been so animated, haven’t they?

RESPONDENT 5: Hm.

RESPONDENT 3: So it’s a toughie. Especially when people are very animated about something. Passionate. But especially when you get into the city centre – people get really passionate don’t they? About how they view it, and everybody’s got a slightly different take.

INTERVIEWER: Is information sharing, allowing people as much information as they can possibly get everything that is available? Is that a step towards working something out as a two-sided…?

RESPONDENT 2: I find sometimes, particularly in relation to, say, the housing, if you try to give them all of the information that we’ve used to come up with whichever housing sites, you get, ‘You’re just bombarding us with information. We don’t understand this.’

If you try and summarise it – ‘Now you’re just picking out the [laughing] best bits.’
So it's a very difficult situation, providing the right amount of information that doesn't look like we're hiding things.

RESPONDENT 5: Unless...

RESPONDENT 4: Which is difficult.

RESPONDENT 2: It's overload.

RESPONDENT 4: I think one of the most common complaints that we pick up in public meetings, or in surveys and so on, is the feeling that people can't find the information. Or they think that we have it but we won't reveal it.

And I think you're right, you are sort of damned if you do, damned if you don't. But I always take great comfort in being able to tell somebody where the information is. If they want to look at it. Or telling them who to speak to if they want more information. It seems to alleviate the anxiety if you can say to somebody, 'It's all there. It's all here. You can go and look at it in your own time. You might not understand it, but it's there. And maybe you could find somebody who could help you to understand it.'

INTerviewer: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: It's not a need to know, it's a want to know thing. Isn't it?

RESPONDENT 4: Yes.

RESPONDENT 5: Yes.

RESPONDENT 3: If you want to know more go and find it here, but here are the key facts. It's that sort of thing, isn't it, really?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. I guess so.

RESPONDENT 5: You might consider doing a layered approach to it. So you've got the summary information, which is the more readily digestible...

RESPONDENT 2: Might be easier...

RESPONDENT 5: ...easier to understand...


RESPONDENT 2: 'Put wind turbines all over the City.'

RESPONDENT 5: And then people say, 'Well, you're not putting the information used to reach that decision.'

Well, then the next layer down is all the more complex stuff to explain that. But actually, setting up those layers...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.
RESPONDENT 5: ...tracking them through, maybe moving as the way that the internet
does, that you have menus, sub menus, sub...

INTERVIEWER: Hm.

RESPONDENT 5: ...all the way through, could be an approach to take. But I don't think
that we've necessarily tried that because we just have the plan and all the supporting
documents...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. We haven’t...

RESPONDENT 5: ...behind it.

RESPONDENT 2: ...got the time or the resources to then start doing summaries of
summaries and...

RESPONDENT 5: And that’s what the inspector said. When we had the core strategy
going and basically, he was a bit rude, and said, ‘I can’t be bothered to read 1,000
documents.’ In effect, ‘I want the information in a ready...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: ...presentable way.’

But, it’s finding out what level of information you need to put in that ready, fileable way.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 4: Producing a document for public consumption, for a layman’s
consumption, is quite a skill. Isn’t it really? And in the council, I think, across the council, we
often get it wrong. And that was falling out in the review of the website.

And some of the reports that even go to council committees – I would suspect officers and
councillors struggle to understand some of them. Let alone [unclear – 0:23:59.5] galore.
[laughing]

That’s a really important part of it. It’s not just how much information you provide, but how
it’s presented.

INTERVIEWER: We’ve had examples of when it’s not gone so well, but have you got examples
of when it has gone well?

Maybe those are things that could be considered A) in how to approach neighbourhood
planning or local plans, but also B) by the HER, because that’s got to consider how it
presents itself to a public [audience], and whether or not it’s going to be information
overload or...

RESPONDENT 2: I think people find visual things far more helpful than long reports.
That’s partly why you have a proposals map with the Local Plan. So that the information is
there and people can see it in the context of their own home. It also works at the
neighbourhood level.
The information that I provide to them, rather than being a list of sites, all the housing sites are given and I provide a map with it, so they can put the sites in context to aid their understanding.

I think that's something we do quite a lot. Spatial planning is what we're all about.

RESPONDENT 5: Hm.

RESPONDENT 4: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: For the Heritage Impact Assessments for the Local Plan, we presented the written information in a table format, and there was a slimline version. The slimline version (because we assess everything against the six principle characteristics of the heritage of York), was literally the six characteristics, and then there was a green, orange or red grading (depending on the severity of the impact), as an at-a-glance guide.

Then there was a beefier document, which was the table, and that went through each of the characteristics. And each characteristic has several sub-characteristics. It told you what each of those was and how each of those was impacted, and then what the mitigation might be as well. But it was very simple terms. Not in loads of detail.

That seemed to work. I don't know how the public read it, but that seemed to work. And similarly, with the characterisation project that I was involved with a couple of years ago, those documents were essentially for public consumption and they were written quite simply. And they were very, very visual. We did a whole suite of maps at the end. Interpretations of maps and things like that. To try and spell things out for people.

RESPONDENT 3: So that goes back to the levels of information, but also being able to visualise what it is that... (I've lost my point whilst I was listening to you!)

[START OF SECOND RECORDING]

RESPONDENT 3: ...accessible information at a level that people want to access. And you also counteract the misinformation that does create the 600 people in a room that are pointing that you can't calm back down.

Because we do have some characters in the city that do like to put out snippets of information, out of context, that are then going to whip up– I'm trying to think of things like the Tour de France, and some of the areas where the roads were going to be closed for, oh, a whole day. And people were saying, 'People are going to die because ambulances aren't going to get through.' And, you know, all of this stuff, 'What are you doing to your residents?'

'Well, hang on a minute, there are plans here, there are ways, we can tell you all about it.'

But when people are– 20,000...

RESPONDENT 2: It's like that...

RESPONDENT 3: ...people and rising. They can't hear those messages anymore.
RESPONDENT 2: ...when it comes to housing and infrastructure, ‘Well, our sewers are full already! If you put 1,000 homes in...’

Do you not think we look at that? The information is there. We are looking at the infrastructure. We’re planning the roads. It’s all part and parcel-- We’re not just going to dump 1,000 new homes with no extra infrastructure.

It’s putting it alongside all the things that are fed into it.

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah. They are people who just won’t – even though you say, ‘Yes, of course we’re going to look at that.’

You don’t say it that way obviously, but, it would be something...

RESPONDENT 2: Oh, I do.

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 5: But there are people who still won’t accept, even though you say, ‘We’ll put all the mitigation in, and the developers will have to do it if not the council.’ ‘We have floods already. It's going to be far worse.’

Things like that.

INTERVIEWER: Are there effective ways of bringing people down from that level? I've never been in a situation like that myself, actually, no I have, but in a customer services role. And that’s the only way I can personally...

RESPONDENT 3: I think each situation is different. But I think there is a lot about the confidence of people to talk to people.

I think as a Local Authority, because we’ve suddenly gone, ‘Oh, engagement is important, again. And we need to talk to people. And we want everybody doing it. So, can you come out from behind your computers and go and talk to this group of people in a room that are actually quite upset about something?’

Well where’s the confidence and the skills building?

Which is what we’ve been trying to do with training for engagement. Because that’s the crucial point. You can have as much information, mitigation– ‘I can counterbalance that,’ but you’ve got to have the confidence.

One of the things that we battle as an Authority is (as most authorities) a level of distrust because you are the council. Isn’t it?

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: ‘I’m sure that you’re telling me that 100% that you’re spinning something,’ or whatever. ‘You work in a political environment.’
So, you’ve got to be confident enough to answer those questions. And you’ve got to be confident enough to say, ‘I don’t know.’ If that’s the case.

I think people get squeezed into a position that a) they’re not comfortable with, they’re worried, intimidated or whatever. Or b) they’re possibly in front of senior officers that they then think, ‘You should say that.’

And members.

And that was my next point. Or members.

So, that becomes quite tricky, doesn’t it? And I have seen people that I thought were very confident in situations where they’ve obviously been intimidated, they’ve been scared. Not knowing what to do. And that’s then fuelled what’s going on in the room because then it looks like you’re hiding something.

Or you don’t know what it is.

Or not telling the truth.

Yeah. And people...

This is what happened in our team. The majority I think of us I think, hate public consultation. When you’re divvying up who goes to which ward committees, or whatever, we dread it. We hate it.

And it’s not– As a team I think we’re fairly confident, but we definitely haven’t had any training.

No. Apart from active training when you get there!

And I tend to get quite aggressive back at people, when they’re aggressive towards me. Which isn’t going to [laughing] help matters. But that’s my kind of defence, I suppose.

Yeah, it is a tricky one, and it’s...

But it’s probably not going to get any easier, as resources go down as well. Maybe, you think, ‘Right, protect the frontline services.’ But does public engagement constitute a frontline service? Probably not. If you’re comparing that to...

Bins.

...providing the home of care. The bins – going from once a week to once every two weeks, or the other way around. Is that more important than actually finding out what your community needs?

I think that’s more about the expectations as an authority. That we expect everyone to be able to do that community engagement, as part of that role.

Their role.
RESPONDENT 3: Which is why we get to a point where people are uncomfortable, or they are in situations that are new to them. Actually, when you break it down, talking to a person, a group of people, is what we do all the time, isn’t it? And it should be a fairly natural thing. But it isn’t, if that’s not—if you’re doing...

INTERVIEWER: It’s because the dynamic is completely...

RESPONDENT 3: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: ...it’s an orchestrated dynamic. If you set up a room, you’ve got desks inside (I don’t know how you do it)... It’s akin to when you’re doing a lecture in an academic environment, and you have that question of whether you break it down into small semi-groups. I don’t know how you...

RESPONDENT 4: Scaling it up is a problem. And I found that one way to really have a proper, thorough discussion with people and perhaps moderate everybody’s opinions, and come out with some kind of conclusion or compromise, is to have a smaller group.

Now, there’s always an antagonism, between the resources to communicate a message to a larger group of people.

RESPONDENT 3: At once...

RESPONDENT 4: And then there’s the actual quality of the result.

Sometimes we need to ensure that the very high level of communication, such as the paperwork that goes out to all residents, is of high quality. And then that there’s an opportunity to discuss it with small groups of those who are most interested. You only ever get a small fraction of people realistically, face-to-face, at an organised public engagement.

Alternatively, you can go out to people, and talk to them, rather than only talk to the people that come in to you.

But even just simple devices like rearranging the furniture, I think you alluded to, is useful because a lecture environment or a sort of House of Commons style, where there are two opposing sides, is not helpful.

When we did the community conversations last year, in each ward, with the leader and various other people, we sat in a circle. And I was struck by the difference that that made to the quality and the mood of the meetings. People were all equal.

The so-called speakers and chair people were in the circle. Everybody was looking at everybody else. Nobody was sitting behind. The microphone was passed around.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 4: People felt like they were part of something more collective. Similarly, in a focus group like this, maybe, it works quite well, because nobody is dominant.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve not taken the power seat.
RESPONDENT 4: Obviously, you need...
RESPONDENT 3: We wouldn’t let you!
RESPONDENT 4: …facilitation.
[laughter]
RESPONDENT 4: But that’s not somebody standing at the front, talking to everybody else.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT 4: And so there are more sorts of devices in that way. We also found that informal sessions at the start, tended to help. So, if the first half an hour is a relaxed discussion, maybe over tea and coffee, when people can chew the ear of their local councillor. By the time the meeting actually starts, and everybody assembles in these rows, the atmosphere has...
INTERVIEWER: They’ve had an icebreaker moment...
RESPONDENT 4: Yes. Some people come in with something quite specific that they want to say and they just wait for the opportunity to say it. And all that energy is then released. It causes a big sort of debate or argument, and then it quietens down again.
If you let people come in first, have a chat and then sit down, they’ve had an opportunity to mention some of those things to other people already.
RESPONDENT 2: What we tend to do is hold more of an informal– We call them drop-in sessions, don’t we?
RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.
RESPONDENT 2: We’ll say we’ll be there for four or five hours.
RESPONDENT 5: Four or five hours!
[laughter]
RESPONDENT 2: And it’s just in a room, with maps and things up. And information set out. And officers just standing around.
But that’s when you can get all of the people focused on one officer, and you’re up against the wall.
So, the next time we did it, we had a table that we stood behind, so that then people weren’t in our personal space, which is better from our perspective rather than better for community engagement.
And having something that people can focus on, like a map, that is always very useful.
RESPONDENT 5: The other thing that I’m thinking of is about the timing of when you do these conversations, because for the Local Plan, there are semi or statutory stages that we go through.

For example, if we do a Preferred Options consultation, that’s a stage that you host a consultation on. Maybe we did one on issues and options as well before.

So, it’s when you are trying to get people’s views about what they might want, as opposed to saying, ‘Well we’ve taken your views and this is what we’re suggesting. But we still want your views on that.’ And before you say, ‘Look, this is what you’re having.’ More or less.

So that’s the difference between consultation and engagement – it’s when are you trying to seek ideas and when are you trying to convince people that the ideas that you’ve got are the right ones. And what stages in between could you do, and how could you manage them?

And how should you do each one?

RESPONDENT 3: There’s something about how we utilise the information that comes into the different service areas across the authority as well.

There’s that old chestnut about consultation fatigue, when you seem to be asking the same questions over and over again, in slightly different ways: why haven’t we learned something from there?

But also, why aren’t we using some of the case studies from across the services to say, ‘Actually, [Mrs Goggins], who lives in your area, in that area on our map here, we talked to her last year and she told us this. And she’s concerned about…what care services are going to be available for her. And what her transport links are going to be.’

So, it’s somebody in your community that’s saying this. Or, ‘We talked to the kids at the school and they said this.’

We can build that stuff up, and it’s almost like, ‘Well, right back at you guys!’ Because it’s the community that’s saying this.

And that’s the start of the conversation. I had an example of that last year, when I went out to do some ‘speaking to people where they are,’ events. Acomb Library, in the café, wherever. And we found some fantastic case studies of people supporting themselves that had never accessed any service, or people that had accessed the service that thought it was really good.

Whereas if I’d just said, ‘Come to talk to me about adult social care.’ I’d have got all of the negative feedback. I did get plenty of negative comments, concerns and all the rest; but I got some really good case studies that you could hold up. For example, Mrs P, who’s 93 and looks after her brother and goes out every day. And when I said, ‘Can you access a computer?’ Because obviously, we’re all on the internet. She got her iPad out of her bag...
RESPONDENT 3: ...and I felt really guilty because I thought, ‘Nah.’ And I had to say, ‘I’m really sorry to have to ask you this, do you use a computer?’

RESPONDENT 5: It sounds like it’s coming back to the single server HER. That you’ve got a GIS or special software as the front piece to access a lot of information behind it. It would save us a lot of time, in a way, if we knew what information is already out there...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: ...it would inform some of the policy decisions we might make, rather than having to go out and...well we’d probably still have to deal with [unclear – 0:12:24.0] consultation anyway, because it’s a process. But at least you’re well informed...

RESPONDENT 2: I think in the past, we had more resources. When we were doing the LDF, we didn’t just do a quick round of drop-in sessions. We would go and we’d speak [to different groups]. I remember going to speak to the Blind and Partially Sighted Society, and all of these hard to reach groups. We would do so many workshops and events.

And then what we’d do is we’d write up each of those and we would use those to feed in. When we writing the new policies, we had to look at all these various types of engagement. And they’d all be grouped in various topic areas, and that’s where we’d get our information from.

Whereas now, we pretty much rely on consultation responses. And fair enough, we have around 10,000 of them.

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah, we do, yeah!

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 2: I know it’s a lot! But then that’s from a certain type of person. So, you might perhaps miss other groups. But they’re still on the database. All these groups will still receive the letters and leaflets, and whatever.

But we obviously have come back from the face-to-face events that we used to do. But that’s just the nature of the Council now. We just haven’t got the resources to do that. We used to have £1000s to do consultation events. And now it’s all just...

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: One of the things we need to look at is a consultation log that you can go in to and you can see exactly what everybody else has been doing, and then go and scribe the results. Because that’s the other thing – short of going out of here and to the top of the atrium and shouting, ‘Who’s done some consultation event?’

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah. We’ve got all that...

RESPONDENT 3: That’s about the level...
RESPONDENT 5: ...allegedly it's all in files, isn't it? It's all stocked away in various things. But actually, if those could be retrieved, and accessed by other people...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I'm just going...

RESPONDENT 5: ...I'm sure others have done the same.

INTERVIEWER: ...I want to put something on the table that is something that Hannah and I did for the Buildings at Risk project, which is basically getting people to actively do something. For example, surveying a listed building, as part of an active, voluntary piece of work. And that would feed into an Historic Environments Buildings at Risk register, if I'm understanding correctly.

[START OF THIRD RECORDING]

RESPONDENT 1: Sort of.

INTERVIEWER: Hypothetically.

[laughter]

INTERVIEWER: And the thing that I'm guess I'm coming at here is, would it be possible (you can shoot me down if this is a crazy idea) to get people to do some research to bring to a consultation? To give them some kind of activity, to say, 'This is our aim today is to work on this. We'd like you to bring in something.' Asking them to bring in something. Rather than just expecting them to. If they're given a task ahead, it might help them feel more included...

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...in the consultation process, if they had something to contribute. I'm just using the Buildings at Risk as an example – because it was successful wasn't it, the way that people engaged with it?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes and no, is the answer. But yes, in a way, it was successful. I think the way we tried to deal with it and tried to split people in to groups – it's a bit complicated that one, isn't it?

But...in theory, if it was another task– Because I was thinking about this the other day. For example, getting volunteers to go out and make a photographic record of a conservation area, say, to help, perhaps, the enforcement team, so they had an annual set of photographs that at some point they could flick through and see if there was something that had been done without consent, or if there was suddenly a massive decline in sash windows in a particular street. That kind of thing.

And I was thinking that if we were to get people to do something like that, how we might go about it. And I quite like this idea of splitting them up into teams.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I don't know how you would do it in a general consultative way.
RESPONDENT 1: Yeah. I don’t know how.

RESPONDENT 5: Something you could do is, we have a process for engaging with volunteers.

RESPONDENT 2: Yes.

RESPONDENT 5: You do?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. Well, on two levels – we have, probably until the end of this month anyway, a volunteer officer who coordinates all of the volunteers that volunteer for the council. And there are lots of them. And works with CVS and their volunteers.

So, in terms of getting information requests and putting out calls for volunteers for things, then that’s fairly coordinated.

And there are volunteer managers that are trained across the Authority as well, who will be taking on that responsibility after a re-structure in Communities and Equalities.

So, there is some coordination in calls to volunteers.

RESPONDENT 3: We’ve done stuff before, when we’ve asked people to bring photographs, news articles, snippets, bits of memory – that sort of thing…

INTERVIEWER: I’ve had that as well.

RESPONDENT 3: …to get conversations going. I had one that went very wrong once, that a colleague did very enthusiastically years ago. Going back to street lighting – gave them all disposable cameras and said, ‘Take pictures of where the street lighting is bad.’

She developed an awful lot of black pictures.

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 3: So just think those ones through.

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 3: That will always stick in my mind. A fantastic example. It was great. She got lots of people motivated to go out and do it, but actually had nothing except, ‘Where is the...?’

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 5: The lack of evidence is the evidence.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

[laughter]

INTERVIEWER: I’ve had an experience as well, where I’ve asked people to come and bring in anything – photographs, newspapers, diaries – to help them have a conversation about the best ways that they feel that they can remember places by.
And I ended up with a video called *50 Years of York*, which is a collage of different snippets of films, put together in the 1980s, from videos taken in the 1950s of York. And it's a fantastic find.

And you just don't know when something like that is going to pop up. Obviously, you can't rely on it, but it then really impacted on the Red Tower project as it was going along. We premiered it for the Heritage Open Day.

Telling people ahead of time to bring stuff in was quite successful in that respect. Although I did have one lady, that thought it was a bit childish. But at the same time, people liked to...

**RESPONDENT 5:** I guess you can think of it in the context of what you're asking to be done.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah.

**RESPONDENT 5:** And I don't know how we do it...

**FEMALE:** Yeah, you see...

**RESPONDENT 5:** ... [unclear – 0:05:04.0] ...

**RESPONDENT 2:** ...people feel that we're trying to shape their ideas. We generally have a set of questions, don't we?

**RESPONDENT 5:** Hm.

**RESPONDENT 2:** So, that can help focus people's...

**INTERVIEWER:** That you send ahead of the...?

**RESPONDENT 2:** Yeah. So, it's usually a part of the leaflet, isn't it?

**RESPONDENT 5:** Mm.

**RESPONDENT 2:** Yeah. Or integrated into the document, I can't remember which.

**RESPONDENT 2:** But the thing is now we're getting into the latter stages. It was alright with the Issues and Options because people could put in lots of views. But by the time we get to publication stage...

**RESPONDENT 5:** That is the options.

**RESPONDENT 2:** ...we're kind of like, ‘This is our final version now. Do you have any last minute...?’

‘I wonder why they... [unclear – 0:05:40.0]’

[laughter]

**RESPONDENT 2:** We can't really be like, ‘Oh where in the city would you like to see growth?’
Because we've got the sites, we've assessed the sites, and the people are very aware of that. And this is why they are getting more and more riled up.

It's like when a planning application comes in, they feel like it's already been decided – developers have already put in master plans, because that would help us look at density of sites and lay out of open space.

RESPONDENT 5: And also, once you've got to application stage, you've already gone through two rounds of consultation.

RESPONDENT 2: So, you're not asking the same...

RESPONDENT 5: And you've done something that they didn't want in the first place. And then you get, 'Oh, we told you what we wanted but you still haven't done it.'

'Well, you may have told us what you didn't want or what you did want, but in the rounds, once you've taken everything else into account – sorry, we've had to go that way.'

And then you get the reputation of, 'Well, you don't listen anyway. So, why bother?'

RESPONDENT 4: Also, the opportunity to undertake exercises such as the one you've described, it's dependent on the extent to which it's a top-down or a bottom-up exercise in the first place. And these exercises are not always entirely top-down, or entirely bottom-up.

But in the case of say, the plan for development in the city, it's constrained in a huge number of ways from the outset, isn't it? So, it's not a blank canvas.

RESPONDENT 3: No.

RESPONDENT 4: Whereas, say for example, we're currently being asked to decide where money should be spent on grounds maintenance in the future. And with some exceptions for legal reasons, it is potentially a blank canvas. And an exercise that we're running in some of the wards, is inviting all of the people who currently maintain green spaces to come along and tell us what they're doing, and whether they could do any more, on the council's behalf.

And that will be a very open conversation, because there's no particular requirement to do these things. We don't know which parts of the city's green spaces people value more than others, really.

So, it's a very different type of discussion, and you could invite people to bring things along to that. Or if it's about memories, then that's a very personal thing that's not constrained in any way by...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and it's a different context...

RESPONDENT 4: ...government or...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT 2: Something like neighbourhood planning, I think that people have the view, and we say, ‘Oh, it’s led by the communities. It’s about what you want as a community. But it has to be in line with national guidance. It has to meet the statutory legislation. It has to do this.’ And before you know it...

You can’t define the greenbelt; that’s for the city council.

RESPONDENT 4: Yes.

RESPONDENT 5: Yes.

RESPONDENT 2: You’ve got to provide enough evidence to counteract the sites that we’re putting in our Local Plans. So, before you know it, they just see it as us completely restricting them again.

The idea of Neighbourhood Plans seemed very good at the time. But I don’t think it was really thought through. Because in the end, it will be an adopted statutory planning document. So, you can’t have namby-pamby policies about, ‘Oh, no one can put fences in front of their house,’ for example, because how can we enforce that?

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: So, it has to be enforceable as well.

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It’s a real...

RESPONDENT 2: Deliverable.

INTERVIEWER: ...meeting of different worlds here, really.

RESPONDENT 2: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: That translation between...

RESPONDENT 2: I think it all sounds very nice...

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: ...but actually...

RESPONDENT 5: It’s fake localism...

RESPONDENT 2: Well, it is...

RESPONDENT 5: ...you devolve everything down to your local area, but...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: ...you’ve got to do this, you’ve got to do that. And by the time, as you say, you’ve got that little bit, which you can...
RESPONDENT 2: Yes, exactly. You can choose what style bricks you use, unless it's an odd fascia, then you...

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: ...[laughing] you know, it's...

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah. [laughing]

RESPONDENT 2: ...actually...

RESPONDENT 4: The government would say that that's how if you want to get involved and share your ideas at a local level, that's how to do it. I think if you go on to the website, is it My Community Rights? And there are about five or six of them, and which neighbourhood plan is what. And that is, if you like, the answer to the question: How do I shape my neighbourhood?

On the other hand, I suppose we have to be careful not to assume that a free-for-all would necessarily be better than a structured planned process, because we know from the disagreements that exist between the shortage of housing and the ‘not in my backyard,’ that actually, if you just let every place do its own thing...

RESPONDENT 2: They'd become...

RESPONDENT 4: ...randomly, there would be complete chaos, wouldn't there really?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 4: So, it's trying to strike that balance, maybe. But perhaps it's gone too far the other way.

RESPONDENT 2: And with...

RESPONDENT 4: Perhaps it's too...you’re in too much of a strait jacket.

RESPONDENT 2: And if you're going to get 90% of responses from village, not wanting any development. The thing is, if every village did that...we need housing in York.

RESPONDENT 4: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: They have to go somewhere. So, whilst we’d like to do what people want. It’s just not possible.

RESPONDENT 5: It’s not as if we don’t do a lot of research, to say, ‘Well, what are the best areas for them to go?’ Given all the primary constraints and things like access to services and transport, and things like that.

RESPONDENT 2: Just the same with...

RESPONDENT 5: And probably heritage assets come under some...

RESPONDENT 2: SEA.
RESPONDENT 5: ...constraints as well. If we’re bringing it back to, ‘How do we protect the heritage of the city?’

RESPONDENT 2: That’s one of our primary constraints.

RESPONDENT 5: And the transport. It’s one of the constraints that we have to consider.

INTERVIEWER: Going back to when you’ve passed the preferred options stage, and you’ve made some decisions but there are still options, and you’ve cut out the chaff from the wheat – do you find when you explain why you’ve made those decisions, that you’re met then with a reluctance to understand the reasoning behind those decisions? Even though you have explained why. Is that the case?

RESPONDENT 5: Yes.

RESPONDENT 2: Completely. Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah. The blinkers are on. ‘Don’t want it. Don’t want it. Don’t want it. Don’t want it. And I don’t care how you tell me why you’ve put it there, I don’t want it.’

RESPONDENT 2: ‘You’re wrong.’

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: Whatever your [unclear – 0:11:54:0].

RESPONDENT 5: ‘What about that side of the city instead?’

‘Well...’

No, I don’t believe you! [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. It seems like a real sticking point, really. Which I imagine is probably nationwide.

RESPONDENT 2: Oh, completely.

RESPONDENT 3: One of the exercises that we ran at a conference last year, was tiddlywinks. Tiddlywinks and council budgeting, we thought went quite well together. Where people were given different areas and a certain number of tiddlywinks to put money into different things.

INTERVIEWER: Can I just ask at this point, what a tiddlywink is?

RESPONDENT 3: Oh, sorry, a small plastic counter.

RESPONDENT 5: It’s a game.

RESPONDENT 3: Small plastic counter, different colours. Each colour representing amounts of money.

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.
RESPONDENT 3: So, [unclear – 0:12:40.5] gave people an amount of money. They allocated resources across the services. Then we said, 'Right, you’ve got a 15% cut. Now do it.'

And actually, the conversations that that provoked, was huge. Then you started to get some rationale. And when it was my responsibility to change the money from where it went, it’s quite a different kettle of fish. And really, it’s that empathy and understanding of the complexities that you need to get across, no matter what you’re considering.

RESPONDENT 2: Was this with members of the public?

RESPONDENT 3: This was a conference that comprised members of the public, community groups, Members, people from other local authorities – coming in and having a go. It was an interesting exercise.

RESPONDENT 4: If there had been more time, it could have led on to all sorts of interesting discussions.

RESPONDENT 3: I think there’s something to be learnt from that, in the way of—Similarly, when I’ve worked in areas of high student densities, when you start a conversation about students and ask:

'Did your children go to university?'

'Oh yes!'

'Did they live in halls?'

'Oh no, they lived in a shared house.'

'Exactly the thing that you’re…'

'Well…'

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: ‘Actually they’re there now and I go and see…

RESPONDENT 5: With them, ‘It’s not my house…

RESPONDENT 3: …them on a Saturday and get their shopping.’

RESPONDENT 5: …they’re affecting.’

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 3: Then you start to be able to have that conversation, don’t you?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: Well, this is it, quite often when they’re saying, ‘We don’t want any affordable housing or any housing.’ And you say…
RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: ‘...Well, when you’re putting...’

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: I remember we said once, oh it was about affordable housing, ‘Where will your son or daughter live?’ ‘Well they’ve got really well-paid jobs; they don’t need affordable housing.’

And you’ve like, ‘Oh!’ How do you reason with these people?

RESPONDENT 5: And, ‘Where’s the nurse going to live when you’re ill?’

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 5: ‘How old are you? You can have someone that’s rich but can’t look after you.’

INTERVIEWER: But there are then ways of engaging empathy for different people.

It is tricky, I have met certain characters at the Red Tower who do just not want the kids to play around the area. And I say, ‘Well, what about your kids? Would you like them to have played around here when they were that age? How would you have like them to have enjoyed their lives?’

It’s empathy at the highest level, really.

RESPONDENT 3: Ages and stages – whether people can still empathise with others.

‘Well, what I needed was somewhere for my kids to play then. What I need now is peace and quiet.’ And they scare me frankly, so can you do something about it?’ You do get that.

RESPONDENT 5: But that’s a difficult skill to acquire, or have in the first place. To be able to say, ‘Well, that’s your view, but try and put yourself in that position.’

You’ve got to have a really good skill set to be able to guide people in that way.

And again, if it comes down to resources to do certain things, and it then becomes part of your job set to do it – you’ve got to have the training, or the nouse in the first place, to be able to do that. And if you haven’t, then it could be a disaster.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I had an idea at the very beginning of my project, that I would be able to have a workshop and I would invite Civic Trust members, council members, people from the community. And they’d all have their labels, like conference labels, but then they would all swap them around and you’d have to pretend that you’re were another person.

RESPONDENT 3: Oh, we’ve had one of those as well!

INTERVIEWER: How did that go?
There is such a thing as a Ward Team – I don’t know how many people it impacted on – been to Ward Teams, where you have members and key players, and key stakeholders in a ward, come together. When we were pulling that together and trying to get people to understand that that’s about making local priorities, working together, pulling together to achieve whatever, we had an exercise in which everyone is given an envelope with a role in. And we’ve had fantastic meetings when councillors are suddenly the local police officers and they are sitting there with their thumbs up in their imaginary stab-proof vests!

And then you've put somebody that has been quite opposing at one committee meeting as the councillor chairing the meeting, so then they've got to negotiate with the other people. It does work, in terms of promoting empathy. We put student reps in there and made the person that's living next to a [unclear – 0:17:09.5] be the student rep. It's raw, but it's just about trying to get the view from the other side. People do like that, because they put their own baggage aside and be somebody else for a minute. And sometimes the conversations are very revealing. I remember a similar exercise, when it was one of these planning-training scenarios. And all the people had to play a different character in the construction of a warehouse on some Green Field land somewhere or other.

And people were deliberately given jobs that they were perhaps more comfortable with. And I hate to play devil’s advocate, but you can quickly start to think like that character. Think how that character would reason. What’s your primary motivation? What is driving your thinking? So, its…

So, you thought your ideas were good?

So, yes, I think...

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

...I think you should still do that.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

I look forward to watching it.

I thought that was a crazy...yeah. Maybe. Maybe.

We started off with the idea of bringing in information about how best to present that. Would you say that's still an important aspect of this?
That you have to also, on top of that, think about the way things are set up? Think about who, how, and when you're talking to people and how to gauge empathy for different areas?

So, it's about bringing in effective information, but also extra stuff on top.

From other conversations that I've had with people, not just here but outside Red Tower, there appears to be multiple ways.

I love Mike's example of doing interviews on buses.

RESPONDENT 4: Well, Betty's the expert on that.

RESPONDENT 3: Don't do it all day, because you can feel a bit queasy.

[laughter]

INTERVIEWER: But having conversations with people in interesting ways...

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...that basically, impact on how decisions get made. What do you do with the information once you've collected it? Because that's really important too.

RESPONDENT 3: You've got to have a way to feed it in, haven't you?

A bit like the community conversations stuff. Where you've had multiple conversations with people about all sorts of open issues, you need to bring that together and make sure that they are relevant. Agencies know about that.

Whether that's our own internal department, or whether that's external – it's got to go. I mean, usually we're doing that sort of work because it's building towards a recommendation or a paper, or something that's going to Members. And we can justify what we're saying by saying, 'Well, those are your options. We've been out to people and talked to them and this is what they've said. So, therefore, there's your recommendation. There's your evidence.'

That's why we are going out, generally. I think more and more; we're doing it anyway. And we're testing back. We're having a look to see what impact we are having, especially with shrinking resources.

That's less clearly defined, I think.

RESPONDENT 5: Can I just ask a question about the bus interviews?

Were they general interviews? Did you chat to someone on a bus about a whole...?

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: ...range of things?

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: Is that right?
RESPONDENT 3: It's part of a city-wide consultation. 'What do you feel? What’s important to you? What sort of service do you get? What's the best bit; what's the worst bit? What would you change?' Those sorts of open questions.

I would say, if you talk with people on a bus, the first thing they want to talk about is...:

RESPONDENT 5: Is the buses.

RESPONDENT 3: ...buses.

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: And getting past that is quite tricky. But, we did get past it.

RESPONDENT 5: Did you take any notes from what they said about the buses?

RESPONDENT 3: Yes. And passed them on to the bus company.

RESPONDENT 5: Right. And...

RESPONDENT 3: ...and internal...

RESPONDENT 5: Right. And...

RESPONDENT 3: ...oh that's alright...

RESPONDENT 5: Right. And...

RESPONDENT 3: In terms of transport. Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: ...yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: [unclear – 0:03:38.0]

RESPONDENT 3: It was a little while ago. But yeah, everything got collated and passed on. It was a lot of stuff.

Like I say, we went to other places – in reception, in libraries – places where people are that you can have those sorts of conversations.

It’s must easier to sit in a café, when someone has just finished their sandwich and you sidle up to them and say, 'Do you mind having a conversation about...’ whatever it is. And just seeing what they think.

That's much easier I think than being in the front of a public meeting, or one of those drop-ins, where you know that someone's going to come and say...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. But then, we have a statement of community involvement.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: It’s quite old now, but it sets out what we should be doing. In different methods...
And these sessions when we meet with people face-to-face – it’s more for them to get their questions answered. We don’t take notes or anything. There isn’t the opportunity to.

So, it’s not about us taking anything away from that, other than the general aggression. We rely on– It has to be from the written reps for them to actually have an influence.

In the past, when we used to do the more structured workshops, we’d have a scribe, and we’d have summary reports of them all. But now, it tends to be more reliant on...

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: ...community types.

RESPONDENT 3: [unclear – 0:05:00.5] to somebody.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. If you’re the [unclear – 0:05:02.0].

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah. If it’s particularly important then we’ll note it down.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: Or, we have questionnaires...

RESPONDENT 2: Forms there, don’t we?

RESPONDENT 5: ...there, that they can then take away and send in, and then it becomes a written representation.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: So, it is taken that way.

RESPONDENT 2: And as you were saying, how you use various information, and how we use it as evidence to justify decisions – we have, as part of the statutory framework – we have to do a consultation statement. That summarises all of the consultation that we’ve done, and then, more importantly, how that has fed in to the final policy for the document, for the final site. It’s a very clear way of demonstrating how we’ve used them (not every single individual rep, we try and group them by theme or things like that).

RESPONDENT 4: One of the things that I admire about applying consultations, in the tabular form, is how, when somebody does write in with a representation, there’s then a comment, and it will say, ‘Noted.’ Or, ‘Disagree with this because...’ Or, ‘Yes, we will incorporate this, because...’

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, we’ve...

RESPONDENT 4: That sort...

[laughter]
RESPONDENT 2: …really…

RESPONDENT 4: Something actually happens with that information. And I think it’s important that you say to somebody what you’ve done with it. Even if you’ve done nothing. Because it might be that they were wrong. Or it’s irrelevant.

RESPONDENT 2: But you say…

RESPONDENT 4: But you’ve done it.

RESPONDENT 2: …why.

RESPONDENT 4: You’ve said why.

RESPONDENT 2: You haven’t said why.

RESPONDENT 4: And then you can get it back to them and say, ‘Well this is what you said. And this is our considered response.’

But so often things go in to the system, and they never come out again. And nobody really knows quite…

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 4: …what happened to it. But that’s harder trying to tell them, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 4: You’ve still got an opportunity to present it back again.

RESPONDENT 5: You’ve still got an opportunity to present it back again.

RESPONDENT 4: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: If you got the same comment about the same thing, it will go to an inspector for an inspector to make the decision about whether your representation is valid enough to say the policy needs to change.

RESPONDENT 4: It’s on the record…

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 4: …and that’s what really matters…

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 4: …that it’s in the public domain. Anybody can download that bit of [unclear – 0:07:04.0].

RESPONDENT 2: And then we scan them all and redact them all. It’s just…
RESPONDENT 4: Yeah. And that’s something that makes for a good planning application report. I know that you can’t go in to copious detail about every single response received, especially on the big applications, but if the Officer can demonstrate how they’ve responded to the points raised, and then assess them in terms of the way they are going to give to them, etc.

Then it’s all there, contained in the report. And the report is published and it’s available on file, more or less forever (I think). Which demonstrates the value of the person contributing their thoughts in the first place.

INTERVIEWER: So, going back to the HER, because Harry has actually asked me to do a bit of work on writing a report – how it might be feasible to connect the parts of the infrastructure of the...

RESPONDENT 1: HBSMR.

INTERVIEWER: ...HBSMR, which is the framework that HER is nested within. And connect it to the local Facebook group – York Past and Present. Which is a community conversation happening elsewhere.

And they are talking about areas, specific streets, specific photographs and archives. They do have some really interesting comments and nuggets of information sometimes as well about these specific areas.

I’m looking at writing a report so that you can consider ways in which those two can be connected. How best to collate the information? Whether it’s ethical to collate the information from a social network page? And what people might think if they thought that their views were going to go in to this, hopefully community-accessible page?

And it’s similar to a consultation then; it almost becomes part of the consultation circle. But it’s just working through different platforms.

I wondered if you had any experience with bringing two different, none face-to-face – or working with Facebook pages?

RESPONDENT 2: Well we have to don’t we, through the comms officer?

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: When we do a consultation, she puts it on the council’s Twitter and Facebook.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right!

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. I don’t really know anything more about it. I’ve never personally been...

RESPONDENT 5: No.

RESPONDENT 3: It’s part of a comms plan, isn’t it?
RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: It's something then to vent.

INTERVIEWER: Comms plan? Is that from communications plan?

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. So, [a council officer] is kind of in charge of all that.

RESPONDENT 3: So, each project, each initiative, whatever...

RESPONDENT 2: It's all part of the press release and so on, package.

RESPONDENT 1: I've done a little bit with social media in a previous life. But it was on a very, very small scale.

It was basically promoting a project, a bit of research that we were doing as a company. We were an archaeological consultancy doing a social history type/archaeology/history report on a village in County Durham. We tried to use Facebook as a way of getting it to reach those people who wouldn't necessarily come to the meetings that were advertising in the usual way.

It wasn't very successful. Probably because I've never done anything like that before apart from use Facebook personally. It was just floundering in the dark, really. And it was on a very, very small scale.

This community in general was extremely difficult anyway, so I don't know how successful it would have been even if we had had a Comms team and what not.

But I did look at some of these local pages on Facebook and took some information from them about some pubs, actually. It wasn't anywhere near as good as York Past and Present – it was literally tiny conversations that people were having.

But I didn't really see any problem. You mentioned about comments off there, because it was on Facebook...

RESPONDENT 5: Probably factually...

RESPONDENT 3: [unclear – 0:11:52.0] don't you? If it's on Facebook.

INTERVIEWER: Compare the material you gather from consultation, when you’ve actually spoken to people face-to-face; or in some other formative way or strategy. Would you consider Facebook as a meaning resource that people can use as a way of bringing in data or information? On subjects like local planning.

RESPONDENT 2: Probably not for the Local Plan. I don't know. If it was an area, say for youths, or something like that, that wouldn't necessarily come to public meetings, that might be useful for a certain type of consultation. I don't know. It's just one of the many avenues, isn't it, for the Local Plan.
RESPONDENT 5: It will be something...
RESPONDENT 2: I don’t think we ever have done anything...
RESPONDENT 5: ...that we have to deliberately monitor, I think, as well. Because you have to look at whether it’s a group or whether there have been postings. You would have to regularly trawl the postings to glean the information from it. Unless there is a way of trawling what comes in through Facebook and...
RESPONDENT 2: And the fears with Facebook – people can be almost anonymous, just have some random name, and they can post nasty things. Whereas at least with a formal consultation, they have to have a proper name and address, and fill in an email and things.
INTERVIEWER: Yes.
RESPONDENT 2: I think on Facebook and Twitter you can get trolls.
RESPONDENT 3: People have used it more as a way of giving information, haven’t they? Or letting people know when there are opportunities...
RESPONDENT 4: Yes.
RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.
RESPONDENT 3: ...to do things, rather than...
INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:13:31.0]
RESPONDENT 4: The difficulty has been when people have started to have conversations on there about us. The Council. Occasionally individual officers.
RESPONDENT 4: If it’s abused.
RESPONDENT 3: It can become a real battle.
RESPONDENT 4: Yes, a battle of wills.
RESPONDENT 3: Back and forth.
RESPONDENT 4: They get quite unpleasant, if you’re not careful.
RESPONDENT 3: And it’s who you’re connected to. Who’s Friends with you.
It’s another thing on Facebook, people connect, and how could you turn somebody down from being a friend?
But actually, the word ‘friend’, and all of the other connotations from that, which are really tricky to negotiate, how you link all of that together?

As an officer, Mike, are you saying that you are friends with particular people that like to take pot-shots at the council, as long as they are linked to that? Are you?

It’s that sort of thing that comes up. That’s why we always go through Comms now.

RESPONDENT 4: Well, we’re not supposed to use Facebook within our team.

RESPONDENT 3: No.

RESPONDENT 4: For other reasons. But we do use Twitter. We’re not friends, we are following people. But as a...

INTERVIEWER: There is a difference, isn’t there...

RESPONDENT 4: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: It’s difficult if they are following you.

RESPONDENT 4: Yeah. If they are following me. And I wouldn’t, particularly, never follow anything that I thought was controversial. Or, retweet something that I didn’t agree with.

Some people, on a personal account, they will say for example, that they sometimes repeat things that they don’t agree with, because they want other people to see what the person has said. As an officer on a corporate Twitter account, I would never do that. My activity on there is relatively limited.

And as you say, it’s mainly about conveying information. Inviting people to do things, or to come to things.

RESPONDENT 3: In some areas— You were explaining about an area where it was maybe difficult to have those conversations, and you might get something from Facebook, or whatever – but I think, in some areas that I’ve worked in, we’ve found groups set up about that area, and it’s quite insightful to be able to go in and read it. But what I haven’t done is go and use that...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: ...somewhere.

RESPONDENT 2: Oh, we do a lot of that, don’t we? A lot of actual groups, things that are set up...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: ...against...

RESPONDENT 3: And actually, some sites...
RESPONDENT 2: ...some stuff, and they have their own social media pages, where they can all bitch together.

RESPONDENT 4: Yes.

RESPONDENT 2: But we don’t use them though, do we?

RESPONDENT 5: No, we don’t. No.

RESPONDENT 3: We have gone and found those individuals, sometimes. If something has been factually incorrect or I want them to get involved in something, I’ve tracked them down and said, ‘Right, well come along to this then and tell me what it is you think.’

There was an example of that recently, about [Playing Fields], which is actually a school playing field, but it’s a triangle of land that’s quite difficult – it’s quite iconic because everybody knows it, you drive past it through [Guildhall Ward].

But it’s got metal and other things coming through the surface where it’s not been kept properly; where it’s obviously been a dump or something at some point. It’s got a culvert underneath it.

There’s lots of misinformation about this area. And somebody set up a Facebook page – I’ll try and think what they called it – it was something to ‘Combat the Ruination of [Playing Fields]’, or something like that.

Well actually, it’s not. You’re talking about the playing field not the road; and actually, it’s a school playing field who can’t use it and it’s been an issue for years. ‘I want to talk to you about this.’

RESPONDENT 5: It was drained fairly recently, wasn’t it? That field?

RESPONDENT 3: I don’t know if it was drained fairly recently. There is a culvert that goes underneath it, but there are issues with using that land. The school can’t use it. But it’s just that misinformation about the ruination of the area in general.

RESPONDENT 2: The Press is bad enough...

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 2: ...and that’s official. But there is a lot of misinformation that goes around in relation to the Local Plan and things.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that social media especially, breeds, or helps misinformation?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: Because I think people will, if they have it on their mind, just let it out and press send. Whereas when it’s a bit more of a formal...

RESPONDENT 5: You’ve got more chance to...
RESPONDENT 2: ...submission.

RESPONDENT 5: ...make a reason and decision...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: ...and response.

RESPONDENT 2: I always thought that this thing called Streetlife, which was something that was set up for my area. And then somebody started slagging off the Local Plans, who wasn’t anything to do with planning, about some development nearby. It was anonymous, my name wasn’t on it, but I was just like, ‘Ah! [unclear – 0:18:21.0]’ And then they came back and had a go at me. And I’m like, ‘Oh, I can’t delete that, I don’t want to be on that anymore.’

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 2: But with some people you can just say what you like and there’s no – providing it’s not too abusive – there’s no constraints over it.

RESPONDENT 5: You see a similar thing in the comments on Press...

RESPONDENT 4: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: ...articles.

RESPONDENT 2: Oh, yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: Oh...

RESPONDENT 2: [unclear – 0:18:39.0] the comments, don’t they? When they are too much.

RESPONDENT 5: But it gets personal! When it’s at councillors’ – what do they call it? Free Game? No.

RESPONDENT 5: Fair Game.

RESPONDENT 2: Fair Game! [laughing] And people think they can say what they like about them because they are a public figure and...

RESPONDENT 4: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: Quality’s be damned, doesn’t it, really? Some of the issues that you are saying you come across in terms of neighbourhood planning and the conversations that people will have about what they are trying to prevent, and then you see some of the stuff going through the comments in the press as well – you just think, ‘This shouldn’t even be given any air time. And I’m not...’

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.

Oh, I’m going to start getting in to freedom of speech. I’ll maybe leave it there.

RESPONDENT 5: Yeah.
RESPONDENT 3: Yeah. Another conversation.

RESPONDENT 4: Possibly the only thing more dangerous than allowing people to say whatever they want, is not allowing them to speak.

RESPONDENT 3: Or not to challenge it.

RESPONDENT 4: Because not only do you then select who is able to set the tone, and who isn’t; but you effectively cut them out of the debate. And it builds up a sense of unhappiness that suddenly will explode in other ways. I do think that the question shouldn’t be whether we consult and engage with people, it’s how.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 4: And those forums are not conducive to constructive debate.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting.

I know that the York Past and Present Group, actually have strict house rules about how you engage on the site and one of the rules is that you do not criticise the council in an unconstrucive way. And you do not swear and you don’t – and they...

RESPONDENT 2: As long as there is someone there to monitor it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Actually, they have a team of administrators just for that.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. Well that’s good news...

INTERVIEWER: And they actually...

RESPONDENT 2: ...yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...will actively warn and then delete a person from the group if they are seen to be doing anything. And also, there are rules about what you can post. So, there is in that case, I don’t know if it’s a very specific case because of the people who run it, but it is really interesting about how these different ways of people talking and sharing information can involve essentially the same thing, be in heritage, the Local Plan. But they will be completely different, because again, there are the dynamics – the way you set up a conversation. And I think on that note...does anyone have anything extra to say that they want to get off their chest? That might be useful for them?

F (RESPONDENT): I don’t know if it’s relevant for you, but I just wanted to ask you [laughing] about how when we are looking at cross-department working – yesterday, at the engagement lunch, I was saying how parish councils are very established and they can put in this Neighbourhood Plan application together, whereas there was that bloke from Heworth...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: ...and a lady from the Groves...

INTERVIEWER: Yes.
RESPONDENT 2: …that aren’t Parish areas, and they wanted to know how do they go about doing it – that’s perhaps something that we could work together on, because you know these groups and you would know how to get people together.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: And things like that.

So, should I get any interest from them, it might be a quick phone call and we could have a discussion about how we could take it forward.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

Obviously, there were councillors in the room who were interested in how that could happen in their areas. I’m sure it will come back around, really.

And we do know the characters, and sometimes the two that were speaking yesterday, introduced it with such a negative view, but actually, what they care about and their aspirations are really positive.

You just think, sometimes…I’ve been working with people for years – what am I? do you always have to do that quick Council bash first and then…?

[laughter]

RESPONDENT 3: …and then get in with the subject? Maybe it’s just habit.

RESPONDENT 4: Tradition.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah. Maybe it’s just habit.

And that’s part of engagement on a range of topics, isn’t it? That’s why we’ve had those engagement sessions, those engagement lunchtimes. And opened them up.

When I first suggested opening them up outside of CYC staff, there were gasps. ’Can’t just have a conversation!’

INTERVIEWER: Were these the engaging lunch time talks?

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I’ll see if I can come along to one of those...

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah, come along...

INTERVIEWER: …if that’s...

RESPONDENT 3: …Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: …okay? That would be really good.

Thank you.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 9: 15-12-15 West Offices HER demo with 
Hannah

RESPONDENT: ...from the list. Now, what I usually do because it’s technically Harry’s job, what 
I usually do is I’ll go through the list and then I write here in red if it’s a watching brief, or if 
it’s nothing and then I send it to Harry and he just flicks through and says yeah or nay and 
then I’ll start the next process.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, you’ll have to explain the format of this.

RESPONDENT: Okay, right, this is just literally cover – this is one page of an eight page list 
that comes out. So, they usually have a title number at the top – it’s just chopped of this one.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So this is a proposal for 24 Main Street, alterations to create one single 
dwelling – they’re all different. So each one is a different application.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah and can you find these on the planning portal?

RESPONDENT: Yes, I can. So I would go on the planning applications website, I would type in 
that number and it would come up with any documents that had been submitted with that. 
So, if somebody had already done a desk-based assessment or something like that and 
submitted it, I’d be able to look at it from there. Or I’d be able to see plans and things. So, 
normally I can just look at the list and think, ‘Oh, it’s just a little extension and it’s not in a 
special area.’

When I looked at this one the other day, I didn’t have access to the HER, I can’t 
remember why, which is why I’ve put a double-check on that one and to check HER on that 
one.

INTERVIEWER: Oh right yes.

RESPONDENT: So that one’s a watching brief. And then, basically, I would just go to that 
location on the HER and look just to see if there was anything.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so with the watching brief can you – just for the purposes of... Well, 
actually I don’t know what is a watching brief?

RESPONDENT: Oh right, okay. So you haven’t got an archaeological, sort of, background?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Right, okay, so in planning sorry – I just can’t explain. I’ve never really had to 
explain things before. It’s... Okay, so if you’re going to do any work that involves breaking 
ground, potentially, then I need to know if it’s going to impact on archaeology or not. Then 
so normally the first stage of assessing this impact would be to do a desk-based assessment. 
Have you seen one of those?
Usually they do some research on the history of the site, if you go, you troll the archives, you look for every map, you do like a map progression. Basically just to see if the site’s been built on or not.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: What kind of archaeology might you find there.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: We don’t ask for a lot of them in York, around the city centre and things but you know these big sites that are coming forward in the local plan, big green field sites. The big green field site the first thing you’d have forward is a desk-based assessment just for some background information and...

INTERVIEWER: So would you or Harry do that desk-based assessment...

RESPONDENT: No, we would ask somebody else to do it. Now in my old job, I would do that desk-based assessment you see. So you’d come somewhere – you’d ring up Harry as an external consultant and I’d ask for the HER data, that’s a definite. So the desk-based assessment usually has all the HER information in it and also information from any local archives, any other relevant sources and it has to be all put together and presented to say you might find X or it might say there was a factory on this site in 1900 or so on, and it will tell you just depending on what’s happened on the site. You know, there might have been a bit of mining on that site that is not on HER and they might say that end of the site you’re less likely to find stuff than that end.

They’ve got limited value because they don’t tell you everything. That’s the first stage.

INTERVIEWER: So, before you move on to the second stage, is the desk-based assessment you mentioned there are maps, do you, so that maps are collected alongside documents as well? Like...

RESPONDENT: Not...

INTERVIEWER: ...I’m just trying to identify that.

RESPONDENT: ...historical documents. Essentially you’re trying to find – if you’re doing an assessment you don’t need to know like the entire history of the area, you’re trying to find out what happened on that block of land.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I can show you one later if you want...

INTERVIEWER: That would be...

RESPONDENT: ...I’ll send you...

INTERVIEWER: ...really helpful, yeah.
RESPONDENT: I mean, I don’t – I’m trying to think of a site that’s got, you know, all of these things. It’s hard to think of one of the top of my head but I can certainly dig them out.

So your assessment might say, I mean there’s probably been one for that site here. So the assessment for this site would say – do you know this site, this is like ST14 or something? For the local plan, this is a big settlement plan site here.

INTERVIEWER: So what’s this [unclear – 0:04:41.6]

RESPONDENT: So the proposal for a big development on the site, it’s one of the big strategic sites so, presumably, there will have been a desk-based assessment asked for. I mean it might be on one of these stars, I’ve got no idea. But this is the kind of site you would ask for one on. In fact, can I just look, yeah?

Anyway, it would say that you need to do more investigation – helpful! And it will basically say – it’s a synthesis that pulls together all the information off the HER, it pulls together all the information about previous digs and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: This is the source.

RESPONDENT: This is the sources, yeah. I don’t really know what I’m looking for here but Harry would probably notice straightaway.

[unclear – 0:05:37.2] I don’t really know what it’s called? Might be tough to know a date. Anyway, it’s a synthesis of information and it just lets us see more clearly, pulls stuff together. But really – it’s the valuations, 1994, it’s not it. But really when Harry asked for that you already know that it’s going to be more than an assessment. That’s just a first stage. So it’s just, yeah, documentary research, you do a desk-based assessment and usually you go for a look round the site and then we take some photographs. Then you would, on a site like this, you would ask to do a visit. So it’s further investigation, you know how Geophys works?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: Sort of?

INTERVIEWER: Yes they, yeah...

RESPONDENT: Sort of, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: They invests...

RESPONDENT: Visit activity...

INTERVIEWER: ...visit activity...

RESPONDENT: ...service...

INTERVIEWER: They’re sort of...
RESPONDENT: ...and LiDAR?

INTERVIEWER: LiDAR surveys, yeah. That's not something you would ask for.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: But you would ask for geophys on this site and that would give you a pattern of anomalies. So it might give – it gives you more of a clue where should I put my trenches and then you have to have archaeological evaluation – no, sorry, you might ask for a watching brief.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: Now...

INTERVIEWER: Is that after doing geophys?

RESPONDENT: Well, we’re looking on this... If we’re talking about this site as an example, it would be geophys then it would be straight to evaluation, no question because you’re going to cover it in houses, it’s never been built on, you’ve probably got anomalies in the geophys. I don’t know, I’m guessing.

INTERVIEWER: Do anomalies – they signify archaeological [unclear – 0:07:12.8]?

RESPONDENT: Possibly.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: A lot of times you’ll get a report and it’ll say there’s anomalies, could be archaeological in origin. But equally it will – sometimes it’ll say it could be archaeology then you dig them and they’re not, their field drains, they’re old river channels, various material.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Any if – it’s not conclusive.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So that’s what I mean. It doesn’t stop with the geophys. You couldn’t rely on geophys to show you this and just say, ‘Alright avoid that.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Then you would do a trenching and you would put your trenches in relevant places to try and investigate those anomalies on a dig.

I think in this case you’d probably have more trenches than anomalies, if you know what I mean. You don’t just put your trenches on your anomalies. You would target some but York has a is it 5%...

INTERVIEWER: Oh yeah.
RESPONDENT: ...survey samples. So on a site like this...

INTERVIEWER: From the arrow.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, Harry might say I want five – all authorities to different things and, but yeah, so Harry might say on this site I want 5% therefore there’s like a 100 trenches or something like that. And then you would do your evaluation trenches which... It would be good if we could get a report on this. But I don’t know so where’s the geophysical survey, I don’t know where, if there isn’t a valuation report. But that would be littered in linear trenches an anatomical survey...

INTERVIEWER: So now you’re looking at the events that you’ve selected in this area and geophysical survey?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, and then I would find the source. So if somebody’s asked for 50%, all this is phase one which is 50%.

INTERVIEWER: Going to library link for photos?

RESPONDENT: No, the report.

INTERVIEWER: Oh right.

RESPONDENT: Will be in here. I want to see an evaluation. Where is it?

INTERVIEWER: It’s just gone, yeah, gone behind...

RESPONDENT: Is it coming up? Is library link not working?

Oh, well, anyway because my library link’s not working at the minute. So this would be just covered in trenches, usually just the width of a digger perhaps. Open them up and then have a look. And if something spectacular came up we might ask for further excavation, like excavate a whole area. I mean this is a Roman man or British settlement actually. Harry will be better to explain what they had done on this site.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Oh, so it is opening there.

INTERVIEWER: Oh here we go.

RESPONDENT: So there’s some...

INTERVIEWER: And one of them is a lovely map.

RESPONDENT: So that’s just showing you which areas had the geophys and there’s this height line drawn in. Now I’m assuming if this is the only plan we’ve got, I’m assuming that – see all those other features aren’t showing up on here.
INTERVIEWER: Hang on, just at the bottom right-hand corner there’s GSB is that the name of the...?

RESPONDENT: That is the company that did it. It’ll be – I can’t remember what they’re called actually, Prospection GSB, GSB Prospection... Oh, hang on.

INTERVIEWER: You can zoom right in, can’t you.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, so there’s something, some funny lines here.

INTERVIEWER: So do you do you spend a lot of time, sort of, going through, lots of just double-checking on the thing...

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: ...or... Is this sort of something that...?

RESPONDENT: Well, I’m just explaining what the process is for the archaeological side of it. The watching briefs, okay, the watching brief would be if I did, on a different site because this is an example where you would go straight to the trenching. But if there was a site that had some buildings on it, for example, I might ask for an assessment first and if they confirmed that there was a building on it and it had a basement in that research stage, then I might say, ‘Well, probably archaeology’s going to be gone but let’s have a watching brief,’ i.e. let’s have an archaeologist stand there while they dig out whatever they’re digging out. And the archaeologist can just double-check that something doesn’t come up. And that happens a lot because it’s a lot cheaper and on sites where you’re probably not going to find anything but just in case.

INTERVIEWER: So there’s... Would you say that putting somebody there is – you say it happens a lot because it’s cheaper but is it...?

RESPONDENT: But it’s not because it’s cheaper, but it’s because, say, from one of these, for example, I’ve suggested a watching brief for this one.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Harry hasn’t not approved it or disapproved it yet but conversion not immersions. Probably because it’s in the middle of an historic village, as I say I need to double-check this one. But if someone was going to build a big extension or one house say, in their back garden or something like that and it was an area where it may or may not have archaeology, it’s a bit uncertain. We’re not going to ask for a desk-based assessment just for that one thing but we might say, ‘Well because it’s in the middle of a medieval village, or because it’s in an area where Roman burials pop up all the time,’ say it was on the mount or something, ‘then we want someone just to stand there and record what is in the ground.’ And if it’s negative, if there’s nothing there that’s still information for us because we can say, ‘Well we’ve checked that part of the land and it was blank,’ this is particularly relevant in Newcastle when you’re looking for Hadrian’s Wall. So any works where there looking at sewers or electricity cables and whatnot in a certain street in Newcastle, even where it’s
totally urban, they’re not going down very deep, all of that stuff, you think you wouldn’t find anything. If it’s on the line of Hadrian’s Wall we always have someone standing there monitoring it because at certain parts of the city you know it doesn’t follow the modern road, it jinks around a little bit. And any evidence negative or otherwise, is important and it gets reported.

INTERVIEWER: So, if you were in York, I mean you’ve said before now that put a spade in York and you find something...

RESPONDENT: Well... not always.

INTERVIEWER: Not always sometimes do you find that it’s unexpected?

RESPONDENT: Probably but you’re best to ask Harry about that because I don’t really follow-up [unclear – 0:14:09.3], so my role getting back to... So that was the other side because it was kind of explaining what was what.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you, yeah.

RESPONDENT: So I wouldn’t... I would check these planning applications, decide which ones may or may not need someone to have a little look. Mostly they’re watching briefs or if it’s a big site there might be an evaluation. And then there’s a sort of admin process where I’ll write a comment about why it needs a watching brief, so it’s in the...

INTERVIEWER: While you’re making that decision is that when you’re consulting the...

RESPONDENT: So I’m using a bit of knowledge just from experience that I’ve got, that I’ve checked this, I check the HER first just to see if there was anything there, you know, but if it’s in an area of archaeological importance, you know, there’s probably going to be a watching brief. That kind of thing, you sort of, you learn where and if it’s along the Mount, you know, there’s Roman – you know? You get to know where there is arch... But I would check the HER...well, I would literally just check it like that. I would go to the, I would go to the address. Let’s have a look. The thing is you’ve got to work out where they are. So I use, because I don’t know where every single street is in York, I use the York map thing that I’ve got save on my computer but not on here. I don’t know where it is though.

INTERVIEWER: Site map?

RESPONDENT: No, Dan? What page is the York Map on?

RESPONDENT 2: Intranet.

RESPONDENT: Intranet, okay. I’m in the wrong page then. I’m looking on the internet. Here somewhere.

RESPONDENT 2: Scroll down.

RESPONDENT: Got it. Thanks.
So if you have a look at this, this is basically loads of different ways of stuff. So it’s got like, probably got bus routes on and libraries all sorts but if you go – I think it’s in, hang on it just takes a couple of seconds to warm up. I think it’s in this one. Go away. I think it’s still just thinking. But I would look for the address on here usually because I don’t know where everywhere is. So we find out where it is, or we go on the planning thing and look at what...

INTERVIEWER: The planning website?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, because that gives you a map sometimes but this is quite probably useful for you to know, so this has got archaeology – have you seen this?

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: Now, it’s not that good because, this is what Harry wants to fill in because events, for example, it’s got events on, it’s taken the GIS data but none of these polygons have any information linked to them. Which is something I need to try and fix really but it involves a lot of boring work behind the scenes. So it hasn’t been done.

I think if you go to the planning…well first of all I’m just going to type the numbers here. Seven, four, three, R. So where’s that here? [unclear – 0:18:12.4]

So that’s Fulford, Main Street and then it’s in there. Right, there is a planning tab on here, just to show you, and if you look on planning constraints as well and you can turn on areas of archaeological importance right, it’s not in one of them. It probably is in a conservation area. Yes.

INTERVIEWER: That’s going over with [unclear – 0:18:41.6] purple shading...

RESPONDENT: And it’s got a list of buildings in [unclear – 0:18:44.1] like, so you can find that information but without looking at the HER, so, colleagues who don’t use the HER like Gill, might look at this. The Conservation Officer would look at this because she doesn’t use the HER. She might look at this and check the list of buildings for example, the conservation areas. So, we don’t care if it’s particularly if it’s a listed building, a conservation, so I’m just thinking about breaking ground. So, I find out where it is, so there it is. Find it on here (HBSMR).

INTERVIEWER: It’s a very crowded...

RESPONDENT: I know. It’s because I’ve got everything turned on. It’s so slow.

Just as an aside while it’s going on, I’m saying that I’m not interested about the listed building and what not because I’m looking at [unclear – 0:00:32.4] breaking ground, which is
true. I’m just thinking about it in archaeology but if they’re doing works that will significantly alter a building, if it’s a listed building, I’ll be asking for building recording. If it’s a local listed building, I’ll be asking a building recording and if it’s [unclear – 0:00:50.7] I’ll be asking for building recording and if it’s anything, of any significance, I would asks for a recording to be done. ...Fulford Park.

INTERVIEWER: So if, for the Red Tower, if we were going to make alterations to the building and a recording would have to be issued, I guess. A building recording would have to be done.

RESPONDENT: Probably. It’s a scheduled monument isn’t?

INTERVIEWER: It is a scheduled ancient monument, yeah.

RESPONDENT: So you’d need that more than anything else.

So, it’s here somewhere isn’t? Site number seven. Is it this one? This is where the planning portal thing should come up because I need to know exactly – see, what the outline is. But I think it’s number seven. I think it was that one. I’m just going to flick back to this. Oh, it’s that one apparently. Right, it’s that one.

So, this is just a very quick and rough guide. So it’s this plot of land here. Two storey and single storey rear extensions. So that’s what they’re proposing. So I’m just going to turn the monuments on. There’s not going to be any monuments. I think that’s ridge and furrow. So I’ve seen something is on there, so I want to know what that is. And it’s not that. [unclear – 0:02:18.4] ridge and furrow, as predicted.

So, okay, ridge and furrow well, ridge and furrow is not going to be there because it’s somebody’s garden now, presumably. Events. No events. We know there are no scheduled monuments or anything like that. So, okay there’s still no clue. And then I might think, ‘Well, I’ll turn on the first edition plan,’ it’s just weird using somebody else’s computer.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a bit different on...?

RESPONDENT: I think I just added things in and moved things around. Or maybe I haven’t actually, I don’t know. I don’t know, you know, it must be the same mustn’t it? I think I just got things in... So I’m looking at the first edition plan and I’m just going to take off, that monument thing, because it’s in the way. So it’s there. So it’s some sort of garden, on the edge of the village.
INTERVIEWER: I'm just going to say that to my eyes it looks quite fuzzy. But to your eyes that looks... That's just...

RESPONDENT: Oh, the map?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, just this section here that we're looking at...

RESPONDENT: Oh yeah, I think it's just the shading and I think it's just coloured in, isn't it? It is, no, it is fuzzy. It's not super clear. But basically it's a sort of park isn't it or gardens to Fulford House or something? Where would Fulford House be? That kind of thing on the edge of this village. So, it's probably never been built on until that house arrived but what would you find on that plot of land? You might find something little like a medieval village, you could find ridge and furrow sub-surface, not very exciting. If you're lucky you might find something to do with Romans or prehistoric but would you find them just looking at foundations of a house? Probably not. So it's one of those borderline cases really, we try not to... Because you might say, 'Oh well, let's just have a watching brief,' because you might, we don't know, you might find something. But I'm trying to balance it out because if it's just a homeowner trying to improve their home, you don't want to land them with another bill for £600, £700, £800 in archaeology fees if they're not expecting it. So sometimes it's a bit of a fine line and it just it's like 50/50 sometimes. Shall we, shall we not? So this is one of those ones I might say, if I'm feeling generous, I might say, 'Don't bother,' but then he is doing a two storey building which means he's going to have deeper foundations and a single storey, so it's going to be quite a large area. So... What I would probably do is look a little bit more closely at exactly where that house is – I'll just turn that off again. So it's there isn't it? That one.

INTERVIEWER: It's the higher one.

RESPONDENT: The top one? I thought it was the middle one.

INTERVIEWER: No, not the top one.

RESPONDENT: It's the middle one there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So it's there and that's probably the back line of the village, the toft line or the croft line, whatever it's called. So it's probably just outside the village but in the agricultural line.

It's a bit of a tough call that one.

INTERVIEWER: It is yeah.

So you'd have to look – from what you've said it sounds like you'd have to make a decision...

RESPONDENT: Yeah you would.

INTERVIEWER: ...on lots of different...
RESPONDENT: Yes. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And it can be bits of information including exactly what it was, where it was...

RESPONDENT: Exactly, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And so you yeah...

RESPONDENT: So it’s not a cut and dried one that one. It could just go – I think before I started helping Harry that one would just definitely go unnoticed. There would be no action taken because I think Harry’s just concentrating on ones that were in areas of archaeological importance or big excavations and things like that. So, that one would probably just go unnoticed. Since I’ve been helping him, we’ve asked for more that are like that but now I’m deciding maybe we should try and stop punishing people so...

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting.

RESPONDENT: So we might let that one go. But yeah, you’ve got to weigh up everything, how deep are they going, what are they doing, where is it, what might it impact upon?

INTERVIEWER: And you’re using several different maps.

RESPONDENT: Yeah but generally it’s just a bit of knowledge, common-sense, modern maps. I do use the First Edition map and then the HER data. And then I’ll write some comments to the planner to say this is what we want. And these are conditions, so, these ones for example, if I’ve said I wanted a watching brief on this one, it doesn’t mean they’re not going to get planning permission. They’ll be granted planning permission on the condition that they have this watching brief while it’s... And if they don’t do it there’s nothing we can do about it, which is annoying.

INTERVIEWER: So, I’m just trying to think if you got like a really good example of when you’ve done a listed – you’ve had a listed building application through and you didn’t think there was going to be anything there but then you sent a watching brief in.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. No, you’ll have to ask Harry because... So, my role – I do this, send off the comments, I might write a brief for people if they’ve asked for one but then everything is still going through Harry because Harry’s job is not my job. So, they would contact him and he would find out really. When the report comes in, then I turn back and do a bit more the HER role and we have a system there, Harry will dump the reports in a folder for me to get [unclear – 0:08:26.6] Harry will put the reports in a folder and then I will process them on the HER, by that I mean, I will add them on as a source, create a source record, create an event record, do all that HER jazz and try and keep that up-to-date. But as an addition to what’s been going on before, because [unclear – 0:08:44.7] Virley who was helping Harry out doing... I think [unclear – 0:08:47.7] Cheryll was looking at these lists but because she hasn’t got any archaeological background she was just checking if it was an AAI or something like that. Or when she’s putting things on the HER, she creating a source and an event but I look through the report and if there’s any extra information I can enhance, then I’m doing that. If
there’s any extra information, if they’ve found something, I’m adding it on as a monument, where I don’t think that was happening before. I’m doing a bit more of the enhancement.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: I’m just trying to think of what else... It’s a bit complicated trying to think of all the things...

That’s it in a nutshell.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

I’ve grasped – it does...

RESPONDENT: I don’t think Harry was asking for much building recording because the Conservation Office and Dan, who deal with the building aspect, I think they ask for building recording where they deem it necessary. But a building recording by an architect is not the same as an archaeological reading recording which is I’ve asked him for, which is what Historic England have different levels – have you seen those kinds of report? I mean I’ll send you examples of all the reports, if it’s helpful. There are different levels ranging from, you know a bit of research and a few snaps to a full-blown photogramic survey and sketches, phase plans all that sort of thing and...

INTERVIEWER: Sorry, but that’s an archaeological report?

RESPONDENT: Archaeological building recording of historic buildings assessments, whatever and it’s essentially somebody photographically recording the building before it’s altered but it’s also doing a bit more background research and looking at things in the building and taking photographs with, you know, some sort scale in them and things like that, that often the architects don’t do, or they don’t look for the same things. Or we might ask for an archaeologist to be on site while the work’s being done in a building. So they’re not digging any holes but there is an example, I think Dan was doing it, where they’d found... They were going to do something and they were going to take out the chimney stack, something like that on this building and I said well I think we need somebody to watch that because who knows what’s going to be under there. There could be a medieval fireplace in there, you know? I mean, the buildings in York have so complicated a history, somewhere on Micklegate, something like that. You know, you’ve got medieval buildings within Georgian buildings and things.

I think it’s important to – again, since I’ve started helping Harry we’re asking for more of that kind of work because I think Harry was just overwhelmed before and had too much going on.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting. The differences between archaeological building recording and architectural...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, well...

INTERVIEWER: That’s, that’s... Yeah.
...there is a difference, there is a difference. But I'll dig out some examples.

That would be really helpful.

Maybe I can have a think about some sites where we've done, you know, like Clifton and things where they've done a series of evaluations.

Yeah, and desk-based analysis.

Desk-based assessment.

Yeah, assessment, sorry is...

I miss doing them. They're quite nice to do ...

Why do you say that?

Because I don't get to do them anymore and I used to like doing them.

Yeah, because it's interesting because, you know, every site is different and you get to do a bit of research and... I just like it.

Do you collect in those... So you're going through the archives and do you collect maps and photos?

Yeah.

I would look for photos and maps and if was an urban thing I would look through Trade Directories and that sort of thing, just to put a bit more in there. But you're not looking at, you know, historical documents from 1509 or anything like that. It's not academic research like that. Mostly you just want to see what was it like in the past as best you can and make your decision or to inform the archaeological– the County Council more about what they might do with it, to inform the management essentially.

So there's lots...

I was going to show you the on here... So, once I've decided what's going to happen, there's a consultations – have you seen this?

I have not seen that, no.

This is where all the archaeological works is logged, basically. So here's one and, okay you've got that – so this is one I did last week. So, basically you would have put it on list like this, same sort of thing, and I filled it in. So there's the planning reference and what not, they want to put four houses on and reconfigure an existing house. There's four tabs on this. So that's the front page, the headlines. If there's any monuments on that HER that's touching it, or like important to it, I'll put it in here – but there isn't. Consultation stage, well this is probably stage one.
Oh God, what it is doing here?

So this is stage one and I’m saying it’s a planning recommendation, it’s a condition – because sometimes if it’s a really important site, like, well you know there’s going to be something archaeological-wise you will ask for it to be predetermination. So, instead of them getting the planning consent and then having to do this as an after-thought, you cannot have planning consent unless you do the archaeology first because if it’s in an area I’m trying to think where would be... I think, actually, you know round the cinema on Blossom Street, there’s been a couple around there recently where people have asked...

INTERVIEWER: The Reels?

RESPONDENT: The Reel Cinema.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: People have come and asked, before an application’s been submitted sometimes people ask for advice, it is called pre-app and it’s where, you know, they’ll say we’re thinking about putting in an application in for this site, what will the constraints be? What will I come up against? And so we’ve said straightaway there are Roman burials all over the shop. So, we need you to do some of these trenches before you even put in an application. So what we want them to do – it’s a bit of a risk because they’ve got to cough up and pay for the archaeology before they’ve even got any planning consent. So they do the archaeology, hoping they’re going to get the planning consent. They submit the archaeological report with the planning application and then we can see, alright, yes, he’s found X – well this is how we’re going to mitigate it by moving the building just away from that or putting pile foundations in or, you know? So we’re not going to say, more likely than not, we’ll not say you cannot have your building there. We’ve had a heads-up about it, we’ve told we’re doing an evaluation but it’s just now we know what’s there, we’ve got a much better idea of what’s there, so we need to do some mitigation.

Oh, here it is, so this is a watching brief, which we call condition two. And this is just the kind of notes I would have sent to the planner. So it’s along a Roman road, basically it means there may have been burials or what not. And I’ll just jump to the map... And this is...

INTERVIEWER: Oh right...

RESPONDENT: ...just the stage...

INTERVIEWER: ...I see you’ve just...

RESPONDENT: ...after.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So once I’ve confirmed with Harry that that’s the right approach, a watching brief in this instance, I’d make the new – they’re called CYO consultations. I’d make the consultation and then I’d draw it on here.
Now it’s got two numbers. 639 is the one I’ve just showed you, but 431 is just an old one. So if I go in groups, basically, they’ve submitted this before. And it’s got a different plan – it’s the same site, same proposal but they’ve submitted it some time ago and nothing ever happened with it. It logged then and, so this is the old one. It had been logged in the past in March it was logged but nothing ever happened and it’s come forward again and because it’s got a different planning number I’ve put it in again as a different application. But that’s all that on it is see? But it’s for the same site.

And so just to...so when I looked at this one off the list, the logic would have been – so imagine we’ve just looked at this – this is probably the way round I should have done it before. So, if we’d looked at this as a site boundary, and they’d said they want to build four houses, so I’m looking at that. Okay, there’s nothing there’s no monuments touching it. I don’t think... There are no events. I think that event I think is an earlier photograph.

INTERVIEWER: You’ve got probably,] from my experience – is it when you’ve opened too many...

RESPONDENT: Oh.

INTERVIEWER: Too many windows and then it just, sort of, goes a bit slow, more slowly?

RESPONDENT: Oh there’s some – settlement occupational debris up there apparently. Anyway, there’s a bit of stuff going on and I would have checked on this to see what’s on there, probably nothing. Nothing. But because – sorry do you want to put that back on?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I’ll try.

RESPONDENT: Let’s us put it back on.

But because it’s because they want to build four houses on a site that hasn’t been built on, next to a Roman road we’ve asked for a watching brief. So we haven’t asked for a dig because the chances are you’re never going to come up against anything spectacular, but we want somebody to watch while they dig out the foundations.

INTERVIEWER: I think I’m with you.

I think I’m getting a sort of an idea of how the process...

RESPONDENT: The planning side of it.

INTERVIEWER: And it can go in different directions.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

And that is how – so the reports have come from the planning side that is where a lot of the information comes from that makes up the HER, because I mean the events, sources and then monuments as well potentially.
INTERVIEWER: So, going back to my initial kind of crazy [unclear – 0:19:26.4] my initial...idea about how HER could be used in a more community-based planning, sort of, workshop type thing. I mean, from my lack of experience of using the HER, it is a bit of a confusing process that you do.

RESPONDENT: When you say community planning, I mean, because they wouldn’t be doing that...

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: ...they wouldn’t decide do I need any archaeology? Do you mean like what do you mean?

INTERVIEWER: Well I’m exploring the idea of maybe using a map that has information...

RESPONDENT: The HER information?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. The HER information as a way of discussing with groups what they would want to do in that area.

RESPONDENT: So like where they might want to put stuff?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Well, you see, I can’t see how a lot of that information is going to be relevant.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: It depends where, doesn’t it? But if you just look at that snapshot there for example, there would be nothing on there that would help them, would it? Mm.

INTERVIEWER: I guess...

RESPONDENT: It’s more like... Sorry, I’m just trying to follow something through in my head. In archaeology terms, unless you’re next to some sort of super-duper known site that would be a sure-stop of building something new, I can’t see how any other archaeological information might be that useful to you.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: If it’s an upstanding monument, yes. Or if it’s... Maybe if it’s a track or a lane or something that’s historic in nature, you might not know it but if you did some research, or looked at some old maps, it might be a medieval lane out of a village or something, I can see how that might be useful. But I think something more like the character statements would be more informative because they would highlight something like that lane I’ve just mentioned, or I don’t know, it might highlight the significance of some open fields at the bottom of a village or something that kept the medieval form or something like that. I don’t know, I’m just talking, making it all up now.
INTERVIEWER: No, no, no, don’t be silly – this is...

RESPONDENT: I’m just thinking off the top of my head, I don’t know, but archaeology is a bit... I mean, were you thinking archaeology or where you thinking something else? I mean where...

INTERVIEWER: I guess I was... Because I haven’t got the everyday knowledge of the use of the HER, I guess for me it seemed it’s a bit mysterious.

RESPONDENT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: But I wanted to understand it more about the process that you’ve just shown me and...

RESPONDENT: I’m just trying to think... Have you got anywhere in mind that you were thinking of?

INTERVIEWER: The Red Tower area is supposed to be....

RESPONDENT: Where’s that?

INTERVIEWER: ...a case study. So that’s Foss Island Road which is...

RESPONDENT: It’s down here...

INTERVIEWER: ...close to the....

RESPONDENT: ...there, Foss Island.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: It’s down somewhere.

INTERVIEWER: So, it’s up here.

RESPONDENT: Oh.

INTERVIEWER: Hang on, no it’s here.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It’s where...

RESPONDENT: [unclear – 0:04:05.2]

INTERVIEWER: ...that’s where it is.

RESPONDENT: Let’s find that Tower.

I still haven’t been in, I need to come down. So I want to go and see Walmgate Bar as well whatever they’ve been doing there.

So is that, where is it?
INTERVIEWER: It is is that it? That can’t be it.

RESPONDENT: No. Is that it?

INTERVIEWER: It must be this...

RESPONDENT: Is that it?

INTERVIEWER: ...area. It should be...

RESPONDENT: Red Tower, yeah. It’s small isn’t it?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

I guess because... Yeah that is definitely it...

RESPONDENT: But when you’re saying about in – not in a neighbourhood plan way but in a planning way...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I mean what can you do round there? You can’t really...

INTERVIEWER: Because it’s in a...

RESPONDENT: I’m just trying to think what you might be asking it.

INTERVIEWER: Because this is specifically for going in underground, basically, would you say?

RESPONDENT: Not necessarily but I’m just wondering what you’re trying to ask it to do. Like when you were saying about in planning terms before, I was thinking about an outlying village that might think, ‘Well, they won’t,’ you know, there’s been a proposal for housing on the east edge of the village, this is neighbourhood planning isn’t it? We might think it’s best on the west end of the village, can we use this for some evidence. That’s what I’m thinking.

INTERVIEWER: Right, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Somewhere like the Red Tower, you’re not talking about any development like that are you?

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: You’re talking about one building and you wouldn’t use – if you wanted to change that building, forget about SMC and all that, like. If you just wanted to change that building you wouldn’t need to look at the HER to do that, you would just do that through planning, wouldn’t you?

INTERVIEWER: But if you were going to use it for neighbourhood planning, it might mean...

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I think so, you would use it for neighbourhood planning.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: Definitely and the character areas, that kind of thing. So that’s what it looks like if you turn on things on the HER.

INTERVIEWER: This is interesting, that playground is actually over here.

RESPONDENT: I think they’re a bit out of date, some of them.

INTERVIEWER: They do have two benches at the end.

RESPONDENT: Because I was looking at one the other day from [unclear – 0:06:40.7] and the school’s moved sites. So that’s what you would see if you were looking at the HER with its listed buildings, city walls, scheduled monument... I mean it’s so inaccurate, that red... I guess that is supposed to be the Red Tower.

INTERVIEWER: That’s their NYO.

RESPONDENT: Oh, no it’s not, it is debris.

INTERVIEWER: No, it’s the old one.

RESPONDENT: Oh.

INTERVIEWER: It’s the City Walls.

RESPONDENT: Oh right, okay.

INTERVIEWER: It’s the general. I did put an image on that library link. Okay. This is why it is very useful to talk to you when I’ve got these ideas that I want to try and work through but without actually knowing how...

RESPONDENT: I mean people – opening the HER up to people, to the public, is... Well it’s useful for people who are trying to write those desk-based assessments and things, although Heritage Gateway for example, you would not use Heritage Gateway if you were doing a desk-based assessment. If you do, you should be shot because you need to be accessing the up-to-date full version and you should be coming through the Council and paying for it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So, you still probably would end up paying for it and speaking to Harry if you were working for a developer. But, if you were just interested in the Red Tower, or if you lived around this area, you might come on here and just go, ‘I didn’t know that about the Red Tower, or that...’

INTERVIEWER: As an educational...

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Not as a planning thing, but just generally about the area, yes it’s educational.
INTERVIEWER: Would you say going back to your characterisation area and project, would you say that is more for the educational or for the planning, or does it – can it do both? And I might have asked this question before.

RESPONDENT: It was supposed to be able to do both. I never bought-in to that, from day one, I said I didn’t think it was possible. And it is possible to an extent in that if you just want to look at a glance from a planning perspective, particularly neighbourhood planning and things like that, it does probably work. If you just want to look and see generally what you might need to look for, then it kind of does work and it does definitely work on the public educational side. It’s just the level of detail that you might need to make a proper, informed decision. You couldn’t rely on that. I think at first I was a bit thinking it had to be that detailed, it had to be useful for a planner. Whereas, I have actually found it more and more useful as a planning guide, more recently, I’ve just looked at – I’m doing the greenbelt appraisal for example and some of the sites where it just comes into some of my character areas, I’ve been looking at my character statements and going right key-views, that, that, that... You know? General feel is that and it just is good for the general feel like that, rather than all the nitty-gritty detail.

So, I suppose I’ve proved myself wrong. I thought it wouldn’t work on both levels. It kind of does, if you’re just need a quick, ‘What should I be looking out for?’ Neighbourhood planning, saying it would be, ‘These are the things you should take into consideration, X, Y, Z,’ and then you need to go away and formulate something more solid around that.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, that’s interesting.

So can I ask you to maybe send me an example of the desk-based assessment.

RESPONDENT: I will go and look, yes.

INTERVIEWER: And, maybe an example of a watching brief?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I might try and think of – find the site because the session...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And I would be interested also about the building recordings.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I’ll just send you everything. Planning, all planning type and examples of everything.

INTERVIEWER: And that will give me a lot to go on and I’ve got a meeting with Harry next week, so...

RESPONDENT: It will. You don’t get to sit down at the planning though do you, is that the direction you were thinking of?

INTERVIEWER: Well, it is and isn’t because the HER is between that education...

RESPONDENT: It’s a planning tool.

INTERVIEWER: ...and it’s a planning tool. You see it...
RESPONDENT: I see it as a planning tool.

INTERVIEWER: Right okay.

RESPONDENT: But that's because all the HERs I've had dealings with, that's how I've used them.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: As a developer, as an archaeologist. Now the Newcastle HER, the York HER, the Durham and Northumberland all have a public website side that's about six months out of date and is a slimmed down educational tool version and they're all different. And there is a benefit in using that as well, just is an out-reach thing but I never use that side of it because I'm using the... I have to look at everything and make the decisions, so... I sometimes don't see it in that way but trying to do something like Know your Place where you've got everything in one, just with switching layers on and off and things, that would be good I can see the benefit of that.

And this idea of people being able to write on their own stuff, I like that idea as well. I think when we've talked about this Heroes thing at the conference last week, they were saying there was three levels, you know, someone might put something on about, I don't know... I think the example was of somebody put something on about dog poo on the grass or something like that. Somebody might put something on about that they met their wife at a certain place and somebody might put on like an historical fact about something. And they were saying, like, there would be three levels and historical facts might go into the proper HER – once it's been screened it would make it into the proper HER, maybe the bit about meeting the wife would go that community level, so it wouldn't come up when a developer was searching. And then the thing about the dog poo would, sort of, get chopped, you know, like?

INTERVIEWER: You mean filtered?

RESPONDENT: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: If that's the word.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Brilliant, that's really interesting. I'm sorry that I couldn't find this [unclear – 0:13:29.6]

RESPONDENT: Oh, it's alright.

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:13:31.1] I did have the resource for it and it is kind of well it's at sort of the height of crazy to go I guess.

RESPONDENT: It sounds pretty cool.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and I mean, just looking at the result for the [unclear – 0:13:48.5] Boston video that doesn’t actually bring up the Boston video. They have got some useful maps wherever they are.

RESPONDENT: Has Harry mentioned the deposit modelling thing?

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: That’s another bid we’re trying to put in money for but I think some work’s been done on it already but essentially the idea is that we want to have a map over the city centre basically, which shows the depths of the different deposits because the archaeology in York is so complex. So you can have like Roman deposits, you know, nine metres down.

INTERVIEWER: So it’s... I have heard of it.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I have heard of it.

RESPONDENT: Then you’d have your medieval deposits are between three and two meters, or whatever... They’re like a map over the city so you could...

INTERVIEWER: How would you – what position would you be looking at it from because obviously with the HER you’d be a bird’s-eye-view.

RESPONDENT: I don’t know. There is some data on the HER already but, so it will just be in 2D. I never – I’m not actually sure...

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:14:51.2]

RESPONDENT: Can you see anything? Strat– yeah it’s one of these. I don’t usually use it but sometimes it will come up on one of the informations or something. How would I use it?.

[unclear – 0:15:11.3] it’s quite complicated, I don’t know how it works exactly. Well that’s worked well. Total two minutes.

Well there is some point data on there and you just click on the point and it’ll say, like it said there, rolling cuts and ditches at five meters or whatever.

INTERVIEWER: You want to be able to...

RESPONDENT: Well ideally it would be nice to have a map that you could just ... I don’t know how he’s expecting it to look but, see you could maybe turn on a layer and show you Roman deposit depths or something.

INTERVIEWER: And you’d find that useful in a in what context would you find that useful?

RESPONDENT: Well, if you were going to – so if you wanted to build a new, I don’t know, apartments or something, I mean this is all a bit fuzzy because we’re talking about the city centre and there’s not going to be a massive scale development like that maybe, but on, I
don’t know, like Coney Street or something like that, if you wanted to put something huge in
there you would like, it would just be useful. You could say, ’Well, you can’t go past six
meters because then you’re hitting the Roman stuff, or...’ That kind of thing, I mean that’s a
really bad example actually but it would just give you more information rather than having to
seek that information again. I mean there is some...the Arup study did do some deposit
modelling but it’s literally like on paper in the [unclear – 0:17:00.8] Arup study review and it
was based on digs and things that were done in the 70s and 80s I guess. And just the data
that was gathered from that, like what depth would you find medieval there, what depth did
you find Roman there, and they’re trying to build-up. Essentially, you can build up a
topography map of the city as it was in Roman times, as it was in medieval times. I think if
you look in the Arup Study, there is maps at the back that show you it’s just very small tiny
bits of the city where they’ve done this topology thing.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Is that the Arup Studies online...

RESPONDENT: Topography, sorry. So you can basically you can do a topographic survey of
what the city was like in Roman times, medieval times, whatever, and that can inform you on
a lot of different things because you might say, ’Oh right, yeah well the river covered that
part of the land at that time, or it was much higher then, so you would have been able to see
this, or,’ you know? A whole variety of things.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: And if you say, ’Well the ground level was at X in medieval times but now it’s
been chopped right down,’ then you can surmise that perhaps the medieval archaeology has
been taken away and the land’s been lowered, you know? That kind of thing. It is useful.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like it’s going to be a big putting all that information together will
be a right – I’d imagine it would be quite a big job.

RESPONDENT: It is a huge job which is why it needs money and things.

I’m just thinking about – there was a site that Harry was talking about the other day...

Why is this not working?

INTERVIEWER: I’m just going to stop this thing because it’s been going on for about an hour.

RESPONDENT: Oh sorry, sorry.

RESPONDENT: Just, just out of interest...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ....really.

So it’s the site of the old fire station and I’ve got a report. So, they’ve just done some
evaluation on it and some bore holes, they’ve been putting bore holes in and doing some
trenches and bore holes and – that’s not what I want... And so the bore holes data I’ve just
put them on, so where is it? Ah do you think... So I’ve been doing bore hole data stuff and
there’s the sort of – if it’s working. So the bore hole tells you the depth of different deposits.

INTERVIEWER: Cool, okay. So this is library link?

RESPONDENT: This is a library link. This is a case that I made earlier. And this is quite
interesting because, so Harry’s asked them to do all of these bore holes and evaluations and
things. I’ll just find the picture I’m looking for.

And I think they need to finish it off but they’re talking now about moving the about moving
is it the garage is it or something? Or having the garages substrata rather than like on the
top and they’ve talked about having them half sunken in, which is slightly changed the goal
posts.

They’re just pictures of the trenches. There was a nice graphic... So that’s the positions
of the trenches and bore holes. And there are some sections and things. This is what you get
in like a standard report but it was this I was going to show you. So these are five bore holes
and you see there, it’s got like meters below ground level. It doesn’t tell you a lot on there
but this was quite cool. So, they’ve managed to, using that bore hole data – so there’s you’re
bore holes one, two, three, four, five. So using the depth they’ve managed to plot the
medieval layer, medieval builder, then the natural...

INTERVIEWER: And that’s just really... And that’s a useful...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, that is useful, so...

INTERVIEWER: It’s not a – is it a diagram would you say? What would you describe it as?


INTERVIEWER: Because it is also yeah it’s numerical... Yeah, it’s an interesting one.

RESPONDENT: So, but it just shows you that you know that the depth of the medieval across
the site is roughly between eight and ten... Hang on a minute. Yeah, sorry it’s a bit hard to
read this but it’s like one to two meters to four meters down, there’s a few spikes and things
and interesting little bumps.

But that’s the kind of data you could get.

INTERVIEWER: I like that. It’s an earth map.

RESPONDENT: They’ve put in this extra of – you might not get this extra information with an
evaluation. This is the kind of thing you might get with the – an assessment. So in the HER
terms, for this site, I’ve put on the event, I’ve put on the source and then I read through this
report and, you know, I’ve seen this picture. Now this is linked to – there’s a monument
record already for the fire station and this old church which was on the site of the fire station.
You’d put in any information about Trinity Chapel into that monument as well.
INTERVIEWER: And this additional information just – I mean how would that work in the next steps that you would be going forward with. How would they assist, or would you just...?

RESPONDENT: What, that bore hole picture?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So, for that site – I’m just trying to think – because I just looked at this the other week and I’ve just got a terrible memory. I’ll just put it back on because I’ve got so that... Right, demolition buildings so, that’s for part one, two and three on this one, which means, so it’s in the centre of archaeological importance. That’s why it’s important, Friary, near the castle, so we looked at the HER and there’s all this other stuff that has gone on. So you know there’s going to be stuff there. Now Harry asked for an evaluation which took place then. We’ve done five of the twelve we wanted. So we’ve asked for R1 which is that we want this evaluation to go ahead. Basically, we want them to finish the bore holes and then R2’s the watching briefs, so even though they’ve done all that bore hole stuff, it’s such an important site we still want someone to be there while they do the rest. R3, we don’t use this one very often but this is where we would want them to make sure that 95% of the deposits are protected. So they’d have to do that by piling or placing buildings in the right place. So this is – we’ve asked for the full-wack on this site. It’s still just a condition – so we’re not saying you can’t do it. Remember the site’s been built on by a chapel and fire station and houses. So it’s – the top layers are pretty roughed-up but we know that down underneath there is protected medieval archaeology.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So we’re asking for quite a lot. So those results from that first load of work and the results from the next lot when they finish it, will help inform this number three where – how will we protect that?

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Because if we didn’t know, if we did have any information just if we thought, ‘Oh well there’s bound to be something under there,’ how would we know how to protect it? So that’s why...

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: I hope that’s clear-ish?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, no it is.

RESPONDENT: I’m not very good at explaining things and I’ve never had to explain any of this before, so...

INTERVIEWER: No, well and I’ve never actually had it explained to me before so it’s a new one for both of us. But I feel like that’s...

I know – archaeology – I’ve had an archaeological lesson today.
RESPONDENT: Is that enough for today then?
INTERVIEWER: That is absolutely, yeah, I'm going to stop here...
RESPONDENT: I'll try and do some...
END OF TRANSCRIPT
INTERVIEWER: So...

RESPONDENT: Sorry I can’t answer that question.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Oh, that’s not a good start. I have been interested to know what your usage of the HER is on a day-to-day basis?

RESPONDENT: Right. I guess it probably replicates pretty much what Hannah’s told you already. I mean I use it less so now that Hannah is here and has taken over the weekly list. But as a logging workflow, so the consultations module allows you to create a record for pretty much anything that we do, if we so desire. In practice, it’s used for recording what we do on the local plan, strategic allocations, development, management, planning applications and search requests for information from the HER. So they’re the three principal work areas that I use this for.

There are other areas that I engage with, which is what you could loosely call enhancement. The actual data that’s in here is fairly dirty. There’s lots of duplication, there’s lots of gaps, there’s lots of information for each individual record that is missing, fields that aren’t completed. So there are quite a lot of problems with the basic datasets in there. So when I get HER search requests then I tend to use those as a means of tidying up the data that’s around those search requests, up to a point. I don’t create lots and lots of new monuments, but I will create monuments if they make more sense of the data that is being requested by whoever is requesting the information. So consultation, the consultation module manages workflow, I engage in enhancements which are essentially driven by whatever comes in in the workflow. So it’s not a planned process of enhancement, it’s a reactive process.

They are the sort of main areas that I use it for. I suppose the lesser area, which is more of a user, really, so this tends not to generate information within or additions to the Historic Environment Record, but is where I’m actually interested in finding out about what’s gone on in a place, for whatever reason. So I will use this as a source of information for whatever bit of work I’m doing and that bit of work may not generate a record within the Historic Environment Record. I think they are the main areas. And I also use the GIS as way of looking at...well the historic maps are particularly helpful and having the 1852 on here is rather special.

INTERVIEWER: Do you mind if I take photos?

RESPONDENT: No. No. So that’s the first edition counter seals, but we also have the...

INTERVIEWER: What do the pink lines...?

RESPONDENT: That’s the consultations.
INTERVIEWER: Right. That’s what you’ve got up on the key?

RESPONDENT: That’s right. So you can see as you turn things on it gets very…the blue is the monument module. If I turn the events on as well, this is where archaeological pieces of work have taken place in brown, it tends to get pretty busy. The listed building information on here replicates the monument information, so if I switch the monuments off and I switch the events off...

INTERVIEWER: I almost wish I could be filming this, the way that it’s coming up on the screen.

RESPONDENT: If I turn the labels off…what I was particularly interested in was the first edition, well it’s not the first edition, it’s a 60 inch to a mile...Ordnance Survey 60 inches to one mile plan that was surveyed between 1850 and 1852. So this is the earliest, most accurate map of the city.

INTERVIEWER: There is a bit of a lag between when you bring it up and it actually loads, isn’t there?

RESPONDENT: Yes. But it’s not...considering, if I switch the maps off, switch the listed buildings off, it redraws it a bit more quickly. So this is of particular...for me this is particularly useful. This used to just exist as paper records and then a few years ago I had it scanned in as high resolution TIFFs and now it’s available...and I’ve worked with an external consultant and with our IT people, so this is now available both on our website, as a georeferenced dataset and on a third party website as a georeferenced dataset as well.

INTERVIEWER: Can you give me an example of when you found this map to be particularly useful in working through either a question that someone has asked you or an application, a planning application?

RESPONDENT: Which one to choose? There are so many, really, that’s the problem. Because it really provides baseline information about the city. So the Hungate area, if we turn on the events and see what we’ve got on here... So not all of the Hungate excavations appear on here at the moment as polygons, so the whole of block H, which is sat in here, doesn’t appear as a polygon at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: So this area here is Hungate?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Where the green...

RESPONDENT: So this is the site before it was fully developed. This is the most recent aerial photograph that we’ve got, so you’ve got the block...that was the first block to be developed, phase one. Phase two was here, and I think we’re going to start...I can’t remember which one we’re starting on next, probably this one here. But what we can do is...the great thing about this is you can play around with things like transparency...that’s too transparent, that. If we turn the
maps off...so there we've got, if we turn the historical maps back on and change the
transparency of that...

INTERVIEWER: Mm.

RESPONDENT: So this is one of the things I like to do when looking at the site of a proposed
development, is to play around with the layers, so that you can see through one layer onto the
next one and although there's a slight issue over the actual alignment of the maps... So the 1852
map is about five metres misplaced from where it should be. That's due to the projection that
was used in the 1850s, to draw that map. It's possible to correct it, but it takes a while. So what
you can see here is, for instance, Haver Lane, which used to run from Hungate all the way
through to the Haymarket over here, Haver Lane disappeared when all of these buildings were
demolished in the 1930s and it became a cleared area, but that was picked up in the excavation
with all of the buildings on either side.

So doing this sort of exercise is a good way of seeing how a development proposal
might impact on the earlier street patterns underneath.

INTERVIEWER: So there is definitely, from what you said, the photograph and the map together
working side by side are helpful.

RESPONDENT: Very helpful. If we look at one where something hasn't happened. Well, you can
also use it to see that you've got areas where there's never been any development. So if we go
and have a look at the site of St Joseph's Convent, which is this site here. In 2007 it was just
open apart from some small scale buildings that were in there that the convent has constructed,
but otherwise it was basically a large, enclosed area. And if you go back to the historic maps, in
1852 it was just a series of fields. So that's particularly...from an assessing development point of
view, that's particularly useful. Because if there is archaeology there, then the only thing that it's
ever had to potentially disturb it is agricultural activity. So it's really very useful to be able to
superimpose one on top of the other.

INTERVIEWER: Do you use this sort of consultation, the maps, is that something that you do on
your own or do you bring those maps to planning meetings?

RESPONDENT: Well, these days I don't go to planning meetings. Very rarely am I asked to go to
a planning committee. I wouldn't necessarily use this as part of a response. I wouldn't
necessarily copy this and place it into a memo, but I might refer to the sequence of
development that you can see from 1852 onwards as part of the discussion. Any other good
ones that we could look at?

INTERVIEWER: Can we look at the Red Tower area?
RESPONDENT: Okay. So you can see you have a linen manufacturer operating on...you’ve got Navigation Road coming down here, and then in the area that’s occupied by the Navigation Road flats, then Rosemary Place there, if you put the...

INTERVIEWER: At the time the Red Tower had been restored, but not to the restoration state that it is in now, because it’s ’57 that it...?

RESPONDENT: Yes. So basically it’s showing a much larger opening than is there at the moment and that enclosure round it, that stone enclosure, isn’t there. You’ve got that building that sits right on top and across the city wall there.

INTERVIEWER: What was that?

RESPONDENT: I don’t know. I’ve no idea. And then the city wall here is shown as quite wide, so that walkway or something is in existence along here in 1852 that is more than just the thickness of the wall, I think.

INTERVIEWER: Couldn’t that just be the way that they’ve drawn it?

RESPONDENT: I don’t think so, because it’s a very accurate portrayal. So you can see there’s the wall walk coming along, and then you’ve got the parapet and then you can see the front of the wall. And you stick this on and it’s the same thickness running through. And that comes through...

INTERVIEWER: It’s sticking to the accurate...

RESPONDENT: And then it runs into the...and then you’ve got the steps up into Walmgate Bar and then again that’s running off along the rest of it there. Interesting.

INTERVIEWER: Say that we’re on the walls and I’ve done a bit of walking on the walls recently, and you showed me the, I forget what the name of the map was....

RESPONDENT: It shows all the chainage points and the measurement points.

INTERVIEWER: So is that not something that you could put in there, on the HER?

RESPONDENT: It is, absolutely, and I’ve had conversations with Nick at On-Site Archaeology to get him to go out with his GPS and put his GPS on each of those chainage points to produce a digital layer of that chainage system that we could then put on here. But as I’ve never paid him, he’s never done it! So if there’s anybody at the department who wants to go out and create a digital layer of chainage systems, then put the word around.

INTERVIEWER: The walls are one of your main assets that you have to manage, I think you’ve said in the past.
RESPONDENT: It is, yeah. This year it’s taking up an increasingly larger percentage of my time, so basically the work that Hannah’s doing is work that I would have been doing and having Hannah has meant that I can spend more time dealing with the city walls this year.

INTERVIEWER: And because I’ve been involved in the Red Tower stuff, I guess...

[interuption]

INTERVIEWER: I’ve forgotten where I was...

RESPONDENT: City walls?

INTERVIEWER: Yes. So I’ve been involved in the Red Tower project and I feel from being here and having spent more time working on it, is there a plan for the city walls?

RESPONDENT: There is a plan. There’s the conservation management plan for the city walls and there is the 1991 condition survey and evolving from both of those we have a programme of repair and maintenance. So each year we look at putting together a programme for the next financial year of the works that we’ll do.

This year has been a bit different in that for eighteen months now I’ve had an engineer who has been monitoring various sections of the city wall. So based on the ’91 condition survey, the monitoring work that he and his team have been doing, we’ve put together a three-year programme, which is sort of part one of a five-year programme of repair and maintenance. So rather than it being an annual suck it and see what we’re doing to do next year sort of work programme, we’re trying to move towards a system where we have a five-year programme of interventions on the city walls, so we know precisely what it is that we’ll be dealing with over that five-year period.

INTERVIEWER: I know that today you’ve been already to Walmgate, is Walmgate part...because there’s been a lot of work done on Walmgate lately...

RESPONDENT: No, Walmgate Bar is the last piece of work from the previous programmes that we’ve had to complete. So Walmgate Bar, we’ve been planning to do the work at Walmgate Bar for three years now, longer. But for a whole set of reasons it’s taken us a while to get there.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: One of the issues with the HER at the moment is that a lot of the functionality here, so say we’re looking at...let’s look at...

INTERVIEWER: This is the building of the commercial supermarket.

RESPONDENT: It is. That’s right. This is before Morrisons...well there’s Morrisons under construction.

INTERVIEWER: And the Foss Islands area, yeah.
RESPONDENT: So you’ve got Morrisons being constructed, car park in front, the access road that goes through to the James Street link road, whatever that bunch of shops...

INTERVIEWER: I think it’s like Homebase or something and...

RESPONDENT: ...and this is now Waitrose.

INTERVIEWER: When was this aerial photo taken?


INTERVIEWER: So almost eight/nine years ago.

RESPONDENT: Nine years ago. 2007, well trench D...these three pieces of work here were underway. It says 2007 on the index here. You can see block H is just beginning to be excavated. So the first bit of excavation on block H, at Hungate, and then these deeper trenches are in the process of excavation.

INTERVIEWER: I know that Hungate had a lot of attention in terms of the archaeological progress and there was a community public archaeology project that was done on there. Why there? Why not the Morrisons area?

RESPONDENT: Why dig that site? So the Morrisons area in 1852 is fields. You’ve got a couple of industrial activities going on out there...it’s all to do with brick and making bricks. So you’ve got these drying sheds and kilns for making bricks and the reason they’re making bricks here is that there was lots of clay, so they’re digging big holes.

So this is a slightly smaller scale plan, but essentially showing the same thing, and you can see you’ve got these strange linear features here. And this is where they’re extracting clay. So by the time you get on to here, it’s not really showing it, but you had great big areas which had been dug out in this area and over here.

INTERVIEWER: There’s a railway track.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So you had great big areas dug out all around here, which were basically used for a rubbish tip. So this whole area was one great big industrial dump and then these sidings were built through it and across it.

[interruption]

So over here basically you’ve just got a big area that lots of stuff has been dug out and has been replaced by nineteenth century rubbish dumping and railway construction. So in terms of research targets, this area has not been and was not a priority. But the Hungate area has offered interesting archaeological possibilities with its adjacency to the River Foss, the King’s Fish Pool running through here, the probable Viking origins of Hungate itself. The mediaeval friary that was in this area, the Carmelite friary, all of the post-mediaeval occupation of this area,
Hungate offered significant potential for interesting archaeological research, which this place didn’t.

It was also, it was at the height of its post-1930s slum clearance development. So all the eighteenth and nineteenth century housing in this area was cleared away between 1933 and 1937. The whole area was just left vacant. You can see in 1936 you’ve actually still got housing on there. 1951 all the housing has gone. You can see the outline of the road pattern still here. By 1962 that then has been redeveloped to provide a sort of semi-industrial area. By 2002 that’s gone, but that’s still there, but a lot of the users in here have gone. So the electricity board has moved out. Lots of these sheds and small-scale industrial units are empty. So you have an area here that has fallen into perhaps three different property ownerships. They have all come together with a proposal for comprehensive redevelopment of the whole site.

So that, from an archaeological perspective, is incredibly tempting. Because it means that you get the opportunity, instead of looking at one small part of the site, where you might be getting a single development on it, you’re looking at the whole area and the potential to evaluate the whole of the site and look at what the research and archaeological potential might be. And that’s basically what happened between 2000 and 2003. There was a huge programme of evaluation rolled out across the site. And out of that came the proposals for this quite ambitious archaeological research project – the Hungate Archaeology Project – which had as part of it a very significant community engagement programme.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve got two questions. Why is there such a massive gap between 1971 and 2002?

RESPONDENT: Well in 1971 this is still active as the, was it the North Eastern Electricity Board back then? Whichever electricity company it was, they were still using the site. Their old cars are still parked on there. The cooling tower still hasn’t been demolished yet. The power stations...Sean was talking about the power station explosion happening, whenever it was, 1957, well that was over here. This is where the power station was. And that’s the cooling tower that’s on Lowry’s – the famous painting of Clifford’s Tower. And there’s another one from over there which is looking in this direction.

INTERVIEWER: So it would have remained the same, pretty much, until...

RESPONDENT: Well the electricity board were using this really until the early 2000s. I’m not quite sure precisely when they did move out. I mean there’s no cars there in 2002, there’s nothing parked...there’s one car parked there, so they may already have moved out by 2002.

INTERVIEWER: So what instigates the photo to be taken then? Is it a change in...?

RESPONDENT: What this? No, these are fairly random aerial photograph surveys of the city. Quite why we haven’t got one more recent than 2007...to get a more recent one you have to go to Google. Let’s have a look at Google and see what Google’s got.
So 2007 wasn’t it, that previous one? That’s demolished in 2012, I think, or 2011.

INTERVIEWER: Bishop Road?

RESPONDENT: No, ignore that, that’s wrong. Bishopthorpe Road car park is in the wrong place, but this is the ambulance station on Dundas Street and that was demolished in 2011. So phase one is still under construction. The viewing area for the Hungate excavation is still looking...is still the first iteration of the viewing area. Because it was designed to look at this area and this area and this area. And then when all of this was excavated, the viewing area was shifted, so it ran along the stone wall edge of the site.

So the aerial photographs are driven by external companies taking photographs and then by the council for these ones purchasing the coverage. And I guess now that we’ve got access to Google, then I doubt we’ll be buying any more of our own aerial photographs, which is a bit of a shame, really.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting.

RESPONDENT: The origins of the Hungate project actually go back to the 1991 Arup report. And the Arup report is saying that the main objective is to try and preserve as much archaeology in the ground as possible, but to be mindful of the research potential of sites. And where you get a site that can offer significant research benefits, then you should explore how that site could be subject to large-scale excavation.

So when the very, very early conversations were taking place about comprehensive redevelopment, I’d already had a conversation in the pub with Dominic Perring and Mark Wyman about how we could take those Arup recommendations and implement then. And this site was the one that ticked all of the boxes. So Mark went away, after that conversation, and produced a little document...

RESPONDENT: It would be a good time to stop this now.

21-12-15 West offices HER JO (2)

RESPONDENT: Back in May, so it must have been 2001 when we had these conversations. Mark went away and produced this proverbial one side of A4, except it is six sides of A4. Which set out sort of a rational for carrying out a fairly ambitious programme of archaeological work, and this basically puts into coherent text what Mark and Dominic and myself have been talking about. So on the basis of that, then produced a fairly, we put it to the developers that they should carry out this programme of evaluation, which they did. On that basis they should consider funding this ambitious programme of archaeological research.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds to me because of the specific layers of history that are going on in Hungate and then other frameworks like the ARUP framework.
RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Which after a chat in the pub became a massive budget.

RESPONDENT: It did and then we put together, we went through various iterations, had various meetings to discuss it. Roped in the great and the good to contribute to the conversations.

INTERVIEWER: What do you now think of the Hungate development and obviously the archaeology has been completed?

RESPONDENT: Not yet, no there is still a lot of work to do out there. There is still a lot of work to do at Hungate. So, it is still very much work in progress, so there is all the closed excavation work being carried out and this is a slightly edited version of the earlier document that we sent out as a discussion document. There is all sorts in here.

INTERVIEWER: Doesn't the Arup report have lots of maps and images of York throughout its different stages of development?

RESPONDENT: Not really, it took a different approach. So we have got it on here as three pdfs. It is not a fantastic scanned version, but it is usable. The Arup report only looked at this area here, so it only looked at the historic quarters, and back in 1990 the city was a much smaller place than it is today. So, that there is one of the administrative boundaries of the council. So, that piece of land out there was in Hambleton, it might have been in Harrogate even, Hambleton or Harrogate. I think it was in Hambleton because it is on the east side of the Ouse.

So York was a very much smaller place than it is today. Rather than use map regression to come up with a way of characterising the city, it basically produced a deposit model for the city. So it conceptually is a very different approach to the sites and monuments record approach which is trying to characterise the city in terms of historic archaeological monuments.

The Arup document viewed the whole city as a site, it was composed of different period stratigraphy's on that it tried to map these deposits and then by applying different criteria to it, like depth, whether the deposits were wet or dry, whether they had anaerobic preservation, whether they covered all of the periods or just some periods. It was able to suggest different levels of approach and different questions that might be applied to these areas. So it defined twenty zones. Now you could argue that these analogous to the character areas.

INTERVIEWER: I was going to say, how does that relate to the character areas?

RESPONDENT: Well, the character areas are actually defined by their above ground appearance. Whereas these are very much definitions which relate to very much what is going on below the ground. So these are maps.

INTERVIEWER: That's perfectly the right neck of the woods isn't it?
RESPONDENT: So you will find that some of these overlap with the Historic Conservation Area, character areas and other zones. Then some areas of course just simply don’t appear in the centre of Historic Core Conservation Area. Five is Hungate, so that sits outside the Central Historic Core Conservation Area, although it is covered by Hannah’s subsequent work in the more detailed characterisation we have carried out outside that Central Historic Core Conservation Area. These were essentially defining research zones rather than character zones, or you could say that they were related to each other, and it then sort of applied these contour maps, these deposit model maps to the city to suggest where the deposits for each period are going to be preserved, where most of them are going to be preserved. So, this is just a model of the natural subsurface, but then you have got similar plans which relate to Roman. So that was a plan of the Roman ground surface as modelled back in 1989/1990. So, suggested deeper areas of deposits running through the Foss valley here. Deeper deposits along the Ouse valley.

INTERVIEWER: This is very much a non-archaeologist’s question. How do they know that is where those contours are?

RESPONDENT: What they did was. Sitting behind that deposit model there is a database of about 2,000 records, and that database has been incorporated into the historic environment record. So, in the event of site activities, if we go to an event record. That is the Coppergate excavation, lots of event records on there, let’s take one of those. There you have got three records nested one on top of the other. So, 2129 and 2130 are deposit model records that were created in the Arup database. 4901 is an event record that relates to that polygon which we have created post HBSMR to define the area that was the subject of the Coppergate archaeological project. All of these stars inside are essentially deposit model points.

So if we go to 2130 it brings this up and it just says that, here we have a tab called stratigraphy, and this stratigraphy tab continues all of the fields which were created by the Arup report, were in the database which informed the Arup report back in 1989/1990. So it has got the height, the top of the deposit that was interpreted as being medieval at 11.5 metres above ordnance data. It is saying that that medieval deposit it 1.5mtrs thick, so it extends down to 10mtrs above ordnance data. It tells you what that deposit in that location consisted of, it tells you that it was a stratified deposit, it was wet, that there was no anaerobic residual material and that it was anaerobic and anoxic deposit. So it means you good organic preservation. That 89 database has been migrated into the HMBSR, it now sits in here.

What we don’t have at the moment is a very easy way of extracting that information and using it in modern deposit modelling software. So Roger has been coming in. Have you met Roger? He used to work for the Oak Archaeological Trust, but he now works on his own and he has been carrying out his own research into the Roman deposits in the Bishop Hill area. The Bishop Hill including West Offices and all of this. There has been a lot of excavations taking place in this area over the past twenty/thirty years. Roger has been going through these excavation reports and putting together deposit model data. Roger has created three events, one for natural, one...
for Roman and then one for the borehole or the pile that produced those two. The HBSMR is not designed to hold deposit model data. It holds information about events. An event can only hold one deposit model record. Okay, so 14 Skeldergate York, trench 27, the natural deposit. So you might have a site that is this big which is the development site, so the developer wants to put a building on the whole of that site. You might excavate several trenches inside there. You might put in several boreholes across the site to give you profiles of the deeper deposits that you can’t look at through the trenches. So, for the deposit model and for HBSMR, you need an event which is the parent event which we call EYO1000 just for the sake of argument.

Now, EYO1000 has fifteen separate interventions in there. Each one of those might have produced up to. So in this deposit model, we have modern, post-med, medieval, Anglo-
Scandinavian, Anglian, Roman, prehistoric, natural, eight periods. So, in theory that trench there could produce eight period deposit model records and that borehole there could produce up to eight and that one and that one and that one. Each one of those needs to have its own EYO. Then, in order to record the deposit model information, each one of these needs to have its own event. So EYO15 could have, we will call it 1,016 modern in there, then it might produce some post-med, so that would have to be seventeen, it might produce some med as well so that would have to be 1,018. It might not have produced any for Viking or Anglian or Roman or prehistoric. It might have produced a natural one, so that would be nineteen. So, in theory in order to accommodate the deposit model information inside the HBSMR, we have had to devise this rather inelegant system of parent and child records. So parent record in this notional example could have up to fifteen child records, and each one of those child records could have up to eight deposit model records as child event records.

INTERVIEWER: How are those ones labelled then, are they EYO’s as well?

RESPONDENT: They all have to be EYO’s, they all have to be events. But after some conversation we decided that what we would call these deposit model events, we would call these interpretations. So you can see you can have an intervention, or you can have an interpretation. We have decided that this represents an interpretation of this sound as a natural deposit. As part of this rather wonderful system that we have put in place, or that we now have in place, these should all appear in here as interpretation events. Now, that is not how the system was meant to be used, but it is how we have shoehorned this information into this system here.

INTERVIEWER: I feel like I have had a lesson in archaeology.

RESPONDENT: What it illustrates is one of the problems that you were looking at from a different angle. Which is going back to library link and all of that, how do we put that information into the system when it is not really designed to hold that sort of information? Do we jump ship and get a whole new system that perhaps we can design to make it more amenable to it or do we stick with what we have got here and try to get [unclear – 0:23:45:7] to make this more flexible? Or design some more tabs here, so you could have a community tab
added, not necessarily to an event but perhaps to a monument. You will see when we bring up monument records. An NYO record has got a different set of tabs attached to it. Could we create some specific tabs here that would be a community tab? So, if you had community information about this monument. Let’s have a look at mansions. These are just the monument types that are contained and defined. This gives you access to the monument type, a thesaurus, there is a set of control terms in there that you can use to add a new monument type to that.

INTERVIEWER: You are talking about the HBSMR being inflexible and if you had the resources, how would you like to see the data incorporated, if you could just be flexible with it?

RESPONDENT: I think I would want to be able to create data and information on the map. So at the moment you have to create data and information in these record boxes. So you have to fill out all of these boxes to create information. Then, you add it to the map, which to me seems a bit counterintuitive.

What I would like to do is to have a system where you can create the data on the map and then it populates all the necessary fields and the database. So, you would still have to have individual records for lots of these things, but by creating the thing on the map, by drawing a polygon on the map and telling it, ‘that’s the site,’ or whatever terminology you would use. Then creating points within that, this would then link those records together so that at the moment in order to create those relationships you have to go into quite a complicated system where you have to tell it which is the parent record, and then if it has a child record as well. So you have to create those relationships in this system here.

Whereas systems GIS is intelligent enough to know that if you create that, you can tell the system that that point belongs to that polygon. So you could create a whole series of them. You could also create points that sit on top of each other and you wouldn’t then have to create, certainly for boreholes anyway, an intermediate record for the borehole. It would know that they all sat on top of each other, that’s part of the same intervention. So you could structure the way that you put the data in through the graphic interface to actually take away that. It is a relic of a system that didn’t have a graphic interface, so what you have here is something that goes back to people sat typing information in boxes, into databases. Whereas what I really want to be able to do is to go to a system where you draw on a map and then you type in the information relating to that and then it populates the database, so it is the other way around.

INTERVIEWER: It makes sense.

RESPONDENT: It does, because this is how everything you put into computers has been going for years and years and years.

INTERVIEWER: From the way you said it, it being prior to having graphic.

RESPONDENT: Yes, so HBSMR evolved over a long period of time, and it still has reflected in its structure, its origins.
INTERVIEWER: You mentioned in passing, the research that I did for you on HER with regards to their library link. The photographs, how does that fit into what you want to do?

RESPONDENT: It doesn’t at the moment. Photographs at the moment are entirely peripheral to how the system works. So, when you look at this, there is no representation of images on the map. So, down here we don’t have a layer that says, ‘photographs,’ apart from the aerial photographs. So there is nothing that we can switch on here that will say, ‘oh look we have got photographs of the Queens Hotel, as it is the modern Queens Hotel on Kings Staith.’ Or we don’t have photographs of the Kings Arms. But if you go to Google and look at Kings Arms, you can bring up Kings Staith and you can bring up all of the maps, all of the photographs that relate to that particular location.

INTERVIEWER: How do you use Google?

RESPONDENT: I use it as one of the sources of information I might look at to help build up a bigger picture. Google is quite crude in terms of what it brings up, but basically these are pictures taken by third parties who drop the little location point on Google and allow Google to pull that data through onto the Google Maps. At the moment we don’t have that ability to do that with photographs in HBSMR, so although I can link photographs to an event through library. I am sure there is a way of doing it in library, I am sure there is a way of bringing photographs through and putting them on the map. But it is something that I have not cracked, I have not managed to make happen.

So what I would really like to be able to do is to have some sort of Google style functionality that allows people to come to the online version, of the HER that shows them in some way a monument record, and clearly how this information is structured visually at the moment is inappropriate to have on the website. But would allow you to click on a monument record, that would then bring up a dialogue box, it would then enable you to upload your photograph and link it with that monument.

For Sean and for the rest of them, going back to the point that you were making about how it might work if all the plumbing were in place. If we go to the Mansion House, then I suppose one of the things I would envisage this doing, is if you were to click on the Mansion House, then it would bring up a dialogue box with all of the different resources that you could look at. You might click on photographs and you might look at all of the photographs that are held in here. Then it might also have something saying, ‘do you want to look at photographs held by other people?’ You click on that, and it then brings up a box that allows you to then tick all of the different data recorders. Click on that, click search, it goes away and then it pulls back York Museums Trust pictures of the Mansion House, YPP pictures of the Mansion House, you can then look at and search and look at that information.

INTERVIEWER: That is the next stage.
RESPONDENT: That is where I want to head. You might also have a little button that says, ‘do you want to print out your results?’ You click, ‘yes.’ Then it would give you something that might print out a little thumbnail of each one and tells you who holds the original information, and then if you want to get a full resolution copy then contact the original data holder.

INTERVIEWER: Who do imagine to be doing these actions?

RESPONDENT: The people out there. Well, there are 9,000 people on York Past and Present Facebook page. There are all the people who look at images on the Evening Press website. There are students, there are people doing family histories. One of the ways I do see it working is that there are all these people who are researching their family trees, and there are all these people producing enormous personal archives that relate to their family, and in those personal archives they have photographs of, gran, grandad, great grandad, whoever. They might be stood in their backyard, they might be sitting in their front room. Now where are those images, where do they end up? They probably are going to be within one or two generations in the bin, because there becomes a point at which people are no longer interested in holding onto them. That or the linearity fails and so it all ends up in the junk shop or whatever and that story is broken up and lost.

What I would like to see a system like this having the possibility of doing, is somebody is doing research on, let’s switch to 1852. Let’s go back to when people actually lived on these streets. Let’s go back to when we had The Leopard public house, here in 1852. I don’t know how long that survived into the late 19th century or even if it survived into the early 20th century. But I would not be surprised if there was somebody out there who is sitting, who has researched their family history and they have come across a photograph of The Leopard public house when their great grandfather was landlord.

Now, that photograph which they hold is of great interest to them from a family point of view, but potentially is of great interest to people researching and looking at the history of this particular building. So you add that in there and it grows the value of that individual record, it grows the value of the collective record. You can imagine all of the people who are doing research who have family contacts with York who potentially have photographs that they hold which they might be scanning in for their own personal use or whatever, but have no idea where it is going to go beyond that.

The archives are not interested in collecting everyone throughout the world who has ever lived, photographs of York. You could argue about what they should and shouldn’t do, but potentially you have a system here that all it is doing is, all you need to be able to do is to grow the digital capacity of the system as people put more information into it. If you have the architecture correct then people will do a search on it and you could moderate it to keep all of the dross out, the pictures of china dogs or whatever might be more appropriate to another data holder on something else. But potentially you put all of that information into the system. What starts out
as information that makes sense only to the family historians actually contributes to a much
wider potential understanding of the city in the late 19th and early 20th century.

INTERVIEWER: I like the example of The Leopard. Obviously no one I have ever come across in
York has mentioned any such establishment. You mentioned that the archives don’t want to take
every single photograph. They have their reasons, are those reasons potentially applicable to
this as well?

RESPONDENT: I would say, ‘no.’ Because I think that the archives have actually got things wrong.
This is very much a personal point of view. Archives have got themselves boxed into a
professional archiver approach to life, and so you are an archivist, you define what you do. I am
an archaeologist, I define what I do. What I have done as an archaeologist is try to open up the
process to non-archaeologists who can carry out archaeological work. Archivists are only just
beginning to make that journey, so they have encouraged third parties to create their own
archives, but there is no commitment as to how they would engage with those archives. I think
that there needs to be some form for these archives somewhere. If you are talking about a
digital archive, and somebody else has put it together and you can link it to a physical location,
which is essentially what HER’s are about. They are about place, and if you link that archive to a
place, then I don’t see any reason why you should not be able to pull that in and just hold it as a
digital data site, as we hold all these other digital data sites. It might be an extra two gigabytes
of data. If you get 10,000 people submitting five gigabytes of data that is only 50,000 gigabytes,
which is only 50 terabytes. The cost of providing 50 terabyte storage facilities is probably about
a couple of thousand pounds. In physical storage capacity terms, it is negligible. In potential
research terms, and understanding place it has got enormous possibilities.

INTERVIEWER: That is really interesting. Okay, we have been talking for a fair while.

RESPONDENT: Sorry, I have been talking for a fair while.

INTERVIEWER: I am really sorry.

RESPONDENT: No, no it is interesting. I suppose archaeologists can be seen as being the last
creative parodist, we like to occupy territory and this is I suppose you are talking about
intellectual territory in a way, and in a way that is what you could construe this has been really, it
is occupying territory. But I believe in many ways it is occupying territory that nobody else is
occupying. Lots of people are making a conscious decision not to occupy and there is a huge
amount of work going on out there which potentially is going to be lost, and which could be of
great value in adding to our understanding of the development of place and the way in which
places have been used and how they might be sued again in the future.

INTERVIEWER: My point of view, because you have put yours out. I think for me gradually
becoming more aware of my views in this exercise is that I have always enjoyed looking through
historical photographs and stuff and maps, they make me extremely excited and they have the
potential to do the same to other people as well. However, when it comes to the gathering of information, storage and building all those frameworks and spaces, reaching intellectual territory and filling them with photographs. I wonder if it is a means to an end or a means in itself. in my mind, I am asking myself how does it enhance human relationship with a place?

RESPONDENT: I would say that perhaps at this point in time we don’t know. Perhaps at the moment we are asking questions that we might perceive this information as being marginal in its ability to contribute to whatever those questions might be, whatever that debate might be, whatever that line of enquiry, that search might be. Some people would say, ‘fine, we won’t need it,’ in that case we would only gather the data that is relevant to the research. But I suppose I take a more serendipitous view of data, which is to say, it is an argument for keeping everything, but in a sense it isn’t, because what you are doing is you are saying we would provide a home for those people who want to put their data in that home.

So you are not keeping everything, there is a process of self-selection going on in there which puts that information into the database and I would say that we don’t necessarily know the value of that data at this point in time. But if somebody is ascribing a value to that data now because, a, they have kept it and brought it all together, b, they have put it into some sort of format that they feel is appropriate, and c, they are willing to share it through the system. I would say you almost have embodied in it there a set of values which makes sense to an individual now and may well make a lot of sense in ways that we don’t at the moment fully understand or can even think about to people in the future. So, I have a feeling that keeping that data, creating a home for it will bring some sort of value in the future.

INTERVIEWER: I think that is a good place to stop. END OF TRANSCRIPT
INTERVIEWER: Okay so that’s you. Hopefully that will pick up you and not the traffic. Can you start, Cathy, by telling me how you know me? I know that I know.

RESPONDENT: How I know you? I met you when there was a meeting in a café on Fossgate about the Red Tower Project. That’s where I met you.

INTERVIEWER: And we’ve met a couple of times since then.

RESPONDENT: We have, yes, at the Red Tower.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And also in the vicinity.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, because I stopped to talk to you in May, I think it was.

RESPONDENT: That’s right, that’s right.

INTERVIEWER: With some students.

RESPONDENT: Yes, that’s right.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So can I ask what are you doing in York? You’re a resident, aren’t you?

RESPONDENT: I’m a resident. I’ve moved from Ireland to live here.

INTERVIEWER: When did you move from Ireland?

RESPONDENT: About four years ago.

INTERVIEWER: Four years ago.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And you’ve been living in...
RESPONDENT: I lived in Bootham with my family first and then I rented on Walmgate, George Street, and then my son and his wife bought a flat in Rosemary Court as an investment. So I'm living in it.

INTERVIEWER: Ah okay. And so you’re, I'm assuming you’re retired?

RESPONDENT: Retired district nurse.

INTERVIEWER: A retired district nurse, and you’ve been...another aspect of what you’ve been, or how we’ve been talking about, is with regards to the residents' association?

RESPONDENT: Residents' association, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me a bit about what your past activities have been with them, if anything?

RESPONDENT: Well when I moved in and familiarised myself with the area, I saw on a noticeboard that they had a residents' association and I felt I ought to go. And I did go, and I went several times. And then there was a proposition that the residents' association would fold. No, what, oh yes, what it was was if they have a working committee, there's a federation meeting and if there's a working committee for the area, they're awarded an estate improvement grant.

So because the residents' association was going to fold, they would be denied that estate improvement grant. So I just volunteered to be on the committee to ensure that they got the grant, but I did state initially that I would be on the committee but I wouldn't take an officer post. And so that's where it started.

INTERVIEWER: And how long ago was this? This was quite recently, wasn’t it?

RESPONDENT: Within the last two years.

INTERVIEWER: And what’s...I mean you opted in to enable this estate improvement grant to be applied. Can I ask you what your reasons were for doing that? For stepping up, so to speak.
RESPONDENT: Well I felt if there was money available that would enhance the area for everybody, then I felt obliged really.

INTERVIEWER: And what are the sort of enhancements, that you can think of, that would be nice to see?

RESPONDENT: Well there's a play area there and there's some children's play furniture and it's neglected. So I felt that that could do with improvement and money could be used for that.

INTERVIEWER: I happen to know that some surveys have been out in the past around this thing, and I wondered if you knew...

RESPONDENT: I've never been surveyed.

INTERVIEWER: You've never been surveyed?

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: No. Okay, and you don't know about the outcomes of that survey, do you?

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: No, okay. So I guess what I'm asking is what are your concerns about the place in Walmgate, in Rosemary Court and Rosemary Place?

RESPONDENT: Well the guttering on the block that I'm on is growing a veritable meadow. So the gutterings need attention, things like that.

INTERVIEWER: Like a place manager, place maintenance?

RESPONDENT: Maintenance, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But the general area as well that would benefit from this enhancement grant including the play area. Are there any other...

RESPONDENT: Well I can't think of anything else at the moment.
INTERVIEWER: Do you have any other ideas of what you’d like to see happen in the Walmgate area? Maybe at a larger scale.

RESPONDENT: What I would like to see is a working committee who are in harmony with each other.

INTERVIEWER: And this is, I guess as we have spoken about before, some of the issues with the residents’ association, is there hasn’t been this harmony which you speak.

RESPONDENT: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: Would you be able to summarise without naming names?

RESPONDENT: I mean the first time I went, I introduced myself and the, I don’t know that she had any...she had formerly been the chair person but she used abbreviations throughout the meeting. And I didn’t know what she was talking about.

So I had to stop and ask, ‘What does that mean? What does that mean?’ And I felt that was unnecessary. If someone is new at a meeting, then I felt they should be given proper information.

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting, yes. I mean are there other things, like that example, where you feel like you’ve not had access...not been invited in?

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you, thinking about working as a community in general, what do you think about the community of Walmgate?

RESPONDENT: I’ve lived here now for, is it four years altogether and they don’t mix, the community don’t mix. They very much keep to themselves and I’m quite a sociable person. And I always speak to people and greet them, but I feel historically they’ve had problems with the
residents' association which have bumbled on. And I think people aren't participating, feel unwilling or unable to participate.

INTERVIEWER: So what's participation mean?

RESPONDENT: That more people would attend the meetings.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay, yeah, that's clear. And what kind of problems have there been in the past?

RESPONDENT: That I don't know. I've never been able to establish that but I know this particular person, she also deliberately kept talking about Rosemary Court being Sally's address. And Sally, she lives in Rosemary Place, and this woman kept saying, 'You live in Rosemary Court.' So there was constant battle going on which was unnecessary and was childish. Childish. So there was conflict there all the time.

INTERVIEWER: And there are...I mean some of the other things that have popped out through my being involved in Red Tower is, were you aware of the Space109?

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: No, you weren't. That was before your time?

RESPONDENT: That's right, yes. So I think there's some history there but I don't know who knows about it. But it's all very guarded mention of it.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And were you there when the project leader for the Red Tower came to visit?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What did you think of that meeting?

RESPONDENT: Well I volunteered there.
INTERVIEWER: Yes, at the Red Tower, yes, yes.

RESPONDENT: But I was the only one.

INTERVIEWER: When...

RESPONDENT: ...Lilac...

INTERVIEWER: ...yeah, when the project leader, Lilac, came to the residents' association, what did...

RESPONDENT: She wasn't welcomed really. I think Sally had invited her and I don't know if Sally had an officer's job then. But this woman was very negative about it. I think she's worked in housing associations or local Government but when Lilac left, I felt uncomfortable. And I said, 'Well I'll volunteer but I don't know that I have any particular skills that will help. But I could be a foot soldier.'

Well of course when she left, they all homed in on me. They'll never get off the ground, they'll never be allowed to put plumbing in there. They'll never be allowed to put electricity in there and I just came away, I thought, 'I don't know what this is all about.' And I just volunteered because it's in the area of where I live and I'm interested in the area where I live.

I have a rubbish picker-upper and I go around picking up the rubbish. I'm sure they think I'm an eccentric old lady. This weekend, people had opened a sand container and put all their rubbish in there. And I thought about it afterwards, I went out with a bag and I collected all these beer cans and food containers. But, in a way, I thought they were very good that they put it in one place rather than scattering it all over.

INTERVIEWER: No, I see exactly what you mean. It's interesting this lack of welcome of the Red Tower and lack of, I don't know what the word is – 'enthusiasm'.

RESPONDENT: Enthusiasm, yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe.

RESPONDENT: Lack of interest. They talked negatively about the other tower that's been...
INTERVIEWER: The café there, The Walmgate Café.

RESPONDENT: They were saying that’s a total failure. Well I don’t know, I’ve never used it.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting.

RESPONDENT: I must go, I must go.

INTERVIEWER: I’m hoping to have a couple of interviews there so I know the bar itself is undergoing some structural issues. Yes, so, okay, we’ve seen that through the history of the Red Tower and the residents’ association, things haven’t been easy. Do you still...are you still interested in the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Even if it doesn’t take off straight away?

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, that’s good to know. And what about the residents’ association? Where do you think that’s going?

RESPONDENT: I don’t know. There’s an annual general meeting in September. Now there’s only one officer left and that’s Sally. She’s the secretary, the treasurer just threw the books at her and walked away, because she went to a federation meeting and she didn’t like what she heard.

So Sally is the only officer left and this other lady, who historically has been involved and I think feels an ownership of the whole thing. But she’s not on the executive now and Sally said, 'It's you and me against the world.' Well now I'm not against the world with anyone. She said, 'You’ll be the treasurer,' and I said, 'No.' I volunteered but as a resident and not to be on the executive.

So the chairperson has been intimidated and the vice-chair, and they were girls who wouldn’t articulate or assertive, and they were opted in to keep the show on the road. And I'm very disappointed that even with this executive that they had, they actually delayed in spending the grant for last year and it was lost. £6,000 was lost.
INTERVIEWER: Through lack of...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Well that's gobsmacking.

RESPONDENT: It really is. So the annual general meeting is going to be very interesting, and I wouldn't volunteer to be an officer. I volunteered to be a member and I can't say that my membership has impacted in any way positively which is a shame.

INTERVIEWER: Except for litter picking.

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Every action counts.

RESPONDENT: That's right, that's right.

INTERVIEWER: So in regards to the general idea about enhancing the place, do you think that you have...my interests were always starting from this idea of sharing information between councils and communities, and that potentially causing issues. And what I've been hearing that there's other issues to do with, for want of a better phrase, personality issues. But do you have...do you see of any other information sharing issues at all? Do you think you have a good, open, transparent relationship with those at the council that could help with the...

RESPONDENT: No, I don't think so, no.

INTERVIEWER: No?

RESPONDENT: No. There's been a change of people who have come from the council. The one person that I felt impacted was Mike but there have been changes. Whatever officer is attached to this area, Walmgate and Navigation Road, they've been moved on. And people have been doing it temporarily, there's been no continuity. I just sit there absolutely bewildered sometimes.

INTERVIEWER: So continuity, in terms of people, is important especially if you're trying to build a relationship?
INTERVIEWER: And I mean, as I said, idea of information sharing, do you feel that there is enough of that or too much?

RESPONDENT: No, no. There isn’t enough, no.

INTERVIEWER: What would you be interested in learning more about or having...

RESPONDENT: I can’t think of anything at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: I think it’s interesting because they’ve worked on a new website and they do make all their minutes and all their meetings available online. I guess what I’m asking is what do you feel like is needed to work with the council? Through people like Mike and...

RESPONDENT: No, I can’t, no, drawn a blank on that.

INTERVIEWER: That’s okay, that’s okay. I’m probably asking the wrong questions. This is semi-structured so I have to improvise as I go. Okay, so we’ve talked a bit about what you’d like the area that you live in to maybe have a bit more of, maybe more participation in the residents’ association, continuity between council groups. I wondered if I could speak to you about more about this idea of how you feel about the place itself, and whether or not you like living there.

RESPONDENT: Oh I like living there, I do.

INTERVIEWER: And what is it about that you like about it?

RESPONDENT: Well it’s so close to everything in York and I love Waitrose. It’s my local.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Red Tower will change the place? What we see as being more active Red Tower [unclear – 0:19:35].

RESPONDENT: I think it’s brought something to Saturday mornings now. I mean I’ve retired and so I’m involved in a lot of things, but I don’t want to get tied down or bogged down with any particular thing.
INTERVIEWER: I'm just talking about how you feel about the place in general and how you interact everyday with it. It sounds like you...the shops nearby are important and...

RESPONDENT: Everything is walking distance.

INTERVIEWER: Everything is?

RESPONDENT: Within walking distance.

INTERVIEWER: Everything is within walking distance.

RESPONDENT: I took, I went to Clifton Green this morning. I left here at ten past eleven and I was there twenty five to twelve. Just straight through to my dentist, so everything’s very convenient.

INTERVIEWER: The whole of York is very...

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: And you were saying before we started, you said that it feels like a village. Can you...how...because I've lived in a village before and...

RESPONDENT: Well people recognise me because I'm on the move over the last four years.

INTERVIEWER: I recognise you.

RESPONDENT: I always greet people. I was born in a small town and it reminds me of the small town that I was born in.

INTERVIEWER: That's nice. I think you're making your small town here. I think that's the best way to do it. Okay. Well I think that is pretty much it. Do you have anything else that you...

RESPONDENT: No, can't think of anything. I don't know if it's been useful.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it has, it has been useful. Second one, so I wanted to ask, what do you think heritage is?

RESPONDENT: Heritage, it's the legacy from the past for us all.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think there is heritage in York then?

RESPONDENT: Oh yes, oh yes.

INTERVIEWER: And what about Walmgate?

RESPONDENT: Well the Red Tower is there.

INTERVIEWER: Well that's always nice to hear, yes. So you think the Red Tower is part of the heritage?

RESPONDENT: Oh yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel a sense of...you say legacy and that means that you...that it's stayed

RESPONDENT: It's been handed to us over time.

INTERVIEWER: So you feel that it's part of your place?

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, alright. Anything else about heritage that...

RESPONDENT: No, no. I must tell you I'm slightly deaf and I have hearing aids and, in the flat above me, one of the other residents, Tom that I got to go to a meeting, he's a care worker with...

INTERVIEWER: Oh hello.

RESPONDENT: A care worker with some disabled, I've gone off my track now a bit.

INTERVIEWER: The hearing aids.

RESPONDENT: Oh yes. And he said to me the other day, 'Did I hear a noise from the flat above?'

The guy above is apparently a drug dealer and there's a lot of alcohol goes on. And actually a friend of his died in the flat, he was from Tang Hall, and he died of an overdose and he was taken away. Now I had these visitors at the weekend and they couldn't get to sleep because of the noise upstairs. But, you see, I don't hear it so I wasn't sympathetic.
INTERVIEWER: I know. I'm exactly the same because I also wear hearing aids which I haven't got in here today for some reason. But I mean it's interesting that you live so close to heritage and then you feel...then you know that your...that there are some social issues.

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes. I have no problem living with people and people's problems because they don't actually affect me. They don't affect me because of my deafness but [unclear – 0:02:48 second file].

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, right.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 12: 10-08-15 Waitrose Café Sally

INTERVIEWER: So just to begin with, Sally, can you explain how you know me and how you we met.

RESPONDENT: [unclear – 0:00:09.1] I met you at a first enquiry meet up at the red house, when there were several people there for the council and one or two local people and I believe it was you.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I was there. I was there on the very first day and that’s why I decided I wanted to be involved.

RESPONDENT: Yes. And I was interested, but I couldn’t really commit myself to doing any work towards the restoration of the red building, but I’m interested to see what’s going on.

INTERVIEWER: And we sort of met through something else, didn’t we? Because we met through Mike...

RESPONDENT: Mike? Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Giving me your email address and I hadn’t put the two people together.

RESPONDENT: That’s true, yes.

INTERVIEWER: I knew you from the Red Tower to recognise you, but I...

RESPONDENT: You can’t put names and faces together.

INTERVIEWER: I didn’t put names and faces together, so I thought it could have been two different people, which is why...and then lately, I think it was last month, you visited the Red Tower, didn’t you?

RESPONDENT: It was about two or three weeks ago, I visited the Red Tower cake and coffee session...

INTERVIEWER: With the dog?
RESPONDENT: With the dog, yeah. And I was very good; I only tasted one piece of cake, but that was for research purposes only.

INTERVIEWER: Because of the flour...

RESPONDENT: Because of the wholewheat flour.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, which is from Holgate Windmill I believe.

RESPONDENT: Yes and now I have a history of working with stoneground, wholewheat flour.

INTERVIEWER: Okay that's brilliant. So can you tell me, Sally, what you're doing here in York?

RESPONDENT: I'm living here.

INTERVIEWER: You live opposite the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: I live opposite the Red Tower. I've lived in York since about 1977, I think, and lived in, I think, six different houses. Going from staying with friends up to a five bedroomed house and back now down to a one bedroomed flat. I've always lived fairly near the town centre.

INTERVIEWER: So, you've been in York for a long time and you can't see yourself leaving?

RESPONDENT: Oh, I won't move away from York now, I don't think. Highly unlikely.

INTERVIEWER: Do you like the city of York?

RESPONDENT: I do like the city of York because it's cosmopolitan, but it's still small.

INTERVIEWER: Small and...

RESPONDENT: It's like a village, I sort of know everybody, or a small town. You just ignore all the tourists and the people that's left over you tend to know most of them.

INTERVIEWER: And have you felt that the whole time you've been living here? Or...

RESPONDENT: Yes. There wasn't many tourists when I first came, there wasn't any Vikings either, it wasn't that long ago!
INTERVIEWER: You’re living in Walmgate now, and as we said, the other reason that we met was through the Residents’ Association. Can you explain about your role?

RESPONDENT: I became involved in the Residents’ Association, probably four or five years after I moved here. Even though I was interested in it beforehand, I felt I didn’t want to go barging in to something that people were already doing, because I felt like I can be a bit overbearing sometimes and I didn’t want to come in and feel like I was taking over. At the time, there were two Residents’ Associations, one at Walmgate and one at Navigation Road, run quite separately, and the Navigation Road one was held in a workingmen’s club, the meetings were held in the workingmen’s club.

INTERVIEWER: On Lawrence Street?

RESPONDENT: Yes. First of all the I+L Club, which was demolished, which I never went to, I went to the one in Lawrence Street, and it was fairly well-attended, but it was quite a lot of fairly old people, who probably didn’t have the energy to...a bit of commitment. I think they relied on the neighbourhood management team, which was a forerunner of Mike’s department, now, and we didn’t have a very, well it wasn’t a very enthusiastic estate manager. So he wasn’t keen on coming to the meetings. We lost the chair, the vice-chair was very old and just said, ‘Well, let’s call it a night, then.’ The treasurer would do a raffle and interrupt when he got to what time he thought the raffle should be, interrupt the business, and we thought, well something has to be done about this.

So a friend and myself went to the National Tenants’ Association in Chester and did a couple of courses and we found out, it was like her and me were really doing most of the work. And then when Lawrence Street was closing down, we found out that Walmgate only had about two members, so we thought we’d merge, because Space 109, this local community arts shop, was opening up and we decided to go there, where I took on the role of secretary, my friend was the chair, and everything was going really, really well.

INTERVIEWER: So when was this? Was it about ten years ago that Space 109 [unclear – 0:07:10.3]
RESPONDENT: I don’t think it would be ten years ago. Less than ten. I’m trying to think, it only
closed down a couple of years ago.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right.

RESPONDENT: So… and it wasn’t going for that long. I can’t remember… I think it would have been about [unclear – 0:07:28.8] 2009, maybe 2008, when we moved over to Space 109.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me a bit about Space 109, because I’ve heard about it, but not the full story.

RESPONDENT: Well I don’t think you’ll ever find out the full story. There was an empty shop and it had been standing there empty for a long time, it used to be a wool shop. Closed down, it was empty for a long time, and because it was belonging to the council, a few different organisations were wondering could we maybe rent it. Well it wouldn’t have been worth renting for one night a month for our Residents’ Association, so it wasn’t going to be worthwhile us going after it. But then we found out that there was a woman living on the estate, an artist, who had an idea of like getting kids off the streets and could have it as a community art space. So the idea was good, she set up a Monday night club for kids from like six to sixteen and she had a regular group that went right through. She did different types of arts with them, went out, did parades and different things, did one or two exhibitions, where she was renting the space out to try and bring in some money.

Then she applied for charitable status, because she was applying for grants before that, applied for charitable status, and of course along with charitable status comes a lot of red tape and I think it got to where it was a bit beyond everybody, really, all this red tape. She couldn’t do it on her own, there was a bit of a management [unclear – 0:09:30.8] which there had to be to comply with the charitable status. They tended to be friends of each other and there was rumours and different accusations about this was going on, that was going on. In the end, it had to be closed down.

INTERVIEWER: So what happened to the artist?
RESPONDENT: She’s still in York.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: I’m not mentioning her name though, because of these rumours and accusations.

INTERVIEWER: So after Space 109 shut down, and I’ve heard this from other people, was it kind of a disappointment, or…?

RESPONDENT: It was a disappointment, because we didn’t have anywhere to meet. I’d got a mouthful of cheek of some local resident about the dustbins and that just, I walked away from the Residents’ Association, I thought, ‘Well I’m not ready to be shouted at. You know, I don’t get paid for all this abuse.’ So I resigned. And I think it was a combination of that and a combination of 109 closing down, it just never picked up again. I’m not saying I was necessary to be there, but somebody who took my place put people off.

INTERVIEWER: Right and is this potentially the same somebody who has been involved in the Residents’ Association [unclear – 0:11:10.3]

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I’ve been speaking to other people about it and…

RESPONDENT: And she said she’s going to resign now and won’t be offering her services from September.

INTERVIEWER: So where does that put you in terms of the Residents’ Association?

RESPONDENT: It’s me and Cathy. Cathy doesn’t want to take on a role, because I said to her, did she want to be treasurer, there was only £47 in the kitty. So she didn’t have to worry too much about anything like that. She said, ‘Oh, no, no. No. No. No.’

INTERVIEWER: [laughing] We’re laughing because that’s a good characteristic of Cathy’s. But fondly.
RESPONDENT: She's lovely, Cathy, she is an absolute treasure. She should be a treasurer, because she is a treasure.

INTERVIEWER: [laughing] I like that. What can you see as being the...your role now is sort of...

RESPONDENT: To go and try and...I need to sit down with somebody, ask people at the council, I don’t know what departments they are, because they’re always changing the names. That’s one of my bugbears, I keep thinking to myself, if they didn’t keep changing the names of the departments and having to bear the cost of all the different headings and what have you, there might be enough money to spend on other things.

INTERVIEWER: I don’t think it costs much to change a name.

RESPONDENT: It’s not that, it’s like...

INTERVIEWER: Anyway...

RESPONDENT: Anyway...I get a bit exasperated with the council, but I can’t get really angry with them.

INTERVIEWER: We’ll come to that in a minute. So your role at the moment...

RESPONDENT: My role at the moment is I feel a bit lost. I wanted to speak to...I think I spoke to Julie, she’s the council person who helps with the federation. And she said I need to speak to Mike. Then I thought, Mike, you seem to be more interested in Red Tower [unclear – 0:13:42.6] and I thought I’m going to get stroppy with them all and fight. So I’ve decided to get stroppy and tell them what I think of them, and try and nudge, not only residents, but council departments, into trying to get this going again. I don’t know how to do it.

INTERVIEWER: What do you see as [unclear – 0:14:16.1] having spoken to other people, I can see the situation in Walmgate as being very complex, historical and tricky, I guess, as a researcher.

RESPONDENT: I think they feel quite apathetic, the people who live in the area. They’re plodding along okay, I mean...

INTERVIEWER: Plodding along, okay, yeah.
RESPONDENT: People plod along okay. We’re British, so we have a moan about things and we put up with things, but there’s nothing really bad enough to get residents fighting for a cause, if you know what I mean. We haven’t got anything really bad on the estate for people to get irate about. They just moan about it. They moan about the traffic, which is not that bad. They moan about the bins, which are not that bad.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned Red Tower and I’d be interested to know your honest opinions on what you think about the Red Tower and whether...I’m happy to discuss where the Red Tower is with you, because it’s important, but what do you think about the Red Tower, before I tell you where we’re at?

RESPONDENT: Well, I’m not one for nostalgia, but I do think heritage is important, without being nostalgic. If there’s a building there, rather than making a museum out of that, I’d rather see is used. So, yes it’s great. When I saw inside of it, I thought, ‘My God, there’s a lot more to do here than I thought.’ A community café would not only require all the utilities, it would need special access, there’s no way they’re going to get upstairs, where are we going to have toilets? All these different things. It’s a job and a half, to say the least. It’s something I couldn’t devote my energies to. If somebody got it up and running, I would support them. I would look to be able to use it if it was up and running.

We used to have a regular knitting group in Space 109, we met every week. I don’t want to go to, I want it for local residents, I don’t want to have to go out and teach knitting skills. I wanted to get local residents in for a cuppa, chat to eat other about personal things or a way of somebody coming along and maybe giving us a word about one or two neighbours that I could maybe just go and report to the council for them if they were feeling uneasy about it. So connected with the Residents’ Association, but apart from it, if you know what I mean. Which could be done, I suppose, in the Red Tower, but I’ve asked a few people about the Red Tower and they’ve said, ‘Oh, that’s a good idea.’ I’m saying then, or other people have just...and then thought nothing else of it after that. Or they’ve thought, ‘Well that’s a waste of time, isn’t it? And, ‘Well, I’m not bothered.’ So they seem to be not bothered. Apathetic.
INTERVIEWER: Apathetic.

RESPONDENT: Nothing, nobody seems to be against it.

INTERVIEWER: So, okay...

RESPONDENT: They don’t want anything to do with it, really, can’t be bothered.

INTERVIEWER: Now I’m, I’m acting as a reactive researcher. I guess this is my professional opinion, there would be scope for the Red Tower to become something a bit more like a tourist attraction. My concern is that that’s not right.

RESPONDENT: Would that be a bit sort of like, was it Monk gate, where’s there a bit of a Richard III... 

INTERVIEWER: My concern is that if something wasn’t done in the future it could end up being something like, but not necessarily exactly the same, as Monk Bar, The Richard III Experience, and if that were the case, I mean how would you feel about that?

RESPONDENT: Well I don’t know whether it would maybe be as conveniently placed for tourists as Monkgate or, what’s the other one? Micklegate? Because it’s not in the middle of...it hasn’t got that gatehouse, has it, like the others have?

INTERVIEWER: True.

RESPONDENT: A barbican.

INTERVIEWER: That is true. Yes.

RESPONDENT: And quite a lot of people give up the walls at the traffic lights, because they don’t know where they start again. You know, if they’re coming round past the Minster...

INTERVIEWER: True.

RESPONDENT: ...yeah, they give up the walls then.

INTERVIEWER: Well I don’t know if that is necessarily true, actually, because...
RESPONDENT: Because when I think of how many people walk along these walls, have you counted them? Have you...is that part of the...?

INTERVIEWER: I’m going to do that, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Because I've looked at how many people wall on other bits of the walls, and I think the fact that because it's near council houses and things like that, it puts people off, because they just think, well the historic bit is behind the Minster.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe. That might be...

RESPONDENT: And there’s a lot more people at those things. But also I mean like this is something historic that...I mean I don't know exactly all of the [unclear – 0:22:07.1] I used to work in a co-operative, a workers’ co-operative, on Gillygate – Gillygate Wholefood Bakery – and we got those premises at rates only, we didn’t pay any rent, because the council had compulsory purchased one side of Gillygate. They were going to knock those buildings down so they could expose the city walls. And there was also going to be, there’s documentation on this, an inner city ring road, where they were going to knock down Melbourne Street and what have you, because I bought a house in Melbourne Street after somebody had bought it for pennies [unclear – 0:22:57.5] because it had been compulsory purchased, or was going to be compulsory purchased.

INTERVIEWER: What’s that word? That compuls–

RESPONDENT: Compulsory purchase?

INTERVIEWER: Compulsory purchase.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve never heard that term before.

RESPONDENT: Have you never compulsory purchased? Well if there’s a compulsory purchase order on something, the council has the right...

INTERVIEWER: Has to sell?
RESPONDENT: No, no, no, they have to buy it.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, they have to buy it.

RESPONDENT: They're buying it, so you have to sell it to the council, they buy it off these people. And that's a compulsory purchase order.

INTERVIEWER: What's the intention there?

RESPONDENT: Well it's either planning or whether they should be demolished because they're health hazards. You know like there was a lot of compulsory purchase going on in the '60s/'70s where they were getting rid of slums.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So what would happen is, is that you're told, send a letter from the council, saying this property is being...

RESPONDENT: Compulsory purchased. Took.

INTERVIEWER: But I don't know like how...that that happened anymore.

RESPONDENT: Well this was a while ago, it would have been the '70s.

INTERVIEWER: Right, yeah. I doubt that would happen these days.

RESPONDENT: No, but what I'm saying is...well it would in certain areas if it was health or slum clearance or something like that. If they wanted to demolish a tower block because it's unsafe, that will be compulsory purchase. But that was the plan years ago, you see. So going back, historically, when the council wanted the city walls to be more of a tourist thing by knocking down Gillygate and exposing the city walls there. And then they changed their mind because they thought it was important that they kept some parts of it a bit more secluded and away from traffic and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: That part of the walls is lovely to look at.

RESPONDENT: Encouraging this bit to be more touristy wouldn't fit in with that, would it?

INTERVIEWER: Potentially not. But it's hard to know.
RESPONDENT: What if they want to rent? Is that what...I mean they want to be able to pay for up-keep?

INTERVIEWER: I think there are some people that want some things and some people that potentially want other things, but I'm not sure what. But my concern is that...

RESPONDENT: If nothing is done in the voluntary sector sort of thing, then the council would be looking for an income.

Because if they did something touristy, then that could encourage people to walk the walls, and there would be more of them.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think, if the Red Tower was, hypothetically, a tourist honeypot type thing...?

RESPONDENT: I don't think I would like it.

INTERVIEWER: You wouldn't like it. That's what I want to...

RESPONDENT: I don't mind people walking on the city walls and coming in to our estate to have a picnic lunch and things like that, that's fine, but I wouldn't like to think that people were driving up and...well they couldn't park there, really.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: No parking facilities.

INTERVIEWER: It would be something different, wouldn't it? How would you feel?

RESPONDENT: I wouldn't like it. But I wouldn't necessarily be out and out against it, without finding out what the idea is going to be.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay.

RESPONDENT: I don't believe in just hanging on to things just because they're old. There needs to be a sort of reason. If heritage is one reason then fair enough. But that's not as historic as people thing though, is it?
INTERVIEWER: No, it’s not and they wouldn’t change it… it would be like the other bars, you know, they’d keep the fabric of the building the same. That would be part of the [unclear – 0:27:23.0] factor.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Wasn’t the idea, though, that the council can’t afford the up-keep of these places, so they would willingly support somebody who was able to apply for grants and support it for them?

INTERVIEWER: That’s the idea. That’s our idea. That’s what we...

RESPONDENT: And what about Postern...?

INTERVIEWER: Fishergate Postern Tower?

RESPONDENT: Fishergate Postern Tower. Because that’s only open a couple of times a year.

INTERVIEWER: But they’re doing…the Friends of York Walls are actually working on that one and they have got quite far with it, because I think they’ve got the grant and they’ve got electricity and [unclear – 0:28:03.2] I don’t actually know how far they’ve got, but I have heard that...

RESPONDENT: You see that’s been a lot more usable, hasn’t it? More of a usable space than this place.

INTERVIEWER: All I know is that they’ve got a bit further ahead of us.

RESPONDENT: Because there used to be art exhibitions and different workshops and things in there before.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah and I think that’s what they are going to try and make it into, an art exhibition. Okay. I’m glad I’ve got your opinion on that, even if it is a hypothetical question. So what are your concerns about the area? I’ve said mine.

RESPONDENT: About the red house? Is that what you mean?

INTERVIEWER: The Red Tower and the Walmgate area.
RESPONDENT: The Red Tower. What are my concerns about...? My concerns about the estate is, the overall concerns, is about how local authorities have had their ability to look after council properties limited very much by central government. And because of [pause] when it went from a...local authorities used to be...they used to do things before, then they became like an enabling thing, where they could point you in the right direction, but they couldn’t actually do things themselves, the council. So [pause] everything seems to have to go out to tender to different companies, where the council used to do a fairly good job themselves without having to go to private contractors.

INTERVIEWER: Can you think of an example?

RESPONDENT: Yes. The annual gas boiler service, which would have been serviced by the council, because the council flats, they put the boilers in and they were serviced by the council. So then the cheapest contractor gets the job, and it was Heating Spares & Services, so they thought, oh yes, we’re great, stick an office on the thing and they were absolutely appalling. They lost the contract and it went to Help-Link. Help-Link have decided, ‘Oh it’s only the council we’re working for, we’ll just tell them that this fire’s faulty or the flue is not clear on this one.’ And they were just fiddling the council left, right and centre. Because they then got the job of taking the gas fire and putting an electric fire in; 37 weeks I had no hot water in my flat and that was Help-Link. How am I supposed to take a bath? No hot water, for 37 weeks. It’s alright doing your washing up with a kettle full of water, but you can’t really get a bath from that.

And then when you’re in the council, they’re saying, ‘Well it’s Help-Link we have to deal with these days.’ So in the end the council thought, well, we’re just taking this back in-house again. So they’ve taken it back in-house and they’ve got a really got set of heating engineers who come and do the work very well, no complaints. No personal agendas to get extra jobs to replace fires and things like that and replace boilers. So, yes, that’s one example.

So my concern is that because of political changes over the years, the council...and the selling off of council houses, I don’t mind people buying their house, I’ve got nothing against that, but I think the council should get first refusal on buying it back again, I don’t think they
should be sold on and on and on. My next concern is if that happens to housing associations, then all these ground floor flats, which are suitable for people with disabilities and older people, they’ll all the getting sold off to holiday lets, because we all live near York. Quite a few holiday lets on the estate and private lets. That’s how you lose that sense of [pause] community of the people. If you’re a holiday let you just want the money, don’t you? If you own the place for a holiday, you just want the place to be reasonably tidy to get somebody in for a couple of weeks. If it’s a private let, you’re obviously getting students in at the moment and they shouldn’t be taking over accommodation for people with disabilities or for older people. Because they weren’t built for that.

INTERVIEWER: I’m trying to think of a way [unclear – 0:33:49.8] that kind of idea of place, because it is about place, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: It’s about local places.

RESPONDENT: Yes. I think we’re losing our [pause] we’re losing our sense of community [pause] because of the changing economic circumstances and changing industries, which is partly the tourist industry.

INTERVIEWER: You said before that you were here before the tourists and before the Vikings, which I think is great, do you think there has been more of it? Because obviously on the one hand there’s the heritage of York is seen as part of the bringing in of the...

RESPONDENT: I understand the changes, because I understand something like service industries taking over manufacturing industries and the disappearance of middle-management and all this, I understand all that...

INTERVIEWER: I don’t understand what you mean by that – what does middle-management mean?

RESPONDENT: Well if you look at some industries where there used to be the manufacturers, then there would be someone, you’d go up to like supervisors, and then up to middle-
managers, well in the hotel business you would have a manager in a hotel and an assistant manager, you might have had the housekeeper – they’ve all gone. And you even now in the tourist industry, you’re getting people, you don’t even have receptionists half the time because you’ve booked yourself in online, so the service industry is bringing about changes. And this is why you get the wealthy and the poor. Because everybody at the bottom, the differential pay scales between somebody at the bottom and then the next thing up might only be twenty pence an hour, where before you sort of went up the ladder, you don’t go up the ladder now, you go twenty pence an hour more.

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting.

RESPONDENT: It’s all connected. So now that you’ve got this tourist industry, you’re relying a lot more on lower paid workers all being run by chains and not the individual hotels it used to be and there isn’t the manufacturing industry there used to be, there isn’t the railway work. I mean look at the hotel now. That used to be railway offices,

INTERVIEWER: That’s the new hotel, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: That’s the hotel at the back of the West Offices, so West Offices used to be the railway offices, that fancy hotel, is the cedar something...

INTERVIEWER: The Cedar House Hotel.

RESPONDENT: Something like that. That used to be railway offices, all these Victorian buildings. Because no railway works here anymore, there’s no railway...there’s nobody checking tickets anymore, because everybody books themselves in online.

INTERVIEWER: I mean this is a very wide thing.

RESPONDENT: It is a very wide thing. And saying that I think York, in a tourist area, is surviving on that tourist industry, where if it’s something like the North East, there’s no tourism industry. Like in somewhere where I come from. Once the manufacturing industry has gone, people are on the dole. Once they’ve closed the mines down, there’s nothing else there. In these horrible sort of...horrible environments, the pits have just left scared landscapes. But York’s got the
tourist industry, so in one respect it’s good, because it’s keeping the economics of the city going, but in other respects it’s not so good.

INTERVIEWER: I mean I think it’s important to acknowledge that tourism changes [unclear – 0:38:13.2]

RESPONDENT: But also it’s not just tourism changing the place. It’s the world economy is changing it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. That’s a big issue.

RESPONDENT: But I am a citizen of the world, not just a resident of York.

INTERVIEWER: That’s true. That’s very true and actually something that’s come up is this idea of there being issues that are different scales, like start off with local places and you get national issues and then international issues.

RESPONDENT: I think it goes the other way.

INTERVIEWER: You think it goes the other way?

RESPONDENT: In a lot of respects, I think.

INTERVIEWER: Go on then, explain why?

RESPONDENT: I can’t probably explain the difference between a multi-national company and an international company, there’s a big difference and I can’t quite explain it. One is where the research and development is in the West and the cheap labour is in the East or something. And another one where, international...that’s it, where it’s more spread out over the world. But I think when you look at the tourist industry now, [pause] and you’re looking at a lot more chains, a lot of these chains are all over the world.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I still think that there are independent shops in...

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And I’m kind of working on this Red Tower project in the hope that it will be...
RESPONDENT: It will be independent.

INTERVIEWER: It will be an independent something.

RESPONDENT: And I think if there can be good quality independent [unclear – 0:40:08.7] because I think if you’re looking at shops and independent shops and what have you in town, then I think you’re going to get good quality boutique type shops, good quality shops, shops with good quality things and pound shops, that’s where the High Street’s going.

INTERVIEWER: There is a bit of that, but the other thing that I think the Red Tower could be is in this macro structure of [unclear – 0:40:49.5] tourism economy it could potentially provide some of something for the local people, even if it’s something small like somebody came in one time and said, ‘Why don’t you have a noticeboard that people can use to put down...a bit like the local link.’ That kind of thing. Like a place where information about the local...

RESPONDENT: What, on the outside?

INTERVIEWER: Outside, inside.

RESPONDENT: Well, yeah, but you’d have to [unclear – 0:41:21.5] put it on the inside.

INTERVIEWER: Well yes, yeah. This is all...

RESPONDENT: Are you finding that there’s more, are there many local people coming in on a Saturday? Or are they mostly people just coming in off the walls?

INTERVIEWER: It’s mostly people coming in off the walls. The people on a Saturday...some people have been coming past to talk about the plants. That’s my impression. And the local kids, which you saw, that day when you came. But I think that fact is that when you, as you said when you came in that first time, and this is my interpretation of other people’s behaviour, I don’t necessarily know this for sure, they see it and it’s a brick shed, that we’ve tried to make look a bit better, but you can’t hide the fact that there’s no running water and there’s no lighting.

RESPONDENT: We used to sit in air raid shelters when we were kids which were left...I’m talking about in the ‘50s, so the air raid shelters have been used for all different types of things, they’ve
been used for coal houses, they’ve been used for garden sheds and some of them were used as public toilets, you know what I mean, unofficial public toilets. Or where the kids used to go in and smoke or...

INTERVIEWER: We’re definitely not doing that with the Red Tower. Not public toilets.

RESPONDENT: I think people used to... well it was, well I dread to think what some people used to get up to in these old, disused air raid shelters.

INTERVIEWER: We’ve gone around the world here, coming back to the Red Tower and the issues there, what do you think would be your... what would you like to see happen in Walmgate and the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: What would I like to see happen to the Red Tower, that would hopefully be of use to the people of Walmgate? Is that what you’re thinking?

INTERVIEWER: Well, no, I’m being broader than that. What would you like to see happen in Walmgate in general? It doesn’t necessarily have to be anything to do with the Red Tower.

RESPONDENT: Well [pause] it’s very difficult, because I think the area is changing very much by the building of student accommodation. So it’s going from what was an ageing population to a very young population for almost three quarters of the year. So what’s going to happen to the other quarter of the year, I haven’t got a clue. I wouldn’t say the students are a burden or a nuisance to anybody, apart from the fact that there are going to be very large buildings locked up, like gated communities, that just look dead. There’s no access to them, you can’t walk through these buildings, you can’t walk between the buildings, [pause] well you couldn’t before on that side, because you could actually see the river and things like that, you can’t see it now, so it’s changing, I think, for the worst, in that respect, by the buildings, rather than the students. I wouldn’t like to say I’d like to see the back of the students, because I wouldn’t, the students are not the problem, it’s the buildings.

INTERVIEWER: So that’s quite important, that sense of...
RESPONDENT: But the students are an issue, in a way, because if it wasn’t for the students, if it wasn’t for these colleges trying to increase the number of students, and I don’t think that building the student accommodation is freeing up the private accommodation that they thought it was going to. Because the universities keep raising the number of students. So what I would like to see in York can’t happen. I’m not being nostalgic, it’s like I say, I don’t want to be nostalgic, but you can’t get a more community-based environment if the majority of the people that are living on the estate are in a gated community and only there part of the year.

INTERVIEWER: Again, my response to that is that okay, yes, I am concerned about providing, getting that sense of community, I guess I am cautiously optimistic…

RESPONDENT: Hi, Mike. We’re just talking about housing and the local community. He’s running away.

INTERVIEWER: He’s running away.

RESPONDENT: I’ll tell you why – he used to work at the council, in housing and local communities.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Um, so…

RESPONDENT: So I don’t think the red house, the Red Tower, whatever it became, would make a great difference to our local community. Does that sound negative? Well it is, because I said no.

INTERVIEWER: Technically it is a negative statement, but do you think we should try anyway?

RESPONDENT: I think you should try anyway, because one of my slogans is it keeps people in jobs.

INTERVIEWER: We’re all volunteers, but…

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: …it keeps people active.
RESPONDENT: It keeps people active and informed. I wish I had the time and the energy to go out and drag people out and say to them, ‘Look there’s a project I wish you could get involved in.’

INTERVIEWER: I asked Cathy this as well, and I wish I’d done this earlier, I really do. As a researcher I’m a bit annoyed with myself that I haven’t been able to get out there and knock on doors and get involved. I think part of [unclear – 0:48:54.6] learning how to do this, and just talking to people like you and Cathy and Mike and understanding the area a bit better before I go in would probably have been a better way of doing things, but I would like to know what your opinion would be if I were to take a survey as part of the…basically it’s Mike’s idea that as part of the Residents’ Association ballot paper that goes out before the AGM, I was thinking of sending a survey out as well.

RESPONDENT: You could send a survey out with that...

INTERVIEWER: But whether it gets delivered or not...

RESPONDENT: …because even when it gets delivered, my friend and I used to do it, we could do the whole estate, well from Walmgate down the bottom, we could do it in 20 minutes, when there’s two of us going, because one person goes in one place and goes up the stairs and then the next house the next person goes up the stairs…so you could do it like that. And you’ve got to get there really early in the morning when you know all the doors are open. And you can post all the things. But we’ve done that, me and Lesley, so we know it can be done and the response you get back is about twelve, and this is from Navigation Road and the Walmgate side. And I think we’ve got about twelve responses.

INTERVIEWER: And this is after you personally went and posted them out.

RESPONDENT: Yes. So me and my friend on this side and somebody else doing that side. And we’ve got about twelve and I think the maximum this time was about twenty. I think the maximum we’ve had, ever, has been about twenty.

INTERVIEWER: Still that’s better than nothing.
RESPONDENT: Yeah. But that’s to say look we’ve got £7,000 to spend, what do we spend it on? And you get twenty…and giving them three options. It could be that people didn’t, a lot of people didn’t…I’d say to people, ‘Did you send that thing in?’ ‘No.’ ‘Why not?’ ‘Oh, waste of time.’ I’d say, ‘Well it’s not a waste of time.’ ‘Well the council do what they want to do anyway.’ I said, ‘Well no they don’t really. Not when it’s £7,000.’

INTERVIEWER: Cathy said that it was delayed.

RESPONDENT: Well we lost a year. We lost some money because of the, the put it bluntly, because of the farting about by the [unclear – 0:51:29.9] Residents’ Association and the council. But the thing is as well is like...

INTERVIEWER: Well you’re trying to do a democracy aren’t you?

RESPONDENT: No, we’ve got these railings, they put these railings up and they’re put up by two penny-halfpenny bloody company from Selby. They’re rubbish, absolute rubbish, but we as a Residents’ Association can’t say we don’t want that company to do it.

INTERVIEWER: You can’t say that?

RESPONDENT: No. So last year we said, ‘We don’t want this...’ I think Russell Stone, £1,400 for this, this wide, 600 x 400 x 400 high, two of them, £1,400, plus £100 delivery from Travis Perkins, you know where Travis Perkins is?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, just across the road.

RESPONDENT: Because it was supposed to be coming from Travis Perkins [unclear – 0:52:29.2] done by some, so we told Russell Stone, you bring these things to our estate, we’ll put them where you don’t want to feel them, believe me, and we just do not want £1,400 wasted on these things. We’d rather buy plastic plant pots. ‘Oh, we can’t buy plastic plant pots.’ I said, ‘Well there’s been plastic plant pots there for the last five years. They’re still standing there.’ Got weeds and that now. You cannot get people involved in anything, apathetic.

INTERVIEWER: I mean I still have the time.
RESPONDENT: I do, I try, this is why there’s me and Cathy left. And I mean Cathy’s not really a tenant, because it’s her son and daughter-in-law that’s bought the house and she rents it off them, so technically she’s a private tenant, but because she hasn’t got a tenancy agreement, I suppose she’s just a family member, so that’s how...

INTERVIEWER: Yes. I’m going to stop here, because otherwise the file gets too big.

INTERVIEWER: This issue of trying to get people involved to try and get the message out there, I have been talking to people about information sharing as being an issue and access being an issue. But it sounds to me like there is something else, it is not about getting the word out there that you have done.

RESPONDENT: I put notices up on the noticeboard, nobody comes to the meeting. We have even invited them to parties, they don’t come. I have been in to the new hotel on one day and asked them could we use a room in there, and they said, ‘yes.’ So that might be the first step, to have our AGM in there. I would say who knows though, New Year, new start or something in the new hotel.

INTERVIEWER: Free tea and biscuits.

RESPONDENT: Well it would be an evening one, I don’t think there would be tea and biscuits, No, people didn’t mind coming to the Orange Tree Club because they could buy a pint.

INTERVIEWER: There is a bar at the hotel isn’t there?

RESPONDENT: Yes, so that’s why I was thinking... Because we had umpteen tea and biscuits and it didn’t work, so I think the best thing. I have just been round to the building around there, had a word with the Project Manager, invited them to the meeting and then she will just say, ‘well, what have you done that for, we are discussing [unclear – 0:01:53:4].

INTERVIEWER: The local bobby, you were speaking to him the other day weren’t you, do you think he would come?

RESPONDENT: He does come sometimes.
INTERVIEWER: Yes, I would actually be really interested to chat to him.

RESPONDENT: They are meant to come, but if they are on a morning shift obviously they don't come. Julian is their PCSO, he is not the police.

INTERVIEWER: No, he is a support worker isn't he?

RESPONDENT: Yes, he is the PCSO. We used to have those come along, we always had the Estate Manager come along, and I always used to make sure there was something else on the agenda that was connected to the local area, and that was either York Rotters, we have had York Rotters come along, we have had somebody from the NUS come along. All these things, then it just dwindled away because they just got so sick of a certain person going on about, 'okay then, so that is,' and then she would just take over the meeting and everybody would just turn off. So, if I can start ahead again in September, by bribery and not so much corruption to get people to come to the meeting. Even if we don't elect a full committee, then hopefully we can build up some kind of residents' group.

INTERVIEWER: Because of my interest with the Red Tower, I think a combined effort of sorts.

RESPONDENT: Yes, so if we have our AGM, which will have to go through the formal disbanding, so starting again. And then guest speaker, you maybe, who is talking about, we have mentioned before, along those lines when people spoke to us, we even let her speak first before people drifted off. I have put photographs in the Red Tower on the noticeboards, I have put photographs of the changing face of the estate, photographs of the university buildings. I thought even if I get someone to come along and say, 'that is a bloody awful building,' but nobody came and even said that. We may officially have to disband, because if we can't get a committee, we may have to disband legally. So, I don't know, I need to see Mike about this and I also need to speak to I think it is that lady from the federation. It was the federation meeting where my friend, the treasurer got so upset and walked out. She just thought there is no point in trying to do anything anymore, it is like banging your head against a brick wall with the council and Dringhouses has had to disband because they have got down to two people.

INTERVIEWER: What day is the...?
RESPONDENT: I am not sure, but it is in September.

INTERVIEWER: I just hope it is not the same time as my...

RESPONDENT: Probably the second Wednesday of September.

INTERVIEWER: That's the 9th isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: If it is only me and Cathy, it has got to officially disband. There is no room officially booked for it, I could have a word with Mike, have a word with Julie and just say, ‘look I need some help here, can we postpone this AGM and have an official new start?’ I think we should change its name just to Walmgate, rather than Walmgate Navigation Road, people think it is important that you have two separate things. What we need is a new start, and try and get some younger people.

INTERVIEWER: It would be really good if the Red Tower staff could be involved from the start and then people can feel like they actually have something to say about it, even if they are apathetic.

RESPONDENT: Nobody feels any interest at all in Walmgate Bar. There used to be a chapel there, nobody bothered. Now it is a café, nobody is interested, nobody goes.

INTERVIEWER: It is about making things exciting.

RESPONDENT: I know.

INTERVIEWER: It is interesting. I think there are ways of sharing information that is exciting, articulating things and then bringing in the energy somehow. I have kind of gone off at a tangent.

RESPONDENT: What I was thinking, while these new kids are coming down to the Red Tower, I know it is only the summer holidays is the reason they might be coming down, because I have never met them before the summer holidays. To try and get them involved, make them a noticeboard to say ‘Rosemary Recreation Area,’ because it has always been called The Kiddies Play Area. But it is not a kiddies play area. So it has changed now, sort of near our clothes lines.
So somebody, [a resident] I think it was from the town hall said, ‘can you not get a local school involved,’ I said, ‘we don’t have a local school, we don’t have a local doctors.’ That’s what I would like around here, but you can’t force a business to come and open a shop. Look, we have lost the Post Office, if we are going to lose the Post Office, we are not going to get a chemist. We had a Post Office, we are not going to get one back because it is now in Monsbrook.

INTERVIEWER: We talked about information sharing and all the efforts that you have made to try and get the message out there and you feel a bit disappointed by the sounds of it.

RESPONDENT: Yes, a bit exasperated by it.

INTERVIEWER: Going back to this idea of heritage, do you think that something like heritage can actually be useful?

RESPONDENT: In bringing people together, partly. When you have lived in an area, heritage, a heritage site so to speak, you don’t see it anymore. You don’t see this heritage, you just see the bottom of your garden wall. So there is that. People go to other cities to see something historic, and they are actually living in one themselves.

INTERVIEWER: I know how that feels, because I work in Kings Manor and sometimes I forget.

RESPONDENT: Yes, I used to work at Kings Manor for a different thing.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, have you got any questions for me? I think we will have a lot to speak about, about this AGM, because I think the AGM and the fact that it is near the Heritage Open Day that we have got here. Do you know what we have?

RESPONDENT: No, I don’t know anything about it. Tell me all about it.

INTERVIEWER: I will tell you all about it. We are going to be part of this Heritage Open Day, on Saturday 12th. We are inviting everybody, we are imagining that some people on the city walls will come. We have got potentially a juggler, storytelling lady in a tent, a pop up cinema is happening showing a film about fifty years in York. It is a movie that I managed to get off a little old lady who came to one of my talks and it is a movie that has been in the archives of The York Press, and obviously published a while ago. So it was in VHS form in the 1990’s and it
is old movies made by the readers of the Yorkshire Evening Press. I haven’t watched it yet, but I have heard other people say that is really good.

RESPONDENT: Is it York itself, not just this area, all of York?

INTERVIEWER: All of York. So, I will get a projector and a screen.

RESPONDENT: So, you have not seen it yourself?

INTERVIEWER: I have not seen it myself, no because I don’t have a cd drive.

RESPONDENT: I have just thrown mine out not so long ago.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, The Fifty Years of York?

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, your VHS player.

RESPONDENT: I chucked it out and then I opened this box and I thought, ‘what am I going to do with all of these tapes?’

INTERVIEWER: I know, I know, but we managed to save this one and it should be played on this Heritage Open Day. So there are loads of different things happening. There is a local group of guys that I have been playing music with and they said that they might come along. So there is a load of stuff happening, and we would love people to be a part of it and enjoy it.

RESPONDENT: And it is all day?

INTERVIEWER: Ten until three.

RESPONDENT: I might have a day off knitting, because I have to have a couple of days off knitting. But I want to go because if my other friend doesn’t die between now and then, she is part of the group so we would be meeting up there, and also Julie has just lost her husband as well, so that would be another reason why I would be in knitting. I should be back by half past one. I could leave at twelve and be back by half past twelve.

INTERVIEWER: Just pop by for a bit if you feel like. END OF TRANSCRIPTION
INTERVIEW 13: 29-08-15 ROSEMARY PLACE MARThA

INTERVIEWER: So, Martha, to start off this interview, can you tell me how you know me?

RESPONDENT: By watching you at the Red Tower, which I'm very interested in, because I'm an historian of York and a citizen, born and bred, and my family were all business people and we had pubs all round York and I have people I've known from a child. I went to Fishergate School and we were a class of 48 and gradually these students that I was with all were from families from the army and my father was the clerk of works at the barracks, so I used to go and meet him and he also was the man that looked after fourteen boilers as well as the food for the soldiers. And they used to always wait for them to get the food and I used to have to go and see my father on my bike and take him his sandwiches, his pack-up.

So living down Walmgate in later life I met a lot of people I went to school with, because that was the catchment area for Fishergate School and some of my friends are still with me and I am the secretary of the Class of '46. And I still have connections, but a lot of my friends, unfortunately, with life, have died or left York. But I've always been a true person and I love York, there's nowhere like it. And I've travelled the world and I do a lot for the Legion. I've been to the Palace three times and I've represented England ten times in Australia, in Sydney, and I'm known as a True Blue. Because when I'm there I do what you call community work. Like when I first went I went and volunteered my six weeks that I had left, because I was driven mad.

I wanted to get with the public and I went and volunteered to go and take meals round Sydney. And this guy who I was put in with, he says, 'Oh, you're a pommie bastard, are you?' I said, 'No, I had a father and mother – what did you have?' And he said, 'You'll never get the money from the places we go.' I said, 'Well just give me a chance.' And this prison I went in, I didn't know it was a prison, it just looked like an ordinary block of flats like what we're living in, and when I got to the top of the steps there was a prison officer and says, 'You want to be straight along here, the third corridor on your right.'

So I went and the order's $14 and I had his food in an esky, they call them there, so that they could keep cool and I went in and I said, 'Hello, are you there?' 'Yeah, what do you want?' I said
well actually I’ve come to get your money that you owe us. It’s $14.’ ‘Oh, you’re not getting that.’

I said, ‘Right, I’m off and you’re not getting your dinner.’ He said, ‘You can’t do that.’ I said, ‘Try me.’ So I did and I said, ‘Right, hope you enjoy your dinner next time, because you won’t be getting any more.’ So he called me back and I actually got the $14 and I went back to the driver and he says, ‘Huh, that’s a one-off. It wouldn’t have happened.’ I said, ‘Well, how come you’ve never done it? Don’t tell me what to do, I’ve done better than you’ve done.’

So I went back to the office and they said I’d done a remarkable job and they said, ‘Is there any more like you in England that would come out and help us to do the social work?’ And the rest of that time I met the Lord Mayor and it turned out that my daughter worked for the Lord Mayor and I…

INTERVIEWER: The Lord Mayor of York?

RESPONDENT: Of Sydney.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, Sydney. Right.

RESPONDENT: And I used to look after his grandchildren, because I was a nursery nurse. And I used to put some of my time in with my grandchildren in Sydney, Chatswood, and I used to go there and do my volunteering there.

INTERVIEWER: Can we talk about York, this is what my research is about. It’s all about York.

RESPONDENT: Oh, I see, but what I was saying was they said that the connections I had with England and York was marvellous and I described York as a very good place to visit.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, good.

RESPONDENT: And my grandchildren come here every other year, from Australia.

INTERVIEWER: So you’ve got a real connection with Australia and a real connection with Sydney, but you’ve still got a really, it sounds like, from what you’ve said…

RESPONDENT: From being a child…
INTERVIEWER: From being a child in York...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, in the school at Fishergate.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: From a child and me to become the secretary.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I’m with you. So you’ve been living in York all your life.

RESPONDENT: I have.

INTERVIEWER: But you’ve been living in Walmgate for how long?

RESPONDENT: Not that long. We came here in 1992, because Clive’s my second husband.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And so since you’ve been living here, what do you think about the Walmgate area?

RESPONDENT: The Walmgate area is a mixed population, it’s had a bad record, but you’ve got to avoid that, like everywhere you go, there’s always a bad penny. And Walmgate was related with the Irish that used to come over from Ireland and bring the cattle. And I remember going to work at Bleasdale’s and I used to meet my friend at Walmgate Bar and we used to ride to work together and if you didn’t get in before eight o’clock, when you went further on the cows and the animals used to come and they used to leave the urination and all the poo on the floor and if you had to go through it you used to get it all over your shoes. So we changed our direction after that, we used to cut up Piccadilly, which was nearer.

INTERVIEWER: So you changed the direction?

RESPONDENT: The direction, to get away from the cattle. But they used to be on– you know where that supermarket, Waitrose, that was where the cattle used to be let off, because that was where the Derwent Valley Railway came from, from Murton, and that’s why...

INTERVIEWER: How long ago was this?
RESPONDENT: Oh, that’s nearly 100 years ago. I’m not 100, but that’s where the history comes from.

INTERVIEWER: Right, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Irish drovers used to come and drive the animals onto the railway and then the railway used to come near Walmgate Bar and then they used to go to the cattle pens, where the barbican is now, and all that used to be a big place for selling all the cattle, sheep and cattle and I’ve got pictures of railings, you know where that green lawn is? That used to be cattle pens and they used to sell the animals through there and through the war the abattoir was right round the corner, where I lived in Horsman Avenue and we used to see the cattle going in one door and then the used to come through the other side with all their skin and everything. And you used to see them all chopped up, you used to see them going round in a circle and they were alive one end and then we used see them coming out the other end.

INTERVIEWER: So you used to see them doing all this work with the cattle.

RESPONDENT: All blood on the floor, yeah. It was nothing, that. That’s my childhood. And I’ve got proper pictures of the Elvington Railway Line from where it was and Murton and I have pictures that go back to 1893. And I allowed them to take it off and they’ve got it on their railway.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. So thinking about more recent times, what do you think about the place now?

RESPONDENT: I think it’s been over-publicised. It isn’t the city of York anymore. It’s more like London, because there are too many visitors, there’s not enough room for what we have, normal traffic, and it’s the tourism. And we need the tourism to bring money in, but I’m afraid now if we want to go into town we go out before nine and we get home before ten. Leave it ‘till five at night and come back home about six, because you can’t get in anywhere in York in the city centre. It’s absolutely chocka, but we welcome visitors, but I’m afraid it’s like social life, at times it’s too busy, there isn’t enough time to be relaxed, because the motor traffic, the traffic that’s
been increased and coming from London, they’re all buying houses in York and coming up by train.

INTERVIEWER: How do you get into town from here?

RESPONDENT: I always get taxis everywhere.

INTERVIEWER: Do you?

RESPONDENT: Yes. Clive and I, we’ll be going by taxi, quarter to four, we come back at quarter past six, got to Morrisons, get our fish and chips for £9 including two pots of tea and your lovely fish with lemon on.

INTERVIEWER: Morrisons?

RESPONDENT: Yes, and then we get our shopping, come back, we order a taxi back, it’s a contract we have, we have done for the last two years, and then we come back at quarter past six, home for half past six and then we unpack, sit down and watch the telly, and that’s our week’s shopping. And that’s our life.

INTERVIEWER: So you don’t visit York...

RESPONDENT: Unless we want to go. We know where places are if we wish to go, but they’re over populated now.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say your life is here, in Walmgate?

RESPONDENT: Definitely. My heart’s in York.

INTERVIEWER: So your life is here, but your heart is in York?

RESPONDENT: But it’s in Australia as well.

INTERVIEWER: As you say, you’ve got family there as well.

RESPONDENT: That’s right. But York is a very old city and it’s been made with history and the history of York, like somebody said, I forget who, that York’s history is the lifeblood of England. That was quoted by someone a long time ago and I can’t remember who it is. One of the
bridges, Lendal Bridge, in 1571 there was a wooden bridge and it went to York Minster and it was the Archbishop of York getting crowned to go to the Minster and with it being a wooden bridge part of it used to open to let the traffic through, and at either end there used to be a ferry, they used to put a chain across, because these boats had to pay penalties, a toll.

Anyway, in 1560 or whenever it was, this Archbishop went over the wooden bridge and it collapsed and he just got the other side, so now when you go and see Lendal Bridge, it’s got two archangels like that blessing and they are there, lead buildings, iron, if you look up you’ll see two angels on each lamppost and fancy art on them and that’s the reason why, because it was blessed that the Archbishop [unclear – 0:10:09.0].

INTERVIEWER: But you’ve lived here so long.

RESPONDENT: And when I was only four my grandad used to take me round York and he used to say, ‘Where’s The Cross Keys?’ And I used to say, ‘Which one– Near the river?’ So he said, ‘No, where’s the other one?’ I said, ‘It’s in Goodramgate.’ Look up at the signs, because a lot of people didn’t know how to read and write in his day, well he did, but I’m talking about medieval days and that’s why the boards are all round the pubs, because people used to travel by hansom cab and all these carriages and horse and carriages on their way to London and up to Edinburgh, York was a stopping point. York was a very important...also railway, because the railway from York, it all started when Queen Victoria came to that hotel, it used to be called the Victoria Hotel, but it isn’t, it’s the Royal York.

INTERVIEWER: So you know a lot about the history of York, because you’ve lived here so long and you’ve lived in Walmgate since 1992 and you don’t go into York as much, but from some of the conversations we’ve had before we had this interview were about your concerns about the local area. Can you talk to me about what your concerns for Walmgate are?

RESPONDENT: Well the children that are living round here now are not brought like we were brought up. They’re just vandals. They’d don’t know how to behave. I don’t know what you can say. They have to be where their mothers can see them, but the mothers never come out of their homes to be with them. So the children get up to mischief, which they wouldn’t do if they took
them out and socialised, personally, like you do with your children. Or take them away from this
environment. There's nothing to stimulate them.

INTERVIEWER: Again, this is going back to something we've already touched on, what would you
suggest?

RESPONDENT: Well we had Space 109 and if that opened again it would be the key to keeping
the kids from being in trouble all the time, causing mischief and firing water at the tourists on
the walls and riding their push bikes, scooters that they have, because they go along there and
the people are crossing the wall and they haven't got room and the kids are stopping them from
going along the city walls. Well it's not a good impression. When they come to visit York, they've
come to see its history and its environment, but people think that these flats are like prison
blocks, because they don't look much different. Because we're in a conservation area here,
where we are.

INTERVIEWER: I knew that and this kind of relates back to the walls and the Red Tower, which is
how you know me, but before that you mentioned Space 109 and it would be really good to talk
about that a bit more.

RESPONDENT: Well it had everything. What we needed, we got. We were very fortunate at that
time, the government were very good.

INTERVIEWER: Where was it again? It was on...

RESPONDENT: Space 109 was in Walmgate. I think it was 119-120, but I can't tell you any more
than that, but that building that was there was CBA, the Council for British Archaeology, they
had Bowes Morrell House, and we were caretakers there for eight years, and that's when we got
the invitation to go to the Palace, from them. They'd all been and they said, 'We know who to
send – send Clive and Martha.' I said, 'I'm not going to the Palace to represent you.' They said,
'Well you've been invited, Royal Family, here, there's you invitation.' And it had our name on it.
And we were so honoured and they said, 'You've been a stalwart at our place.' Because they
were broken into twice...
INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:14:00.1] House.

RESPONDENT: At Bowes Morrell House.

INTERVIEWER: Bowes Morrell House.

RESPONDENT: CBA – Council for British Archaeology. They’ve moved, they’re down Marygate now.

INTERVIEWER: I know, I’ve got a friend who works there.

RESPONDENT: Well just mention Martha and Clive and they’ll say, ‘Oh, are they still going? I don’t know if they’re still there, Jenny was there, wasn’t she? She got married and I did her wedding gown, I made a tablecloth and I did all the things. Because they emigrated to Australia, or was it New Zealand or Tasmania. She’s got a boy called Rufus.

INTERVIEWER: So Space109…

RESPONDENT: Was attached to the Council for British Archaeology.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: To start with it was a wool shop. And next to it was somebody that did photographs. But then two shops were taken over, because they were going free, and we were complaining about now having anywhere for the kids to go, same as we’ve got here, it’s the same thing, it hasn’t changed. But the only thing is we’ve got more now. As the fashion goes, unmarried mothers and no fathers, so the kids haven’t got that atmosphere of a close family, but they did when we were at Space109. And they were like a little closed meeting club for [unclear – 0:15:13.7] to come and that really helped us, because Space109, everybody contributed what they could do and we did. But there’s not that spirit now. There’s nobody here that will do it.

INTERVIEWER: And what did you used to do at Space109?
RESPONDENT: We used to show them how to cook. We used to have an art class. They used to hire the rooms out, so they’d got money coming in and then they used to have a knitting club, we used to call it the knitting and nattering club, because that was my name for it.

And then on the Saturday we used to open it out to the parents to come with their children and join in drawing, like you’ve got over there, making cups of tea and we used to run it on a fund and we used to donate so much for a kitty, to help us to run the thing. And Jo, up here, Joanne, she was an artist type, because she painted a drawing of me and it’s in the passage. And the Lord Mayor of York, Brian Watson, you ought to see him, he knows all about it, he’ll tell you.

INTERVIEWER: So your concerns about the place are about the kids...

RESPONDENT: There’s no stimulus.

INTERVIEWER: There’s nothing stimulating them. Space109...

RESPONDENT: Had the answer to it all.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And now it’s gone for whatever reasons...

RESPONDENT: Well they couldn’t afford to...we handed it over to somebody, because we couldn’t pay the rent. They put it up and the council said, ‘We can’t afford to run it anymore.’ But somebody else took it over and they couldn’t run it, and they ended up letting the lease go because they were in debt, and that’s when it was changed over to that place for...

INTERVIEWER: It’s a homeless– My understanding, because I went and had a look, it’s for homeless. Which is still a worthy cause.

RESPONDENT: It is and there’s a big door there that we had put in between, we knocked the two walls through, the shops, so we got a big one and we got one that you could cut off for smaller occasions. And if you look in front of there, there’s a tree and there’s all blooms in what we put in about ten years ago and they’re all growing well now.

INTERVIEWER: So what would your wish be for this area, then?
RESPONDENT: To get Space109 back, with a bit of enthusiasm, with these parents to take their
children along and do what the children need. A meeting point, instead of being vandalising
everywhere. Red Tower is alright for now, but for a base when it’s raining and pouring, they want
somewhere they can meet and there’s no unit that can provide the stimulus that they need. I
mean there’s supposed to be a community place opening as a place here, in Hungate, and it
says on this writing I’ve got down there that they’re going for form a new community.

Jeffrey Newman, I know him, because he went to Australia and I used to go and meet him and
he was near my daughter, and he knew who was I was and he said, ‘My God, Martha, you do go
travelling, don’t you?’ And I’ve been to see him and I’ve asked him if this community centre is
going to get built in Hungate here, if it’s going to be a community centre that we can go to?
Because we’ve got nothing to do, all the children have to do is go over the bridge and let their
parents take them. And that’s the future project, is that community.

INTERVIEWER: That’s good to know, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, it’s Jeffrey, down here somewhere, and he represents Lowther Street.

INTERVIEWER: Let me take a photo of this piece of paper that you’ve got.

RESPONDENT: And they’ve got so much money awarded.

INTERVIEWER: Where does it say that they’ve got the money?

RESPONDENT: It was on one of the press cuttings.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay.

RESPONDENT: And if you see [B], he should know. Ring the council, [unclear – 0:18:50.9]
collections and she got through did that one that represents us, I forgot what they call her now.
Green Party, Play Day, 84 Lowther Street, he’s in charge of that, that’s what it is. I know him from
old days and Red Tower is mentioned here, look.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. We’re there.

RESPONDENT: But this woman here, she knows all this money that’s been allowed.
INTERVIEWER: Which woman?

RESPONDENT: Who’s won the award for this area.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yeah.

RESPONDENT: It said in the paper somewhere that there was £20,000 awarded to Guildhall area and that’s us, nobody else. And that we would get an amount, because I’ve been arguing and I’ve rung the Labour Councillor and she agrees with me. She said we were designated to have some things put on the play area. Now four years ago I asked for these adult ones, that we can play on, you know. You know, where you can get exercises, they’ve got them in Tang Hall, because Sally has been to seen them and she took a picture. Now I asked and she knows what I’m like if I get the bit between my teeth, I’m off. And she knows that if I start [unclear – 0:20:10.2] she knows that I mean it, because I don’t give up.

INTERVIEWER: So what do you think that that money could be used for?

RESPONDENT: Well to try and get Space109 back and maybe boost what you need there.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like your need is that…

RESPONDENT: Well it’s not my personal need, it’s for the area we live in.

INTERVIEWER: For the area, yeah.

RESPONDENT: But nobody seems to want to bite the bullet, do they?

INTERVIEWER: It’s very tricky, we’re having difficulty with the Red Tower because we are lacking...

RESPONDENT: This is the one you want to get to – her.

INTERVIEWER: The Green Councillor? Yes. We have...

RESPONDENT: And also the labour councillor and tell her I sent you and then she’ll go, ‘Oh, my God.’

INTERVIEWER: We have had both of them come round to see us.
RESPONDENT: But what have they got to offer you? They haven’t given you nothing, have they?

INTERVIEWER: Not yet, but we’re having a meeting next week where we’re talking about the future of the Red Tower.

RESPONDENT: It’s about time, we pay our rates, why should we be pestered by kids that have got no inspiration from home. They want them there, where they belong. So they don’t have to go looking for them. Those kids are out of here at quarter past eight in the morning, especially Latham, and then he goes round and gets all his little ones round him and then they do nothing but plague you ‘till seven or eight, when it was summer time, it’s earlier now, it’s dark by about seven, but nobody comes looking for them. You’d think they were waifs and strays.

INTERVIEWER: I’m going to stop this because the file gets too big.

[START OF SECOND RECORDING]

RESPONDENT: Because I think the parents should be with them more. I mean one child ran out at the top of the slope of here and if I hadn’t have grabbed her, she was three, she would have got killed. And her mother went, ‘What are you talking to my child for?’ She was like this with phone, I said, ‘I’ve just caught her, alright?’ ‘Well don’t you be talking to my child?’ I said, ‘You should have been there with your child, never been on your phone.’ So I said, ‘Don’t you tell me.’ And she went. ‘Oh, what have I told you about leaving here?’ She was only three, she was running after a ball.

INTERVIEWER: It’s frustrating, it’s a concern that is relevant. I mean our experience at the Red Tower has been that the kids are quite well-behaved and...

RESPONDENT: Within reason.

INTERVIEWER: They haven’t been disruptive and have actually helped...

RESPONDENT: No, they won’t be, because they’re starved of proper—That’s what you need. That’s why I’m glad you’re here. Because you are teaching them how to behave, but they’re getting bad elements, which are not brought up to respect people. They want the stimulus, they want the education and you’ve got it there. I’m very much admiring you, because I’ve told Clive,
that input you’ve got there is valuable and you’re good at your job and so are your people who help you, but I'm just so fed up of when that's closed it's like a door has shut and the rest of the week they’ve nothing to do. They’re bored to tears. And that’s why they’re getting...

INTERVIEWER: It would be lovely if we could do something, as you say, and it’s good to speak to you, to know what the needs are, of the community.

RESPONDENT: I wouldn’t let my child out...a three-year old being allowed to be exposed to boys when it wants a wee, its mother should have been with her. And she had a dog with her, this girl, she was about eight or nine and they just look as though they’re thrown out to, ‘Go and get yourself away from here. I want peace.’ Speculation Street is just the same. And football. All the big fellers, they don’t work, none of them do. And they’re all there sunning themselves and they think they’re off the telly and all you can hear is the football, bang, bang, bang all the time. And kids screaming and dogs barking.

INTERVIEWER: Are you giving this to me?

RESPONDENT: Just say if you don’t want it. I’ve no use for it.

INTERVIEWER: I might keep it. The Greenlight, just as a reminder.

RESPONDENT: But she knows I’ve been in touch with her and so does this Jeffrey.

INTERVIEWER: I know Jeffrey as well, actually, through some of the work we were doing.

RESPONDENT: You just tell him you’ve been talking to Martha. He’ll say, ‘Is she still going? Is she still banging on?’ That’s all he will say.

INTERVIEWER: So my last two questions are it’s obvious you’ve got a concern and wishes for this place, but my interest is how do you get those wishes and those concerns across and how you share information about them?

RESPONDENT: Well now we’ve nowhere to go, which was always on a Thursday...was it a Thursday night or a Monday night? I can’t remember. Space 109, it was our set appointment
that we went, and you see years ago Navigation wasn’t connected with Walmgate’s residents, they were two separate issues.

INTERVIEWER: I’m aware of that, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Because the woman that used to rule this place with a rod of iron, she’s gone, Mrs Hardy, and there was somebody on Walmgate side, which I don’t know, we didn’t go to their residents’ meetings, but we amalgamated them both because we had to for financial gain from the council. Well I came here with Clive in 1992 and they called him, what did they call that man that used to be here then? He went to [unclear – 0:03:44.4] what did they call him? He used to go to Mrs Hardy’s and he used to have Christmas dinner with them, he was a Salvation Army man. Oh, I can’t remember, my memory don’t go back as good as it used to.

But any rate, he was in the inspector for all round here and he used to work, rule this area with a rod of, ‘Oh, you will do this, or if not, you know, suffer the consequences.’ Gary Garland, that’s what they called him. And he wouldn’t stand no crap, I’m telling you now. He wouldn’t have allowed dogs to be barking and kids running round wild like they did and they were angels in those days to what they are now. Because there’s a lot of new social lives come in, single parents and they can go and have a night away with somebody so they get a baby in nine months’ time when the other one’s ready to go to nursery and they it all paid.

That’s the social balance that’s gone. You see it’s all to do with money and they’ve come because they’ve got a child and they all get children. If you go around, most if the girls that’s in their teens, they think they must have a baby to this man to prove that she loves him. Well it’s a load of rubbish. I know somebody who’s got that. She was only sixteen when she got pregnant and she told him she loved him and said, ‘Well if you have my baby, I’ll believe you.’ No that is like common knowledge now, that’s what the youngsters feel like. So they next thing I’m going to say, Gary Garland used to come round here, so he sent me to go to one of the meetings and we used to meet in the INL Club when it was there, but it’s not there anymore, it’s those new flats that that farmer’s built, you know where the bar walls are?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: Well did you know the...you wouldn't know the INL, so I'm talking about twelve or fourteen years ago. There used to be a big pub and it was a social club and it was run by the Irish, INL, it was the Irish National League, so any rate we used to meet in there and Gary Garland said, 'Go and see Mrs Hardy and she'll welcome it.' So I thought, right, I'm looking forward to it. So I went in and we sat down, Clive and I, and already, half past seven it was, the meeting, and she just said to this man sat next to her, he took all the notes, and she said, 'Excuse me. I'm sorry, but you'll have to leave, you're not allowed in here.'

So I looked at Clive, I thought, 'Who's she talking to?' And they all turned round and looked at us as if we were a bit of muck on your foot. So I knew it, I said, 'Don't move Clive, I don't like the look of her.' I could tell my tension was growing, so she said, 'Excuse me, I've asked you twice to leave.' I said, 'Do you mind me asking you, who the hell are you?' So she said, 'I'm the secretary.' I said, 'Well I'm a tenant, do you pay my rent?' 'I'm sorry, I don't think you're in the right place.'

I got my keys, I said, 'What's these then?' And they all looked round, 'You can't talk to Mrs Hardy like that.' I said, 'Why can't I? I'm a tenant. I pay my rent. Are you going to tell me that I can't stay?' 'Well where are you living?' I said, 'Well that's my secret, not yours. But I shall tell Gary Garland in the morning that I don't like the impressions I've got. You're not very friendly, are you? I see you thought I've stood on a piece of dirt.' And she goes, 'Oh, uh, I'm sorry, but, where did you say you come from?' I said, 'I didn't say anything, that's my business, and that's for you to find out. But if this is a tenants' meeting, God help the rest.' And I walked out.

Next day, she comes knocking on my door. 'I do apologise. I'm so sorry, I wasn't aware of who you were.' I said, 'Well you know now. But don't you ever cross me, because you've met the wrong person.' And after that she was the best friend I could have had. But she was two-faced. And that was what we came here to in 1992.

INTERVIEWER: Going back to my original question, the idea that you've got concerns about this place and the wishes, I'm really interested in how people share those concerns and those wishes.

RESPONDENT: Well they don't seem to bother, because they're at work and it don't bother them, as long as the kids are out and not bothering them they don't care.
INTERVIEWER: But what about you? How do you share?

RESPONDENT: I look at the children, I've done my whack, I'm not there to be doing this spokesmen, I'm too old now, I'm looking after Clive and I'm looking after myself. They haven't got a husband that's got dementia and illnesses like we have. Five days a week we have nurses coming in here, and he has to go to care, and I'm here on my own.

INTERVIEWER: What would you...?

RESPONDENT: All the people who used to be like me have died. I'm sorry, they've all gone. There's three died this last week. Janet Grey, who I mentioned, there's Ben who used to live on here, he was 94, found dead in his bath and who's the other one? Oh, Jill, she died a week last Tuesday and we went to the funeral service yesterday at the Early Music Centre. See the Early Music Centre weren't there in them days, it only opened in 1980 I think it was, because I was at the original opening. Because all the men came with the trumpets and opened the walls and trumpets opened the old church which was St Margaret's and it was made the Early Music Centre, and that was another venue we used to meet at.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right. So do you think that these venues, these are places where people can get together...

RESPONDENT: And join things and visitors come. It's unique – have you been to the Early Music Centre?

INTERVIEWER: I've been to the Early Music Centre, yes.

RESPONDENT: Well I know Delma, she knows me very well, I was part of the choir, going back to when it opened.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Well do you want to explain why you've got this newspaper cutting out?

RESPONDENT: Well there's a scheme they've got there at Southbank, which I think's brilliant. They run it themselves.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Go Bananas, Ben [unclear – 0:09:47.3] Peckett, a group of schoolchildren...
RESPONDENT: Yeah, ten years old they are. They’re running a scheme to keep the kids occupied.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Because we lived on Philadelphia Terrace and it’s marvellous and they’ve done it all themselves, and that could be used in York and in this area it would go off like a bomb.

INTERVIEWER: Can I keep this piece of paper?

RESPONDENT: You can. I’ve cut these things out.

INTERVIEWER: I’m really happy that you’ve been looking out for these things.

RESPONDENT: I have, yes. I said to you...

INTERVIEWER: This is what I mean by sharing information.

RESPONDENT: That’s right. You wouldn’t have known about that [unclear – 0:10:21.9].

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I don’t buy The Press.

RESPONDENT: But that is marvellous, is that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay.

RESPONDENT: And that’s what I said to Jeffrey, if they’re opening this community centre idea, on Hungate, why couldn’t we all amalgamate and get the funds together and run that, alongside Red Tower. It doesn’t take much, does it? You’ve got the people against you are on the council.

INTERVIEWER: No, no, they’re not against us.

RESPONDENT: No, but they’ve said there’s no funding, like we had before.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

RESPONDENT: Cutbacks.

INTERVIEWER: Well we know that that there’s ward funding, we’ve always known that there would be ward funding.
RESPONDENT: I think it said £20,000, somewhere. It was mentioned. I used to do this as well, that’s something else I’ve been involved in. I’ve always been busy, busy, busy. Because I get bored if I’ve nothing to do. And believe me if you get me bored you might just as well— Look, I was involved in that, I’m a Friend of the Fosse.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, do you know what, that’s brilliant, because I walk past that every day and I wonder what on earth is being, what’s being done about it.

RESPONDENT: It goes up and down the river. But you see they’ve no money to run the…

INTERVIEWER: They’ve got no money to run it…

RESPONDENT: …the council say that they do have to clear it when the Fosse Society gets in with them, but you know that little bridge, we call it Blue Bridge, that’s the one that goes onto the island and do you know that island, where all those trees are, those big flats at the back, that reserve there is where is where all the geese have been born and they go there to lay their eggs and they get the chicks and then when they fly off they go back to the university. Because the University or York is there they go to to get fed. And you can hear them honking.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, you can. I have a lot to say about the geese at the campus.

RESPONDENT: And if you go in Rowntree’s Park…

INTERVIEWER: Are you giving this to me as well?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that’s so kind.

RESPONDENT: I don’t need them. You see this is where you get the historian from. That’s me. I don’t need books, I’ve got a good memory.

INTERVIEWER: What’s the date for this?

RESPONDENT: Oh, it’s about ‘80s.

RESPONDENT: Oh, this is another one, this is what I’m on about, Central Methodist Church. St Saviourgate.

INTERVIEWER: That’s another scheme.

RESPONDENT: Well you see all the projects, the resources needed are all within half a mile of each other, aren’t they?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, but it’s good to have them in...

RESPONDENT: They want unity. Someone needs to get all these little bits pulled together and make one good pot, so that it will affect all the areas and we’re all involved in community, that’s what it’s called. I don’t know whether you agree or understand.

INTERVIEWER: I do. My opinion is that...

RESPONDENT: I’m only a small cog in a big wheel.

INTERVIEWER: I know the feeling. I think it would be lovely if, as you say, all the different schemes...August 12th, is this recently then?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: ‘Communities in York are to share £90,000 of the council cash in an initiative to give people more money say how their money is spent.’

RESPONDENT: But we are in the Guildhall.

INTERVIEWER: ‘Guildhall, the city centre ward that stretches residential areas like the Groves receives the biggest annual budget of £29,000 and the smallest amount goes to Bishopthorpe, which is £8,000.’

RESPONDENT: Yeah, but in that Guildhall, we were in with it, because we’re the tail end of Guildhall ward, which is this end of the city.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.
RESPONDENT: And that’s where Jeffrey gets his money from. Because he’s getting some for [unclear – 0:14:16.6] that place.

INTERVIEWER: Well I live in the Groves.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, well that’s where your money is going, most of it, to him. Because we’re on the end of the Guildhall.

INTERVIEWER: Well he’s got Hungate is...

RESPONDENT: That’s right and we’re in with it, because we’re in Guildhall ward, we vote from here. We go to Early Music to vote. Brian is the man to talk to. And there’s still time to get them.

INTERVIEWER: What party is he with?

RESPONDENT: He’s with Labour.

INTERVIEWER: Labour.

RESPONDENT: There we are, he was Lord Mayor of York, any rate.

INTERVIEWER: That’s fantastic, you’re coming out with all these...

RESPONDENT: He gets something from there, because they give you money.

INTERVIEWER: There’s still time to apply for the grants, 14th August 2015. [pause] Okay.

RESPONDENT: That was one of my best...

INTERVIEWER: Do you know we need someone, this is what we’ve been needing...

RESPONDENT: And they’re no longer alive, they’ve been worn out.

INTERVIEWER: We’ve just not had...where’s this from?

RESPONDENT: Me.

INTERVIEWER: But when?

RESPONDENT: It was in the paper, last year.

RESPONDENT: So you can have that.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really handy, yeah, that is, that is really handy.

RESPONDENT: And then there is another one.

INTERVIEWER: And then a little one.

RESPONDENT: This is, when I say, I was well-educated.

INTERVIEWER: So this is you, this is you using The Press as a way of sharing your...

RESPONDENT: Exactly. And getting the news around. Because what I’ve been told at Christmas, they said, ‘Has she died? Because we love her letters, because she’s direct and she writes a good letter.’ And the editorials phoned me and they said, ‘Are you okay Martha? Because we haven’t had any letters from you lately.’ Well I had to turn round and I was crying and I said, ‘I can’t write anymore.’ And now I’ve started to write very slowly and as I go along I do it...

INTERVIEWER: You know that these days you can get technology that writes it for you. I’m trying to sort it out myself.

RESPONDENT: I know. Now that one, aircraft plotting, I was in Royal Observer Corps, I got my medal, I’m a veteran. And that’s the very latest, that’s been in this week and that’s me finished.

INTERVIEWER: And that’s you finished for now. Oh, right, yes, so you’ve made your point about the carousel.

RESPONDENT: Definitely.

INTERVIEWER: Which is what you mentioned to me.

RESPONDENT: Why should we go up the Eye of York just to help the visitors to come to York? Why can’t we stay where we are? It’s tradition. They’ve got everything else off us. We need our roots.
INTERVIEWER: Well this gets me to the last question. My last theme, that’s so organised of you. My information sheet, that I gave you, which is here, talks about local heritage places. Now, we’ve talked about how much you love the city of York and you know that it’s historic and you feel that your heart is in York. Do you think that that’s part of your heritage then?

RESPONDENT: Yes and proud to have it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And how about Walmgate?

RESPONDENT: Well Walmgate is now coming forward, because we’ve now got a hotel, we’ve got a lot of new shops and since the builders have been here, all the cafes and restaurants are all doing marvellous buildings. And Walmgate is now alive, like it should have been. But before we didn’t have these facilities. We didn’t have universities, we didn’t have flats being built. And now it’s a place to live and be handy – handy for town. We’ve got a good bus service, we can go to Walmgate Bar, go to Scarborough, Bridlington, Hull, you name it. And we come back at night and we’re still back home.

INTERVIEWER: So what would you say your definition of heritage is?

RESPONDENT: Well it’s the history of England.


RESPONDENT: Yeah, you can’t do without York, because our Archbishop has to go to the Palace and he can’t do anything without our Archbishop.

INTERVIEWER: So the heritage in York, what is the heritage in York? For you?

RESPONDENT: For me I’m proud to have been born here. I’m proud to have gone to school here and York, the proper York, is a wonderful place and everybody who comes to York, even tourists now, finds that it’s different. We’ve still got a lot of old ways, but the new ways are strangling us, because there is too much tourism, but we need the money to run the place.

INTERVIEWER: So it’s not really a straightforward...
RESPONDENT: You can't do both. It's the modern day is killing York, the modern way that things...we've got four universities, we didn't have any when I was a child, they only came later. But St Clive's is my favourite, because my photograph from my family in Australia are in their museum and if you go to the, I think I told you, the archives, my family from Australia went from York to Australia and I've got the picture postcards that they gave to me when I was there, and that was my family history and I brought them back to York.

RESPONDENT: So you shared some of your...

INTERVIEWER: They're in the archives, and they're all hand-painted and they've all gone back with my daughter, so her children will have them. Because my fore uncles, my father's uncles, all went out as boy soldiers, volunteered, and they were in the army as boy volunteers for the First World War and when I went they sent and paid for me to go and see them and I went 3,000 miles, I went from Sydney to Rockhampton, Rockhampton to Brisbane, Brisbane, all that area, met that side of the family and they were latter day saints and I didn’t know that they were that way. But when I went I went with Easter eggs and she had 28 grandchildren, and now she has 36, because they are the sort of people, that's the life they lead. And I was made welcome. And then when I come to the other side, I've written a book, I've got a book already written about my experiences. But it's all in the archives. And Mr John Moore, he was the person that did this book and he wrote it and it took him three years and he orientated it all and it's all in the library at the archives at St John's university.

INTERVIEWER: So that's a way of you sharing information about your life.

RESPONDENT: So my grandchildren now...

INTERVIEWER: And because of that you really like that museum.

RESPONDENT: That's right. And it's York because my father played rugby for York St John's when it was a rugby, not a university, he went to that school and he was born down that way, Laycock way. So it all goes back and it all– It took me three years to write that book and it took him five to put it together. And I've sent all the original postcards, they've just taken them back home. So my grandchildren will see where their roots are from.
INTERVIEWER: I like postcards. Okay, I think...

RESPONDENT: I don’t think you’ll meet anybody else like me, will you?

INTERVIEWER: [laughing] I meet a lot, I mean I’ve met a lot of people in York and...

RESPONDENT: But we like tourism, don’t get me wrong, but our roots are here, because York is an important thing. In London they can’t do nothing without us in York. Our Archbishop is equal to the Queen...every time the Queen comes here, she has to open Micklegate Bar and she has to be given permission to come through the archway. And yet she’s the Queen of England, did you know that?

INTERVIEWER: I didn’t know that.

RESPONDENT: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Well, there you go. Right, I’m going to stop the...

END OF TRANSCRIPT
INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, to start off, can I ask you to give your account of how we know each other?

RESPONDENT: Okay. From me living on the estate and I don’t know how I missed it, but last year I know that you told me there had been lots of leaflets dropped out in the past, but I didn’t see anything until probably just before Christmas I think it was. And at the bottom of my stairs there was a leaflet about the Red Tower. And I thought, ‘Okay, it’s an open day this weekend.’ So I came and had a look. And that’s how I met you.

INTERVIEWER: So did you come on the December…

RESPONDENT: I did.

INTERVIEWER: …Christmas event?

RESPONDENT: It was…well I’m saying it was on the December Christmas event. I think it must have been, but there was you and there somebody else, but it was really cold and quite wet.

INTERVIEWER: It was Jonathan there.

RESPONDENT: I think he was, yes.

INTERVIEWER: It’s going back quite a bit, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And then we sort of, as far as my memory of course…

RESPONDENT: And I think you introduced me to the Red Tower and the information and you gave your contact details on the form you’d just given me. And then we stayed in contact from then. And then, just, I think it was after the floods, I think you might have seen me once in town, because I was like, ‘I recognise you, but where do I recognise you from?’ And then I saw...
you just after the floods. And you were with a colleague and then you were heading towards the Red Tower.

INTERVIEWER: Was that was when I stood outside the city walls?

RESPONDENT: You were actually... I was stood outside my flat talking to somebody and you were heading towards and I said, 'I'd really, really like to meet.'

INTERVIEWER: Jonathan. And that’s...yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So these are the names that I’d seen on Facebook, through all the flood help, but I've actually never met them. And I think Matt was another one, but I can’t remember whether Matt was there that day. But again, that's how I've been introduced to Matt too.

INTERVIEWER: And I think it really turned up that day as well.

RESPONDENT: Yes, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And I’ve remembered who it was I was with. It was somebody from St. John’s. So, it’s come up through the conversation that you are definitely a resident of York and a resident of the estate, which is obviously at Red Tower.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You agree with that. So, at the current time– I mean you’re spending– My next question is, is there a place in York in which you want to be in or spend a lot time in? And my next question is, at the current time, is there a place you spend a lot of time in?

RESPONDENT: At the Red Tower.

INTERVIEWER: Wait, your home?

RESPONDENT: I spend a lot of time at home. Are you asking me where about else I spend– I meet friends in places like here.

INTERVIEWER: Which is the...
RESPONDENT: The big– The [unclear – 0:02:50.3]. I’m not sure...

INTERVIEWER: Dumas Café.

RESPONDENT: …which I’m not sure. And then the Fossegate socials are another place that we meet up. And I haven’t done recently, but just prior to the end of the last year, I spent a lot of time at Kyra Women’s Project in York, which has been really great and really supportive.

Ever since I’ve gotten involved with the Red Tower, everything seems to fall on the days that would have been the Kyra thing and this has taken hold of my heart.

INTERVIEWER: That’s fair enough. Okay, so Red Tower is coming through as the place that is really important to you.

RESPONDENT: Yes. Yeah, totally.

INTERVIEWER: And has taken a part of you.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: I’d like to know what your intentions are for the Red Tower.

RESPONDENT: For the Red Tower, I’ve actually put my name if I were to become a trustee. I would love to work in there, but I don’t know what jobs would be available. So that would be a case of if a job came up and then I wouldn’t be able to be a trustee, which would be nice, because I’d like to work and be a part of my community and that to me is part of my community. Well if that’s the difference between not being as involved and being really involved, then I’d rather just stay as a trustee. And it feels like there’s a lot that’s coming together all at once, and it probably isn’t for yourself, because you’ve spent a lot of time on the Red Tower.

But for me, being all year round, for like a quarter of a year really, there’s now Edible York that have come onto the estate. They’ve started planting. They’re involved with the residents. There’s the wall that’s going to be opened up on the Red Tower, which I think we will be inviting to the residents. And I’d like to be involved with the Red Tower and the residents. So for me, it’s an integral part of the community.
INTERVIEWER: When you say that it might not seem that a lot is happening in my eyes and I think that I would probably agree that there is a lot happening. So yeah, I definitely agree that there are all of those things; Edible York, the move for the wall to be taken out. Actually, shall we talk about the wall a little bit more?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Why is that important to you as a part of the project?

RESPONDENT: There are probably a couple of reasons for me. The fact that the wall goes all the way around the Red Tower where the estate part is. So the wall finishes and then it goes all the way round. And then there’s a– If I say a snicket-way, or a gunnel or a cut-through. I’m not quite sure what language people use. For me, because of my limited mobility, I have to walk all the way around and then back round. So it’s not far, but it’s all extra movement for me, which can be a strain. Also, I don’t think it’s as inviting, whereas if...when the wall has actually got up halfway through and it’s got a gateway, I think people are more likely to come in from the estate, because it’s almost like the only entrance is from [unclear – 0:05:46.3]. And it’s not that people on the estate know that that’s an entrance. So I’m not sure that people are really aware of how easy it is to get to. So there’s a lot of people who climb out over the wall. And since I’ve out that obviously– It’s a beautiful, old...brickwork and everything. It’s stone masonry. It’s not part of the original wall. So it’s like, come on then, let’s open it up.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, so are you saying that potentially when you didn’t know that it wasn’t original, that there was maybe a concern there?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I think I would have been wearier rather than I wouldn’t want it to happen, but I would have liked to know more details, because for me, it’s a lot of pieces of stone masonry from around and about, and it’s been added. And obviously if I knew more about the history, these are the sorts of things that I’ve found out. For me, it’s important that it stays within York or becomes part of York. And open up and become part of a huge community, because for me, I’ve lived there for nearly four years and I’ve known some of my neighbours to smile at and a couple of my local neighbours in the block that I live in and I know them all to talk to. And the
people further afield, just a smile and a hello, how are you. Since the floods, I’ve got people I’ve been talking to, people stop me in the street. I’ve had the council...estate manager ringing me, saying, ‘Do you want to come and pick the blankets up Jess, because we’re closing the hub down on Friday?’ So I feel like I’ve become a part of that. And I’d like other people to stay in that. That we don’t lose people going back into their little square blocks and hide away again. I’d really like that community spirit to stay. And I’ve noticed since people have come back, it’s almost gotten quieter with more people, because not as many people are talking.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting. Okay.

RESPONDENT: So for me, that hole opening it up and keeping the momentum going while there’s still that real community spirit, would not be just opening up a brick wall, it would be opening up the Red Tower.

INTERVIEWER: When you say people going back into their boxes. The blocks, sorry.

RESPONDENT: As in homes. Yeah, it is their boxes, their little square boxes.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think...could you elaborate more on that?

RESPONDENT: I’m not sure. I’ve been trying to think about it, because as you know, because you’ve seen the devastation, a lot of people have moved out. A lot of people that even stayed in the flats were living in horrendous situations. So there was a lot of people who were out of their flats quite a lot of the time. So there was just a car of people that were left. So there was lot of people that were really chatty and would spend time talking on the street. And somehow it seems to be that now that people are moving back in that...maybe those people that haven’t been there, haven’t seen that side of the community, because they’ve not been there, that they’ve come in and although there’s more people as I said, the doors are shut. So they’re not out chatting to people or whether they just– Because I know there’s a lot of people that have had enough, and they’re just sick to death of everything that has gone on. They feel let down by the council and other things that have gone on around it. So whether people have just had enough and they’ve shut themselves away. I’m not sure. But I just know that I have seen a lot more people, but they’re not outside as often.
INTERVIEWER: Can we go back to how you said that before the floods, can you remember what it was like being in the estate then?

RESPONDENT: Well, as I said, my corner, I know everybody in my corner and we’ve all got on well. I was introduced to them the first week I was there, which was really nice. Barring one person, there’s been a lot of the same people have stayed there. So we’d always get chatting and I’m in a real community corner, which is really nice. And we used to go out and hang clothes and things like that. But if I said, ‘Hello,’ to people, they’d smile and walk away. And it wasn’t that it was impolite. They’re doing their life, I’m doing my life working full-time, get out of my flat, into my car, go to work, come home twelve and a half hours, thirteen, fourteen hours later, back into my flat, go to sleep, get up the next day.

And it’s that constant momentum of life that was happening, and it wasn’t awful, but it’s just so noticeably different. And I’ve watched this family opposite me. And in these foyers, I’ve been there, I’ve seen them carrying their baby and he’s now a little toddler, and he’s now going to school. And I’ve only ever said, ‘Hello,’ but since the floods, we’ve chatted, ‘How is your car?’ They’d got theirs in a garage. So theirs is alright. I lost my car. But we’ve chatted about it. And it’s just opened it up. So I think if it’s probably— I mean, I know I talk to people anyway, but I think it’s probably happened for a lot of people. And Facebook. That was the other thing that’s opened it up. I think because I didn’t know people’s names, but since the Facebook Flood Victims page, I’ve seen people’s names and faces. So I now know, not necessarily which flat people live in, but I know that they are part of my estate. And like this one guy who’s got dogs who has a stick who’s used to struggle with them, and now I can stop and go, ‘Now then, how are you?’ And actually call him by his name. And I’ve seen other people dog-walking. And I know the faces again and say, ‘Hi,’ but I can actually say, ‘Hi,’ and then say people’s names and it’s opened up conversations. And I’ve even got my neighbours on my Facebook page now.

INTERVIEWER: You’ve actually— My next sort of question: I sometimes sort of pick questions as they fall into the natural order as we talk. Communication and media. You’ve identified two things. The leaflets and Facebook as...the leaflets first being brought your
attention to the Red Tower and Facebook as being what's bringing your attention to the
different people in your estate.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So my question is— So you regularly use— How regularly did you use the
Facebook page?

RESPONDENT: Before the floods hit, I'd taken Facebook, emails, everything off my phone,
but that was because I wasn't really well and I was really struggling and I couldn't cope with the
devastating news that kept popping up like France and bombings and all that sort. And it was
just distressing me. So I took it all off. But when the floods hit, I just thought, I don't have a telly,
so I thought I'll go and have a look and see if there's anything on the page. So I looked from my
computer and then I was hooked to it for days. So I literally now...I don't look as often and I
know that there are other people that don't look as often, but it's been an integral part of me
knowing where to go next, being able to pass information on to people that are not on
Facebook on the estate, my neighbours that don't even know what the internet is. So now I'm
on there every day and I have put it back on my phone, but I don't necessarily look at it every
day. But other than from the 27th, 26th...so it was 27th of December probably through to even
January, February I was looking at it very, very regularly to see what was going on.

INTERVIEWER: And you mentioned that just seeing people's pictures with their names—
Can you talk a bit more about that? It's quite...

RESPONDENT: Well, because I've lived there for four years, I've known a lot of the faces,
that I've said a little hello to, but I've never actually gone and spoken to the person. But now it's
like, even through— I don't know, it feels like it's an integral part of the Red Tower and Facebook.
But I've met a lot more people and then I can go and feel confident in going up and going, 'Hi,
I'm Jess. I live on the same estate as you.' And that's opened the lines of communication to the
point of when— I think I was introduced to him— That was it, I was on Facebook whilst I was
flooded in and this lady private messaged me and said, 'From looking from the photos that
you've taken of your house, I think you live in the flat opposite me, could you please tell me if
my flat is flooded?'

INTERVIEWER: Wow, okay.

RESPONDENT: So I contacted her and I said, 'I'm really sorry, but it looks like the whole of
the estate on the ground floor has been flooded. Are you safe? Are you okay?' So we do
communicate now. Then Emma came to...the weekend that she came to the Red Tower and
dropped everything off and we were with the LDS Church I think they were going the bags and
everything out, Emma pointed it out that actually, 'People don’t know who you are Jess, because
you’ve not got a picture of you on your Facebook page.' I had a picture of candles.

INTERVIEWER: Oh right, okay.

RESPONDENT: And she said, 'It would be really nice if people could see you.' And then I
didn’t actually realize consciously at that point I’d been looking at people’s pictures to see if I
knew them. So since then, I’ve put my picture on my page, so that when people see me, they
can see who I am. So it works both ways.

INTERVIEWER: Wow, that’s interesting. Thinking about Red Tower, because the Red Tower has a
Facebook page, how...do you use that often? The page. I know that– Yeah, sorry.

RESPONDENT: For me, it’s a case of yourself and Jonathan pointing me in the right
direction of them and introducing me to one of the pages that I think was a closed page.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And because I now have the connections and I’m regularly in contact with
people on the Red Tower, the feed comes up. So I might look at it more often than I would have
done before, but I’m not one of these people that think, 'I must look at that page.' It’s more of
the feed that comes up.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I see. For me, I personally never, ever use feeds anymore.

RESPONDENT: Right, okay.
INTERVIEWER: I completely avoid it. Yes.

RESPONDENT: I'm such a terror at forgetting that I know of pages...that I have pages on my...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Because I've had that many friends over the years that have been self-employed. And you like people's pages and they like your pages and then you end up with all these pages that actually I'm never going to look at again. And I don't know enough about Facebook to filter them, which is another story.

INTERVIEWER: I think you can just exit. Like if you see a post from a page on your feed, you can actually hover over it and get an X and then turn off notifications from this feed or something.

RESPONDENT: That's helpful. But now there's a new bit that comes up with my top– I've put my favourite groups in my favourite bin. So Red Tower is in there.

INTERVIEWER: Great. So the other thing was the leaflets. So that was pretty integral to getting you notified about Red Tower. Is there anything else in terms of the Red– I'm very keen to have feedback on how the Red Tower's communications, other than Facebook, have been doing. I don't know if you have any more impressions on that.

RESPONDENT: I don't know how you would have done it differently. I don't know how I would have spotted it any differently to be honest with you, because even though it's on my estate, I don't use that exit. I always use the other exit. So I would never have probably spotted– As much as I love history, I've obviously spent nearly a year not seeing you. But I know that again another part of introducing myself to other people on the estate was when we went around and I just...I was just with you when you were doing the questions.

INTERVIEWER: The door-knocking.

RESPONDENT: The questionnaire. So I met some faces that I've never met actually before, because they'll obviously go out the other side of the estate through their front–
Because all of our front doors face outwards. So if they don’t come out the back door, I wouldn’t– Some of those faces I’d never seen before. So I’m not sure that– What were you saying about how to communicate differently?

INTERVIEWER: Well I guess I’m just reflecting on our use of leaflets and leafletting. We’ve put a couple of posters up as well around. Stuck them on lampposts. I’m just wondering if they’ve been seen.

RESPONDENT: I don’t remember seeing any of them.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. What do you think therefore of the notice board outside Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: I think I’m a bit biased because I know it’s there now.

INTERVIEWER: Potentially. Yeah, I see what you’re saying.

RESPONDENT: So I know it’s there. So I know that I can go and look at it. But I think where it’s positioned from the estate side of things, it’s noticeable because it’s right next to the path.

INTERVIEWER: If people are using that path.

RESPONDENT: Yes. Whereas our notice board for our part of the estate is outside– You know where I live, just that corner, there’s a notice board there that’s behind the compost bin, but it’s behind a wall.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve put a couple of posters in there.

RESPONDENT: But as you’re walking you can’t see it.

INTERVIEWER: How many people walk past that way do you think?

RESPONDENT: I think there’s probably a lot more tourists walk around that way and students walk around that way, but how many people would notice it, I don’t know, because it’s not even allowed to be noticed, if that makes sense as a notice board.
INTERVIEWER: Why do you say that?

RESPONDENT: Because of where it’s positioned. I know it’s there, but I often forget to look at it.

INTERVIEWER: Just as you’re walking past that...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that’s interesting.

RESPONDENT: And a lot of people do cars. So a lot of people go out of the flat, into the car, go do their thing.

INTERVIEWER: So you wouldn’t notice it in the car, would you?

RESPONDENT: No, not at all.

INTERVIEWER: And there’s another notice board up near Margaret’s terrace.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It’s one of the staff, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yes it is, but again unless you walk that way, because they’re all on corners, which I would imagine is probably the better place to put them, but they’ve put them on corners that are almost hidden.

INTERVIEWER: Cool.

RESPONDENT: Because the other thing I can now start doing is I can put things on the...lease up for residents Facebook page, which is great, but there’s only so many residents and I can’t invite people, because I don’t know who the people are. So we’ve got the people that
I know of. There’s a lady on the estate who’s introduced a few people, but if they’re like me, reliant on feeds, then it doesn’t happen very often.

INTERVIEWER: How many are there on that Facebook page?

RESPONDENT: I think there’s only something like...I’m not sure, but I think it was something like fifteen, twenty.

INTERVIEWER: And there’s about 100 flats, isn’t there?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. There’s a few more than that, but then you think that there’s potentially a few people that are older that don’t necessarily...I’m not saying that that’s the case just because they’re older that they don’t use internet, but I know a couple of people that don’t use the internet, that don’t use Facebook.

INTERVIEWER: No, I’ve come across that a number of times actually, with a number of people. Not necessarily all the same age range as well.

RESPONDENT: No, I was going to say, I’ve known other people in different age groups for other reasons who’ve wanted their security maintained that don’t have Facebook pages.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, we’ve actually whizzed through...so we’ve whizzed through my questions, which is really great and without even been necessarily prompted. Do you...what are your overall concerns for the Rosemary Place Navigation Road Estate and the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: My concerns...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ...are that if the momentum is not kept up, it will just become a nothing and it will go back to the little rectangular boxes that people live in. And that worries me because I think it’s sad that people then become isolated again. And I think there’s a lot of isolation in cities. And it’s not always easy for people to get assistance. Well half the time, people don’t know who to ask, but if there’s a...like the Red Tower there, then even if...say for instance, I was involved and I don’t know, then I might know somebody that does know. So that
people don’t get lost. Because there are people that are house-bound on the estate or they only come out at certain times, sort of things. So I don’t want people to get lost again.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the Red Tower– Do you have concerns for the Red Tower as a building? That’s not a trick question, I’m just...

RESPONDENT: No, no, I’m actually thinking, because I’m thinking if the momentum stays as it’s been with the group coming together and becoming the trustees and Tim’s involvement, then I think it will continue, but it’s like everything, it the momentum doesn’t stay, then people will end up, not necessarily falling out, but falling off, if that makes sense. So I would like to feel that that 30 year lease will be used for 30 years plus. And I want to be able to say to my grandkids if ever eventually, I was involved in part of the setting that up and there was all these different people who did it before me.

INTERVIEWER: That’s a lovely thought, memory of sorts.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, it’s history and I think it could potentially become a part of our history, not just part of York’s history. And that’s for me. So I don’t want it to fall...like be any concerns and it falling apart or anything like that. Because from what I’ve seen at the meetings as well, there’s potential for a lot of funding especially in the early waves. And from– John updated you on the meeting with the tin-lid.

INTERVIEWER: Can you explain that for the purposes of this interview? Just very briefly.

RESPONDENT: The tin has a lid. The lid becomes the steering group. The tin is actually the £36,000 that the conservation of volunteers that the guy has. And he’s only allowed to release £2,000 at any one time on his own. But if the tin-lid group sets up, which is a steering group of people in that area, that live in the area...now the area is a fairly big area...he said that there are...his counterparts in different parts of the country that have only got three streets, but his is east Town Hall, Guildhall, that area.

So there are two parts. There’s Town Hall and then there’s Navigation Road Guildhall. But anybody who lives in that area or works in the area can be involved in the steering group, they
can release the funds. So as long as they meet and they agree to these forms that obviously
need to be filled in for applications. He’s already released £6,000, but there’s still £30,000 which
needs to be spent before December. Not necessarily spent, but allocated. So the steering group
has to be the one that allows that much money to be released. So at the moment, there’s
myself, there’s Emma who works in the area, I’ve conned Ashley Ray into joining, bless her. I did
explain what it was about and I did say it might only be one meeting, because it might be that
the Red Tower gets the full whack, if need be. Do you know what I mean? So it won’t be meeting
very often, but that steering group has to be there and all the background work that you did
with your questions and answer sessions and that’s all part of the basis of how this group can
actually become set up because that’s part of what the locals are interested in. And that’s
basically what the tin-lid is.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that’s my understanding from John’s account [unclear – 0:27:03.7].

RESPONDENT: The fact that we are also Red Tower people, apparently he’s checked it
out and that doesn’t matter, because we are residents. It’s not about the Red Tower, because
somebody might come in from some other group and say, ‘Well actually we want six grand
for…please can we have it?’ And we might go, ‘Yeah, nothing to do with the Red Tower, but it’s
to do with our group.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And Ashley Ray for the purposes of this interview, is your daughter?

RESPONDENT: Yes. But also John’s got– Because John’s catchment area where he lives
isn’t– John Cosham, John compost. He’s not within the catchment area. Hall Road isn’t in that
area.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: But he’s spoken to a few people that are going to become involved from
that area as well.

INTERVIEWER: It’s about areas, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: Yes and Ed did show us the actual map. He has the map to...
INTERVIEWER: He showed me that map as well. I’m quite interested by that. Okay. And obviously the money is significant for the Red Tower. Can you explain your understanding–I know this is kind of going at stuff that I know…we both know it, but can you explain why that money needs to go to the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: At the moment, the Red Tower is a historical monument. I don’t know…

INTERVIEWER: A scheduled ancient monument is the word, the technical term.

RESPONDENT: Thank you. I knew you knew the title. I’m a completely layperson on this, but to me it’s a beautiful old building, that needs a lot of work doing to it. And we haven’t even got the utilities. We’ve not got water going in, we’ve not got gas and electricity. So that needs to be got, but in the interim of all that there’s a lady, Shahida, that we would like–because she’s amazing and again I don’t know what her title is. I can’t remember it off the top of my head, but she’s an integral part of keeping us focused and, not pointing us in the right direction, but informing us with information that’s appropriate to us being able to choose. And that all costs. So £30,000 sounds like a lot of money, but in actual fact, it’s not going to go very far at all.

INTERVIEWER: That’s my understanding as well.

RESPONDENT: That’s my understanding.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And Lilac’s explained a few things to me where I’ve gone…I think the way I understand is that the process of doing applications and putting utilities in…and by the way I understand that the council would be...

RESPONDENT: The council are up for putting the money forward, although it’s £2,000 more than expected. So that’s going to some committee in the council on the, is it the 28th?

INTERVIEWER: Is that when it’s...

RESPONDENT: That’s the executive. It’s going to be executive. Again not really sure, but I know it needs to be gone through and that’s where they’re going to say yay or nay, but from what Lilac’s told us within the group structure is that they’re very, very excited to be part involved to pay the way.
INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: That's without putting in any actual thing in. So then we've got all the architect's beautiful designs to go in and that's all to be paid for.

INTERVIEWER: And in terms of the Red Tower's history, I've been working on sort of a plan on how its history can be presented.

RESPONDENT: Well that's good.

INTERVIEWER: I don't know if you knew that actually. I mean Tash and I have been working on some ideas.

RESPONDENT: Fantastic. No. Is that to be put up at the workshop for the children, as well as?

INTERVIEWER: Is there a workshop for children?

RESPONDENT: It was a potential for children from local schools coming to find out the history.

INTERVIEWER: Well, yeah, I mean, all potential. That idea, is that coming from the meeting in March?

RESPONDENT: That one that we had back at friends meeting house.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, the big one.

RESPONDENT: The school teacher.

INTERVIEWER: With the teacher coming in. Potentially. And there are potentially some other things that I will explain to you after the interview.

RESPONDENT: Right, okay, got you.

INTERVIEWER: But basically there's loads of different opportunities for the Red Tower's presentation to be helped by local groups like students and children. And that might become more– I don't have anything solid yet, but the students– I've got three students from York St
Johns who said that they want to be social media management for the Red Tower and they’re hopefully going to help us get the message out...

RESPONDENT: Brilliant.

INTERVIEWER: ...about the Red Tower a bit more.

RESPONDENT: I know there’s mention of a logo as well, isn’t there?

INTERVIEWER: There is also mention of a logo as well, at the last three meetings I think we’ve had. And that’s I believe forthcoming, they’ve got some preliminary designs they’ve put forward to Amelda and Carol and now they’re working on them.

RESPONDENT: Great. Good.

INTERVIEWER: And early sort of cat out of the bag, a little bit, a little cat tail out of the bag is that one of the logos is a brick or has a brick logo engraved in it. So that will be quite interesting.

RESPONDENT: Great.

INTERVIEWER: So I’m going to wrap up actually.

RESPONDENT: Great.

INTERVIEWER: So my last question is, what is your definition of heritage?

RESPONDENT: Now that’s...

INTERVIEWER: I ask everyone this...it’s like...

RESPONDENT: Honestly, I don’t know what the true meaning of heritage is. But for me, it’s about the history being shared and made– I don’t even know whether that it’s made accessible to people, but I would like to feel that that’s a part of it, that it’s made accessible to people to see rather than locked away and forgotten about.
RESPONDENT: I've never really thought about it to be honest with you, but I'll bet I'll have thought of a different answer tonight.

INTERVIEWER: If you do, do send it over, I'll happily work that in.

RESPONDENT: Brilliant, thank you.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I just love the fact that the modern is coming into the old. So maybe that's a part of it, I'm not sure. What is the definition in terms of your...

RESPONDENT: There's a lot of— There's people who write whole chapters on it and I'm going to have to answer it as well. And there's also— When you say the modern coming into the old, what are you thinking about? What's in there?

INTERVIEWER: Well for me, 2016 community space that was actually...that's coming into a building that is set up as a protection. So it wasn't all about community— I mean in the essence I suppose it was community space because somebody had to stay somewhere, but I can't imagine that that's what it was thought of back in the day, when they built it that all these years and years later that the local community, which was a swamp then would have buildings on it and people would be maybe using it as a place to share information.

RESPONDENT: You are talking about Red Tower, right?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Otherwise, heritage-wise, I've always loved history, but again I don't know...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. That's great. Thank you Helen.

RESPONDENT: You're very welcome.

INTERVIEWER: I'm going to stop it there.

RESPONDENT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: That's great. 35 minutes. Cool. Thank you very much. END OF TRANSCRIPT
INTERVIEWER: Can you start by telling me who you are and how we have met?

RESPONDENT 1: I’m Isabel, we met when you were setting up at the Red Tower and we offered you a big plastic table and some wooden chairs, because we had an allotment garden and we were giving it up. That was how we first met wasn’t it?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, that was about right and I think that plastic chairs and table did actually make it through the floods.

RESPONDENT 1: Did it?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT 1: I think now we have upgraded them, one of the guys said, ‘Oh we don’t need these anymore.’

INTERVIEWER: So you agree that you are a resident of the estate opposite Red Tower.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: You spend a lot of time on this estate, because you live here.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Given that you have seen the Red Tower developing and you have seen what has happened with the floods, I would like to ask whether you have any concerns for this particular area, the estate and the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT 1: We were quite surprised because we have lived here 25 years and all the time we have been here, water has come halfway up the street but never flooded or even closed us all completely, but that was because they had opened the flood gates. Because we hadn’t really been told all of the severity, the impact it was going to have. We didn’t realise what a big impact it was going to have.

INTERVIEWER: In 25 years you have never seen anything like that?

RESPONDENT 1: No, because my husband long before we ever got married and everything and lived here, you used to work over at the council didn’t you?

RESPONDENT 2: When council yard was over on Foss Islands, I did yes. That was the only time I have ever seen it flooded and that was 1981.

RESPONDENT 1: It used to flood Foss Islands.
RESPONDENT 2: It used to flood Foss Islands Road there, but that is the last time up to the previous one I have ever seen it flood that much before.

RESPONDENT 1: It has never come and surrounded all this has it?

RESPONDENT 2: No.

INTERVIEWER: Since the floods, have you noticed anything different about the area in general?

RESPONDENT 1: Just trying to get their lives back together and just all workmen and things like that. It has had such a big impact and it has taken so so long for people. Our neighbour down at the bottom, he has only just come back last Saturday.

RESPONDENT 2: Since Boxing Day.

RESPONDENT 1: He got taken out Boxing Day night when it all happened, and he has not come back into his premises until last Saturday.

INTERVIEWER: So that is four months.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes.

RESPONDENT 2: Just nearly four months it is, yes.

RESPONDENT 1: Because of his age, in that time not seeing him it was like a bereavement really because you are thinking, it is like he has passed on and you have not seen him because he had to stay up at his sisters. It has been a big impact on him, being away and he says, 'I am so pleased to be back in my own little space,' which you wouldn't you? After such a long time.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of before the floods, we were talking before the recorder went on about changes you have seen to the area and how you have seen living here. Can we go back to that again?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, when we first moved here, just straight over the road where the pylon towers are for electricity. That was just a little newsagent, it was called, Grey’s Newsagents and on a Sunday all the people that used to come for all their Sunday papers and magazines to distribute all over York and everything else. There was Pullmans Coach further up wasn’t there?

RESPONDENT 2: Yes.

RESPONDENT 1: All the coaches, and you see all of that has all gone and now it is being built into student accommodation. Then this was going to be an office block over here, but then they decided to sell it on to St Johns, so it never became an office block and now it is just their electricity main little hub.

INTERVIEWER: I am going to have a quick look and see where you are talking about.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, that little building there it is like a little electricity hut.
INTERVIEWER: I can see two little huts.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, that one was there but then they built this one, I think it was all for student accommodation and then that big building the Student Castle over there used to be the Evening Press.

RESPONDENT 2: That building there, whilst we have been here we have seen the Evening Press get built and get brought down in the same time we have been here. Now they have got Student Castle there now in place.

INTERVIEWER: Can I take photos of you?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, of course you can.

INTERVIEWER: It will help with going back through the interview and knowing.

RESPONDENT 1: This is the car park belonging to Rowntrees Wharf, because that used to be for Rowntrees for the factory where they kept all the beans that came down the river and then they turned it all into flats and offices. Now just over there they are building new housing, Hungate Housing. They were going to turn that into a chocolate museum when we first came and they had put a new little street map for people to get, and everybody who said, 'we are looking for the chocolate museum,' and we said, 'there isn’t one.' They put a walkway along for people to walk on and then it never materialised.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting, now they have the chocolate museum attraction in the middle of York.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, but they were going to actually do it there, and put it on a map. We never actually got one did we, but it would have been nice to have got that little map saying, 'The Chocolate Museum,' which never became a chocolate museum.

INTERVIEWER: So where did they get that map from?

RESPONDENT 1: I don’t know if we had information kiosks and things or those little street map things, I don’t know if we had them.

INTERVIEWER: What sort of year was this? I am interested to try and track this map down.

RESPONDENT 1: It was about 25 years ago, so what is that?

RESPONDENT 2: 1990 wasn’t it?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, about 1990.

INTERVIEWER: I will have to check that out. How interesting. Before the recorder was on you also said that you could see the Minster and Clifford’s Tower.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, you could sit here and you could...
RESPONDENT 2: ...I have taken many photos of the Minster when it was lit up.

RESPONDENT 1: If you look from there straight that way, York Minster used to be over there, but now because of all this being built you can’t see it. Before Student Castle was built you could see Clifford’s Tower.

INTERVIEWER: You said that you used to wave to your friends.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, we used to get the binoculars out and they would have their little binoculars and we would say, ‘give us a wave.’

RESPONDENT 2: What it used to be when I worked, it used to be the tax place and now it is flats the big building. Can’t you see any of it?

RESPONDENT 1: You can’t see it now. Craig used to work at Hilary House, which was a tax office, he used to stand and we used to be able to see his lights go off and then I knew he would be on his way home.

INTERVIEWER: Wow!

RESPONDENT 1: It was quite unusual.

RESPONDENT 2: Can’t you see it?

RESPONDENT 1: No, I can’t see it.

RESPONDENT 2: Oh no you can’t, I used to wave and say, ‘I will be home in ten minutes.’

RESPONDENT 1: It was before this bridge got built, so you used to have to come round on the main road, now we have got the bridge over here and they have got the new building...

INTERVIEWER: ...Hiscox.

RESPONDENT 1: Now we have got all that, I said, ‘Now you would have been home in less than five minutes.’

RESPONDENT 2: Now the bridge is there, yes. That was the biggest of all of what we have seen. The press office was there, we saw it get built, the press office and we used to watch the barge come, because they used to get the barge with rolls of paper, the pulleys used to pulley it up off the barge and roll it into the factory.

RESPONDENT 1: Well your dad worked there, didn’t he?

RESPONDENT 2: My dad worked there yes. We have seen it get knocked down, built and get knocked down, and that get built in place of it.

INTERVIEWER: So when did the press office get knocked down?

RESPONDENT 2: It was only about two years ago wasn’t it?
RESPONDENT 1: Two or three years ago, not that long ago.

RESPONDENT 2: It was all new bricks, that’s why we couldn’t understand why it got knocked down, because we saw it getting built because it wasn’t that old.

RESPONDENT 1: Where that building is there, the front of the students, this one, that was Pullmans Coaches where all the coaches where and everything, and then here straight across from us was just a little prefab thing and it was Grey’s Newsagents. We used to hear it probably on a Sunday, because we were at home on a Sunday morning in bed and like seven o’clock you would hear all the van doors banging and everything, but during the week we were at work, we don’t know if they came during the week do we? But it was only Sunday morning, you thought, ‘Oh, great lie in,’ and you used to hear them all come, and now student accommodation got built.

INTERVIEWER: So what is your opinion about the student accommodation?

RESPONDENT 1: It is nice, but because it is just a small resident’s area, and then you have got all these big buildings, it is like all these now and you are thinking what a big impact it is on such a tiny area.

RESPONDENT 2: What gets us more than anything else, plus a load more I have heard them say is the road, the wagons come up and down this road, so while they were building this lot, big trucks with scaffolding on them, with a crane on. Because this is the only road through.

INTERVIEWER: Are you saying that that would have had an impact?

RESPONDENT 2: Yes, definitely because it was the only road through.

RESPONDENT 1: Since they have had all these building works, they have resurfaced the road twice and then they keep coming and filling all the holes in. But it is because of the heavy loads of traffic and now because they have closed Walmgate Bar and it takes so long to get through, lots of cars now cut down here and use it as a rat run sort of thing.

INTERVIEWER: So you do see quite a lot of traffic?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, of a night if they know they can cut through to go on to Foss Islands they won’t go through the traffic lights at the top of the road. There is the little lane down the new hotel that they have built; they come down there so they don’t have to come down the other street.

RESPONDENT 2: The other big wagons couldn’t come that way; they had to come this way.

RESPONDENT 1: All the wagons, when they were building all of this were all coming up and on to there, because it was the only access way in bringing all the things they needed.
RESPONDENT 1: But, no the cars will cut through, so when it comes to half 4 you can see cars queuing up. It is quite amusing now, because of all the geese wandering around the gardens, they will sit and peep at them and you think, ‘The geese don’t understand the horns.’

INTERVIEWER: I have seen that a number of times in other places as well actually.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, it is quite amusing.

INTERVIEWER: It was very interesting to get an idea of what you have seen from this window. But you have also been out of the other side as well and you have seen what has been happening with Red Tower. I would be interested to know your opinions about Red Tower.

RESPONDENT 1: We are impressed aren’t we?

RESPONDENT 2: I think it is a good idea that, I said years ago do you remember when we used to get our ice-creams there?

RESPONDENT 1: We used to get our ice-creams there.

RESPONDENT 2: There was an ice-cream stall with all the visitors up and down them walls I said it would be a little gold mine didn’t I? A bit after that, that is when you moved in and started doing what you are doing.

INTERVIEWER: Read your mind.

RESPONDENT 1: Tourists, when you go places you like to see everything and just even if you have cold fridges just to get a cold can of pop, a bottle of water. You always think, ‘Oh, where is the shop?’ or you get too involved in what you are looking at that you don’t think and then you think, ‘Oh, I will just pick something up.’

INTERVIEWER: From my experience being at the Red Tower is as soon as you open the Red Tower door people are walking in off the walls. Do you think that there is any interest for the resident side of things?

RESPONDENT 1: Now because there are more younger people moving in to the area, they might start using it for meetings or things like that, a little social hub. But because people’s lifestyles and things like that you would think they would use it and then sometimes they don’t. I am thinking when we were both working we wouldn’t have had time, but now more parents are at home with their little children and more young ones are moving in. So if it was revamped the probably people would use it.

INTERVIEWER: So young people might use it.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, if they are at home with their children and if they put a few more things on at the park thing that they had. When we were down here there was only Alex and he was eight and nine and then we had Sophie in 1993 and then there was Sharon with Paul and
Laura, Laura is the same age as my daughter. We were the only ones with kiddies because everybody else was old and they would say, ‘Oh, kids,’ and it was like when I would pick her up from school and then she would ride her bike and all of the oldies got to know us and knew that we weren’t the first humans with children thinking, ‘Oh, big impact.’ Then you got to know them all and now over the years, because they have all passed away or moved into homes, and you think how it has changed.

INTERVIEWER: That is really interesting.

RESPONDENT 1: We were young then and now we are probably old ones, that is what we are seeing.

RESPONDENT 2: The years we have been here, and the only people we never saw going in and out of the Red Tower were council, and I have often wondered myself, ‘What is in there?’ We just thought it was a warehouse for the council. I have seen tourists walk by there and they have that little plaque to read and then they are away, they have got nothing else to do. We have seen in their minds, they are wondering what all of this was about this red building. So by it being open, I think it is a good thing.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, it is giving them more of an insight, like you said the council used to just keep some machinery in there, didn’t they?

INTERVIEWER: It was basically like you say a warehouse, a shed and now it has got tables with tablecloths in.

RESPONDENT 2: When you were walking over this bridge, the tourists that have got lost because they have come down the river and walked in a straight line, the first thing they say, ‘Could you tell us where the Red Tower is?’ That is the first thing, so we just say, ‘Go up here, turn left, straight down.’ We have told loads.

RESPONDENT 1: Because on their maps it will say, ‘follow the river,’ then they would just carry on walking, and then they would get to here, come and look and there aren’t any signs or anything. So they stand on that corner and sometimes you feel like going, ‘it’s that way!’

INTERVIEWER: I am going to take a photo, so that sign there by the carpark doesn’t have...

RESPONDENT 1: ...It doesn’t say, ‘Red Tower.’

INTERVIEWER: It doesn’t say, ‘Red Tower.’

RESPONDENT 1: Everybody always stands at the bottom of this bit here and thinks, ‘Well where do we go from here?’ There aren’t any signposts, no nothing.

INTERVIEWER: There you go.

RESPONDENT 2: You would think there would be wouldn’t you?
RESPONDENT 1: Yes, then if they decide to walk along this bit at the end of this road here there is a little tiny plaque and it says, ‘City Walls.’ You just see them and you feel like saying, ‘It is that way.’

RESPONDENT 2: A couple of months back, where you there when they showed us that film? They had a film on in there of all of York in black and white.

INTERVIEWER: Was that the 50 Years of York one? I wasn’t there that day.

RESPONDENT 2: I sat and watched that because that was of interest to me, like I said to you earlier on, I was useless but I loved history, I still do. I said to you, ‘I would love to see that.’ She and I went straightaway to watch it, it was brilliant.

RESPONDENT 1: It was a good night. So doing things like that, if they had say once a month or once every couple of months and then lots of people would probably come.

RESPONDENT 2: I think all these would come; they would if they knew at the time.

RESPONDENT 1: A social evening to sit and reminisce, say a fifteen/twenty-minute slot showing say one part of York and then having a little talk and everybody could reminisce, I think it would be really nice for us oldies.

RESPONDENT 2: It was interesting that, it was to me and you enjoyed it.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, even tourists would probably even really enjoy that and sort of like thinking, ‘can you imagine living there and doing this and that.’

INTERVIEWER: I don’t know if you know Jonathan, he is our sort of handyman at Red Tower, he built the stairs and he really wants to put more films on. We have had one night where we put some Charlie Chaplin films on, so we would be interested to do that again. Getting the word out I think.

RESPONDENT 2: Advertising it.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, my next subject area is about communication and me coming from Red Tower I would be really keen to know what you think the best way for us to advertise is.

RESPONDENT 2: You can put a thing in the shop window.

RESPONDENT 1: Jo would put one up in the shop.

RESPONDENT 2: You can advertise inside shops or you can put a poster up there. My brother has got a shop up Fourth Avenue Tang Hall, he will put one in his shop window for you.

INTERVIEWER: So posters. Do you think any social media stuff would be useful?
RESPONDENT 1: Yes, because quite a few people are on that and since all the floods, more and more have been onto it. It must have cost quite a fair bit to put all of the leaflets through, or if you got one and just put it on each block so that everybody could know.

INTERVIEWER: Next to the door?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, rather than doing individual ones and it would be more time consuming for you putting them through or you can’t gain entry half of the time. So if you pin them on to the doors.

RESPONDENT 2: You could put one on to the red buildings door itself. All of the people pass by, even us when we are going to shops, you would go up and read what it says wouldn’t you?

RESPONDENT 1: I don’t know if they have restrictions on what you can do, if you could have a little notice board on this side of the grass for the Red Tower.

RESPONDENT 2: Isn’t there one there anymore on that corner?

RESPONDENT 1: But I am saying like you have just said for people going along the walkway, if you had a notice board somewhere around there that there was no way you could say, ‘Oh, I didn’t see it,’ because it is there.

INTERVIEWER: We have got a temporary noticeboard.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, the one with the thing.

INTERVIEWER: It is plyboard and it is a bit wonky.

RESPONDENT 1: I don’t know if they would let you build a permanent fixture because of the walls and everything, sometimes they are a bit funny, aren’t they, about it?

INTERVIEWER: It would be interesting to ask, my impression from the city archaeologist is that he is quite happy for things to change a bit. So, for example he has suggested that the horseshoe wall around the Red Tower, a hole to go through. Do you think that is a good idea?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, because lots of tourists as well walk up and then realise they have come up the wrong walk bit and then the younger ones climb over or they have to walk back down and you can hear them moaning to go back down to come back round.

RESPONDENT 2: That is where all the little kiddies sit on on a school trip; they all sit on that wall.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, sitting with their picnics.

INTERVIEWER: So you have seen kids there.
RESPONDENT 1: Yes, we would be having our lunch and you would hear the noise and you would think, ‘Oh look at all the kiddies,’ and there they are sat on there eating their packups on the grass.

RESPONDENT 2: Even the little kiddies would love to look at that.

RESPONDENT 1: They couldn’t go in and see, no.

RESPONDENT 2: They would love to know what was inside there I bet.

RESPONDENT 1: If there is a little keyhole you always want to spy in don’t you when you are a kiddie.

RESPONDENT 2: I notice that a load of school trips are on the walls, past the red building and back onto the walls again, loads of kids come by. All they have got to do is just to look at it, haven’t they?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, especially now because you get to know it was a water tower and everything else, and now if it was open then all of the schoolchildren could go in. I don’t know if it is the same man, he was saying when you go upstairs there is a window up there and how it shows all the light through it.

INTERVIEWER: If you ever get the chance to go in and have a look.

RESPONDENT 1: I keep wanting to go in, but he says he doesn’t know if he dared to get up the stairs, because we don’t know how wide they are. But I thought that would be really nice as it is something that I haven’t done.

INTERVIEWER: When it is a sunny day, we are going to try to do some events over the summer, just pop by and have a peek up.

RESPONDENT 1: I don’t know how it is for you with the stairs.

INTERVIEWER: It is a sight, in my opinion it is a sight.

RESPONDENT 1: Well, as I say we are born and bred York both of us, we have lived here for 26 years and never ever been in there until you all came and started opening it up, and we have been in a couple of times.

RESPONDENT 2: I bet there was a lot of pigeons in there weren’t there?

INTERVIEWER: There is none.

RESPONDENT 2: Not now, I mean before.

INTERVIEWER: To be honest I don’t know, but they did find a leopard gecko in the Red Tower and it had been hibernating. But the roof is completely watertight.
RESPONDENT 2: We saw the council doing the roof.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes.

RESPONDENT 2: I saw loads of pigeons going through that little door, I thought there must be pigeons in there, because once they start they never stop.

INTERVIEWER: There are sparrows.

RESPONDENT 1: In the rafters.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, but they are not inside the building they are just underneath the eaves just on the outside bit. So that doesn’t cause any issues, I think it would be a shame to...

RESPONDENT 1: ...to disturb them yes, he is a bird lover.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, pointing to the bird feeder outside.

RESPONDENT 1: It is quite nice because we have a robin that comes and he has got more and more friendly.

RESPONDENT 2: When I was in Spalding Avenue, I had pigeons there, I used to have pigeons you see.

INTERVIEWER: Fantastic! I have seen a guy in the museum gardens with the pigeons.

RESPONDENT 1: He lets them sit on him.

RESPONDENT 2: They do, yes.

INTERVIEWER: My last question, to wrap it all up is, I would like to ask you both for your definition of what heritage is? It is not a test and there is no wrong or right answer, it would just be interesting to know what your opinion is.

RESPONDENT 1: Heritage is talking as far as I know about what has happened in the past and how things were made or the reasons why they were used. What do you think it is?

RESPONDENT 2: Is it about how you lived in the past?

INTERVIEWER: There is no right or wrong answer.

RESPONDENT 2: I am going back to Hungate, my dad was born there and there were sons and those sons were my dad’s age too now and when he was born there and he said they couldn't wait to get out of the place because they were just slums, and how that has changed now to what it was, obviously. It looks wonderful now, doesn’t it?

RESPONDENT 1: You can’t believe what they are building now, we can’t actually remember now. Our dentist was down on that far end bit, but as for here, we have got pictures, I will have to find you some pictures.
INTERVIEWER: That would be really nice actually.

RESPONDENT 2: I have got a book in there if you want to see it with the pictures of all old York.

INTERVIEWER: I would actually and if you have got any photographs of your view from here with the Minster.

RESPONDENT 1: I should have looked for some for you, but as you say you will be in touch again and I will pop over there and see you.

INTERVIEWER: What I was going to do is, can I take your email because what I would like to do, and I will get Craig to sign this as well. I can send the interview.

RESPONDENT 1: You might have seen it have you that one?

INTERVIEWER: You said Grey's Newsagents at the back and I was looking at the back and seeing piano and organs.

RESPONDENT 1: There is one picture when they built the snowman out on the wall here and that would have Grey's Newsagents in, we will have to look for them.

RESPONDENT 2: We will have to go through them because I know we have got photographs. I have taken photographs of The Minster when it was lit up.

INTERVIEWER: So this was published in 1997.

RESPONDENT 1: I can make a photocopy if it's easier for you.

INTERVIEWER: What would be really great, we would like to have a library in the Red Tower, one of the ideas is to have a library and it would be really great to try and make a collection. I am not suggesting that we take this book but it would be good to find another copy of it and be able to have it in the Red Tower for people to read.

RESPONDENT 1: Have you been over the bridge that takes you down into.

INTERVIEWER: The Foss bridge?

RESPONDENT 1: The little metal one and it takes you down to next Stone Bar near BTs.

INTERVIEWER: No, I don't think I have. If you don't mean the Foss Bridge which is the white one.

RESPONDENT 1: No, then you can go down some little snickets and when you go down, right on the corner used to be the old bookshop and we used to get books from there, Barbican bookshop I think it was, well that sadly now has closed down and everything.

INTERVIEWER: Look at that one, it is ghostly. I am just looking through this pamphlet.
RESPONDENT 1: Because we have lived here, sometimes you take everything for granted and it is funny. I was just reading this. The Local Link, I said to Craig, ‘do you remember,’ where is it?

INTERVIEWER: Oh wow!

RESPONDENT 2: We had postcards of them, that is Parliament Street there where Brown’s is, it is still there now, actually.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you get these from then?

RESPONDENT 2: My dad gave me them, I have had them for years.

INTERVIEWER: I love postcards.

RESPONDENT 1: This is it, I was saying to Craig, ‘Do you remember the Davygate Arcade?’ Do you know where Browns is right on the corner? Well straight across from there they have got Gap now, but that used to be called the Davygate Arcade Centre, that used to be the only place where you could walk and use different shops, that was the only arcade thing we ever had and there was a record shop that used to go into the back of British Home Stores and allsorts. Then he said about Stonegate and I said, ‘I forgot about that one,’ then Craig says, ‘Can’t you remember this statue and that.’ You know, you forget because York is just changing all the time from how it used to be and that is New Look across on Blake Street and you forget about these things. I like just looking because sometimes they will put little different things in like that.

INTERVIEWER: I won’t take this today because I can’t quite think how I might use it, but if it occurs to me how I would use it, I will come back. There are a couple of other people who have shown me some really interesting books on Walmgate as well and...

RESPONDENT 1: Ben had quite a few didn’t he, his family would have got them, but he had a load of little books, because he was born and bred Walmgate.

RESPONDENT 2: I am sure there are some pictures in there of Walmgate.

INTERVIEWER: I’m sure there is, yes.

RESPONDENT 1: But he had books on it because he showed you them didn’t he, Ben? There were lots of butchers, because up at the top of the road I know there was a club, because there were a lot of Irish people around here, long before we came along, but the club was there, wasn’t it?

RESPONDENT 2: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: The bit on Walmgate in this book says, ‘In 1070 it was known as Walbergate, but in 1145 was changed to its present form. In the 1840s Irish immigrants settled into the area...’
which was then a maze of little streets and yards of damp overcrowded hovels with little or no sanitation and in an extremely bad state of repair.' A very much different scene today.

RESPONDENT 1: Yes.

RESPONDENT 2: When you said about that club, that was for the Irish.

RESPONDENT 1: Ben, because he was 93 and he had always lived in this area, he could tell you 1,001 things, couldn't he?

INTERVIEWER: Who is this sorry?

RESPONDENT 1: Our Ben who lived right at the bottom, but sadly we lost him in July last year. He could have told you 1,001 things, couldn't he, Ben?

RESPONDENT 2: We can only to back 25 or 30 years, he could have gone back 90-odd, he was born and bred here.

INTERVIEWER: There are a fair few people that are still here though that are of that age group or a bit less, but they have been here all of their lives and have seen many changes over the years.

RESPONDENT 1: I think that tall man, I don't know if you have seen him, he walks along with a little friend; he lives right at the end one.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, is that Colin?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes, that is him. He was in the navy with Ben. I actually believe he always lived in this area, like I say Ben had, but he must have done because Ben knew him or if it was just when they were in the navy together. To look at how different they were you wouldn't have thought they were roughly the same age.

INTERVIEWER: It is funny that. Well, thank you.

RESPONDENT 1: You are welcome.

INTERVIEWER: This has been really interesting. Do you have anything else you would like to add on the subject of heritage in general?

RESPONDENT 1: No, I don't think so, we start reminiscing and start talking about everything else, don't we?

INTERVIEWER: It is good, great.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 16: 16-09-16 St Denys Tim

INTERVIEWER: My first question is can you explain how you know me, how we met?

RESPONDENT: Okay, yeah. Well I met you at the barbecue at the Red Tower a couple of months ago now, I think. So yeah, that’s how we met.

INTERVIEWER: And you were there for a specific reason, so you told me that day.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Well I saw the barbecue was on. I saw one of your posters tied to the round chair, the tree next to Redgate, the round bench.

INTERVIEWER: Oh right, yeah.

RESPONDENT: And there was a poster attached to that. So I knew the barbecue was on then. And somebody else has mentioned the Red Tower and said, ‘Are you involved with the Red Tower project?’ So I thought, ‘Ah, I’ll go round and see the Red Tower.’ And also, I’d already started to be involved in the residents’ association which I’m hoping to set up. So I was hoping to go along and see if I could promote the residents’ association. So I asked Lilac if she minded me doing that and she said, ‘We want residents’ associations. We’d ideally have liked residents’ associations to work with from the very beginning, basically. But we are very keen to help set them up.’ So that was good.

INTERVIEWER: So how long have you been a resident in the area?

RESPONDENT: In the area, 31 years.

INTERVIEWER: Wow! Okay. And have you always been in the same property?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah, I’ve always lived there.

INTERVIEWER: So can I ask with you being involved or just starting to be involved, you’re just starting to be involved with the residents’ association?

RESPONDENT: Well I’ve been with the Labour Party all the time I’ve been living in the area. And there’s been a divide between on the one side of Walmgate the navigation roadside residents’ association and they’ve had another one which has been a lot more successful on the Home Street side, and I’ve never been involved with any of that before.

But I’ve got a bit more time now to devote to community things, so I thought that’d be a good thing to start getting involved with really, the residents’ association. So I heard that it was being set up and I came to a meeting here and then just kind of networking around locally just trying to get people involved, really.

INTERVIEWER: And when you came to the meeting here at the place of interview, which is St Deny’s Hall, we discussed how the residents’ association was going to be...
RESPONDENT: Yeah, that’s right. We’ve had two meetings here, yeah. So we’ve been thinking about how it’s all going to work, really. So basically the previous ones were mainly for residents, either council tenants or people living in former council properties that had been bought. But we’ve decided that we’re going to have a broader remit. Basically the idea is that it’s not going to be purely residents; it’s going to be a community association, so businesses will be able to join as well.

And also we’ll try and involve students as well. I met Millie Beech. I don’t know if you’ve heard but she’s the Sabbatical President of York Students’ Union. I met her at a meeting in the West Offices and she said, yeah, they’ve got students who lack community engagement. That’s one of her things she’s hoping to do in her year as student university union president is get a bit more involved in the community, really, and put the positive case for students. Quite often it’s a bit like people where I was growing up, we used to blame gypsies for everything bad that happened. If something disappeared, then it was the gypsies who stole it. So it’s a bit like that in York with students, really. I don’t think there are any gypsies living near here, so we blame everything on students instead, basically.

INTERVIEWER: It’s interesting that you say that. If by ‘gypsy’ you mean travellers...

RESPONDENT: Well I think that’s what people meant in the old days when I was growing up. This is my childhood from 50 years ago, so I don’t ever remember the word ‘traveller’ being used in those days. Maybe it was, but travellers and gypsies were synonymous. People we now think of as travellers were described as gypsies in those days.

INTERVIEWER: You say that, but actually there is an official traveller site that’s behind Morrison’s.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It’s near but it’s not sort of...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I think it was one of the places that got flooded, wasn’t it? It’s quite a [unclear – 0:05:09.0] isn’t it? The Fosse comes up and then it backs up and flooded the travellers’ site near here, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Let me just come back to this. You mentioned ‘community association’.

RESPONDENT: That’s right, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So what exactly is a community association?

RESPONDENT: Well basically I think if we broaden out the membership to include businesses as well as residents, then it would be described as a community association.

INTERVIEWER: Mm.
RESPONDENT: So I think Walmgate, at the moment it’s called Navigation and the Walmgate Residents’ Association and we’re kind of doing stuff but I think Walmgate Community Association’s probably what it’s going to end up being called.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So at the current time, do you have an intention for this wide scope of Walmgate? What are your intentions?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I think we were here and somebody said the parish boundaries are the Fosse and the walls. So we thought, ‘Well that sounds like a good area to define as the area that the residents or the community association will cover.’ So it’s basically everybody who lives or works in the area, where we can get people together.

There’s quite a lot of stuff. People are...antisocial behaviour is going to be a big issue, so I think we want to talk about that. And we’d hopefully get the... I’m not sure whether we still have a police and community support officer. I don’t know whether we have one specifically for Walmgate or not but...

INTERVIEWER: I was under the impression that there was one.

RESPONDENT: Oh right, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And that it was... I don’t think it’s necessarily that there’s one... Let me reiterate that. I think that they do like an area but it doesn’t necessarily have to be one person.

RESPONDENT: I do a bit of volunteering at Refugee Action York. We meet at the children’s centre in Clifton on a Sunday afternoon. And there is one PCSO. I think the way it tends to work is they get allocated to particular community groups to kind of liaise with. So she comes along on a Sunday afternoon sometimes. So if something kicked off – not necessarily in her area but elsewhere in York – that they needed to go and sort out...I think they tend to do community stuff as a sort of background task, really. So if there’s an urgent problem that they’ve got to deal with, then they’ll go off and do that. And if they’ve got time where they don’t have to deal with an incident, then they could come along to community event meetings. As I understand it. Or community meetings. But I haven’t really got involved with that. Certainly that’s one of the things that we need to sort out really, is that.

And then trying to get people to take a pride in the area. So I was speaking to Sally, for example, about the Incredible Edible beds. She looks after one of those and she’s wanted to extend that and it’s going to be tarmac-ed over where the skips were when they had the floods. So everybody’s stuff got thrown in those skips that are on that bit of concrete there. And it’s going to be tarmac-ed over to sort of level it out ‘cause it got broken up a bit with the skips.
And when that’s done she wants to put some more...she’s got one bed and she wants to put three more beds in to kind of have more growing space for the Incredible Edible project.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I’m aware of that project.

RESPONDENT: It’s a great project. So that’s the kind of thing. Children’s play area. I think we’ve got the two dogs at the moment, which are a bit rubbish, really. I think they had chickens on springs. I can’t remember where they are. But if you go to St Nick’s, they’ve got quite a nice children’s play area there. So I’m wondering, ‘Could we have something similar to that?’

And people talk about Section 106 money, which is I think when Hungate got their planning permission and they agreed that they’d pay some money towards community programmes. I think that’s what Section 106 money means. So hopefully there’s some money around. One of the things that that could go to could be a children’s play area, for example.

INTERVIEWER: So you’ve sort of talked about your intentions for the area but what would you say your aspirations for the area are?

RESPONDENT: Aspirations? Well just for everybody to be engaged and happy with the community, really. So that’s my aspiration, I think, yeah. Well the community association is one thing. I volunteer for right of engagement, I guess, in a word is what my volunteering and community stuff is about, really. So the Red Tower is part of that process really, engaging with groups to come along and talk about how they see the area developing.

Rarely I do the community association, there was a grant thing that I was working on for...if it comes off it’ll be £2.5million and there’s an area sort of...more deprived parts of the city is where the money has to be spent and it’s trying to get people who are a long way off the labour market to engage and go and get jobs, basically. So those are the four things I’m doing.

INTERVIEWER: So for this area, Walmgate, you’ve already answered the question in some ways. But do you have any concerns about the area?

RESPONDENT: Well not really. When I came here, traditionally it’s been a bit of a stigmatised part of the city. I think it all goes back to the 17th Century when I think it was more affected by plague than other parts of the city, I think. So in the high medieval period it was actually one of the more select parts of the city, but the plague wiped out a lot of the population in the 17th Century, so then it became a bit of a stigmatised area, really. So basically, if you came to York with nothing then you started off with Walmgate and then you would have aspirations to moving out and going somewhere else, basically, which was higher status. So that has been kind of Walmgate’s fate for a few centuries, really, the last couple of hundred years.

INTERVIEWER: You said ‘stigmatised’. Do you think the past of Walmgate is...

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Certainly when I bought my house people would say, ‘Oh, you don’t live there, do you?’ But it’s water off a duck’s back, as far as I’m concerned. But there was definitely a
feeling that Walmgate was not the place to live, really. But that has changed over time. So all the
restaurants have opened in my time in the area. So it’s now kind of like the dining centre of the
city, really. It was cheap property, was the thing. A lot of people tried various businesses out in
Walmgate. There used to be a place called York Reptiles, which I think might have been where
the gecko came from, basically, so there was this shop that used to sell reptiles as pets – various
lizards and snakes and things. They don’t kind of relate to people really, so why you would even
have a lizard or any kind of reptile as a pet has never struck me as being a particularly good...
You know, cats and dogs, even gerbils can understand you, but reptiles don’t really do that. But
anyway, each to their own.

So yeah, that didn’t succeed. That’s not there anymore. But people tried out various... It
was a relatively low cost of entry to having a business on Walmgate. So it tended to be a sort of
selection process. Restaurants were the thing that kind of worked, so now it’s become lots and
lots of restaurants in Walmgate.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting. I’ll have to talk to you about some research that I’m
doing.

RESPONDENT: Ah okay, right.

INTERVIEWER: It’s not relevant to our interview but it’s on Walmgate and I’ll share that with you
after this.

RESPONDENT: That’d be great, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But I wanted to talk about what your thoughts were on the best way to
communicate and engage with different people.

RESPONDENT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: And sort of information-sharing. I wondered if... Let’s go back to the poster. What
did you think of the poster?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, well I’m quite keen on posters ‘cause in my job, one of the things we do is
audience research for poster campaigns, and they are quite a powerful medium, basically. About
10% of advertising money goes on posters. So I think they are quite a powerful medium.

I’m a bit nervous about fly-posting, really, because...

INTERVIEWER: Apparently that’s what I have committed.

RESPONDENT: Right, okay.

INTERVIEWER: I didn’t know but that’s what I’ve...
RESPONDENT: I did circulate to my fellow directors of the Red Tower that basically there is stuff on the council website saying basically if you just kind of attach posters to bits of street furniture, then that probably counts as fly-posting.

So I think the poster idea is brilliant and that’s a good way to communicate. I think there are four noticeboards at the council and Sally kind of seems to have control over. There’s a councillors’ meeting on the 23rd, I think, so just as my first test really has been to get some of those... So I went into the shops. I read my handover document. So I went to the Copper Kettle and I used the launderette anyway myself, so I went there. And the bike shop next door as well if there’ll put posters. I went to Picalillies. She’s quite keen ‘cause she’s going to go to the meeting I think. There are quite a lot...A-boards, basically. The council try to say you can’t have A-boards outside your shop on the pavement. So that kind of helps to generate business for her so she wants to go and talk to them about that.

INTERVIEWER: Mm.

RESPONDENT: The one-stop I paid a quid, I think, to have two weeks of poster displaying in the one-stop.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve been in there a couple of times and when I’ve said it’s the Red Tower she’s said, ‘Oh, it’s for charity,’ so I haven’t...

RESPONDENT: Oh, you haven’t paid. Okay.

INTERVIEWER: But that was when it was going to be a CIO, so I didn’t refute that at the time.

RESPONDENT: Well it’s a something company, isn’t it? Community interest company.

INTERVIEWER: Community interest company.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So it’s not actually a registered charity but it is a community-run thing, so I guess that would count as a... Not that you’re getting paid but involvement with it as directors. And the Brown Cow. I dropped one off in there as well. So yeah, I put a few posters up and then I think after I’d got those up, Sally came and put her ones up on the noticeboard, so the four noticeboards. So we could do something similar to that for the Red Tower.

I put the Heritage Open Day one – I don’t know if you’ve seen that, but Tash did it, but I thought it was a work of art. I’d be willing to put that on my wall, I think, at home.

INTERVIEWER: I did see it but the background image is from a...I want to say a Ridsdale watercolour.

RESPONDENT: Ah, okay.

INTERVIEWER: That someone’s done.

RESPONDENT: Right.
INTERVIEWER: And she superimposed the information onto it, so...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It looked very nice.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So if we could have one fairly standard design and then when we run an event we just change the wording. So we could just have a Red Tower poster with the Red Tower logo on, the graphics would...it would just be a standard Red Tower graphical design and then we could just change the wording or have an agreed font and agreed size and so on. And possibly a bit more about how we lay things out and so on. And then any idiot like me could just come along and just type some new text in and just obey those guidelines. I think that would be the way to go, really.

Certainly if we could advertise things a couple of weeks in advance of events, I think would be good.

Oh, the Co-op, the new Co-op, I've got one in there. And she was quite disappointed actually, when we doing the Heritage Open Day, that I didn't come in with anything. Lorraine Carter, who's... All the Co-ops have a community liaison person and Lorraine Carter is our one at our new Co-op on Peregrine Street.

INTERVIEWER: The Morrison's and Waitrose ladies are also quite keen to...

RESPONDENT: Oh yeah. I haven't been in there yet but yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. There's a nice lady at Morrison's. She's the Community Champion and she's very keen to help out.

RESPONDENT: Okay. Yeah, I think in the new Co-op, 'cause it's next door to the hotel, and she's saying, 'I've got lots of Americans and Canadians staying here and they don't know anything anywhere near as old as...' Not created by white people anyway, or of European descent. Native American archaeology. But my cousin, he lives in Rochester, which was sort of early 19th Century when the Americans went west, so the European settlers went west and it was kind of settled by European people at the start of the 19th Century. And so he was completely bowled over when he came here and saw all this old stuff. So yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Just coming to... Do you make use of other forms of media in your work and what do you think could be important for the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: I think having a website is probably key and then building the social media around the website. So doing Twitter and Facebook. Certainly search engine optimisation. I think Mr Compost's setting that up at the moment and he's working with Castlegate IT. They're called Castlegate IT but they're actually at Walmgate now. And I know one of the directors there. He's very good.
So yeah, and I know somebody who runs Tang Hall Local. I know who runs Tang Hall Local. And she’s working with Jim as well, so I think he’s quite a good person to work with.

But Jim charges by the hour so you need to kind of know what you want before you go and talk to him really, ‘cause he just kind of does what you tell him. I think he’s got some marketing people working there now as well, rather than just technical. He’s always done technology, basically. So you say, ‘I want the website to have this, this and this,’ and they work out technically how to make it all happen. But I think he’s got some marketing people working there now as well, so if we wanted help with marketing strategy, potentially we might be able to get some help there.

But it depends. I’m kind of involved with the business planning side of things. So one of the things I’ve been asked to work on is business use of the Red Tower going forwards. So we had a meeting yesterday.

INTERVIEWER: Let’s just clarify at this point, I don’t think we’ve covered this but do you confirm that you’ve opted into being part of the CIC director group?

RESPONDENT: Yes, that’s right. I’m one of the directors of the CIC, yeah. So does that screw everything up?

INTERVIEWER: How did that come about?

RESPONDENT: Well I went to the barbecue and I met Lilac. And she said, ‘Would you like to be a director of the Red Tower?’ So I said, ‘Yeah. I’d pretty much like to do that, really.’ ‘Cause I think having that group of volunteers, doing other things in the area, having met that core of Red Tower volunteers, they could also do other things. Like, for example, the community association. That would definitely help. So I know Jonathan and Jess are quite keen on getting involved with the community association. Jonathan doesn’t live locally so I think if we allow businesses... Well, I think the community association should be... One of our councillors – Denise – is quite keen on getting on residents’ associations and community associations. I think it should be local people kind of talking, almost like a focus group-type role really, of local people telling people in authority what it is that they want to happen, rather than people in authority using it as yet another lever to kind of order people around. That might be putting it a bit strongly but...

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that that’s part of the reason why it’s difficult for residents’ associations to...some of the difficulties? And I say that because of the disbanding of the...

RESPONDENT: Disbanding of the other one, yeah, the previous one in Navigation Road. Yeah. I mean, I think there’s been a clash of personalities.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, there were other reasons, weren’t there?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, there were other reasons. And I think not having a venue. I don’t know if you’ve met Jo, who used to run Space109?
INTERVIEWER: I haven’t met Jo. I wanted to but we’ve both been too busy.

RESPONDENT: Okay, yeah. She did a fantastic job with Space109. But it was dependent on grant funding, basically. So when austerity happened, she didn’t really have a business plan that could work without grant funding, so it ended up having to be closed down because the grant ended and she hadn’t worked out how to generate revenue to make it work herself, really.

So I think the Red Tower, I think the heritage building, I think that gives... I think without it being a heritage building there’s talk of other things, other possible community centres I’ve heard mentioned, or sites that could be used. If you had a new-build building, it wouldn’t have that heritage aspect to it and I think it would make it more difficult to make it be a self-funding community centre than the Red Tower.

So I think that’s its USP, if you like, in marketing-speak. It’s unique selling proposition is that it is a heritage building and I think people would be more willing to get engaged with it, come along to a sort of heritage building than they would be if it was an ordinary, new-build community centre.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting. So if I get that right, you’re suggesting that because of the heritage aspect of the Red Tower...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...that will actually help it where perhaps with the Space109 project it didn’t.

RESPONDENT: That’s my theory, is that I think people would be more willing to come along to events at a heritage building. I mean, certainly within my business we used to run what we used to call a ‘user group’, when I worked for an IT company, and we used to run a user group. And we used to do that on the outskirts of Rugby, a hotel called Brownsover Hall, which was designed by, I think it was Charles...the elder Gilbert Scott who did St Pancras Station, so...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So you imagine St Pancras Station turned into a country house, then that’s what it was, basically. So I think having a heritage...you have a nice venue for an event, it encourages people to come along, really. And certainly reading books on marketing, people say, ‘Try and find a nice venue for your event because that will make it easier to get people to come along.’

So that is a known thing to do in marketing circles, is to have people think, ‘Oh, I wonder what it’s like there.’ So if you can do that... Or, ‘I’d really like to go there and see that place.’

INTERVIEWER: I’m going to ask you one question with regards to the size of...‘cause obviously size matters with...

RESPONDENT: That’s right, yeah.
INTERVIEWER: I've had discussions with other people about it and we have...we don't necessarily see it as a problem but I wondered if you saw it as a problem or a...

RESPONDENT: Potentially, yes. I think people have said that to me. 'It can't work 'cause it's too small,' really, is what people have said to me, really. I think Lilac's talked to me about Jacob's Well. I don't know if she's mentioned that to you? No? That's like a heritage building off Micklegate. So it's a medieval house, sort of medieval, timber-framed house. So a bit like Morel House. I don't know if you know on Moorgate, yeah?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I do.

RESPONDENT: So similar kind of construction to that but it's part of a terrace. And that belongs to the church. It's like parish ruins for the...what's it called? All Saints?

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:27:02.9] Convent?

RESPONDENT: No. It's the church that's on Micklegate.

INTERVIEWER: Oh yes, I do know the one you mean but I can't remember the name. I can see it in my mind's eye.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So around the back of there is their equivalent to this basically, is Jacob's Well. And Lilac tried to book it for a networking event that she wanted to run for her business and she wasn't able to book it because it's all fully booked up. So I think that's kind of given me encouragement that a relatively small... It is slightly bigger than the Red Tower but it's on two floors like the Red Tower is. So that kind of gives me encouragement that a small, quirky, heritage building can function as a community centre and also get business bookings there as well.

So they have community events as well. I think the National Childbirth Trust's got a branch in Bishop Hill and they meet there. And also, as I say, Lilac wanted to run a business networking event there. So I think it does kind of give me hope that it could work.

And also I think the Red Tower were going to have gardens front and back so it's like two additional rooms really. So obviously we don't have perfect weather in this country, but that kind of gives you an additional space really, that you can overflow into the two gardens.

INTERVIEWER: I was going to say that I've spoken to Clement's Hall, which is a huge...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I know Clement's Hall, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And the two ladies -- I think Jane and Alison-- are both really supportive and say that essentially that they do struggle to accommodate all of their enquiries and they often do find that small, intimate counselling meetings between NHS staff and stuff happens and they often want smaller space to...
RESPONDENT: Yeah, well it's the church, isn't it? I think St Clement's Church, there's the hall, which is pretty big. I think that would seat about 150, something like that.

INTERVIEWER: Well they can make it into a cinema. That's what they do, I think.

RESPONDENT: Ah, okay. There is around the back of the church, which is sort of 19th Century, which is also St Clement's Church, there's a smaller meeting space at the back of that, that I've been to before. That's about the same as here, about twenty-odd people that could accommodate.

INTERVIEWER: So you mentioned that it's going to be a community venue, that that's the intention.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But also the business. How in your mind do you see those two things coexisting?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, well I think basically the business idea is the idea that there's going to be two-tier pricing. So some of the community events will be relatively modest. So here I think there's a fixed price of £10 an hour or £20 per session. So there's a fixed price and whatever you do here you pay the same, everybody pays the same price. But the idea would be that business usage, people would be charged more for business usage than for community events.

My guess – I haven't really researched this at all – is that businesses probably wouldn't mind their money... You know, they could use it in their publicity: 'Come along to our event' and while people are drinking their wine they can get a good feeling that they're helping the community to keep the venue going. I think businesses would probably be okay about that. I haven't actually tested that.

INTERVIEWER: What about the other way around?

RESPONDENT: The community people, I think the community people wouldn't mind if they knew that the businesses were there and that's what made the community usage possible, was the funding from business. Because I can't see grant funding coming along for five, ten years, before the local government finances are in a position where they'd have money to spend on things like providing grants to community venues.

So I think people understand. That's my feeling. I haven't kind of talked to people. So I think both sides will understand and the sort of symbiosis and why it's required, and that they're both kind of needed, really.

My big fear really, is quality. The business people will expect a higher quality of venue. So they expect it very clean and they'll expect to have nice china and stuff as well. Whereas for a community venue you wouldn't really expect...you know, we don't think that's terrible. Whereas
if you were running a business event and you were paying a higher price, you would expect a higher level of service. So I think that’s something we’re going to have to think about.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, my last question. What is your definition of ‘heritage’? There is no right answer.

RESPONDENT: Right, okay. I think age, the age of the artefact is kind of significant. And understanding...something that helps us understand how people lived in the past, I guess would be my definition of ‘heritage’.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned artefacts.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have anything specific in your head when you think of that?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I was thinking of the city walls really, obviously. So that’s something that’s been there, most of it, since the time of Edward I, really, in its current incarnation, I think. So yeah, that’s my thinking. But there are a number of... If you look at the VisitYork4Meetings website, there are a couple of pages of heritage buildings that you can hire. Some of them are fairly big, like the Hospitium. I don’t know if you’ve heard of that? And the Museum Gardens, and the various guilds that have survived. You know, there’s the Merchant Adventurers’ and then the Merchant Tailors’.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So they’re all kind of heritage venues that are kind of older venues that you can hire. So sometimes people would want to go to a hotel. So some kinds of events for businesses, they just want to go with the new hotel that’s been built. In Walmgate that would be ideal for them, so they want a meeting room in there. And then for other kinds of events then you might want to go with the more heritage location. Like we went for Brownsover Hall because we felt that that would attract people who would want to come there, whereas if we went for a new-build, hotel-type place, for example, then that would be less attractive to the people that we were trying to get to come. So we wanted as many people to come as possible, so we felt that would boost our audience if we went with a heritage building, basically, which was a hotel.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Can you think of anything else you would like to add to this interview?

RESPONDENT: No, I don’t think so. I’ve answered all your questions.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, you’ve got through them, yes.

RESPONDENT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Yep. End!

RESPONDENT: End! Right, okay, thank you.
INTERVIEWER: Thanks very much.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 17: 06-08-15 West Offices Claire

INTERVIEWER: So can you tell me, Claire, how you know me?

PARTICIPANT: I know you, Kat, through the Red Tower project. I think we first met at the first meeting, which was at the Fossgate social. Was it December last year?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, December 4th or something.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah. In early December 2014. I went along to that meeting because I’d heard about it through the job I was doing at the time, which was the Community Hubs project at the City of York Council. And the Red Tower had always been something I’d noticed and wondered about. It’s not too far away from where I live and it just sounded like a really exciting project that I thought I wanted to get involved with.

And I’d heard about Tim before, especially when I cycle along the cycle track – There’s a big Tim mural on the mural under the bridge and I’ve been very conscious of it every time I’ve seen it and always thought it would be an organisation I’d really fit into. And I think I have!

So yeah, that’s how I got to know you and the Red Tower.

INTERVIEWER: And we’ve been doing it for, I guess, eight months then. It’s August now, so on and off.

So okay, that’s great. I agree with that! The first question then, I guess I’ll talk to you about your initial role with the council has been with the Community Hubs. ‘Cause I’ve not actually spoken to you about this at all, have I?

PARTICIPANT: No, you haven’t.

INTERVIEWER: No. Okay.

PARTICIPANT: Oh, April 2013, I think, I left my job in the City Centre and Markets team to take on a project that had just been given to the [Strategic Services Manager], who is the manager that looks after all the community centres, leisure centres, and at the time parking. He’d been given a project to look at creating a network of community hubs across the city as a way of connecting up community venues and creating a more supportive network.

I think that was possibly shortly after or even just before the announcement that there was going to be no funding for community centres in York. So they wanted to, I guess, sort of strengthen what we have and enable the creation of a self-help network.

So in that role I would say I nurtured the community hubs network, which is a network of community venues and centres and community buildings and places – ‘cause it’s not necessarily community centres – in York with a monthly meeting, where people would come together, talk
about the issues they’ve got, discuss a certain topic (say it’s how to recruit volunteers or how to
market or advertise) and enable those meetings to take place.

So I would book the venues but then let the community centres kind of lead the way as
they wanted, really.

INTERVIEWER: So when you say ‘nurturing’, it’s face-to-face sort of group discussions, monthly
meetings with people?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah. The idea was the council was trying to take a step back and they’re trying
to change the relationship. Rather than being parent-child, they’re trying to make it adult-adult
sort of style relationships. So rather than the council supporting everything that goes on, trying
to create that independence in the community centres out there.

So that was part of it, and as well I did a mapping exercise which you can see online at
www.york.gov.uk/communityvenues. I got a list from Property Services and other sources and
merged them all together to create this one, massive list of all the community buildings we had
in York, and then boiled that down through speaking to the Equalities team they’re called now (I
just call them Mary’s team), which Mike’s part of, to work out which of these buildings would be
suitable to be that centre of the community, but a building that they thought would really, really
work well as being a community hub.

Narrowed this list down, and you can now see the map on the website that shows you all
the venues that are targeted now as community hubs.

And it’s nice to actually see the visual landscape of it all because it’s something that
crosses ward boundaries and all the other boundaries we have in the city.

We were hoping as the next stage of the project before I left to create cluster groups. So
there would be one hub and a network of individual community venues around that, but
supported wholeheartedly by the one hub. We didn’t quite get as far as that in the project, but
that was kind of the idea; a sort of spokes model but lots of them across the city, like blocks of
community, as it were.

Another layer would have been – if we’d had time – to put ”the friends of... “
Communities that don’t necessarily focus up on a building but come together, Friends of
Rowntree Park or [unclear – 0:06:04.5] or... The lesbian and gay community, you know?

INTERVIEWER: The boundaries or the ways of grouping them together.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, absolutely. Rather than physically but in other ways.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
PARTICIPANT: It was a really, really interesting project and it was really good to do. But then I got offered a job in IT so that’s why I’m not doing it anymore. But if you did want to find out more, the [Strategic Services Manager] is the person to speak to.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I’ll star him as a contact.

PARTICIPANT: Really lovely, always happy to talk.

INTERVIEWER: So is he still on the project, then?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, he’s doing it still.

INTERVIEWER: Cool. I’m really interested by this map, actually. Did you get feedback about it or...?

PARTICIPANT: I’ve heard some people find it useful because you can actually see what’s near you. So you can just find your place or where you live on the map and you can see where the spots are around you.

It indicates on there where the public Wifi access points are, which was kind of how I knew about this job when it came up, ’cause there was money from BDUK to put public Wifi spots into community centres that are owned by the council. So on that map you can actually see the community centres across the city that have benefitted from that free Wifi, public Wifi on there.

INTERVIEWER: So it’s dual-purpose?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, and the idea is it can be layered up in whatever ways you want. The data comes from the York Open Services Directory, which is an open data directory of every building and everything that’s going on in York, with the current information services. So that’s where all the information comes from that is displayed on the map. So it was quite difficult to coordinate the two – the map and the database person – but we did get it to work. But that means we can just add in more places as they come alive.

INTERVIEWER: And did this ever come up at your monthly meetings, this map as a tool?

PARTICIPANT: We mentioned it but it’s difficult. You can take a horse to water but you can’t make it drink sometimes. The idea is it would be most used by the public to find out, ‘What’s near me?’ or, ‘Is there a community centre near my dad?’ or use it whatever way they needed to. You could search and find things on there and it would pull through the data and then link you through onto if you had a website, some have a website and things. But I think it just got lost in the mass that is the City of York Council website, really.

INTERVIEWER: So now you’re in IT, that doesn’t have anything to do with working with the public? It’s just internal...?
PARTICIPANT: Well I do work with the public through the voucher scheme thing but no, I've cut my ties really with the community centres thing. Which is where the Red Tower’s been nice 'cause that’s kept my hand in. 'Cause I enjoy doing things with people out there and I've enjoyed being a part of that.

INTERVIEWER: So with the Red Tower then, this is going to be interesting. Our journey with the Red Tower. What would you say your role is? I know this is a really basic question. I know that I know. You know that I know.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah. I feel I'm part of the core group but I think at the minute we’re a bit not sure of the direction of the project now because we’re all keen to do things but not to dedicate all our spare time to writing business plans and things like that.

The project is quite ambitious and I think it needs somebody like a social entrepreneur who would happily give six months of their time for free in the hope that in a year’s time it’ll be a building that’ll be creating an income to be able to pay for what they do.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: But those sort of people must be very few and far between.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. And I think we’ve spoken about this before and I’ve written this in my field notes as well, about how we all want to put in what we can and then...

PARTICIPANT: You want to enjoy it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: It’s a fun project and we love doing fun things in the building, but we need the building to be more usable.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: Running water, electricity. Patricia’s talked about game nights. I’d love game nights. I’m really into board games and things and it’d be a brilliant place to do it, but we’ve got this little gap that we’ve got to get to... 

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: ...between there and there that’s the hard bit.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think because I’m very... For me, my concern for the building or my wish for the building, is that the local community next to it could potentially use it as a hub. But as I think we’ve seen, there’s a bit of a barrier there as well. I wondered what your thoughts on that were.
PARTICIPANT: I think, as we planned to do, I think when they see things that are happening, they will get involved. I don’t think that the community would be – unless there are any particularly strong characters there – would be interested in running things themselves. But I think if there was something going on, for example like the heritage open day, we would get people wandering across and bringing their kids.

But in this day and age – I saw it with the community centres – people just don’t have time to give to volunteer for things. But sadly everything seems to be going down the route of doing everything via volunteers.

And I had an interesting conversation with somebody at Foxwood Community Centre, who was saying that people who’ve got kids, there’s a big pressure on them to volunteer at their local school. And so that sucks any volunteering time up. They’ll be helping their school to do reading classes or extra-curricular stuff.

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting.

PARTICIPANT: And that just zaps all their free time that anyone with kids would have, really.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it’s come up in a couple of conferences in Heritage. ‘Cause Heritage is a big sector that’s being powered by volunteers – people working at the National Trust and English Heritage and their own groups. But for the most part they’re retired people and they’re not young people, and there’s the fear of them all dying!

But I don’t know. It’s interesting, this idea of community volunteering. It’s quite important and yet...

PARTICIPANT: I don’t think we’ve got generations where volunteering was encouraged. And it’d be in the middle classes, people did Duke of Edinburgh and things like that, which have volunteering as part of the course. But people that are just scraping an income together – which a lot of people in Walmgate are (there’s a lot of social housing around there) – really why should they do stuff for other people when they’re trying to keep themselves going, really?

INTERVIEWER: In which case, what do you see the task of Red Tower doing for the local community in that area?

PARTICIPANT: I think if there was someone to run it or some people to run it, I think the community would use it. But I don’t think the community are strong enough or have the time to be able to be the people that run it, if that makes sense.

It would be a really valued service if it was a building that they could come and use and have a coffee or let the kids run around in the garden or something like that. But I can’t see any people from the area becoming part of the core group, really.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I’m of the same mind now as well. I hoped, but I think experience tells us otherwise.

PARTICIPANT: I’d be very experienced to find a handful of people that do actually live right next to it and talk to them, interview them, say, ‘So we’re doing this over here. We notice you’ve not be down. Why?’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. No, I think my next steps once I’ve done as many interviews with people as I can talk to, have got access to, is to try and send out a survey, ‘cause I think that’s the only way to reach out to people. I’m not sure about going around knocking on doors. I think I’d get a different...

PARTICIPANT: Well it’s funny ‘cause when Ed and I went to collect that cabinet from the lady in Rosemary Place, and she literally just looked onto the road...

INTERVIEWER: Was her name Martha?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, something like that. I’ve still got it on my phone. She was really, really friendly. Really nice lady. And we went in and we got the cabinet and Ed was like, ‘Oh, do you mind if I have a look inside your house?’ And he was, ‘Is that a really bad thing to say?’ And she was absolutely fine.

INTERVIEWER: Oh right.

PARTICIPANT: So she took us into her house and just shows us the layout. I felt it was a bit cheeky but...

INTERVIEWER: Why did he want to go in her house?

PARTICIPANT: I think he wanted to see how the flats were laid out, ‘cause you can’t really tell from the outside. They are really nice with substantial...nicely built flats. Much better than you’d probably get in a modern thing. But I was like, ‘Oh God, I’d never want somebody strange coming into my house,’ but she said, ‘No, no, come in,’ and she showed us the rooms and explained how long she’d been there and things like that.

I think you possibly need to try and get a mole. Get really friendly with somebody in and try and...

INTERVIEWER: I’m speaking to Sally and Cathy on Monday, so yeah. We’ll see. We’ll see.

PARTICIPANT: And there’ll be the impact of the new students coming back, and the new ‘student castle’, they call it, that’s just been built.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And it’ll be really interesting to know what the residents think of that impact.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: Is another thing.

PARTICIPANT: There’s a pub there called The Spread Eagle, which used to be always a great pub, but then Walmgate went through a bit of a downhill bit, went a bit bleak. But now it’s got student residences all over it and I think The Spread Eagle must be doing brilliant!

INTERVIEWER: Where’s The Spread Eagle then?

PARTICIPANT: It’s on Walmgate and I think it’s got the new student building right next to it. But it’s literally just a couple of doors up from the York Press. But they would have seen a massive difference with the two student buildings being built.

But apparently Walmgate, every second building used to be a pub. ‘Cause it was the Irish end of town and it’s gone through a lot of changes. I’d be very interested to see a sort of timeline history of Walmate.

INTERVIEWER: ‘Cause you live nearby, don’t you?

PARTICIPANT: Well I used to literally live on Walmgate. When I first came to York I lived in George Street and then I lived at 114b Walmgate and I lived at 136 Walmgate, where the tree is in the corner. So it’s almost felt like the home end of town for me. ‘Cause even then when I left Walmgate I only lived on Fishergate, which was just close to there. So I spent quite a few years on Walmgate.

But now I live on Dodsworth Avenue, which is further out but it’s still my side of town, you know? Nothing really goes on on my side of town. The Red Tower’s about the nearest thing that’s happening, the only place to go, really.

INTERVIEWER: You’ve lived in York for...

PARTICIPANT: Eighteen years, I think. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Does that make you a Yorkie?

PARTICIPANT: I say I’m Scorkish. ‘Cause I’m originally from Edinburgh – I’m Scottish. So I have to be some sort of combination of Scottish and Yorkshire, so...

INTERVIEWER: Scorkie? I love it! That’s great! Amazing. But do you think that...going back to some of the stuff that we talked about with the mapping and how to engage community people, do you think that kind of information-sharing is important, to involving community groups in...or helping nurture those community hubs?

PARTICIPANT: Well absolutely, and I don’t think it’s an uncommon problem not getting people to engage in what you’re doing. Looking at other community centres – places like Foxwood – it’s entirely run by volunteers and they’ve got a core team of people who do just about everything. And they’re trying to do things to get the community more engaged in what they do. They’re
doing a little café for which their inspiration was Lidgett Grove. They’re doing car boot sales and things like that. So I don’t think it’s a unique problem that people at the Red Tower are facing.

And I think the community centres coming together and talking about that and realising that sort of empowers them a bit more, realising it’s not just their problem, it’s something that they all have to work towards. And getting more volunteers involved in the committees and things like that. It can be like drawing teeth sometimes. It’s a common problem and I think you get that sort of safety in numbers thing when you realise you’re not on your own, it’s not just your community centre that nobody wants to go to!

INTERVIEWER: I went to this locality thing last week and that was really interesting, about essentially that. I was partners and community organisation members who’d come together to discuss all the difficulties essentially, and the ways forwards. And some of the things that were coming out, there was this idea of how to engage the community. It seems to be the million-dollar question.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I think it’s a deep social psychology thing. When I attempted to do a top-up degree, I was going to do what motivated people to volunteer for beer festivals, ’cause I used to be heavily involved in York CAMRA and the beer festival. And I always remember a phrase which was, ‘Forget altruism. I just want a T-shirt,’ sort of thing. And I looked at all the different things people have volunteered for, like the Winter Olympics and various other things. People want something from the experience of volunteering and giving their time. And I think that has to be looked very carefully at.

I used to be the volunteer coordinator at the York CAMRA beer festival and we always needed more volunteers but you always did get...we got up to about 200 volunteers coming. And it’s mainly because they got free beer, free food and had a fun time. You know?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: And people come running if they can do things like that. But incentivising something like what we’re doing is quite difficult really. Other than just having a bit of fun really. But that’s difficult to get across to people.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I was writing about it today. I was thinking about what it is that we’re doing, and in my head I was like, ‘You’re just a bunch of friendly females in a brick shed, having cups of tea and listening to jazz!’ And it is fun because we get the nice feeling of we open the doors and...or at least I get a nice feeling when we open the door, someone comes in and they seem really intrigued by it. And you can see it in their face. They’re just like, ‘Wow!’

PARTICIPANT: Yeah. ‘Thank you for letting me in, I’ve always wanted to see inside,’ sort of thing is nice. And you can have some nice conversations. And finding out where people have come from and, ‘How did you happen to be here right now at this time?’ sort of thing I always find fascinating.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And people do seem to be genuinely pleased to be there.

PARTICIPANT: Mm.

INTERVIEWER: And excited as well, actually. I think some of them – especially the younger ones. But going back to this idea, you mentioned the incentives of volunteering. I'm actually really interested in that. Do you think with the community hubs that you see in the centres across York that you've worked on, what are the incentives there? I know that Red Tower might not be of that ilk just yet, but the ones that are successful?

PARTICIPANT: I think that some people enjoy working in that particular team, which is I think something that we do have at the Red Tower. We've got a particularly nice team and part of the experience is being with those people, some sort of social connection.

And for some, I think volunteering to run their local community centre is their way of giving back to the community or offering a service to their local community, the older people, the people that need that to be done.

I think it maybe takes a certain type of person to see those sort of benefits, really. Other than benefits for yourself. But you'll see in lots of volunteering things you can put this on your CV, there's some sort of comeback to giving up your spare time to do something.

INTERVIEWER: That's really interesting. I hadn't thought about that dynamic as much, 'cause I've been going in with a specific line of enquiry. Incentive is one that...but it's a social incentive, isn't it?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: Well it's like when we thought about crowdfunding and stuff like that. Quite often with crowdfunding you get something back, whether it's a share in the business or they get a free cup of tea once a month or something like that. And I know we could easily fundraise without offering those sort of things, but quite often people do want something for something. You don't get owt for nowt, as they say.

INTERVIEWER: That is very true. Yeah. Okay. So your time in York then, would you want to move anywhere else or what do you think about York?

PARTICIPANT: We've been through the sort of conversation that we'd maybe like to go somewhere different. We've got so many years on this planet and we don't necessarily want to spend it all in the same place. I would like to be somewhere where there are more trees around me! I love being around trees and forests and things like that. At one point we were thinking about possibly moving to Knaresborough or even as far away as Durham and places like that, but we do really love York. We like it here. It's just to be in the area that we'd want to be -- say,
like Fishergate – we just couldn’t afford that sort of house price. You’re looking at £250,000 minimum if we were to move to Fishergate or one of the desirable areas.

But I think if I moved away from York I think I’d miss more than I’d gain, I think. I love the riverside. Yeah, I don’t live right next to it but it’s there and there are things going on. And my home city of Edinburgh, lovely place, lots going on, great stuff, but it’s huge and it’s just a big smelly city like lots of other big smelly cities, with lots of problems and mess and issues.

INTERVIEWER: Is York a smelly city?

PARTICIPANT: No, it’s not. I think it’s the perfect size, actually. I think if it was to get any bigger it could be at risk of being a big smelly city but it’s not. I think it’s just the right size now.

INTERVIEWER: ‘Cause it technically is going to get bigger, isn’t it?

PARTICIPANT: It will. It will. As time goes on.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: York is a very middle-class, white city. You don’t see many Asian people. You see lots of Chinese students but you don’t see many Asian people or African people or anything like that, which is always something very striking when you’ve come away, when you’ve gone to visit Leeds or Edinburgh or London or something. You suddenly start noticing that everybody seems very British here.

And there’s historical reasons for that. But it’s one of the downsides, I think. It’d be nice to see a lot more ethnic cultures.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it’s not a metropolitan city, is it? From looking at it. I think I have seen some demographics from the census and funnily enough, apparently there are 750 Jedi knights in York!

PARTICIPANT: [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: I don’t know what that says! But yeah. Well okay, let’s talk about politics then, about York’s political status. It’s Labour, isn’t it, now?

PARTICIPANT: No, it’s Conservative. It’s a mix, a rainbow. It’s Green, ‘cause you’ve got…

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PARTICIPANT: It’s a Conservative stronghold but I think with either Lib Dems or Labour. To be honest, I don’t really get involved in it so much ‘cause in my job I have to remain politically neutral so I tend not to get too involved in that.

But if you look at the way the council’s made up you’ve got Andrew Waller, for instance. He looks after community centres. He’s Liberal Democrats. The head of the council is
Conservative. I think we’ve got one or two Green people – Andy D’Agorne – on there. So in some ways you hope it will give a more balanced outcome for things when you have got a mix of different parties.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. This is jumping a bit back but kind of connected. Do you think that what we’re doing at the Red Tower is anything to do with politics?

PARTICIPANT: Absolutely not. Politics is not in there at all.

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting.

PARTICIPANT: No. Not at all. I don’t see any connection at all with politics.

INTERVIEWER: Well what about, for example, I’ve been talking to some of the councillors and does that connection there, does that mean...what’s that about?

PARTICIPANT: Well every part of the city has to have a council of some sort and the councillor is essentially there as the voice of the people. They have their surgeries. And I’d be very warmed by seeing – is it Rachel Maskell?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: I’ve seen her out and about doing stuff more than I have any other councillor. And I’ve been very warmed by seeing that.

INTERVIEWER: She came to the Red Tower as well, yeah.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, she’s been to the Red Tower. And I just see her at stuff. If there’s stuff going on, I see her there.

But although they have a political party behind them, I feel councillors are more community-focused. I don’t really feel they have an agenda, other than speaking on behalf of people in their area. Maybe I’m just blind to it.

INTERVIEWER: I have no opinion on it. I just wondered. When we were talking about demographics of people I started thinking about the politics in York as well and I wondered.

PARTICIPANT: I mean, York is an industrial city. It’s Labour in the inside and it’s Conservative in the country, but that’s kind of how it works across the whole of the UK. I come from a place where there isn’t a Conservative in Scotland.

INTERVIEWER: I’m intrigued that you think Edinburgh is a smelly city!

PARTICIPANT: Well everybody sees the pretty bit in the middle. But take a bus out to Oxgangs, you’ll see poverty, you’ll see people really struggling with life. This used to be a really, really bad part, it was the docks and that’s where all the AIDS stuff – that’s where the Trainspotting film is set, in Edinburgh. People often ignore that bit of cities.
And you do that in York as well. I know there’s not horrendous poverty here. There are some really, really poor people living here in certain areas of the city. And the main contact they have is with places like the libraries and things that are out there where they are.

A great person to speak to is Fiona Williams, the Head of Explore, about how the libraries do connect with the communities and the people that really need stuff, really can’t afford to feed themselves, only their kids sort of thing. She’s very clued on, on that one.

INTERVIEWER: So what would you say your concerns are for the Red Tower and then York?

PARTICIPANT: My concerns for the Red Tower are that the local community don’t engage. Because I kind of hoped that the community would get engaged and then we could step back and then just be a part of it, rather than leading it, if that makes sense.

And I worry about the Red Tower being a very middle-class thing for art exhibitions and all this nice, twee, lovely little things that with money you can get involved with and people that don’t, can’t. And that’s why the thing that I was most excited about with the Red Tower was the potential of having a pay-as-you-feel junk food café where people could come in, you give them soup and nourish them and give them somewhere warm to sit if they didn’t have that place to be. And I’ll be sad if we can’t offer that, really.

So those are my concerns for the Red Tower, that it just becomes a playpen for well-off people.

For York, I don’t know. York’s a funny place. Everybody seems to be obsessed by tiny, little things and sort of ignore the big, important stuff. I don’t know. I really enjoyed Lendal Bridge being closed! That was just so nice for me to get into work in the morning and not have to thing through stuff. It was nice to see that open.

I’d like to see in York, especially hospitality businesses. My background is hospitality so it’s always in me. I’d like to see more businesses – especially restaurants and cafés – being allowed to put tables and chairs out the front and bringing a more continental sort of relaxed feel to the city centre. Yeah. I’d like to see that more, really. But I worked in a city centre office so I know how constrained it can be.

Yeah, it seems like a lot of people are fighting against the council to do things, and it’d be nice to see if there was some other system that would work, that enabled people to do more stuff without having to get licences or something, you know? It all seems so very bureaucratic.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, but we’re owed a licence, I think.

PARTICIPANT: Are we?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, probably. So my last question, we haven’t really talked about this idea of heritage. Can I ask you what you think heritage is?
PARTICIPANT: I think heritage is more than just old buildings, I think. I think heritage is very much now. We’re creating heritage in the things we do and how we shape the city and how we shape what we do as human beings at this particular moment in time.

Yeah, you always think of heritage as stuff that’s happened in the past, but I think it’s stuff that’s happening now. Yeah, it’s quite a big question to ask, actually. I think I might need to think about that one.

INTERVIEWER: Mike threw it back at me. At the end of the interview I hadn’t brought it up and it kind of came up because I was asking him about how a lot of the hubs and centres in York are often old buildings. And then at the end he asked me that question and it was like, ‘Oh!’ So I’m going to ask everybody else!

PARTICIPANT: No, it’s a good idea.

INTERVIEWER: It’s a good question. Cool. Okay, I think we’ve pretty much covered everything I was going to ask.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 18: 07-08-15 Your Bike Shed Lilac

INTERVIEWER: Okay, we’re good. So, thank you for joining me today.
RESPONDENT: You’re welcome.

INTERVIEWER: I will make everybody anonymous in the transcripts [unclear – 0:00:10.1].
RESPONDENT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Can we first start by telling me how we know each other?
RESPONDENT: We know each other though having met in here actually, Your Bike Shed, about a year ago. Then before the Red Tower ideas developed, I was involved in TIM in York - The Incredible Movement in York and you contacted me, I think– Or us– through the website and asked what TIM was about and if there was any way you could get involved and then we had a cup of tea in here and it went from there. So, that’s my recollection.

INTERVIEWER: And then we– carrying on from December I think when we had the first Red Tower meeting.
RESPONDENT: We did, we had that just before Christmas and you were at that and you were showing an interest in the Red Tower as a case study for the work that you’re doing.

INTERVIEWER: And we’ve been continuing.
RESPONDENT: And it’s been on-going ever since.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, so okay. I’m going to ask you about what it is that you’re doing in York and what your job is.
RESPONDENT: My job role with Red Tower, or generally, what I do?
INTERVIEWER: Generally first and then with the Red Tower.
RESPONDENT: Okay, I live in York and I run two urban regeneration companies. I am an urban regeneration consultant. One is Blue Fish Regeneration which is my own company which works with communities to develop and deliver regeneration projects across the UK but primarily working in the north of England. My other company is called Restoration People and that’s very similar but with three co-directors and we focus particularly on heritage historic buildings. So listed buildings, listed sites and scheduled ancient monuments.

INTERVIEWER: And so...
RESPONDENT: Oh, sorry, my answer to the rest of the question.
INTERVIEWER: Yes, the Red Tower bit, yes, sorry.
RESPONDENT: The Red Tower bit, really it’s taking whatever skills I have in my day job into something that I have a passion for outside my work. So, with TIM we had an idea that we wanted to have a focus in the form of a building that would really epitomise the ethos of TIM, which is basically fast, fun, cheap, local, get on and do it, don’t wait for permission to do it, and something that will help resolve any issues involved, you know, in the area. You know, protecting the environment, encouraging food-growing and encouraging grass-roots activism in a very positive way. So when I accidently discovered the Red Tower back in September last year at a Heritage Open Day and I found out what the council, who own it, were looking for potential new uses for it – I thought that would be an opportunity. So my role with the Red Tower has been to, I suppose, catalyse the project, gather the people together who share that passion and really, sort of, keep the energy going I suppose – holding the ring I think is probably the best way I describe it.

INTERVIEWER: And how have you been– What was your sort of activities been as regards the Red Tower, I know I through working with working with you, but if you could just put it into your own words.

RESPONDENT: Yes, absolutely. Primarily my role is to talk to the council. So I went and spoke to Harry at City of York Council who is responsible for all the buildings and the walls and– I mean, he’s been brilliant – spoke to the Asset Management Team, the Community Management Team at the council and also people like English Heritage, the local community, resident’s association and anyone relevant with the local councillors to really, sort of, garner support and to get views on– really sort of test the water to see the reaction to something like a community kitchen, café, growing space and a meeting space. So it was to really sort of throw the idea out there and to see if anyone looked terrified or shocked, or anything like that. So it was taken as original sound-groups. After that it’s been really a matter of just keeping the momentum behind the project. So working with people like you and Claire, Patricia and Linda and others who have come and gone over time, to try and just keep it on track really.

INTERVIEWER: We’re still going, so you carry on.

RESPONDENT: Yes, so I think that’s kind of answered that question.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, well one of the other things that I have noticed that you’ve done as part of this getting the message out there, the idea out there rather, is you’ve been doing a lot of press releases...

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: ...on the radio [unclear – 0:05:39.2] Do we know how many press releases the Red Tower has done?

RESPONDENT: We haven’t actually done– I don’t think we’ve done any press releases.
INTERVIEWER: What's happened?

RESPONDENT: The beauty of the Red Tower is it seems to attract its own press attention I think. So in the early days I had several approaches from the York press, they put a couple of really good articles in there round about Christmas time and they promoted the resident's only weekend in January, which was a great success. We have had many journalists from the Yorkshire Post picked up on the project and I did a long interview with her so that was a fairly major article in the Yorkshire post, probably about six months ago. And we've had, I think it was a Radio York has contacted us. So we haven't really been doing a lot of running around trying to flag it up, people have kind of come to us which is just as well because we're so stretched that we haven't got time to get the press releases out. So we're just hoping really– A bit like this recent piece in the press that was for conservation volunteers that approached us and said would you be happy to have an article? So it's that kind of project, it doesn't need the hard sell really. It kind of sells itself.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, I don't actually have very much experience of promoting, getting the idea out there [unclear – 0:07:00.7] how– What is the main purpose of doing that? What is the intention?

RESPONDENT: Right the intention behind that is basically to build its profile as a project. So, for instance, you Tweet about something, so used in a communication strategy we use a combination of various media platforms. So, you can have Twitter and Facebook – they're the two starting points really on the social media. We Tweet about things when they happen. What then happens is the media outlets pick it up. So you'll get the BBC has suddenly seen– You know they want to do an interview on radio or something like that. You'll do, you know, the local press will pick it up, the regional press will pick it up. You then Tweet those stories and Facebook those stories back out on social media, so people then realise that it's something that it's building as a subject. So it's kind of a symbiotic relationship between pushing stuff out there, pulling stuff in and then regurgitating it. So you've got this virtual circle of publicity if you like, which builds the credibility and then from that the momentum for the project.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, as a social media practitioner, per se, you know I manage the department’s archaeology site, one of the things that I find is really interesting is this idea of encouraging people to participate on social media platforms.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And I don't know if– What is your experience of or is your impression of how these platforms have been doing in terms of, you know, participation and...

RESPONDENT: I think they've been doing really well. I mean the– We've got something like 180 likes of the Facebook page, we've got about 50 members of the Facebook board and we've got– I mean, we're Tweeting via TIM but TIM's got something like 600 followers. So it's very effective
at getting out to a lot of people. What’s primarily interesting is where that then goes. So for instance, I’ll see on the Facebook page— I’ll put something out there and some, it might falls as a dud, like a football with no air in it, it just lands and nothing happens and you think, ‘Well what’s all that about?’ And then the next thing you’ll put out, which you don’t necessarily think is any more interesting, but there’s clearly an angle to it and you’ll suddenly see that it’s reached an audience of 350 people because what’s happened is the people on that page have shared it and then other people will have read it from those networks. So it’s kind of, you’ve got that sort of viral effect if you like on social media. So it can be a little bit unpredictable as to which ones will be picked up and run with and which ones won’t. But it is getting out there and it is getting recognition, which is incredibly helpful when talking to anyone about the project because you never have to start from scratch because a lot of people now, I speak to, they just know about this.

INTERVIEWER: So, my– When we were talking earlier just before the recording about, sort of, the discussions you’ve had on Twitter and Facebook, certain people and you were telling me your account of that. Can you just give a brief summary of what we were talking about, not naming names.

RESPONDENT: Yes, absolutely, yeah. I mean we’ve had very– We’ve had no opposition really. We’ve had two cases, one on Facebook, one on Twitter– Each an individual who, I think are, their perception of what you do with monuments like the walls, the city walls, and the Red Tower is probably radically different from the TIM perception. In that they want to– There seems to be a view, and it’s not widely held and by getting, you know, as I say there are only two individuals that seem to want to preserve things in their strict... So their responses have been rather, a little bit as though we’re kind of irresponsible children that needed to be brought back into line and, you know, when you grow up you’ll learn the real way of things. It’s that kind of attitude which is, kind of, neither here nor there really because it’s not going to have any affect. But that’s the only – we haven’t had anyone come back and say, ‘Oh, this is terrible.’ I think they would just rather the [unclear – 0:11:39.2] approach which clearly when [unclear – 0:11:41.2] – and it hasn’t gone anywhere, I mean, that hasn’t whipped up a storm of other people thinking the same thing. It’s just they fall in line; they’ve just not gone anywhere. So, it’s kind of, not amounted to anything really.

INTERVIEWER: And the other really important aspect for getting the message out there, as I am very aware of thing – You know, my concern is about the Red Tower is opening up to local communities and I think I know your views on this, but could you give a sort of – what your impressions are, first of our intentions for the local community next to the Red Tower and how well that’s gone?

RESPONDENT: Right, I mean, I’ve been– That’s the one aspect that I’m quite disappointed in but not entirely surprising. I mean in the generation you’ve got to find the communities can become very apathetic. They can want to say within a comfort zone and even though you might come in
from another part of the city and say, ‘Well, look there’s clearly demand in this area, look around you, there’s not much going, this could be a real facility,’ it’s not– You don’t necessarily make that quantum leap from realisation of the potential to actually other people realising that potential, if you like. So whilst setting the potential to realising the potential, you don’t make that leap over night.

So that is why the community side, which I think I agree with you, is absolutely crucial to this. The immediate community needs to get involved, on-board and feel like they’re benefitting from it, otherwise it just becomes another tourist attraction in York and I don’t think that’s what they’re after. Personally, that’s not what I’m after because York has lots of tourist attractions. So I don’t see, you know, my passion is to create another tourist attraction in York. My passion is about working with communities that want something better, to hopefully use whatever expertise and experience I’ve got, to help that challenge.

But what’s been happening more recently which is one of the reasons for opening the Tower on Saturday every couple of hours, is just that sort of drip, drip, drip approach. Gently, kind of, just having it there and that– It’s a loss, it’s probably, you know, you’re putting time in and all the rest of it, it’s not about making money it’s about actually just having in there so gently promoting the benefits of it to people. And it’s actually working, you know, what we’ve– I think it’s turned 180 degrees, or at least, you know, 150 degrees in the last few weeks because we’ve now got people from local residents’ associations coming in on Saturday and enjoying the cakes and donating and chatting. And the kids from the local area rushing in and they absolutely love it, they’re having a great time.

And they’re, kind of, talking to each other and I get the impression that they hadn’t talked to each other before. You know, a lot of these people didn’t know each other even though they’d lived on our doorstep, because of the slightly silo-esque nature of the local neighbourhood, how it’s physically built and how it’s physically interacts was quite siloed. So, I get the impression that people actually don’t know each other within that area and the Red Tower is already forming a– serving a purpose in bringing those people together. And it’s organically happening, when all we’re doing is having the opportunity there, just opening it and saying, ‘Hey, how do you want to use this?’ You know, we’re not being prescriptive about it and we have no expectations.

INTERVIEWER: I am sharing the same sort of aspirations if you like, passions and for the Red Tower and I think that, although I have had days where I feel it’s [unclear – 0:15:58.7] I think it’s just one day when I was like, ‘This isn’t going to happen.’

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But then...

RESPONDENT: I think we’ve all...

INTERVIEWER: ...as you...
RESPONDENT: ...had days like that...

INTERVIEWER: ...say, yeah.

RESPONDENT: ...to be fair, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: When the people, when the goods started coming in and that week...

RESPONDENT: It brings in energies, it brings an energy in which is...

INTERVIEWER: It really...

RESPONDENT: ...irreplaceable, you know, that’s just wonderful.

INTERVIEWER: So, what would you say your concerns are for— lets start first with the concerns for the Red Tower and then concerns for the wider [unclear – 0:16:31.3] of York.

RESPONDENT: What do you mean – I’m not too sure what you mean by concerns. Do you mean things that might prevent it from happening or...? I mean I can talk about aspirations and ideas.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, well talk aspirations and...

RESPONDENT: I don’t really have any concerns other that it might not happen.

INTERVIEWER: Fair enough.

RESPONDENT: Which is clearly a concern.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But, I mean that I think that what’s really, really exciting about Red Tower, if it goes as I would personally like it to, it’s actually a demonstration of being able to do things really differently. It’s not about opening a café, it’s not about growing veggies in a bed outside, it’s about actually demonstrating to people that you can do this. You know, we don’t need to live the way we live. We don’t need to be clad down by true market capitalism and top-down hierarchies and the council telling us whether we can wear a blue blouse on a Wednesday. We don’t need to live like that. There is another way of living.

So actually to me the Red Tower is almost incidental, to me Red Tower is a tool to demonstrate the possibilities of how we can do things differently. And that’s the bit that really excites me. It could, I mean it happens to be a wonderful building with its own fantastic energy which is great but equally it could be, you know, some kind of port-a-cabin, you know. It doesn’t really matter to me. I’m not precious about the historic aspect— the historic and that is great but that’s not what’s driving me. What’s driving me is to really show that we can do things differently and what’s very, very interesting is the energy in and around the Red Tower is a very different energy.
This is starting to sound a bit Mystic Meg but I really believe this. If you step over that wall into the council area where they have the flats and they have a really nice garden lea, a nice space for us, it’s dead. Absolutely dead. I get no energy from that place. I could walk backwards and forwards all day and I get no energy. I walk into the Red Tower and my spirits lift and I think okay maybe, you know buildings have their own energy but I think what actually happens in that building is driving the energy and now you’re seeing on either side of the walls two different things happening, profoundly different things happening. On the other side of the wall they’re still worried about whether the council will let them plant this, or do that, or sit there, or move that somewhere, you know? They’re very hung-up on what they can and can’t do on that side of the wall. On our side of the wall, we just do it anyway.

So my real ambition is for, you know, our energy to spill over the wall and for people to start coming out into the council bits to start to say, ‘Actually, I don’t really like prickly bushes, I’m going to plant some, I don’t know, spinach or something.’ Fine, do it. That would be my ultimate dream, I think if that happens and if you speak to people like, you know, Pam Warnhurst and Mary Clear from Incredible Edible, they have that type of– They have desire and it’s that shared desire that I have. It’s not about the building, I tell you.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting because my next question was going to be– Obviously I’m coming from the Department of Archaeology and there are lot of people named in the department that do have desires to build it– That are very, very much about the buildings themselves...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...and not necessarily– I think there are a lot of people in Heritage as a discipline. There’s a big movement about how heritage, not just in its physical form as a building or as archaeology but heritage at large can be a part of this, sort of, social...

RESPONDENT: Absolutely, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...you know...

RESPONDENT: Well it’s...

INTERVIEWER: That’s, that’s...

RESPONDENT: ...heritage is only a continuum; it’s part of a continuum. It’s not something [unclear – 0:20:26.8] I think whether your an archaeologist or not, if you start seeing heritage as some fixed point in time then it makes, it makes a nonsense out of heritage because no heritage– Look at the Red Tower, it’s been rebuilt and rebuilt. So very little is actually fifteenth century, a lot of it is nineteenth century. So, how hung-up do you get on heritage? So, yeah, I mean I think from an archaeologist’s point of view they will have different perspective but I think they’ll probably at heart the same thing. To me, as I say, Red Tower is a tool but it’s actually a
really interesting one and it’s a great opportunity to make sure it continues to have a purpose to
come for future generations. So that’s an exciting— I suppose to an archaeologist, the difference
between me and an archaeologist probably is to say well that’s the driver. The building itself is
not driving me, to me the building’s not the driver, to me the driver is the ethos behind the
incredible— That TIM thing which is about saying let’s just do it.
INTERVIEWER: It’s interesting because it— I mean, you talk about the energy in the building and I
think that’s where there’s a similar [long pause] coming together [long pause] ethos and— Well
this is my point, is...
RESPONDENT: I think we’re right, yeah.
INTERVIEWER: Do... I mean...
RESPONDENT: I do, I agree, yes I think there is. I think what it’s doing... If there’s an energy
somewhere it will pull people in and it will hold it. Energy doesn’t discriminate so it will pull in
kids, you know, into this joint. It will pull in local residents’ association. It will pull in people like
us. It will pull in, you know, visitors walking past. You know, you will have seen this and I’ve seen
this so many times. You open that door and from the minute you open that door people go
straight in and, I mean, I was actually trying to have a meeting in there with my colleagues last
week and we had about ten kids running around, you know, it was like having a meeting in a
kindergarten, it’s hilarious. But that was great and my colleagues did look a bit, sort of, taken
aback at first but it was really good fun. And what that did was we all got that energy and so it
will attract people, and it snowballs.
INTERVIEWER: Do you, I mean, we’ve talk a bit about the sort of the place, that area, and I’m
going to use the place because it is important to my theory, I wondered what you thought
about this idea of place and do you feel that considering everything you’ve said that some
places have energy, some places don’t.
RESPONDENT: Mm.
INTERVIEWER: Is do you have other places in York that you feel that energy or is that...?
RESPONDENT: Ah, I could talk all day about the energy in York. That’s a really weird thing. I think
there’s a very odd energy in York because some of it can be quite negative and I think, I wonder,
I’ve talked to so many friends about that who feel the same way. I think the Red Tower’s quite
strange because it the walls I think create a mindset of keeping people out but what’s really
interesting about the Red Tower— And I’ve been into lots of other of the Towers around the
walls and I don’t feel anything one way or the other, you know? You know the Micklegate one
here to museums, the one that’s a café in Walmgate perfectly pleasant places but I don’t feel
particularly drawn to them.
So, I think the Red Tower’s quite unusual in that it’s very open and I think it could be because
the layout— I think it’s unique because, well not only because it’s the only red brick tile on the
walks but it’s also very accessible at ground level and it’s got that garden space around it that’s
got the wall. And it set within—

And it’s massively historic. Most of the historic buildings that I go to in York are either church
halls or, you know, the guildhall or wherever. They’re very closed, they’re very dark, they have a
kind of slight, even the Minster, you know, slightly you’ve got to kind of work your way into
them. The Red Tower is just there. It’s just incredibly... That’s what it says on the tin, very
straightforward and for a building that’s essentially 500 years old that’s pretty unusual. So I’d say
it’s unique.

INTERVIEWER: So, I mean, it’s a really cool theory and I do follow you to an extent— I just wonder
whether there are other places that you’ve experienced that— Maybe not exactly like the Red
Tower, which is, you know, is materially different to anything I’ve come across— My appreciation
of it is that I have always liked the idea of making a space look like [unclear – 0:25:46.6] I used to
come across but I’m wondering if you’ve had that experience in any other
places, like, in your life?

RESPONDENT: Yes, some of them are actually really good spaces.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...Or something but I’m wondering if you’ve had that experience in any other
places, like, in your life?

RESPONDENT: Well, yeah, I mean I think... Gosh. I’m sure I have. I don’t tend to think of York as
being somewhere that has those silly places, I think. You know, there are places in York like
Clements Hall which has been done up in old wall, you know, the one in South Bank, it’s all done
up. That’s, you know, that’s kind of an old building that’s being done up and it’s quite
welcoming and, you know, that’s okay to go in. I quite like that place. But, you know, I don’t
have that in York. I’d have to think about that. Nothing springs to mind. I mean I do I do have a
thing about spaces but it’s very rare that you pick up that positive energy so strongly, so it’s
actually quite unusual. I don’t normally walk into a place, something like this café now is
perfectly pleasant but I don’t have a particularly strong view about it either way. It’s a
commercial proposition I’m walking into a commercial space and it’s a nicely done commercial
space but it’s not really— I don’t have strong views one way or the other but maybe I’m just a bit
thick-skinned about picking up energies, I don’t know. I don’t have a particular view on that...

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:27:16.8]

RESPONDENT: Yeah, exactly, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting. I’m trying to think of...
RESPONDENT: I’ll probably think of one the minute I walk out of here actually and I’ll think, ‘Oh yes...’

INTERVIEWER: I mean, this is like the thing that I always, always done, I’m happy to put my own experiences here. Whenever I’ve moved into somewhere, like a student flat, I always put my little crystal...

RESPONDENT: Oh right, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...to catch the sunlight and make rainbows.

RESPONDENT: Oh right.

INTERVIEWER: And that for me always makes a space more...

RESPONDENT: Oh, that’s what it is, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...it does and I’ve spoken to yoga teachers about this...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...who agree that that is part of bringing in energy...

RESPONDENT: Right, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...I mean, I’m not proposing that’s what you do.

RESPONDENT: No, I would be against it, absolutely no, I’m all for – I mean I’m not particularly, I don’t practice that but I completely respect it, yeah, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I do, why not...? But it might scare off the residents’ association though it might.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah and I realise that it is, you know, has the, sort of, potential to align with certain people.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...it’s not their cup of tea.

RESPONDENT: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: But it is, it’s something– I mean, we can agree that we have some kind of, that you’ve talked about your sister seeing a...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah, we all have our...

INTERVIEWER: ...a Reiki healer...

RESPONDENT: Absolutely, yeah.
INTERVIEWER: And that’s really interesting for me.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But it is interesting that I [long pause] yeah, I think some people have different appreciations of space and places.

RESPONDENT: Yes, yeah.

I mean going back to...

INTERVIEWER: And that’s what I’m exploring.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I mean, obviously placed at two levels there is that kind of slightly subliminal or whatever you like to call it, that kind of subconscious level that you engage with places at but I think there’s also the physical stuff. And the two are obviously interconnected but that’s why I think the Red Tower works really well because you have that outside space. And we’ve made, I mean the progress on that– What we’ve done on that space in two, three months is absolutely phenomenal. We’ve build a bed, joint effort, cost about two and six, you know, and we’ve put a load of soil in, put a load of vegetables in and it’s just gone ballistic and it looks beautiful.

INTERVIEWER: And we’ve had residents actually help us.

RESPONDENT: And they help– Yeah, they help and they’ve got themselves some veggies, which is equally good. So, but that leads people into the Red Tower and then they come in and then get another piece of cake or some coffee, or whatever, or just kind of chill out. And the kids can run around upstairs and, sort of, make dens with whatever it is, you know, to me that’s a place that works, you know, you don’t have, for instance, people standing at the door charging for entry to the Red Tower. So you can have a great day bed and then you go into the Red Tower and you’ve got to pay through the nose to get in, you know, stuff like that. The whole thing flows and that’s the idea. The idea is that it’s open, it’s free, it’s sharing, it’s everybody’s, it’s ours. So, and people get that which is why they go in there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I’m really looking forward to doing some interviews with some people that do come in and use it.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Are you going to speak to visitors as well?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, that’s great.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, um, oh, you’re speaking to Sally and Cathy aren’t you?
INTERVIEWER: Yes.
RESPONDENT: Good.
INTERVIEWER: Yes I am.
RESPONDENT: That'll be really interesting.
INTERVIEWER: And hopefully [unclear – 0:30:37.6] Right, I think that's me covered, I don't know...
RESPONDENT: Okay.
INTERVIEWER: ...if there’s anything else you wanted to add or...?
RESPONDENT: No I don’t think so.
INTERVIEWER: The other thing, I mean, you talked about, yeah, actually we will go back to this because effective media, if we could.
RESPONDENT: Right.
INTERVIEWER: It's about it being an effective thing, and effective is actually whether [unclear – 0:30:55.3].
RESPONDENT: Right.
INTERVIEWER: And I wonder what your idea of effective media is, I mean, I know that there are multiple platforms that we’re talking about. How do you judge their effectiveness?
RESPONDENT: Well, I suppose you can measure it by how many people, you know, when they’ve picked upon on a particular Tweet, or a particular email, or a particular Facebook message, or whatever. To me though it’s much more about getting the message out and so to me it’s not just about reaching lots and lots of people. It’s about getting the idea out that, you know, in several different ways that this is something for all of us. And that it won’t happen unless we all get behind it. So it’s not for us to then, sort of, issue instructions from the sidelines. It’s about us getting on board. So to me the real measure is whether enough people come onboard through that to make it happen.
INTERVIEWER: We have had a couple of people come through.
RESPONDENT: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: Did Ed – did Ed the TCV guy, did he...?
RESPONDENT: He contacted us through social media, yeah.
INTERVIEWER: And that led to a grant?
RESPONDENT: Yes, exactly. Yeah, that was absolute—That was perfect, that was a really good example. I mean other things are Ingrid who didn’t come to the last meeting, not the same Ingrid that we’re talking about. But she’s been great and she’s very keen to get involved. She just turned up at the Red Tower a couple of weeks ago and I was there and was chatting to her. So, she’s happy to help with funding applications and stuff like that. So, but she doesn’t do social media. So, which is a bit awkward really so we’re having to email her and stuff, so...

INTERVIEWER: Is she still in contact?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I think...

RESPONDENT: She’s just waiting for—She’s going to try and come this Saturday, actually.

INTERVIEWER: Everyone’s coming this Saturday.

RESPONDENT: And there’s also somebody called Mary who does storytelling who really wants to get involved in the Heritage Open Day.

INTERVIEWER: Awesome.

RESPONDENT: So she’s going to try and come on Saturday as well.

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:32:57.8].

RESPONDENT: You’re not... This Saturday?

INTERVIEWER: Oh, no this Saturday?

RESPONDENT: This coming Saturday.

INTERVIEWER: This Saturday, yeah...

RESPONDENT: Oh, no, it’s not the Heritage Open Day.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, the Heritage Open Day I suppose bad timing on my part. Anyway, never mind. I think that that has pretty much had it. So I’m going to stop now.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 19: 08-08-15 Red Tower Patricia

INTERVIEWER: So can you first tell me, if I could give you that to hold, can you first tell me about how we know each other and how we met?

RESPONDENT: Well we met, I believe it was when we had the Yorkshire Open Residents weekend and I heard through Food Not Bombs that Lilac was looking for volunteers to help out Red Tower on that day. I believe we met then, on that day.

INTERVIEWER: So that was back in January.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, January/February time, the York Residents Weekend.

INTERVIEWER: And we’ve been working together on and off ever since?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. About seven months.

INTERVIEWER: And can you tell me what are you doing in York?

RESPONDENT: I’m living in York and I’m working in York. I’ve only been in York for a couple of years, but I love it and it’s become more my home town and I don’t particularly want to move, so I’m just trying to make a living for myself at the moment in York.

INTERVIEWER: So what do you do for a living?

RESPONDENT: I work for Macmillan Cancer Charity as an administrator and I work for the South East of England, doing finances, looking after the nurses and helping with their queries and anything Macmillan related and supporting Macmillan development managers, who go out to the hospitals and to organisations to set up cancer services to help people who are affected by cancer.

INTERVIEWER: And what do you do day-to-day?

RESPONDENT: Day-to-day I sit at a computer, mainly, and look at emails and reply to emails. I write legal documents to send out to hospitals to set up the services to welcome new professionals into their Macmillan role, to set up the payment schedules for the professionals and do additional grants. So for things like if a nurse wants to set up a private counselling room and they didn’t have any funding from the NHS, they would come to us and apply for a small grant to be able to do that. And I deal with a lot of queries, answer a lot of emails.

INTERVIEWER: So you’ve got a range of activities there. Where are your offices?

RESPONDENT: Oh, gosh, what’s the road called? You know where Luke is?

INTERVIEWER: Luke?

RESPONDENT: You know where the Phoenix is?
INTERVIEWER: I know where the Phoenix is.

RESPONDENT: It is just, if you go through the gates, and then you’ve got on the big main road going out towards Fulford, Fulford Road, yes, Fawcett Street.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I think I do know that one. So you got involved in the Red Tower in January, through Food Not Bombs, which is another charity. Can you tell us about the link there?

RESPONDENT: Well I’ve got a lot of friends in Food Not Bombs and I’ve been helping out with them, so on their Sundays I’ve been going over and cooking every now and again. I’ve made good friends with them, I meet up with the guys who do it, just in the pub generally. And DW, who is the main guy in Food Not Bombs, he put a post on the Food Not Bombs Facebook group and said this project is needing volunteers – is anyone free? And I said, ‘I’m free, I’ll go along and help out.’ So Food Not Bombs and Red Tower projects have really helped each other. So on a Saturday, when we’ve got cakes, we will give the cakes to Food Not Bombs for their Sunday stall and when we haven’t had any hot water, we’ve borrowed their urns and hot water and we’ve had Food Not Bombs food cooked and brought here as well.

INTERVIEWER: So you kind of went from Food Not Bombs– I mean you still do stuff with them, I imagine? Or...

RESPONDENT: Not very often. Because I’m too busy with Red Tower. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: So you’ve kind of moved from Food Not Bombs to Red Tower.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me about your role in Red Tower? I know it seems obvious because I’ve been working with you...

RESPONDENT: But for the sake... yeah. I don’t really have a huge role, I wouldn’t say. I come along and do the Saturdays and help out on Saturdays. I love cleaning, so you’ll often find me in the Tower at the top with a sweeping brush, sweeping, scaring Hugh and I like doing the mucky bits, so I helped out doing the big clean out and got absolutely filthy. I help look at items that we want to purchase and did a bit of budgeting and figured out how much it would cost. Because I’m the only one, I think, with a car, I picked up a lot of the furniture, like the chairs, the tables, brought a lot of books down. So I’ve done a few odd bits and bobs, but I haven’t been involved really with the bid stages and any of the money, just more of the practical side and the doing side.

INTERVIEWER: That’s great. So what do you think about the money side of things? What is your opinion on it? Do you have one?

RESPONDENT: Well, we need money.

INTERVIEWER: We need money, yeah. Why do we need money?
RESPONDENT: Well we need to buy things, we need to get the kitchen fitted out, we need to pay people, because it’s so hard getting volunteers who are dedicated to carry on coming each week or every other week to help volunteer and to make the project work. There’s a core group of five of us giving up our Saturdays to do this, and it’s quite hard and we need somebody who can take on the project full-time to actually make the café happen. Somebody with experience who knows what they’re doing and maybe have got the time.

INTERVIEWER: So what are your sort of desires for this project? And what are your concerns?

Desires first.

RESPONDENT: Desires, I want the upstairs to look gorgeous. I’m in love with the upstairs of the Tower. I went up there, the first time I saw it I had little goose bumps and it’s just got the lovely beams and all the ledges and all the little cubby holes. I go up there and I can just see how good it can be. So my desires are to get the kitchen fitted out downstairs, so we can start focusing on the upstairs, getting that decorated and looking very vintage and lovely and warm and happy. And to have that used for the café side on Saturdays or for businesses or organisations to use that space for their activities. So games clubs, book clubs, knitting clubs, theatre clubs, open cinema clubs, businesses who want to do team meetings or team building days. Just to bring people in to use that space. Then we’ve got the downstairs for the catering to do the sandwiches, soups for lunches. So you can have it as a day venue as well.

INTERVIEWER: So what about your concerns for the building? Do you have any concerns?

RESPONDENT: Well, and this is something we can’t help, but the lighting is a serious issue and I know once we get electricity we will have light, but it’s maybe the lack of natural light and maybe having artificial light will ruin it a little bit, especially upstairs, because you’ve got the light from the sun that comes through the tiny holes in the rooms and you get those little snapshots of light and it might ruin the charm, having it too kitted out and having too much in there. That’s one of my concerns. Another concern is the volunteers – being able to actually keep it open. And also heat in winter – having it open in winter is going to be hard. So if we’ve going to have the lease on the building, we have to pay rent on the building, but we can’t open properly in winter, we don’t get a lot of business, that’s a big concern.

INTERVIEWER: So obviously it sounds likes there’s lots of physical things, practical things that are both part of your concerns and you desires, how do you think... I’m trying to think of good questions here, it’s tricky, how do you think that we can go forward from here?

RESPONDENT: Realistically I think we need to carry on doing what we’re doing for a while. Raise the profile of the project, get people who live in York actually knowing that this is happening every Saturday and I don’t think that’s going to happen this year. It might not even happen next year. I think we just need to carry on doing what we’re doing, having fun, keep looking after the raised bed, slowly and surely make it look nicer on the inside. So with the big table, maybe get the flip, pop-up table to create more space, because it is quite small in there, and when you get
a couple of people who walk past the walls and we say, ‘Feel free to take a look inside.’ They
stand in the doorway, they’re not quite sure whether to go inside, so I think we need to focus on
the inside to make it inviting, to make people know about it, keep coming back. And for people
to see that it is a part of York, it is just a café like every other café, but with an obvious twist,
because it’s the Red Tower, it’s a totally different concept to a normal café.

INTERVIEWER: So there’s a couple of things there then. Raising the profile – what does that
mean for you?

RESPONDENT: Having it seen as a part of York instead of just an old building that’s on the walls
that is just on the wall trail. It’s actually something that people can do, like when you’re walking
along the walls, people know it’s here, so they think, ‘Oh, let’s walk the walls and let’s stop and
have a coffee in the Red Tower.’ And people start thinking of it as an activity, rather than just
walking past with a, ‘Oh, what’s this?’ So that’s going to take a while for people in York to realise
it is happening, because there is a lot happening in York. And also if you’re into this sort of stuff,
if you into that pay as you feel concept, if you’re into heritage in York, you’ll know about it, but if
you’re not, if you’re just an average person who does your job, you go home, you’ve got your
kids to look after or your family or you’re off at the weekends, you might not necessarily hear
about the Red Tower, because you’re involved in those circles, you’re not reading things like
that. Do you see what I mean?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I do. So this is where my interest in sort of sharing information is what I’m
really interested in, although it can be seen as neither here nor there for others, but I would be
interested, because in the past we did talk about having a media chat, didn’t we? And I
wondered if the Facebook page was part of that? What do you think?

RESPONDENT: I think in this day and age you need to have your Facebook, your Twitter, your
website and all your social media platforms up and running and looking professional. That’s very
hard for a group of volunteers who all work full-time. That’s a big challenge, I know I found it a
massive challenge doing the social media. I switch my laptop on once a week and I don’t go on
Facebook that often, so to find the time to sit down and get my head around social media, don’t
laugh because I’m quite young, but I’m not very good at it. To sit down and do it and think right
I need to do a post, because it takes up a lot of time, because you can’t just post about yourself,
you’ve got to look at other Facebook accounts and other projects and post about them and get
involved with what they’re doing, keep up to date with what they’re doing to post on your page.

And that takes a lot of time to look and to find other projects and to find other social
media sites to look at and to follow and to get engaged with, so they engage with you. So it’s
very time-consuming, I think that’s a huge challenge and that takes somebody who is dedicated
and has the time to do that and has the time to do that on a daily basis.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I hear you. I manage a social media site for the Department of Archaeology
and I think that’s... something’s just occurred to me. So information sharing on social media sites
and you’ve got to have different platforms as well, Facebook, Twitter but it sounds like it’s a bit
time-consuming and potentially, from what you’ve said, maybe even a bit confusing? Would you
say that, would you agree with that?

RESPONDENT: I wouldn’t say it’s confusing, it is the time and also some of the challenges are
thinking about what you’re posting. Is it actually appropriate? Because it is quite easy to post
things on your own agenda and if you really support, say, the Green Party, you want to post
things about them, but then also you’ve got to think of your audience – who is my audience?
And our audience is a huge, wide-range of people. You’ve got families, you’ve got young
people, you’ve got students and you’ve got to make sure that you’re not posting about one
particular thing. You’ve got to make sure that it is appropriate for what your project is and for
who is reading it, as well. So I wouldn’t say confusing, I think it’s...

INTERVIEWER: I know what you mean. I hear you on these levels, because as I’ve had with my
own experience doing the archaeology posts, I do find that thinking about audiences is a puzzle.
Okay, so we’ve talked about what you’re doing in York and your job. We’ve talked about your
role with Red Tower and your concerns and desires for the building, and the information sharing
aspect. What I would now like to ask about is what your idea of heritage is?

RESPONDENT: Heritage?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I’m not an expert on heritage, but for me when I think of heritage, I think of nice,
preserved buildings and nice places to go and look and feel inspired by. So to feel like you’re
walking in the past, that’s how I see heritage. I might be completely wrong.

INTERVIEWER: Everyone is entitled to their opinion.

RESPONDENT: But if I think of, oh, I want to go and see some heritage, I’ll get in the car, have a
nice day out to a big manor house or a big day out and I’ll see it as an activity to go to, to try
and live the past, try and figure out how they lived. On a more day-to-day basis, I’m not so
concerned about big, historical events, I like the day-to-day, I like to know how did people in
mediaeval times bake their bread, the little, practical home things. Because I love my home and I
love making my home homely, so I want to know about other people’s homes, if that makes
sense.

INTERVIEWER: That makes sense.

RESPONDENT: So that’s what I think when I think of heritage. I also think of voluntary groups
trying to keep these buildings going and trying to keep the interest going, but also having to
make a bit of an income to do any restoration on it, to keep it maintained. Because a building
will eventually fall down if you don’t look after it.
INTERVIEWER: So do you think that Red Tower is part of what your idea of heritage is? Where does Red Tower fit in your idea of what you've just said about heritage?

RESPONDENT: I think it's 50/50. I think it's very 50/50. It is very heritage-y, it has all its information facts on the walls, people who are walking past can see... so the information boards, they can read our boards that we put out each Saturday. They can read up on the internet as well. But then you’ve got the modern day, which is what we’re doing. I think what we’re doing is very modern, very up-to-date and very current. This is why I think it's 50/50, because you can see it’s old, you can see it’s... is it Victorian?

INTERVIEWER: Well the current renovations are Victorian.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, current Victorian renovation, but then if you look in detail at the building, you can see that the level of the building has been raised over the years and you can see the partial fireplace, you can see all the brickwork and you can see the different types of brickwork and you can see its little slits in the walls, so we can see how it was a watch tower and was also used in maybe some defence. So you can definitely see the history of it, but then it is very current, with what we’re doing with it, having a pay as you feel café with having it very... we’ve quite conscious of people who may be a little bit poorer or people who have got more money who want to see projects like this carry on and it’s attracting lots of different types of people and it’s raising questions about how we should live our lives and how the country should live its life as well. Should be really be corporate or should be have more nice projects like this, which make people feel good? So that’s why I think it's 50/50.

INTERVIEWER: That’s a really interesting way of looking at it. And we haven’t actually talked about, very much, the interpretation panels that are outside the Red Tower. What’s your opinion on them?

RESPONDENT: To be honest I’ve been so busy doing what I’ve been doing, I haven’t actually read them. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Well, okay, having not read them, though, do you think... You mentioned that people look at them, do you think that... The word that came up with Lilac’s interview was effective. Do you think they’re effective?

RESPONDENT: I like them, I like that it stops people. As they’re walking past the wall, they stop, they have a read and then it gives... there we go, there’s a many just there reading them now. And that will give one of us, who is volunteering, an opportunity to go up and say, ‘Feel free to take a look inside, this is what we’re trying to do. Look upstairs.’ And then also give a more verbal account of the history, if you know it, or to say, ‘This is what happened, this is what we’re doing now, this is how this building is being used now.’ So, yes, I agree with Lilac, they are effective. I think aesthetically maybe a lick of paint or make them look at little bit sturdier, but that’s just me with my creative head on. But I do like them, I think it is useful for people to stop
and look at them and to read them and read into the history of the project and then see what we’re doing now.

INTERVIEWER: Wow, okay. I’m trying to think if there’s anything left to say. Okay, let’s see how long we’ve been going for. It’s twenty minutes, that’s a record.

RESPONDENT: It’s probably because I haven’t got useful answers.

INTERVIEWER: No, no they are. They’re very useful answers. I talk about heritage places in my information leaflet – we’ve talked about heritage places and information-sharing. Do you think that the two are linked?

RESPONDENT: Heritage and information sharing?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Because I mean you go there for information. If you’re going to visit a heritage site, you’re going there for information on something, whether it is just on that site or if you’re looking for people to contact about something else, you’re always going to find contacts. You’re always going to find people with a similar interest if you’re going to find people to help you or to talk or to get inspiration for something, or... is that chair broken?

INTERVIEWER: I think it’s holding up.

RESPONDENT: And then if you go in just to see the building, you’re going for information about that building because you’re interested. So, yeah, of course it’s information sharing in both ways. I think that it’s useful. I would say that.

INTERVIEWER: And we’ve talked about your desires and your concerns for the Red Tower. I wonder if you have a similar kind of opinion about York as a city? Do you have concerns for York or desires for York?

RESPONDENT: No real concerns for York. I feel very, very lucky to live here, because it is in touch with its history still, yet it’s still very modern and you can live here and you’ve got everything that you need on your doorstep, so it is very much best of both worlds. I think my concerns would just be not to change it too much, not to bring it into the future too much and to keep the nice buildings, to keep the nice relaxed feel about it and don’t over-commercialise everywhere, don’t make every café a Costa and don’t make every shop a Top Shop, just to keep the nice, little off-the-wall shops in York and to not ruin it. Not to put too much modern stuff down by the river, and just to keep it as it is. Because people don’t like to be spoon-fed and I think if you try and put too much around and say, ‘Oh, this used to be like this’ and try and make it too touristy, you’re going to feel like you’re being spoon-fed, when actually people like to use their imaginations and the like to ponder things themselves and then ask questions afterwards.
INTERVIEWER: The concerns and the desires for York, they're kind of quite linked, aren't they?

The desire is to keep it the same, but the concern is that it might change. So I guess, do you see

the Red Tower as being connected to that? Because you said earlier it's 50/50, we're doing

something modern.

RESPONDENT: I think we don't go overboard. I think there could be a fine line of just going too

overboard with it. I like what we're doing now, I think it feels nice, it feels, it doesn't feel like

we're a big corporate company, but if we go too overboard and we start doing too much and

putting too much money into it... I'm probably not explaining this really well at all, but I think if

we start buying brand new, plush furniture and really jazzy high-tech lights, we're going to go

overboard, it's going to lose a lot of its charm and what we're doing now, it does feel very

community-based, because we're serving tea and coffee out of an urn, we don't have a huge,

big coffee-making machine and in some ways I quite like that, because people, when they see

the project, they look around, I don't think people want another Costa, I think people like

what we're doing.

Last weekend we had a group of ladies come who were all at university together and

they've gone their own ways in life, and they meet up every year and last week's meeting place

was the Red Tower. Let's meet at that Red Tower building along the walls. So they came, they all

met up and I went and said, 'Hi, feel free to take a look inside, we've got tea, coffee and

chocolate cake.' And they all sat round in the sun drinking tea and coffee and they were here for

ages, they must have been here for about half an hour/three quarters of an hour and one said to

me afterwards, 'I'm so glad we came here and had a coffee here, rather than in a Costa Coffee.'

And I think what we're doing now is really nice. It would be nice to have the electricity so we can

get a bit of music going on, we can power up an amp so we can get some jazz bands down to

play a bit of music for a special event. It would be nice to have a little bit more high-tech, but

not too much. I don't think we should change it too much.

INTERVIEWER: Fine lines are important then?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting. I'm trying to think of other things that you've mentioned earlier

that could be explored a bit further, but maybe for now we'll let you finish, because I know

you've got a wedding to get to.

RESPONDENT: I've got to do my nails, soak my feet and find somebody to straighten out my

hair!

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 20: 12-08-15 York Tap Linda

INTERVIEWER: I find that my retention, memory is really bad just for things like, ‘What have I got to do next?’ That kind of thing. And so, I decided that it’s possibly because of social media. Because of the huge amount of information we’re given. And so I’ve started learning poetry.

RESPONDENT: Try and do the learning thing. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I know people who are in their 80’s now who have just amazing memories because they do that whole exercise at school, where they used to just recite and recite and recite, until they remembered word for word.

RESPONDENT: And some of those are beautiful as well.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Some of those poems you described. My dad did that for language. He was a musician, so he used to teach us songs when we were little – German songs, and French songs. And quite a lot of the time, I was asking, ‘What’s the word for such-and-such?’ And I’d hum through the song, ‘Ah! There it is!’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah.

RESPONDENT: And I’d grab it from the song. So, the song is still there on a reel. And I don’t lose any of the words on the reel because they’re all tied together.

INTERVIEWER: Exactly, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Anyway, focus, focussing! [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Hello. Welcome to your research interview.

RESPONDENT: Hello Katrina. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Can we start by explaining how you know me and how we met?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, so we probably met at the Red Tower, if it wasn’t at one of the Red Tower meetings. It might have been in the Thomas Pub, originally. Or it might have been at one of the Fossgate events at the Red Tower.

INTERVIEWER: I think we did actually meet...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, probably at...

INTERVIEWER: ...what was saying to me, I was sat in the same vicinity as Hannah.

RESPONDENT: I’m not sure I was.
INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: Well we can check with Hannah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: We've been volunteering with [unclear – 0:02:27.0] volunteering at Red Tower...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...for eight months.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Probably. So certainly, from around March we were starting to think about putting the raised beds...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ...at Red Tower...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ...so...

INTERVIEWER: So could you tell me what you're doing in York?


INTERVIEWER: Why are you living in York?

RESPONDENT: I'm living in York. I moved to York eight years ago, nearly nine years ago. Eight years and eleven months ago. From Oxford. Because I grew up in Yorkshire and I felt that I'd lived down south for too long and I wanted to come back to Yorkshire.

Why York, rather than anywhere else in Yorkshire? It's connected to everywhere on the train line and it's a lovely, green, beautiful city. And a bunch of friends had moved here. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Some good reasons there.

RESPONDENT: It's a quality of life move.

INTERVIEWER: Quality of life move! Okay!

RESPONDENT: And I could afford to buy a house here. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: That's another very good reason.

RESPONDENT: Oxford to York was much about, yeah, coming home and being able to buy a house. Settle.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, I come from Oxford. We’re actually the other way around! I don’t come from Oxford, I come from Oxfordshire. The Chilterns.

RESPONDENT: Abingdon, I lived in Abingdon. And I worked in Harwell.

INTERVIEWER: Okay!

RESPONDENT: There were go! [laughing] A new connection.

INTERVIEWER: I used to do the Farmers’ Markets. And...

RESPONDENT: Oh, right.

INTERVIEWER: Headington?

RESPONDENT: Headington, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Headington. Headington, that was it. I did a few there.

RESPONDENT: Brilliant! Okay.

INTERVIEWER: And now I’m living in Yorkshire. So, you mentioned ‘greenness’ as a reason why you came to York, even though – is Oxford quite green?

RESPONDENT: Oxford’s quite green as well. There are a lot of similarities. They both have quite a lot of history. A fair amount of green space. And a river running through the town. [laughing] And they are also both university towns.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that’s true.

RESPONDENT: But I ended up in Oxford, whereas I chose to be in York.

INTERVIEWER: That’s important – choosing. Having a choice.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I just happened, didn’t really make a conscious decision.

INTERVIEWER: So, you’re not working in York?

RESPONDENT: No, this is my base.

INTERVIEWER: Your base? Okay, so what is your role? What do you do for a living?

RESPONDENT: For a living, I am working in IT as both a trainer and a consultant. So, originally, a trainer; and now doing a mixture of training and consultancy.

INTERVIEWER: But that’s not the only activity you’re doing in the office there?

RESPONDENT: That’s what I travel and get paid for.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: During the week.

INTERVIEWER: What’s the other stuff that you do? What do we know each other through?

RESPONDENT: It’s the Red Tower. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So, can you explain your role with the Red Tower and how you’re connected to it?

RESPONDENT: How I came to be involved in the Red Tower project was because I’ve been involved in Edible York, probably for about three-and-a-bit/four years. I’m a trustee of Edible York. And Lilac was keen to get an Edible-side involvement with the Growing-side of the Red Tower site. So, I was the person nominated to go along to one of the meetings. And I never escaped! [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: My understanding is that Lilac is connected to the Edible group in York through the Incredible Edible group in York.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Which TIM in York actually set up. So, you’re one of many Edible?

RESPONDENT: So, there are two – Edible York has been going since 2009. And is primarily about the Growing Spaces side and the Incredible Edible movement also seems to have kind of three prongs, which is about the eating and cooking food side.

So, I think that the TIM in York group came about because people were very keen to do an Incredible Edible movement and not just be part of Edible York.

INTERVIEWER: And that sort of movement, that sort of keenness to be in food growing, the growing especially, that’s what mainly you’ve been mainly doing.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Can you say what you’ve actually done at the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: Okay, yeah.

At the Red Tower, we looked at the space there and as well as the renovation of the building, there were also the questions of, ‘How do we embed this within the community? How do we make it look loved? How do we get people involved?’

And the idea was that if we had an Incredible Edible Bed there, then it would be a focus and people could see that something was happening and that there was growing things happening. And we could, over time, put more Edibles on the site. Maybe fruit trees and things like that.

At the moment, we’ve put effectively two Edible Beds side-by-side in there; built those, filled them with soil and put plants in them around May time. And we’ve been looking after them since then.
INTERVIEWER: And they’ve done pretty well.

RESPONDENT: They’ve done amazingly well! Mr Compost’s compost has been powering the plants, powering some big growth spurts for the Edible plants and food there. It’s looking really amazing.

INTERVIEWER: And you say that part of the intention there was to get the community to make the site look loved.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How effective do you think that’s been?

RESPONDENT: I think because whenever I’m there, I’m always fiddling the beds, people do come past all the time, saying, ‘Wow! Look how it’s grown!’ And, ‘Isn’t it impressive how much it’s come along in this time?’

So, people really do notice. And say, ‘It’s looking really lovely.’ And, ‘It’s making the place look loved.’

People actually say that. Even though that’s what we were saying we were hoping they would do, that’s actually the feedback people are giving as they walk past. So, that’s amazing, really.

INTERVIEWER: So, people are saying that they’ve seen it grow?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So, they’ve noticed it...

RESPONDENT: They’ve noticed it...

INTERVIEWER: ...from the beginning...

RESPONDENT: ...from when it was just earth! And suddenly it’s a mass of...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah!

RESPONDENT: ... ‘What are they?’

‘Tomato plants.’

‘Cool!’ [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: So, we can assume that the people who are coming up to you there, are people living nearby?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. A lot of them either live very close by, or this is their walking route through.

INTERVIEWER: Right.
RESPONDENT: It’s the way through to places like Homebase and Waitrose, and Morrison’s. And this is the route back into a lot of the social housing, which is in that corner inside the Walls there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: It might not be the housing immediately surrounding it, but there is also a lot of council housing to the left, around that corner.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Through towards Fossgate. But that’s one of the obvious cut-throughs if you’ve been to Morrison’s. For instance.

INTERVIEWER: I imagine some people have been to Morrison’s.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Can we go back to your initial job? I’ve spoken to you about this before. I find it really interesting, if a bit bizarre, that you’re an IT Consultant…

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: …but have this really Green, Growing...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: …I mean, to me it’s a bit contrary...

RESPONDENT: Jekyll and Hyde?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah!

[laughter]

RESPONDENT: Yeah!

[laughter]

INTERVIEWER: Pretty much.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, absolutely. And I did a Biology degree at university but it wasn’t botany or animals. It was Cell and Molecular Biology. But that is involved in the growing and splitting of cells; and the development of organisms and embryos and all of that sort of stuff. So, from the cell and molecular side, I’ve always been fascinated by how things, and life, works.

So, I have a very strong science thread running through my life. I keep reading New Scientist and I did that degree because it was fascinating rather than because I could see a job in it.
And at the end of the degree I had the option to do a PhD, which looked like it was primarily involved in changing test tubes and not interacting with people. So, I decided that I would go out into the real world and get a real job.

INTERVIEWER: But outside...

RESPONDENT: And ended up in an oil company, in the IT department, completely by accident.

INTERVIEWER: And so...

RESPONDENT: Weird. There we go.

INTERVIEWER: When you say that the science stuff with the Green growing and how life works, but also you said something along the lines of, ‘Wanting to go out there and speak to people.’

RESPONDENT: True.

INTERVIEWER: Do you find...

RESPONDENT: Those two things.

INTERVIEWER: ...those two things are really...

RESPONDENT: So...

INTERVIEWER: ...key?

RESPONDENT: ...I was– If you could look back and saw me aged thirteen, I was shy, I wouldn’t say boo to a goose; I wouldn’t go out and talk to people. I didn’t like who I was and I wanted to be more extrovert. And that’s something you can learn to do, and people don’t necessarily realise that.

But I wanted to be more of a sociable person who could talk about what I really believed in and all of that sort of thing. And you can get over your nerves and your shyness and things like that.

And the bit about my degree that I enjoyed as much as anything else, is the explaining how science works to other people who didn’t necessarily have the science background.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Reporting, writing, the journalistic type; explaining what had gone on in the experiment in lay terms. Doing the summaries at the beginning of the experiments, all of that sort of thing. Being able to write a paper in an accessible way was a challenge that I relished. And I do the same in IT.

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:15:30.5]

RESPONDENT: I like communicating the IT to people so they get it.
INTERVIEWER: So...

RESPONDENT: So passing on the message is one theme that happens throughout all the different strands of my life. The communicating the message in an engaging way.

INTERVIEWER: Brilliant!

[laughter]

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:15:51.0] the English degree.

RESPONDENT: Oh, right.

INTERVIEWER: But I think for me... I was also quite a shy one, when I first started, and also I didn’t learn very fast.

Apparently, a teacher of mine told me at primary school that I wasn’t going to become much.

RESPONDENT: [laughing] How lovely! [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: And that I wasn’t going to learn to read or write very much...also I had hearing difficulties, so I think that put me back as part of it. My sister is now a teacher and she reckons that that’s what prompted me to read.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Because reading is where I learn things.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But, understanding that there’s a lot more to reading. And life has become sort of like a challenge, again that I relish challenge. So that’s me.

[unclear – 0:17:04.5] is something that – my progress is quite important to me. Do you think that that’s what we’re doing well at Red Tower? Be honest because I know I can’t comment as I’m part of this.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I’m not sure I’m the right person to ask that. I get a slightly skewed view. I don’t manage to get to all the meetings. And I’m fairly – I take on too much so I don’t necessarily pay attention to all aspects of the Red Tower project. I want to make sure that it kind of all the beds worked.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: I’m interested that it keeps going but I’m not going to take on loads of stuff inside the Red Tower because I’ve got a lot of other roles in Edible York as well that I’m trying to juggle and keep up in the air.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Could you say that perhaps communicating to the rest of Red Tower, regardless of not including Edible Beds, is within your remit?

RESPONDENT: No, it’s...

INTERVIEWER: No. I mean, I’d agree with that from...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...what we’ve been doing.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. But the Edible Bed is a way of engaging people and communicating like that. So, you can occasionally communicate that things are happening at the Red Tower through making it look nice, keeping posters up, help yourself, get involved...

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah.

RESPONDENT: ...pull people in. So, there’s that sort of communication as well as verbal, as well as articles written and Facebook pages maintained, and all of that.

INTERVIEWER: You’ve been putting posters in the Edible Beds.

RESPONDENT: Saying, ‘Help yourself.’ And, ‘What’s one of these?’ And labelling things.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: It’s a way of getting people to notice, but also to get involved. ‘Water me.’ ‘Take some herbs.’

[START OF SECOND RECORDING]

RESPONDENT: That sort of thing. You can pull people in with stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: I’m remembering someone who must not be named, but they made a suggestion that there could be stones that you can write on. So basically suggesting that you get stones with the names of the herbs written on them.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Lovely.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I thought it was nice too.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I’ve just been doing a signage bit as part of one of the Edible York projects. And there were stones in there. There were also wooden spoons with the names of the herbs so you could just jab them in next to wherever you planted them. And it stands up above...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, a bit more...

RESPONDENT: Yeah. What was the other one? Oh, people use bits of slate and also just sticks from split wood, with a flat edge you can just burn writing onto the wood. You can with do it
with acid or use a heating coil to write, instead of writing with a Sharpie pen that is light sensitive and will degrade in UV so eventually the writing fades. But burnt on wood has more longevity and you can sand it down when you want something else! [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: So, it’s stable as well.

RESPONDENT: [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: I guess that...

RESPONDENT: No, I like that. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: A green way of doing it.

RESPONDENT: I like that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But the stones are good as well.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

Well, okay, I know that you’re not in charge of what happens in terms of communicating messages at Red Tower, but aside from the Edible stuff?

RESPONDENT: Well I take part in the Facebook page and on the website.

INTERVIEWER: You do!

RESPONDENT: I’ve got an account with admin rights on that so I can post pictures...

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: ...so...

INTERVIEWER: Yes, you did.

RESPONDENT: ...I...

INTERVIEWER: You have.

RESPONDENT: ...and yes I’m involved in that side.

INTERVIEWER: Of the beds.

RESPONDENT: Primarily of what’s growing currently. Yeah. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: But again, it’s...

RESPONDENT: It’s engaging. I tend to think that, ‘Yeah, a picture of the Red Tower, look this is growing from here to here to here.’ It makes a timeline an interesting story.
INTERVIEWER: You mentioned the timeline to me before. Taking photos of different seasons.
That’s a nice idea. Have you been doing that?
RESPONDENT: What you find is, you can go along...
INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you don’t need to do it...
RESPONDENT: ...yeah, and then you can go back and just grab those four pictures and go, ‘Winter, spring, summer, autumn.’
INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: So, you can retrospectively put a, ‘what happened this year’ story together quite easily. If you’ve got photos there to start with.
INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:03:11.0] What do you think is the other [unclear – 0:03:24.0] also at the Red Tower is the interpretation of the beds. Have you read through them all?
RESPONDENT: Some of them. Yes. Definitely. I’m a big one for – when I’m a tourist – going around and reading stuff like that. And visiting museums and getting my history fix of wherever I am that week. I end up travelling with work and sometimes, summer in the evenings, I can get out somewhere and do a little bit of the tourist thing, even though it’s a working holiday.
So, I’m all for having lots of information that people can read, but they don’t feel they have to.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: And being where we are on the end of the wall section is great because people walk past, and then they can stop and read the history of where the compost comes from. I think it’s really, really important that we have interpretation there. But it’s not...
INTERVIEWER: It’s doing it for a different audience, by the sounds of it?
Tourists you mentioned, having interpretation panels.
RESPONDENT: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think tourists are as interested in the [unclear – 0:04:48.0]?
RESPONDENT: I think it’s going to be more interesting for the locals, because they see things happen over time.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: But it’s always good from a PR perspective to see vegetables growing anywhere. I’ve been amazed in France to see flowerbeds with a mix of vegetables and flowers in. You do see the potager garden thing even in the council-run, municipal-run beds in France.
INTERVIEWER: Oh, wow!
RESPONDENT: Yeah. They do big artichoke plants and kale; substantially-sized plants at the back, so that you ask, ‘What’s that thing at the back?’ ‘It’s a bloody cabbage!’

[laughter]

RESPONDENT: It’s a municipal planting but there is this concept of a potager display, a mix of cottage garden and the vegetables. And people always used to do this.

INTERVIEWER: Flowers that are...

RESPONDENT: Flowers that are...

INTERVIEWER: ...pretty?

RESPONDENT: ...pretty, but also edible or there is a vegetable section and, ‘Here is some prettiness around it.’ There’s a real mix of stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Just the idea of vegetables and plants being PR.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: I think that’s really cool.

So, here we are talking in terms of the media, so planting as a weird kind of media. A growing media?

RESPONDENT: It’s still communicating a message. It’s an edible message.

INTERVIEWER: Edible message!

RESPONDENT: [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: That’s really funky.

RESPONDENT: But I kind of feel that if you can plant things that people can also eat, then it’s a double-whip. Why wouldn’t you do the double-whip? Instead of the single-whip? You can still make it look loved and somebody can eat if they’re hungry.

INTERVIEWER: I mean my sort of green views are becoming... Are coming on in bounds.

RESPONDENT: [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Leaps and bounds. Now everywhere I go, I’m looking at different places. It is kind of a...

RESPONDENT: And you can tap into it...

INTERVIEWER: ...that’s it.

RESPONDENT: ...it’s one of those you keep seeing.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it's really [unclear – 0:07.46.0]. Okay.

We skipped a bit that I was going to go on to next. Somehow. But this bit came up first. That's fine.

So, the question I'd like to ask is, in your role with Red Tower, what are your aspirations, your intentions? I know we've kind of touched on it a bit, but if we could just hear it?

RESPONDENT: So, I'm– Yeah, where do you start?

So, I'm really keen that the project does make really good use of the space. If we can do it for cooking-type, community-type stuff as well, that's brilliant. If there's enough of a drive to expand the Edible Beds around the back there, or around the front, with picnic areas or fruit trees, or whatever, then brilliant!

But there's no point putting this stuff in and then nobody looks after it and so it dies. It's growing the team and have the team look after the stuff – then that's the right time to start filling it.

INTERVIEWER: So, what would your concern be in all of this?

RESPONDENT: With all of the projects that Edible York does, it's always a combination of growing the community groups and let them drive the growing stuff that's happening in their community areas.

So, if they mainly do herbs, that's fine. If they want to do apple trees, that's fine.

But from an Edible York perspective, there are only so many of us on the core trustee team and what we want to try and do is repeatable, sustainable stuff. So, we are growing groups as much as planting.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: There's no point us going out and planting Edibles if there aren't people to water them, feed them, look after them...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ...eat them. [laughing] I could plant loads more stuff than I can eat! But if it's not being eaten then it's pointless.

INTERVIEWER: We've had another person take a courgette this afternoon.
Yeah. Well one of the ladies who was there the other day, was actually telling the kids, ‘Oh, what’s down here? And there’s another three or four courgettes there, so when they’re ready, come back, and tell your mum you can have that for tea.’

She was doing a great job with them. Actually, a brilliant job!

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: She was doing a wonderful job!

INTERVIEWER: Was this not one of the team?

RESPONDENT: I don’t think so. No, she was talking to the people inside, earlier. She’s slightly blondish hair, about 5’5’; round, rather than skinny. Lilac knows her I think. Although I’m not sure if she’s part of...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, maybe...

RESPONDENT: ...the regulars.

INTERVIEWER: ...she’s to do with her. I’ll ask her if I get a chance. Is this concern about growing people as well as plants, is this not only a Red Tower thing, but it’s a York thing? So, you’ve got spots where you can grow – how many have you got?

RESPONDENT: So, Edible York has probably got about twenty different areas around York where there is a group of people doing something.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So, some of them might be into growing. Some of them have a couple of beds within the community, in front of the shops or whatever. Some of them like having green fields; like the Haxby Road area. There, it’s almost three quarters of an acre field in the middle of a square set of housing that was a school playing field, and is now all being Edible Bedded. There are thirty fruit trees, the grass is cut by scythes, twenty or so beds, dozens of...

INTERVIEWER: How exciting!

RESPONDENT: ...when you get there, you just go, ‘How big is this!’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah!

RESPONDENT: There is a school group, and a Scout group and a whole load of people involved. And that’s started as three beds, then we put something in the middle, and then there’s a container for the tools and then people started planting fruit trees around the outside.

And that only happened because the community grew enough to support the extra growing area. If the community of people that is doing it isn’t growing, then you can’t put extra beds in.
INTERVIEWER: This is my priority about whether sharing the message, creating the message, helps that community growth to happen, to encourage the site. What’s your opinion on that? Especially with regards to Red Tower.

RESPONDENT: Red Tower is definitely a challenge in terms of engaging the local area of people. When you are in flats like there, around a common area, then if people don’t have a front garden then you won’t catch them out the front of their house. Getting to actually talk to people is actually quite hard then.

Also, there is a certain amount of, ‘Them and Us.’ And, ‘Who are those people at the Red Tower? They aren’t really like us.’

Those kinds of things to get over. It’s all incrementally trying to break that down. Have a couple of people involved, let the local kids bring in water. Those kinds of things help, but it can be quite a long-term kind of thing.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, for example, those [unclear – 0:15:34.0] and I don’t think they particularly work. I don’t know, but I don’t feel that they are particularly successful.

RESPONDENT: Sometimes you just have to keep trying something until suddenly you find something that clicked for a reason. You’re not quite sure ever why it clicked, but it just clicked. And if you’re in a community that has a pianist then it helps.

[START OF THIRD RECORDING]

INTERVIEWER: There we go, sorry. Carry on.

RESPONDENT: One of the easy ways in to a community, is if there are kids and parents, because you can meet them at a particular place, like the school gate, and leaflet them there. And you know the ins, the you know what will work. Pictures of kids holding vegetables and smiling; eating strawberries out of their hands, things like that are very quick, easy ways in that you know will work for a certain percentage of those parents.

Whereas retired people, or people on the verge of retirement, or those who have been retired for quite a long time; the group of housing like we’ve got around the Red Tower – there aren’t obvious ways in to these groups. There is no, ‘We know that if we say this sort of thing, we’ll get a few people.’ We don’t necessarily know how best to connect with them.

INTERVIEWER: I am relieved that you say this.

RESPONDENT: No, it is really hard.

INTERVIEWER: Partly my drive is about trying to achieve actually what you’ve been saying. And the only having a certain amount of time and energy is trying to create [unclear – 0:01:27.0] students trying to [unclear – 0:01:32.0]. We discovered that we [unclear – 0:01:34.0] and that’s when I was...
RESPONDENT: Yeah. The front door and... a bunch of buttons and...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ... everybody hates door-steppers, so...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ... you're not going to get anywhere, are you?

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: And the same problem happens if you get involved in politics and if you're trying to campaign for a council, or whatever. And when you go to flats, you get nowhere.

Evan Harris, he was my local MP and nobody would talk to him. Nobody would go down to talk to him. I talked to him over the intercom! But I was busy cooking the tea. [laughing] Talking to him on the intercom whilst I was finishing cooking tea! Nobody would go and talk to him – but that was my MP turning up on my doorstep and I didn’t have time to go and talk to him. And I'm politically engaged. [laughing] It's mad. I wasn't as politically engaged at the time, but I was thinking, ‘Oh, why now?’ [unclear – 0:02:39.0]

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But it's really hard if you've got an intercom system.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And they might by really old – it might take them ten minutes to walk down the stairs and then they've got to walk back up. It feels a big deal doing that. That's not going to work, is it? It needs other ways to engage. What are those ways? I don't know. Somebody will.

From the pros are that they are not out at work all the time so you will probably catch them in. Catching people who are really busy professionals is sometimes really hard as well. Whereas the mums with kids are easier.

At least with retired people, you're more likely to be able to catch them. And they will have grown up with the sense of, ‘Yeah, my dad had an allotment. My grandfather had an allotment. We used to love growing...’

So, there's that, but you have to get there; you have to have got over the initial hurdle of being able to talk to them and starting the conversations.

INTERVIEWER: I think for me, it's starting the conversation with older people has never been a problem. I love older people. I did a [unclear – 0:04:08.0] project... But even before that... The friend that I was telling you about – the woman that recites poetry, she's 88 and...

RESPONDENT: But it's easier once you're eyeball to eyeball.
INTERVIEWER: Exactly.

RESPONDENT: [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: It is true. It is true.

RESPONDENT: It’s very hard before you’re eyeball to eyeball. If I can get in front of somebody, in an interview or whatever, then I can get the job.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: It’s getting in front of somebody that’s the hard part.

INTERVIEWER: And it’s about, again, communicating the message, in a way that somehow gets that message across in the best way that you can. I guess people have different ways of wanting to do that. So, I know that you want to go through and do a scene. Going back to this idea of York being an historic city, and the Red Tower is part of the City Walls. And I’m doing a Heritage Management course, so I have to ask you this. What is your, in all of this, what is your definition of heritage? And why is it important in this particular circumstance?

RESPONDENT: I’m coming to realise that my view of history is not the same as everybody else’s view of history. In that we’ve got English Heritage and National Trust and things like that, but there’s also a whole load of heritage that we’re not preserving and we’re not always singing about in the UK. Stonehenge, we do; and Avebury we do. But there is a whole load of megalithic stuff around the UK that isn’t song and danced about. So, to me, heritage is all of that. The stuff we are set up to preserve, interpret, tell people about, plus the stuff we’re not. [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: What’s the stuff that we’re not preserving in York, so you think?

RESPONDENT: I think it’s hard in a city to spot things like that. It’s easier in the countryside because it’s not all been built upon and lost. I like spotting things like the old packhorse trails across the Pennines. Suddenly you’ll come across a bit that’s obviously been laid stones, where there’s no way that a car could have got there. And it’s a packhorse trail that’s been there for God knows how many years, and nobody has any idea why it was made. And it just happened to be marked as a bridleway.

But it’s a neglected heritage. Undiscovered, or unsung, or whatever, it’s...

INTERVIEWER: The Red Tower!

RESPONDENT: ...well it’s– Yeah. I mean, it’s not been taken up at any official organisation’s wing, but it has got some documented history.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think of it, as a building?
RESPONDENT: It’s not as immediately iconic or beautiful like some of York’s buildings. For example, Micklegate is my corner from here and that’s what everyone will react to saying, ‘Oh, isn’t it lovely!’

But if you look at it [Red Tower], you go, ‘Wow! Those bricks are really old! I didn’t know bricks were that old.’

And that was my way in – ‘Actually, this is a load older than you would initially guess.’

And then you go, ‘Oh yeah! Actually, the Romans did make bricks. Right, okay, so if the bricks go back that far, to 10,000 years old. Right! Blimey!’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it wasn’t the Romans who made it.

RESPONDENT: No, no. But the brick is a whole concept thing. People think of Victorian red brick.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: That’s what we see as red brick, isn’t it? We mostly see the Victorian terraces and brick used in some of...

INTERVIEWER: The Victorians are a big shadow on our history.

RESPONDENT: [laughing] They built a lot of stuff. But people don’t realise that bricks were being made that long ago. And I hadn’t really twigged.

So, it’s really interesting because it’s unusual. Because it’s not like the rest of the city walls.

INTERVIEWER: York, as a city [pause] you said at the very beginning that you chose to come and live here because it is historic and it’s green. Do the green aspects and the heritage aspects, is there any connection there?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I think the combination of the two is enriching. Each enriches the other.

I was born in Bradford, so I have a big industrial heritage and lots of mills, which are quite architecturally impressive, now that they’ve been cleaned of all the soot. And you realise quite how rich it made the city, the wool exchanges. But Bradford doesn’t appeal because it’s not very green.

Whereas York, which is even older, but a combination of the heritage plus the green, plus the smallness of the city, gentle hub, community thing. All of those add up to being – York feels like home and I like to call York home.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, so I’m still not convinced that York is a home base for me yet.

RESPONDENT: But that’s a past thing. My past is important to my concept of what would feel like home to me, now. So, London would never feel like home. It’s too big. Everybody is too stressed. Leeds is too big for me now. Hereford is too posh for me. So, I was going to have to
find somewhere that was interesting, green, and small enough. Enough of a community feel. If
you can approach people and talk to people in the street and they don’t think you’re a weirdo
on the bus. All of those things. [laughing] The weirdo on the bus things I got all the time in
London. I’ll smile at people and then realise, ‘Oh, actually I’m in London, I’m not supposed to
smile.’

INTERVIEWER: I think buses are really important as well, actually.

RESPONDENT: Well, I’ve hardly been on the bus because I cycle everywhere [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Yes. You cycle, don’t you? You’re a brilliant cyclist. Do you... we’re wrapping this
up now so...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: The way that you move through cycling, what’s that like as an experience? Do
you find it freeing? Or annoying, or...

RESPONDENT: Oh, yeah! All of the above, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What would be your path?

RESPONDENT: The cycle paths are really useful – you can get through the green and you can go
across your own bridges and that’s absolutely lovely. The sense of freedom and all of that. You
can scoot past the cars, that’s great. But you can get on the wrong road and the taxis are cutting
you up and buses try to run you over.

There are more problems with cycling in Britain. Yeah. It’s not as bad as a lot of places.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: There are still cycle lanes where you go, ‘Why did it stop there!’ Just as you get to
the dangerous bits.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

[laughter]

RESPONDENT: Arguments about that– The traffic lights by Clifton Green, where they took it
down to one lane and they had too many complaints from the car drivers so they ripped up all
of the infrastructure that cost them thousands of pounds – fifty thousand, something thousand
– to put in, and put it back to two lanes and exactly as it was six months before, because car
drivers had complained. What a waste of money! ‘Sorry, we’ve already spent it.’

But, anyway, there we go. You just have to look at the York Press articles to see the blame wars
between car drivers and cyclists. A British thing.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I just wonder if it’s inspiring? Is it as inspiring being green? I don’t know if it’s as green as…Is it your interpretation of what greenness for a city is?

RESPONDENT: It’s interesting when you look at the Google satellite view on lots of different cities and London actually has an awful lot more green spaces than people realise. And Oxford a lot of green spaces, that people don’t realise. And if you drive into Oxford you would think it was a horrible place because it’s horrible to drive in. Because they can’t widen the roads because they’d have to knock the colleges down.

INTERVIEWER: Yes!

RESPONDENT: The colleges aren’t going to let you. It’s horrible to drive in to. And if all you did was drive, and you didn’t cycle and you didn’t walk, you wouldn’t know that Oxford has a huge amount of green space. And once…

INTERVIEWER: [unclear – 0:14:56.4]

RESPONDENT: …you start cycling…yes. By the river. Because it’s college plains.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, yes.

RESPONDENT: And college grounds.

INTERVIEWER: But big [unclear – 0:15:05.0].

RESPONDENT: On the bike, you can see that. And you can also get the benefit of it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So, that’s true of York a bit as well, that you don’t realise its greenness. The Walls count.

RESPONDENT: The Walls have some green space, but also there are the Strays. So, there is Hobmoor, Walmgate Stray. So, if you…

INTERVIEWER: Walmgate Stray, yeah, I know.

RESPONDENT: …so, and if you go across to the Heslington campus…

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: …from the Fulford Road…

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: …you can go through the cut through from the Army Base.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, go through the Army Base.

RESPONDENT: And then there is suddenly green stuff and cows. Cows, inside the ring road.

INTERVIEWER: I meant to walk through there…
RESPONDENT: Brilliant!

INTERVIEWER: ...this morning.

RESPONDENT: [laughing] And the Maize Mire is a huge green space and then...

INTERVIEWER: And it’s a mix.

RESPONDENT: ...then it’s a big green space, and then there’s a similar bit up north, again partly because of the floodplains and the river. But there is actually a huge amount of green inside the city that as a car driver you don’t see that.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: Because the ribbon development that happens along roads over the last 200 years has meant that every road gets built along. So, car drivers just see houses, they don’t see all the green bits.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay. That’s just put a different perspective on things.

RESPONDENT: Oh, yeah. Look at the satellite view and compare a few cities that you’ve been in.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And compare the amount of green.

INTERVIEWER: Reading is where my parents live.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: My...

RESPONDENT: There are green bits in Reading, but not as much.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it’s...

RESPONDENT: Small pockets. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It’s growing.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Everywhere along the M4 corridor is. As people are employed there.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much.

RESPONDENT: That’s alright.

INTERVIEWER: That’s...

RESPONDENT: I hope it was useful and not just too random. You managed to rein me in.
INTERVIEWER: Yes. You’ve given me a few bits and bobs that are highly relevant. And what I’m doing is looking at where things are in mind of what I’m looking at through the...

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: ... [unclear – 0:17:46.0].

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I think sometimes it’s just nice to chat.

RESPONDENT: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. [laughing]

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 21: 13-08-15 Leake St Ed

INTERVIEWER: Hi Ed.

RESPONDENT: Hello.

INTERVIEWER: Hello. Could you first start by telling me or explaining how we’ve met, how we know each other?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So I do a kind of grant scheme. This started in January, called Local People, and it’s basically I’m funded for two years to work out of this office, the Conservation Volunteers, and I’m based...so we’re kind of here, slap bang in the middle, and this is my project, this is the area which I’m trying to deliver in. And that is basically so Tang Hall and Guildhall, so you’re slap bang in the middle.

How I met you? Through the Red Tower project. And the Red Tower project is the first grant under this scheme. It was only a small grant that we paid, but my role is very much...

INTERVIEWER: Just taking a photo of the map.

RESPONDENT: What I try to do here is it’s funded by the People’s Health Trust, and that ultimately is if you do scratch cards, if you’ve ever seen the health ones with the rainbow on, it’s that. And the principle being that whatever money is raised – same with the lottery – it goes back to the people who do the scratch cards. And it’s very particular to postcodes in this case.

So that’s why I’ve got such a rigid...

So I’ve got a pot of money which pays for my time, and I have a pot of money to help me deliver my outcomes, and my outcome for this scheme is one of the loosest outcomes I’ve ever worked on in my life.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: And it’s very much helping... I’ve got kind of official things here, but it’s basically to help local people come together to help overcome problems and to improve where they live. And it can be anything and everything, which is really nice in a way because you can do anything under it, hence why there’s a rock club coming in here later on.

INTERVIEWER: When you say ‘rock’, you mean musical?

RESPONDENT: Musical rock. And because it’s not about the music per se; it’s about the fact that I heard about this group of people and they were coming from the angle of social isolation, and just wanted to come together. So it’s not the fact that they play music, it’s the fact that they’re coming together as a group of people to do something. That’s what I’m kind of interested in. Although whether I actually say that to them... Well I probably will; I’ll be very open.
But it’s very similar to the Red Tower and how I met you was... The Red Tower, when I first heard about it, you were trying to do the raised bed there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that was I think back in March, wasn’t it? Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So it’s my time, there’s a pot of money. So I started off, that was just, ‘Can I help you in my van move some earth?’ kind of thing. And again you’re talking about doing a pay-as-you-feel café and other things going on there, and again it’s what you do is pretty much irrelevant to me other than it’s really nice what you’re doing. It’s the fact that you’re opening up a community space for people to use and to come together. So down the line I’m sure you’ll be tackling problems, and you’re already bringing the community together, particularly how I liked it. I’ve only just been told about how the community centre had been shut down previously.

INTERVIEWER: Space 109.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. And I just thought, that’s kind of nice how it’s kind of, in my whimsical eyes, that you were kind of coming together to do something similar. So just community space. And that’s what I was interested in and how I came.

INTERVIEWER: So your interests are through your role but also prior to actually doing your role, would you say that sort of drive for the community to get together, is that something that’s...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, it’s very much. And in preparation for this I was looking at... I mean TCV themselves, the Conservation Volunteers, we’re a charity and as with any organisation we have our goals. And goal number one is very much work together with people and communities to transform their health prospects and outdoor places for the long-term. It’s very much in the ethos of the charity and the organisation and what we want to do. And it is very much people-based, but it does come into it improving the area itself.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you’re here because of your role to the local people project which is part of the TCV, under that remit of the grant project.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So I’m just trying to work out what your relationship to York is.

RESPONDENT: Right, yeah. My background is I’ve always worked in the environment industry. I long time served for an organisation called Natural England, and I was very much on the...and that’s much more about protection, subsidies to farmers and things like that, and I was very much always the community person within Natural England and within government cuts that was seen as secondary and so they were cutting back on that. My job wasn’t at risk but I knew my work area was and I really enjoy this type of work and I wanted that kind of people engagement side of things and I wanted to continue it. So I left a very secure job to do this job for two years, and then I will go on to hopefully get employed again to do contract work and grant.
RESPONDENT: And a lot of this type of thing is grant-based.

INTERVIEWER: Mm.

RESPONDENT: You know? And administering grant and it’s my time.

INTERVIEWER: And lottery.

RESPONDENT: And lottery, yeah. This is my second lottery job, yeah. And it’s always about engaging people. Prior to this I was doing a big thing about engaging people with the natural environment, whereas this is purely engaging with people to overcome problems. And I don’t come from York. I’ve moved around quite a bit recently. I was in Leeds previously and I’m working from here but I’m actually moving to Pocklington on Friday.

INTERVIEWER: So you’re here primarily, would you say, for the main purpose of doing this job?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you didn’t make a conscious decision to be here?

RESPONDENT: No. I’ve come to the decision, but only more recently, that I will go to wherever the work is. Yeah. And it was very much I knew York through a few visits, liked it and thought, ‘Yeah, why not?’

INTERVIEWER: So you kind of liked it?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Yeah. And it’s following a job primarily, which is why I kind of came here. But I’ve already found it quite interesting in the fact that my previous role was working in deprived areas of Newcastle.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right.

RESPONDENT: And part of the role for this current role is funding for the more deprived areas.

INTERVIEWER: So there’s a similarity then?

RESPONDENT: And the levels of deprivation are hugely different, but I really like this role because I think it’s very apparent between the ‘have’ and ‘have not’ in York. That’s what I find really interesting.

For example, there are six of me around the UK.

INTERVIEWER: Six people doing your job?

RESPONDENT: Doing my job in different areas. And over the last week I’ve actually had two of them independently come up to shadow me for a day, and they’ve both gone, ‘Wow, this is very nice!’ They work in completely different areas but it’s...
INTERVIEWER: That's interesting.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: 'Cause you say that your remit is to look at the more deprived areas in the area of York, and yet they're saying it's...

RESPONDENT: Yeah. By coincidence they were both different boroughs within London which really have much different problems to here.

INTERVIEWER: Did you take them to the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, we walked past and they both had a look at your flower... Actually, 'cause I did that thing of I showed them the difference between what I said about putting in an infrastructure and having no one behind it and how it's problematic. Five minutes later we were looking at your site and looking at how there are people there and how much better it is. You know, the amount of money as an organisation we've spent in the Tang Hall to do an orchard site, which we're having real difficulties with – things getting vandalised and community engagement with it – compared to have the people there first and it's just so much better. It's chalk and cheese, it really is.

INTERVIEWER: But that's really interesting 'cause some of the difficulties that we're facing with the Red Tower is the community engagement side of things.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And we've discussed this at different points but there is a core group of...

RESPONDENT: 'Cause how strong a core group would you say there is?

INTERVIEWER: There are about five of us.

RESPONDENT: I think you're flying! I really do.

INTERVIEWER: See that speaks to me and relieves me somewhat! So yeah, I think that it'll be interesting to see in terms of the long-term.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: We've been going sort of eight months really. How long's the Tang Hall been going for?

RESPONDENT: Oh, it's only been in for about three or four months, and we did it working with the Residents' Association of the Tang Hall. But there wasn't anybody really signed up for it. We're hoping now we'll get the community centre – they've got some groups working out of there who we're just talking to now, which we should have done before. But there was a change of staff there. We're hoping they can adopt it. But I go along once a week and I've become quite
thick-skinned because everything I put in keeps getting ripped out and things like that. You know?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that’s the one thing we haven’t had an issue with at the Red Tower. We’ve had a footprint, but that was a while ago.

RESPONDENT: And I think as soon as something looks a big neglected, that’s when it suffers.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And ours was looking neglected. And I think that’s the big difference. And maybe something to do with also you’ve got all those windows looking onto it as well, haven’t you? Which will help.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But no, in terms of a group I look at you and think you’re flying, I really do. For such early days. And I think the more you do, the more people will get involved.

INTERVIEWER: Well we might come back to that. One of the things I want to just clarify, I’m asking everybody these two questions. I know perhaps you’re not as connected to York as a place as some of the other people I’ve spoken to, but what are your concerns for this area, what you’ve got on the map? And what are your intentions? I know that’s come through in some of the stuff you said, but concerns and aspirations.

RESPONDENT: My concerns just in general?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Right. Yeah, my concerns are the lack of connectivity, because of all these natural barriers, of the wall, of the main roads, of all the rivers and things like that. You know, I think they’re all separate little communities going on there.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that’s really interesting, yeah.

RESPONDENT: That’s what I really find. Partly because one of my jobs is to start a steering group and I’m struggling with it because to get someone over here engaged with what’s going on here and likewise is just not happening.

And also because there’s so much going on. I think that’s what I’ve really...

INTERVIEWER: We’ve got a very busy patch.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. And I think when I started I came along thinking, ‘Oh, this is going to be excellent. I’m going to do some wonderful things.’ And at the end of these two years I think realistically I would have done some nice things, hopefully put some money in. But I’m actually finding that it’s all...how I’m going to make a success is finding people like yourselves, in that
just-starting-off stage. Because there are so many pots of money out there to be given to
people. There are so many charities doing wonderful things all around. And it’s just such a
diverse area in terms of the historic, the tourism. There’s quite a Polish population there, isn’t
there?

INTERVIEWER: The Tang Hall has a reputation. Although it’s not necessarily a reputation that
really reflects the reality.

RESPONDENT: No.

INTERVIEWER: But it has got one.

RESPONDENT: And I’ve been quite taken back by the conflict between students and residents.
Especially in Tang Hall I pick it up. I hear quite a lot about... There’s a wonderful...well it’s not
wonderful, it’s tragic. But someone’s put a big, proper, permanent sign up in their house, corner
of the garden, saying, ‘If you’re students looking to rent this house next door, we’re a family and
we want tolerate noise, disruption and things.’ And when I go along to the residents I just didn’t
realise that that kind of happened.

INTERVIEWER: It’s interesting. When I was in Falmouth, when I did my first degree, Falmouth is a
very small fishing town, historically, and is becoming more student-populated and also for
tourism as well. And again, the locals detest it. And we had the Cornish Republican Army, which
although sounds quite comical...

RESPONDENT: Yeah!

INTERVIEWER: ...people didn’t take it seriously, they were known to set fire to bicycle sheds at
the student campus and also write, ‘Students go away, students go home,’ in graffiti on
prominent walls. And you kind of see a bit of that in York. And it’s a nationwide problem, I’d say.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. And looking at the university website and the news, I know the Student
Union’s done lots and lots to try and ease this, in terms of outreach work and things like that to
try and solve things.

INTERVIEWER: The Groves aren’t in your area, are they?

RESPONDENT: No. This is my area. It’s done on a...it’s a government...it’s got the lowest [unclear
– 0:17:35.2] output area, which just clumps people together based on different factors such as
health and employment, number of services and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: It’s really interesting because although you personally are not connected to York,
the way that your work connects you to York means that you have to abide by this black line,
this barrier, a boundary around.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: And you also mentioned that there are these boundaries that you think are actually compounding different people.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah. No, it’s quite a difficult one. ‘Cause you have to be realistic. I’m not going to ask for postcodes of people when they come in here tonight and I’m not going to say, ‘Sorry, you can’t join the band ‘cause you’re outside my area.’ You just have to, you know. That type of thing.

And I think the last thing I would say is I find it quite stark because I leave Leeds...I have since the start of this year I’ve been living in Leeds, and I leave Leeds, come to York, and the difference in diversity is just phenomenal, I really find. I live in a place at the top of Chapeltown, which is primarily a black area. I have about four mosques within – no exaggeration – about 500 metres. And then I come to York and there’s one mosque over there and that’s it. And it’s complete...yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It is a very strange dynamic. Falmouth was so much... I like the Cornish people, though.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And I like Yorkies, on the whole. I’ve met some really nice people.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But it’s this idea of the ‘us and them’ that sometimes pervades.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Right, so where was I going next with this? Okay, so with this issue of community engagement, my line of enquiry has been into this idea of communication and information-sharing and whether or not that can appease some of these issues, and I wondered what your view on that... My understanding is developing because I can see that there are other issues as well.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But in this particular...what are your ways of meeting people and...?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I actually find it really difficult to get the word out here, and I kind of balance it out with, ‘I’m only here for two years.’ But I still want to shout about, ‘There’s me, there’s my time and I have some money to help do the outcomes of the grant.’ And I just find that I’m a tiny little speck of sand in a massive beach, ‘cause there’s just so much going on. It comes back to there’s social media, there are so many groups around, you know?

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting. That’s a good way of...

RESPONDENT: So I dabble with social media in terms of Twitter and Facebook.
INTERVIEWER: You've got a nice website.

RESPONDENT: Thank you. I do that for myself, just as motivation, so if I haven't done anything for a while – that means I haven't done a post for a while – that means I need to do something. 'Cause it's just me doing this. So it's just self-management. If I need to keep populating.

INTERVIEWER: So what have you got? Twitter?

RESPONDENT: Twitter, Facebook. I prefer Twitter. I hardly follow anyone at the moment. I just like to build it slowly. But what I've found is really nice is when people... Sorry, 'cause you know I can join Twitter, I can follow 2,000 in a day just by clicking follow?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And hopefully I'd get a couple of hundred 'cause they'd follow me back.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But I haven't followed many people and I think how it's worked for me is getting nice retweets off people, off Tang Hall Community Centre and things like that. That really helps me.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I'll follow you. I've got at least three Twitter accounts, so yeah. I feel that same kind of... I'm getting the impression of guiltiness – is that what you're feeling?

RESPONDENT: Guiltiness, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Like you're not doing enough. Is that what you're saying?

RESPONDENT: Well I don't dislike Twitter and Facebook but I think they're just limited. I mean, it's good. That was how I got into the Red Tower, into your group, 'cause you did a tweet and I saw that. This group coming here tonight was through Street Life, which is social media people in a patch talking about what's going on.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But I don't find that any one thing is the answer. It's just a whole balancing act. I've done a bit of leafleting, which was no good whatsoever. 'Cause not everybody has the internet or is interested in it.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, so on the leaflets you had webpages?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I've actually found that in terms of, for me, going around the patch is the best way. I've met someone in Tang Hall who really wants to get a group going with doing activities for children with families, and that was just through walking and bumping into people, which really helps.

[START OF RECORDING TWO]
INTERVIEWER: Sorry, carry on there.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So a mixture of social media, a bit of traditional leaflets. We've actually just commissioned an animation but I don't know how useful that's going to be.

INTERVIEWER: Something to go on, like a film?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I've yet to see it, I've yet to be convinced. But the other thing I've found is just doing stalls, tagging onto different events. So the Tour de Tang Hall was on, which was a little cycle around, a family cycle ride. And I was volunteered to be one of the... You know, it's like orienteering. You've got a van at five different places around. Basically it was a cycle ride that went on a loop. They found that you could walk; it was only a couple of miles. And I was there in T-shirt and just saying, when I got chatting to people, kind of saying what I do and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: That's something that we haven't tried actually, I don't think, the Red Tower. We've gone along to a couple of workshops but we've not been... We were going to do a student freshers one, which would be fun.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, that'd be really good.

INTERVIEWER: But the issue still remains of the building, the contacts in the community, in the space around it, and that is the challenge.

RESPONDENT: I just know that I'll never... I'll just scratch the surface of this area. I'm pretty much forgetting about... 'Cause that's shops, businesses, some people do live in there but not masses.

INTERVIEWER: See, my... I mean, this is something that I think that is a comment problem.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: As you say, there are a lot of different organisations with all their social media and it's almost like you're trying to find something new to do. Hm. Thinking now!

RESPONDENT: No, when I think of the Red Tower, what you do, is it yourself who runs...?

INTERVIEWER: Well it runs essentially through Tim, the Incredible Movement, which is sort of the catalyst, community activism project that Lilac set up in response to Edible York. And so we are using that as a springboard and financial deposit as well.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: We don't have a Red Tower constitution but we're using Tim as the...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So the Red Tower in name but Tim in practice, yeah. So we have used Tim as a way of bouncing off, and Lilac's been pretty prolific with...
RESPONDENT: Yeah, it’s funny actually because I know that when there were some press questions, I knew that I could get into contact with one of you instantly because of social media and things, which was really good.

INTERVIEWER: You haven’t had that kind of relationship with any other projects?

RESPONDENT: No. Well, [unclear – 0:04:07.3] from Tang Hall, have you ever heard of them?

INTERVIEWER: Yes. They came to visit.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, they’re really good as well. They’re doing really well on that side of things.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I’m getting a real picture of these different organisations like the social-facing. We have to group together to help each other out, essentially.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. But ultimately for my job, I want to be targeting a mixture. So groups such as yourself who have that kind of savvy online presence, but also people who just wouldn’t dream of starting up a Twitter account.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and I know those people. I’ve met people who’ve said to me, ‘I don’t use a computer,’ and it’s almost something that you respect as part of their package. That’s the way that they do things and you have to cater for that.

But do you think if we just got rid of social media, would that be a good idea?

RESPONDENT: In general or for the Red Tower?

INTERVIEWER: Well, in Red Tower? What do you think?

RESPONDENT: Well from my side personally, I have a love/hate relationship with it. I really enjoy it, keep contact with friends, and then I’ve shut my account down so many times.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, Spitfires!

RESPONDENT: Oh, I heard about those coming over.

INTERVIEWER: There they are! Wow, we got a really good view!

RESPONDENT: Nice. I was hoping to see them.

INTERVIEWER: Four, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It’s amazing! And I’ve got it on audio!

RESPONDENT: It’s really good. I saw them running out as a kiddie!

INTERVIEWER: Yeah!
RESPONDENT: It’s really good.

INTERVIEWER: What we should do is get Spitfires with banners on and then everyone would know about us.

RESPONDENT: ‘Cause that’s historic environment, isn’t it, Spitfires going over?

INTERVIEWER: Yes it is! So okay, let’s talk about historic environment. Before the recorder went on, you were saying how TCV sort of has the historic environment in its remit.

RESPONDENT: Well we, for example, help groups come together with insurance and to help people set up as a group and things like that. And it’s mainly if it’s growing food in an activity or involvement in something historical. I can’t remember the exact terminology but preserving the historic environment. Very much so in terms of that. My view, from what I’ve seen, is on the periphery of what we do, but certainly in terms of the bread and butter of TCV is typically that minibus going out with volunteers to work, to do contract jobs in effect, around and about York.

INTERVIEWER: Contract jobs like...?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, so for the local authority, clearing... Well some of the pictures we’ve got here. Building, infrastructure, clearing woodlands, better woodland management. So because they’re out and about, it’s more of... one of the things that I really like is historic parklands, working in that environment. Ha-ha and things like, where if you...

INTERVIEWER: Oh yeah, I do know what a ha-ha is. That’s really bad ‘cause I used to work at a National Trust site and they had a ha-ha and I always had to explain it to visitors.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So they’re more working in that conservation.

INTERVIEWER: More mud and grass conservation than bricks and mortar.

RESPONDENT: Very much so. Because our skill is in number of hands. That’s why you use us because we can turn up with a bus. But it’s also the classic kind of way of it of, say if you have an environment and you want to get some work done on it which is conservation, you can either employ contractors to come into it or you can get us to come in and do it. There is a cost with that. But the positive thing about getting us is a) you’re doing this thing of volunteering and all the positives that come out of that, but also if you have anybody on site that wants to get involved...

So we sometimes mow the grass along by the wall.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right.

RESPONDENT: And so if you want to get involved in your local... you can actually join us and get involved with it as well.
INTERVIEWER: So, like Lords Mayor’s Walk, that area next to the walls, where they used to apparently graze sheep...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...you’ve been there and done some mowing?

RESPONDENT: We will have. Because of the council cutbacks and things, the amount of mowing we’re doing for the council is reducing. But that’s the way of the world. But it’s that type of thing. So it’s doing works in and around York, sometimes in a historical environment. But ultimately we’re doing practical kind of conservation. Sometimes it’ll just so happen to be next to, or will involve... But it’s never highly technical, to do with a conservation site or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: So I suggested that maybe we talk about this connection to the more grass and mud side of conservation to the historic environment. We’ll start first with what is your definition of ‘historic environment’ or ‘heritage’, as it’s often termed?

RESPONDENT: I would kind of come from it... In my previous job I worked for Natural England. And that’s why it’s traditions and landscape that we want to protect. But my personal viewpoint is always protect for the enjoyment of others, rather than protecting it for the sake of just protecting it. I’m going to sidetrack you, I think, on a definition. I’m struggling with that, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It’s funny, one of the interviews... I hadn’t asked that question and then he asked it back to me.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And I was a bit unprepared.

RESPONDENT: No, but I think it’s just things which...yeah.

INTERVIEWER: As you pointed up in the sky when the Spitfires went past, you said that that was the historic environment, which I probably would say was more heritage because...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...it’s mobile. But only because it’s mobile.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. But it’s that same type of thing. Unless there was a passion for it, they wouldn’t exist.

INTERVIEWER: What is the passion for it, then?

RESPONDENT: For the historic environment?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: It's for tradition, it's for... I'm just going to spout words like 'culture', 'heritage'. It's just respect for... I think I'm very much, some of the simple things that I really like about the historic environment is just simple things like we can furrow on a field. Just those traditional ways where you dig and you chuck all the earth to one side and you've got these lovely fields of just bumps like that.

INTERVIEWER: So considering your sort of definition, traditions and it is a bit greener, what do you think of the Red Tower in that...?

RESPONDENT: I love it. I much prefer that it is that, as opposed to a portakabin. You know, 'cause you could be doing exactly the same thing out of a portakabin in the middle of nowhere. And it doesn't make any difference to what you're doing and my kind of interest but it's just a lovely hook, if that's the right word.

INTERVIEWER: It's a hook. Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But also I'm very much of the thing of, you know, you're opening it up. Every time I go there and the door's open, people get in, don't they? You know, people are dying to have a look in.

INTERVIEWER: The people who come off the walls are immediately in there.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, and I think that's really positive to get people looking at it and understanding. I love all the... Well, it probably causes you grief, but I love all the contention that comes with it, of people saying, 'You shouldn't be doing this. That's brick and it's not this and not that,' and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you like that? I'm not saying I don't but...

RESPONDENT: No, because it's just getting people talking about it. You would never discuss that pub across the street 'cause it's just there. We think it's a knocking shop, by the way!

INTERVIEWER: Huh?

RESPONDENT: We think it's a knocking shop.

INTERVIEWER: I don't know what that means!

RESPONDENT: Uh...the building of ills!

INTERVIEWER: Oh right, okay.

RESPONDENT: We're not definite, but we think it is!

INTERVIEWER: [laughing] Right, okay!

RESPONDENT: Sorry!
INTERVIEWER: That is a deviation, if I may say so!

Okay, right, where am I? So going back to this contention and you talk about the Red Tower being a hook, do you think that what we’re doing – our activities – are part of the message?

RESPONDENT: Your message of the...?

INTERVIEWER: Of what it’s about, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Um.

INTERVIEWER: ‘Cause one of the things that came up in another interview was that the... This is just an idea so I’d be interested to know your thoughts on it. The edible bed is a message. It acts as a getting-the-word-across type thing, and it’s lovely as well.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. When I think of you, I don’t think... When I think of Red Tower, I think of humans.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Of you. I don’t actually think of...

INTERVIEWER: The Red Tower itself.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting. That is really interesting.

RESPONDENT: And every time I go there I think, ‘That’s lovely. I like it. It’s simple.’ I love the fact that there’s not much in it at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: It’s very simple.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I really like that. But it’s good and symbolic because obviously it is a red tower; it lives up to its name. But no, if you said ‘Red Tower’ to me, I would imagine you five core people trying to get something going. But maybe that’s because I’m new. I kind of walked past it. Never really thought about the Red Tower until I came across you doing that.

INTERVIEWER: It’s interesting. And I say that word a lot. I should really not. It’s a noteworthy statement to say that’s what you think of. And you’re not the only one to say it, so...

RESPONDENT: Yeah, and that’s why I like what you’re doing. Because if you were there to say, ‘We’re raising funds to protect this landmark,’ I don’t think I’d be as interested in what you’re doing.

INTERVIEWER: Oh right. So it’s our intentions that are what...
RESPONDENT: Your intentions are a group coming together, social benefits. And what you’re
talking about in terms of getting that community that you look out on, engage with, that’s what
I really like about what you’re doing.

And it’s very much I totally understand... You know, we’ve had discussions before about
the café and you’ve said, ‘It’s not just about the café,’ and I really like that you’ve said that
because the café is just a means...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ...sorry, this sounds demeaning, of doing something, of bringing a bit of money in
and things like that. But the fact that you’re probably attracting mainly tourists... I don’t know.
For my sins I’ve yet to come along on a Saturday. That is no interest to me. I think it’s...

INTERVIEWER: So you think the tourist aspect is a red herring. No, that’s not the right word.

RESPONDENT: It’s not a red herring but it’s a by-the-by. I love the fact that I went along with
Claire to get a bit of furniture out of an old lady’s flat to go and having her saying, ‘Oh, it’s lovely
to see it used,’ and the fact that that simple interaction of us having a nice chat with her, saying,
‘It’s really good.’ Claire was saying, ‘Come and have a cup of tea next time you’re along. You can
see your chest of drawers in situ.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So it’s her getting out, coming along, you know? That kind of thing of the social
side of it.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that’s part of your...that is aligned with your...

RESPONDENT: It’s aligned with my work, yeah, but I think it’s very much...and maybe that’s why
I’ve ended up doing this job, because it’s one of the things which I really think is important, is
that thing of...like that, with whoever she was – can’t remember her name.

INTERVIEWER: The little lady?

RESPONDENT: Little lady, this terrible statistic of... I don’t know. It’s a statistic so it’s X amount of
people don’t see people for weeks on end and things like that. It’s that type of thing. That’s what
I really like about the Red Tower, the fact that it’s there and you’ve just got people looking at it. I
really like it.

INTERVIEWER: My feeling is that – and I’m saying this because I’m a human being; I’m going to
retract my opinions from you – that particular building has a charm because of its heritage. If it
was a portakabin, I don’t know. I don’t know if it would be the same.

RESPONDENT: Yes. A portakabin was probably a bit extreme, ‘cause you wouldn’t have a
portakabin there, would you?
INTERVIEWER: I don’t know what else you could have there instead that would be...

RESPONDENT: I suppose I would say very much the same as in if there was no building in the park of Tang Hall and you put in a little temporary thing there.

INTERVIEWER: A terrapin.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. It just fits there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: The Red Tower. It really does. Yeah, ‘cause from my work point of view I love the wall. I’ve walked it, thoroughly enjoy it. It is a wall. It’s a barrier and that’s how it impacts on my work.

INTERVIEWER: So it has a physical impact but the temporality of it, the ancient-ness of it, it doesn’t really...that’s not really any of your concern?

RESPONDENT: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, yeah. Okay. That’s really interesting. ‘Cause I’m interested in the idea of barriers and then the fact that it’s called the Local People. And those barriers are chopping up your local!

RESPONDENT: They really are, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Cool. So the last thing. How are we doing?

RESPONDENT: How are we doing?

INTERVIEWER: What time is it?

RESPONDENT: No, it’s alright.

INTERVIEWER: Well it’s twenty to five. Okay, so my last question is we’ve talked about the social media stuff and that is, in a way, a way of getting over the walls and into people’s houses. But at the same time you need to be able to physically navigate these areas in order to get the message out there, as you said. So it’s essentially both, is what you’re saying? Would you say?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I think from my side, I would like it if your...I would fully support you, help you printing and things like that, if you were wanting to do some more traditional way of leafleting the houses or whatever like that.

INTERVIEWER: That would be handy.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Just because they must see you and wonder what you’re doing.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve done a bit but I have had difficulties with printing.
RESPONDENT: Right, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Because I've got colour printing for free from the Department of Archaeology but the amount of times that technology has just let me down at the last moment 'cause I'm rushing around being a volunteer. And the printer's run out of paper and then I've done it wrong on the settings so that it prints it out in black and white and I'm just like, 'Noooo!' 

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So I don't know, what kind of facilities do you have? I'm going to finish now.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 22: 19-08-15 Pottery Lane Vicky

INTERVIEWER: Hello. Hi. Can you tell me how you, to start off with, just tell me how you know me and how we met?

RESPONDENT: I’m Vicky and I met you through the Red Tower.

INTERVIEWER: Can you remember when?

RESPONDENT: Oh gosh, no. Probably quite...was it last...no, it was this year.

INTERVIEWER: Can you remember where and then...

RESPONDENT: I’m trying to think where. It was at the meeting at the pub at the top, in the top room.

INTERVIEWER: Was it the one in.

RESPONDENT: It’s now a gay pub.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a gay pub?

RESPONDENT: It’s now a gay pub, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Oh. Oh, Thomas is...

RESPONDENT: That’s it.

INTERVIEWER: Right, okay.

RESPONDENT: Across from where the library is. Across from there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, [unclear – 0:00:48.2], yeah. And they’ve got the Spice Girls in the window?

RESPONDENT: Yes! And the Queen’s in it!

INTERVIEWER: And so bearing in mind we’ve had conversations about how your role has shifted and changed and chopped and is about to change into potentially something else completely, can you tell me at the time that we met, what your role was?

RESPONDENT: My role was, I was one of the people that was setting up York Real Junk Food Project, which is a project that connected through the Leeds York Real Junk Food Network charity, and they intersect food that would normally go to landfill, and use it appropriately within obviously health regulations. And it’s given away, in a way, on a pay-as-you-feel basis. So that means that you don’t necessarily have prices, charging and asking for X, Y and Z. What you say to people is, ‘If you’d like to give us some money, that’s be great, and you give what you can afford. Or you might want to bring in some food to swap for it. Or you might feel that you can
do grants or you could clear a table or do a bit of washing-up. Or a poster or something for that food.’

INTERVIEWER: So when you met us that time, what was your intention with the Red Tower, the connection there?

RESPONDENT: Well it was to find out more about the Red Tower, what you guys were wanting to do. And also part of York Junk Food Project, we were very keen to work with the Edible York and growing, so that is teaching people about food and educating them. And we came to visit the meeting to find out what you guys are about. I personally like the location. I know Walmgate quite well with the council estate there, and the idea was to try and work alongside each other to support each other.

‘Cause the main was to actually reach the community and try and get them to take on the projects as their own. And I’ve had quite an experience working with deprived areas and people in different classes to get them involved in community work.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Part of the reason I really wanted to talk to you actually – I’ve just remembered – was because you have this knowledge of the Walmgate area. You can put it on there.

RESPONDENT: I was going to try and put it in the middle, actually.

INTERVIEWER: So yeah, your work prior to the Junk Food Project, was that in the Walmgate area?

RESPONDENT: I used to live in The Groves. So there was a residents’ association there and it was about to close. I turned up to it and basically ended up being the Chair and re-growing the residents’ association there.

Being a Chair of the residents’ association, you get to meet the other Chairs of the other residents’ associations, and one of them was Walmgate. So I knew a bit about what they were doing, and obviously I’ve had some friends that live in...some private rent but some council tenants live in the area. And it’s very similar buildings to what The Groves are. They’re maisonettes and flats. No privacy really for them. And they are very much... I know in Groves, for York’s always been the poor area, and I think Walmgate has as well in some areas, and it’s built on...there’s water there and stuff. And there are students and there are a lot of students in The Groves. And there are always very similar problems what there was in The Groves, there has been for Walmgate.

There is this very much ‘them and us’ between the students, ‘them and us’ between the private housing, and it’s felt very on their own and not listened to. And it’s very evident as you go around the city of private roads down here, the private roads get listened to and the council
estates don’t. You know, Pottery Lane, for example, is full of potholes. You go to [unclear – 0:05:05.4] Avenue, the next road up, there’s nothing. Because they complain and it gets done.

INTERVIEWER: I also live in The Groves and I know exactly that there’s lovely... I’ve been walking down St John’s Road every day to get to...

RESPONDENT: ‘Cause they kick off and I know people down there who kicked off. And because they know how to complain, know who to talk to, they get things done. They don’t have any bins down there because they think it looks disgusting at the front of their properties. So that’s why they have the big ones in the car park.

INTERVIEWER: Ah, but they have...

RESPONDENT: The recycle bins but they don’t have...

INTERVIEWER: ...the boxes.

RESPONDENT: ...but they don’t have the green wheelie bins and they grey ones. If you look in the car park, the bins that are in the car park are for them.

INTERVIEWER: Ah. Interesting. I did not know that. But obviously the Red Tower is in the Walmgate area.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Now we’ve been talking on and off a bit about what Red Tower is, and normally I leave this question ‘til last but my background, as you know, is about heritage.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What is your opinion on heritage?

RESPONDENT: My personal opinion is I’d like to have more money, like National Trust and stuff like that, to go and visit these places. Because I am from...my family are multi-millionaires so I am from a lot of money and like nice things [unclear – 0:06:38.7] and all that sort of stuff. But I do live in a council house and I’ve been on benefits since 2003. So I don’t have much money. And heritage is often how the others live; it’s how the other side live. And we’re the poor side.

INTERVIEWER: So the other side being the rich people?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. You go to these places and it’s rich people, isn’t it? Even if you wanted to go to the Jorvik Centre to learn about the poor, I ain’t spending that money to go. Do you know what I mean? Even if it’s £5 or £7.50 to go to the art gallery, that’s to feed me for the week. So it’s very much we haven’t got those sort of finances to do that. And heritage is a bit of a distance thing and I suppose it’s like a different language.
For me, because I do like that – I like history, I like very much learning about how to go back to basics and can get lost in that myself – that's different. But I think I mentioned there's a guy down here, he's a retired gardener, ex-forces, so he's been to all the Eastern places, and he was just saying to me today, I think he's been in York for maybe 30, 40 years, he's never been to the Castle Museum. And he'd like to go but hasn't got the spare cash to do it. And it's seen as boring. And it's seen as they don't understand; there's a distance.

And what it is, I suppose, it's applying it in a way, or presenting it in a way that is not shouting, 'Heritage.' I suppose it's like renaming it so people come along and then they start saying, 'Well what was this building?' 'Oh, this was a...

And I suppose the educational literature – the pictures and stuff that are out – making it not too wordy, making it easy. So it's adapting it for real people.

INTERVIEWER: I really like the phrase you said earlier when we just having a conversation – 'dressing it up'.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. It's dressing it up differently. You hear 'heritage' and you're, 'Oh, boring,' or 'traditional' or 'upper class'. But instead of calling it that, for example call it the Red Tower Pop-In or Red Tower Café. I don't know. Or just naming it totally different. I don't know. Even after the person that maybe built it. And I know there are the moment they're looking at growing things, and that'd be a great place to get that. And I think it'd be great even to have the traditional people dressing up and have the traditional food that was in that era. But it's trying to make it more fun.

Kids are always the first ones, I always think, even with York Junk Food, you aim it at the kids. Food is such an easy thing to get people together over. We all need to eat.

And I suppose these heritage things are very much for the middle upper-class. They're the ones that are educated. They've got the money. People that are just working...they just haven't. And especially nowadays, money's even more scarce.

We all love walking around our beautiful city but I think because some of us live here we take so much of it for granted. I love going in the Minster. I know I can go in free. 1) I'm a Christian so I'm going to say I'm praying. 'Cause I'm not paying to go in there, you know? Why should we? But not everybody knows that, you see.

It's understanding that, and you've got to read about something to understand about that. And if you don't have the access to the books to read about it, it's a knock-on effect. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So okay, the educational stuff, which I think is really interesting, say you would take the Red Tower and you could do something with it that's like doing the education to make it fun, to make it interesting for people and to make it free to people that, like you say, don't necessarily have that language, what would you do?
RESPONDENT: I personally would probably go and approach the local school and get one of the local schools involved.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And get them to come and help put the garden in and maybe grow things. Especially looking at the kids that are in the area, where do they go to school? How do you plug them in? And even getting them to design the colours that they’d have for the kitchen. Get them involved in designing. So they actually, maybe at school, take ownership in some way. They partner specifically with the Red Tower and they can use that as an educational resource area.

I know there’s a church up near Priory Street as you’re going up there, they’ve got an amazing education resource centre and they pair with the schools, so the schools specifically come. I know the Minster, they specifically do stuff, and I think that’s maybe what the Red Tower, for it to survive as well...

But it is on a massive tourist trail. I’ve been really surprised how many tourists do just walk by. I haven’t checked – is it on the map yet?

INTERVIEWER: It’s on the map. I’ve seen it on a leaflet recently, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Good. And I think that’ll make such a difference it being on the map and actually not just like Walmgate.

INTERVIEWER: Just to clarify, the Red Tower wasn’t on the Visit York tourist map, but I think it is now.

RESPONDENT: Good.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve sure I’ve seen it has Red Tower on there.

RESPONDENT: ‘Cause I noticed that a few months ago. And I think that’s important it is on there ‘cause it’s a tower, right, on there.

I know there’s been comment about, ‘Walmgate Tower’s got a café,’ and, ‘Why’ve they got a café?’ And I think you need to clarify as well – I don’t think it’s clear to the public – that actually Red Tower is totally different. And that again for me comes back to you need to get your mission plan in, your mission statement, your vision statement and all that sort of stuff, and actually do bite-sizes.

And the funding, I think, through the pay-as-you-feel concept, I think you’d be able to kit that place out for next to nothing, actually. I personally think you could. Especially with it saying it’s sound. ‘Cause we’ve found out it’s sound.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: I think you’d be quite surprised how you could kit things out. And I know a lot of projects have got stuff for nothing.

INTERVIEWER: Now this is coming back to your role as the Real Junk Food Project sort of network for the area.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Which has happened over the last couple of months.

RESPONDENT: It has, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And so now, what are your sort of concerns for the Red Tower? Do you have any intentions for it?

RESPONDENT: Well I suppose I’ve been asked to be the network... The charity that the York Junk Food came out of would like me to consider being their area network coordinator for north-east Yorkshire, Humberside and Lincolnshire, and overseeing that and talking to the projects and where they’re at and what they want to do. And maybe helping them a bit with their visionary and thinking outside the box.

And I mean, I’m holding back getting involved with the Red Tower because I don’t know how much I’ve got going on. But I think it’s going back to basics. I think it’s great that it’s ticking over every Saturday, trying to get it on the map.

INTERVIEWER: It’s on the map now!

RESPONDENT: Yeah, and I think it’d be great if that can be maintained because even opening just for those few hours every Saturday, if that’s the commitment, for every Saturday of the year, that’s a massive commitment in itself.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Well we’re not sure that’s going to continue in the winter because of the weather.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. And it’s looking at what is possible.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And I think maybe when it comes to autumn, winter, maybe even the beginning of October, to be honest, I think you guys say, ‘Right, we’re going to shut from the beginning of October to, let’s say, end of March, and in that time we’re going to try and do A, B, C and D.’ Get your foundations in.

As a network there are different levels of how much get involved. I mean, if you become a CIC and want to sign up to the contract to be properly affiliated with, there are other things.

INTERVIEWER: So you’re saying the Red Tower would be part of the Real Junk Food network?
RESPONDENT: As a network.

INTERVIEWER: Because that was your initial sort of interest and one of our other team...was it Claire?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: She would...yeah. I mean, we all did.

RESPONDENT: And it's very much you would be part of the network and get what comes with that. But then when you sign a contract to become an affiliated member ('cause that's like the next level) what you're saying is that 90% of the food is intercepted or donated, intercepted. You weigh it ('cause obviously we need to keep figures; we're trying to prove long-term for things) and then there's other stuff, 'cause obviously as a network it's working with Ocado, Morrison's, Waitrose nationally, and the idea is nationally – once you've got things tied up nationally – individual projects in the towns will be able to go directly to these organisations. And there's already been an agreement with head office, so basically it's a done deal.

And I think like Ocado, they're looking at when they replace the vans, Junk Food members will get the choice to get them at next to nothing. So there are all those sort of things.

And also we know like Nandos, it was basically re-furbing a lot of their restaurants. The Junk Food network projects were getting chance to have their kitchens and dining rooms.

So that's why I'm saying...

INTERVIEWER: The furnishings, you mean?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, the furnishings. You know, the kitchen, the cooker. And there are other things I've seen through the network. 'Oh, there's this cooker – anyone want it, come and get it.' You know, proper kitchen. It's amazing, the stuff, because people are donating things. They know that it's going to be reused for community stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Something that I'm getting just from listening to you is that this idea that we've got... Maybe we could backtrack on what the Real Junk Food Project actually is. Like, its ethos, its mission statement.

RESPONDENT: Well it's basically intercepted food. It wants to reduce food waste so there's no food waste whatsoever in the world, not just this country, and eventually do itself out of a job. Because it's about educating people how to deal with food, but it's also educating supermarkets, and actually the supermarkets are easier to educate than the individual.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting to know.
RESPONDENT: Because actually the individual, we throw stuff away (well I don’t, ’cause I can’t afford to) like lettuce. Instead of buying small amounts we buy a full lettuce and then we chuck it. Well why do we? Then carrots and...

Also we have to have things a certain shape and a certain size. Well why do we?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: You know, what’s wrong with a misshapen veg? It’s still the same thing; you can eat off it.

And this best before date. There’s no such thing. Yeah, you’ve got sell by date, and that’s often eggs and stuff that will go off. But the best before date is literally just for the manufacturer and the businesses to rotate stock. Food is still fine after that date and months after that date, especially if it’s not been opened.

INTERVIEWER: What really interests me is hearing what you’re saying about the Real Junk Food Project network, is that not is the waste of food...

RESPONDENT: Everything. What’s happening is it’s everything. Because what’s happening is a lot of organisations like the ethos that... ’Cause we’re not selling it on. And actually it’s against the law, especially for food, to resell it on unless you’re specific... And the idea is that organisations throw this stuff away. They have to pay to get it removed. But if a project comes along and says, ‘We can use that,’ they take it away for free. So actually they’re saving the organisation or business money and we’re gaining by it.

INTERVIEWER: And when you say, ‘It’s everything,’ as you were saying earlier, it’s not just food.

RESPONDENT: It’s furniture, it’s white goods, silver goods. I know through Waitrose if we got the relationship with them going, they get stuff for us as part of John Lewis and they were saying the bedding – we get bedding and all sorts. In packs. ‘If they can’t sell it, can we have it?’ ‘Yeah, we’ll take it.’

‘Cause the thing is, there are people out there who can’t afford bedding, or we can plug into organisations like homeless organisations that could use it. It’s just absolutely opening up a totally different world.

INTERVIEWER: Of material...

RESPONDENT: Yeah. We are such a wasteful group of people, it is ridiculous. And I think it’s changing mind set. I mean, I remember the day we had milk bottles. And even lemonade bottles – we put them back out and they got recycled. We had paper bags for stuff. We didn’t have all these cartons and everything. You know? Things are so wasteful now. People think we’re... But we’re not, you know?
So I just think we need to change the mind set and the idea is that through these projects we’re trying to educate people.

Schools as well. And I think the school one for the Red Tower. Because of the heritage, I think that’d be a really good way of partnering up with a specific school that’s linked to the kids in Walmgate.

INTERVIEWER: And so here you’re saying that heritage is sort of... What is it for you in this case, with the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: I think if you’re talking abo... But I think trying to look at it differently, yes you can still have a reading room there and a café and stuff ‘cause that’ll get more people coming. But I think the kids are the way into getting more people coming. And actually not just temporary for visiting. You need this to last forever. So it can become self-managed by the community. And if the kids start loving it and wanting the parents to come, you’ve sort of got it really, ‘cause...

INTERVIEWER: Do you think – and I had this conversation with someone else – that if it wasn’t what it is, it being a 15th Century building made of red bricks...

RESPONDENT: I think if it was just a brand new building that’s just been put up, unless it was eco-friendly and that’s another angle, but just imagine we just put up like another Walmgate flat there, it’d just be another Walmgate flat, wouldn’t it, really?

INTERVIEWER: What I’m saying it if it wasn’t the Red Tower but it was space, like the Red Tower but it wasn’t as old...

RESPONDENT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: ...it was maybe just...

RESPONDENT: 1970s?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, why not, why not? Just a building. Would it have the same... Could it have the same...

RESPONDENT: Well no. It would just be like one of the buildings that’s in Walmgate. If the Red Tower wasn’t built as it was by the people that it was in those times back gone, and basically it’s like having a flat in the Walmgate flats, isn’t it?

INTERVIEWER: Well basically what I was thinking is like if you had a space because of Space109, which wasn’t old, but it was still a hub and it was still a place that people came and did art stuff but it wasn’t old, so it was part of the street...
RESPONDENT: It gives it more edge, having it in the building that it is and having the history behind it.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: And I think for kids, nowadays interaction for children is massive. 80% of people learn much more by interacting and using all our senses than sitting there and being lectured at.

INTERVIEWER: And you think the Red Tower would be a really good...

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I think it would be. Because there is a lot to it and there’s been that animal – what was that stoat or whatever found?

INTERVIEWER: It was a gecko, not a stoat!

RESPONDENT: Gecko then, a gecko! Whatever – it looks the same!

And I think with the growing there, with that big, solid wall, yeah, it just gives it something. And Walmgate is a lovely area. I mean, it could be a lot better, and I see once you get established in that area that you would probably get more, sort of grow things more out into the other areas.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, like at the front of the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, and the raised beds with the crap perennials in. They’re just in there ‘cause no one manages them. But they would be the sort of thing that you could sort of spread out into.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: With the help of the school. And the thing is, the schools love doing stuff but they don’t want to always be 100% responsible for something.

[START OF FILE 2]

INTERVIEWER: So where were we? Gecko, kids, Red Tower. So the heritage aspect of the Red Tower, it gives it an edge, you said?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. It gives it something different. And I think it’s not just a normal building. You see, if you had a normal 1970s building, why would kids want to come to it? Why would we want to learn about it?

INTERVIEWER: And in that sort of situation, kids are learning at the Red Tower, education and all that stuff...
RESPONDENT: They could be planting plants and...

INTERVIEWER: Planting plants. So that’s the edible stuff.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So education, edible stuff and the Real Junk Food would just be part of it?

RESPONDENT: As an extra, to get...

INTERVIEWER: As an extra.

RESPONDENT: And you’d have the food, obviously, growing and it’d be free, wouldn’t it?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So it’d be part of all that as well. And linking into Edible York and stuff, and the abundance that they do. And I just think it could be like another drop-in, another location. And I think run properly I think you could do quite well with it, really. Because there’s nothing... Okay, you’ve got paid... What is it? Frankie and Benny’s. And you’ve got Waitrose. But there’s nothing that’s unique like that there.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I was going to talk about... We’ve talked a bit about your aspirations or intentions with the Real Junk Food Project and the Red Tower, your ideas there. ‘Cause of York being a heritage place, what are your concerns about York? Do you have any?

RESPONDENT: I think there are lots of amazing places to visit, heritage-wise, in York. And it was great having the York Card. I think I paid £3 for mind last year to be able to go to the different museums and stuff for free. But now, because it can’t be subsidised, my York Card’s just run out so I’ve got to pay £5 to get a new York Card, and then I’ve got to go and pay £5 (‘cause I’m on benefits I can get it reduced instead of £20, I think) to get another card so I can visit the other places for free. It’s a lot of hard work to do all that, and most people wouldn’t do it. ‘Cause I’ve got to go into different places and send it off and photocopy my proof of benefits and put the card number down. And a lot of people in my situation won’t do that. And I think what’ll happen is now the paid places, even like the gallery, they’re going to be more exclusive for the people that can afford it, i.e. the upper middle-class. So I think people on low incomes, benefits, will lose out.


RESPONDENT: The gap will get bigger. If we were in London, I’d love to go to places like The Tate Gallery and stuff, the National... Places that are free. But then with my disability I’d want to go with somebody ‘cause of the distance and finding out where it is. But I don’t have that opportunity.

INTERVIEWER: No.
And being in York, I have thankfully – when I’ve had an odd day – been around
the museums on offer. But even when we have the York special days at the open, and we have
places for free, I haven’t been out on those days because I have trouble with crowds, and my
disability and queueing. So automatically I’m isolated from that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

It doesn’t cater for single people as well. So I think the gap is going to get even
bigger, to be honest. Even like Dig In, I know we get a reduction with this special card and stuff.
But actually, I’m not going to go to Dig In ‘cause I haven’t got any kids.

INTERVIEWER: What’s Dig In?

RESPONDENT: Dig In...

INTERVIEWER: Oh sorry, I do know that. It’s down by St Saviour Gate, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Sorry, yeah.

And also you find a lot of homeless people aren’t going to go to these places
because they stand out like a sore thumb. But they do go to the library and hang out in there
‘cause it’s free to hang out.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. The library has come up a couple of times.

Yeah. They don’t go for the books, though. They go for the computers and the
free Wifi and it’s somewhere to hang out. If there was an alternative – and that’s what York Real
Junk Food Project was going to do; give an alternative – they would go there.

‘Cause I know some of them don’t want to beg. They want to read their books. I know
Patrick does and a few of the others. And want to stay warm. It’s somewhere to stay warm. I hate
the library.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

RESPONDENT: I’m dyslexic; I don’t like the library.

INTERVIEWER: Fair enough.

RESPONDENT: And it’s busy and it’s really...

INTERVIEWER: But everybody likes to spend their time in different ways. I can’t say I’ve been to
this library but very much...

RESPONDENT: You should go and see. It’s quite a busy library.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: And I mean, I went to York St John’s and I love the old library. Then they’ve done this new style and I freaked out because it’s open-plan, it’s got loads of different patterns, and the noise levels are horrendous.

INTERVIEWER: You should come to King’s Manor library. It’s titchy and you’ve got creaky floorboards and...

RESPONDENT: And that’s fine for me, when everyone’s going, ‘Shh!’ But when there’s tapping away and, ‘Aw, it’s horrible.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Someone with heightened senses, that’s the worst thing for me. So hidden disability unfriendly.

INTERVIEWER: So what... I don’t actually know what your disability is.

RESPONDENT: I’m severe dyslexia and ADHD.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And so ADHD is when you’re...

RESPONDENT: Well it’s Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. So hyperactivity.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But I’m severe ADHD. So the spectrum is massive.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So I suppose the line, all my senses are quite on that. And I’m not ADHD with autism. ADHD within itself has dyspraxia, autism, Asperger’s, all the neurological conditions and learning disabilities. Imagine a little bit of every single one thrown into a big bucket with hyperactivity. That’s me. Plus the dyslexia.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So that comes back to what you were saying about those kids and the interaction stuff.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Is that why you’re so aware of it?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. And I’ve learnt myself... And I know 80% of interaction is better... Sorry, interaction – so that’s using all your senses – 80% of people learn by talking at somebody. Through a lecture only 20% learn.

INTERVIEWER: Mm. So when you go to heritage sites – if you go...
RESPONDENT: Well when I have the opportunity to go... ‘Cause I used to have a National Trust card, ‘cause I got it cheap when I was a student (I think it was £30 for the year, which was great) and I love going, and I went to the ones in York...

INTERVIEWER: Treasurer’s House.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And I paid a bit extra to go underneath and I loved to see how the Romans it was all set out. Sometimes I find the information’s too much, there’s too much information. I just need bullet points and then if you want to know more, pick up more. And also I find I need to go back to somewhere, ‘cause I need to revisit, get used to it and then come back so I’m not having to relearn a lot in one go.

INTERVIEWER: It’d be really interesting because I’d like to do some stuff. My intention would be, if I could – if I had the resources and the time – I would like to be able to do some kind of interpretation plans for the Red Tower, that is incorporated in this social-facing stuff and it’d be really good to work with you to see what would work.

RESPONDENT: Well they joke and say, ‘If Vicky understands it, anyone’ll understand it.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you could be the guinea pig.

RESPONDENT: I sort of cover every area.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ‘Cause my attention span can be quite short and I can suddenly lose it and just go off, and if you’ve lost me you’ve lost me. It’s like I don’t like going to the theatre ‘cause it can go on and on and it’s like boring.

INTERVIEWER: Sorry if my understanding of this is a bit fuzzy, but having a short attention span, doesn’t that make you... You know, kids have a short attention span as well, don’t they? Is that...

RESPONDENT: But if you’ve got ADHD, that’s a definite.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I’ve learnt to keep eye contact and I’ve learnt a lot of stuff over time. And obviously I’m on medication as well. But yeah. ADHD for kids is different ADHD for men and women.

INTERVIEWER: Right, okay.
RESPONDENT: So I've got the male form and ADHD can be quite aggressive. If it's ADD, which is Attention-Deficit Disorder without the hyperactivity, you can be quite dreamy and off with the fairies.

INTERVIEWER: Okay!

RESPONDENT: But I'm quite intense, forward, very black and white, very matter-of-fact.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I can be very de-de-de-de.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But that's my personality. It's part of my condition as well.

INTERVIEWER: So going back to interaction with places of historic...

RESPONDENT: I think (sorry, it's just come to me), something like the Red Tower, if you get a plan together and decide what you're going to plant there it could be a good sensory. 'Cause it's not a big place. And you can get in the bottom with wheelchairs and stuff. I don't find it overcrowded. I feel comfortable in the Red Tower 'cause it's not too much. There's not too much going on. It's not a busy, noisy place.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting. Having people in there would change that, wouldn't it?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. How you've got it set up... So when... I think there were about four of us in there, weren't there?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: That was quite nice. And I think normally when you have people doing sensory projects, you don't have a lot of people anyway.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: And you would have a small network class for a period of time. Or even if you had a class of 30 it'd be quite hectic out there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: You'd have to break the class up into two or something.

INTERVIEWER: Well that's why you'd have the outside space as well as an option.

RESPONDENT: Well you'd have the upstairs, wouldn't you? And also you'd have to get permission to find out how many people you could have in the building all at once, your capacity. So there's all that to think about. And fire safety.
INTERVIEWER: So going back to York and your concern with it, it seems to me, talking about the York Card, your concern is that you’re having to pay entry for these places.

RESPONDENT: I think it’s very good value for money. It’s just finding that extra...well I’ve got to find an extra £10 now and probably spend a day running around trying to sort it all out. And most people won’t do that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I’m doing that because I’m making a conscious decision with other people that I’m trying to make and build relationships that want to go and meet at the art gallery. But I don’t want to pay £7.50. So I’m thinking, ‘If I do all this running around, it’s going to save me money in the long-run,’ and I’m trying to build relationships.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And I’m not really working at the moment so I’m trying to go that extra mile. And there’s a certain class of people that go to these places. It’s like a certain class of people go to Betty’s, don’t they? I was brought up in Betty’s. We were all brought up in Betty’s in Harrogate. ‘Cause my great-grandparents, you know? But yeah, it’s just different and I suppose I’m trying to broaden my spectrum a bit. My concern is that there’ll be more of a distance between them and us, sort of thing. It won’t be so accessible.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Even if it was £1 to get in. I would pay £1 to get in.

INTERVIEWER: Would you pay £1 to get into the Red Tower, if that was to help with...

RESPONDENT: Well yeah, I would.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: But if it had a pay-as-you-feel café I would come on purpose to give some money for that, you see.

INTERVIEWER: Oh yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And that’s an intention then?
RESPONDENT: Yeah. And like I said, when I went to Saltaire near Bradford for their pay-as-you-go café I think I gave that £1.20, but someone gave me a jar of unopened olives, so I took them. It was like, ‘Oh, cheers!’ But I know they’ll probably use... So it’s like a swap thing.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah.

RESPONDENT: And it idea is...

INTERVIEWER: It’s efficient!

RESPONDENT: ‘Cause I don’t use those. You find a lot of these cafés have been a real lifesaver to people that have come out of work, that would have been at home, that have got in a bit of a rut and a bit lost. They come to somewhere like that and they feel useful. And then you find when they get work they’re like, ‘Oh, I can give back now. Here – I can give you £20.’ ‘What’s that for?’ ‘Well you’ve helped me for the last few months.’

And like Adam tells a story about having the café, all the rewiring for free because they supported that guy in the three or four months, didn’t ask for a penny, and then he came back and said, ‘I can do this for you now ‘cause I’m working.’

Yeah. So it’s about investing in the community and sometimes you have to give things for nothing and not expect anything back.

INTERVIEWER: Before we turned on the recording we were chatting about what the heritage aspect of Red Tower is, and because of what you’ve been saying about it being a bit middle-class, upper middle-class or even upper-class, is that an issue for Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: I think it is at the moment, yeah. What happens is you look at Red Tower, Tim, Edible York. It is upper middle-class. Or upper-class. People dress differently, they act differently, they speak differently. There’s no bridge to the community and I think it’s because in some ways it’s like having two foreign countries try to come together and they’ve got to understand each other’s cultures. And sometimes there’s a fear in each one.

Even I can talk about St Nicholas Fields. It’d be a great place to go and learn, but a lot of the people round and about don’t go because again it’s like them and us. And it’s trying to break that barrier. And once you break the barrier down, the floodgates will open ‘cause the word’ll get round: ‘Go there. It’s really good. It’s not what you think it is.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Do you know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER: So how did you do that? This breaking down the bridges, or building bridges, rather... Which one is it?

RESPONDENT: Well breaking down the walls and building bridges.
INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So it's a bit of both, really.

INTERVIEWER: Bit of both.

RESPONDENT: I know in Walmgate... I did it in The Groves because it’s like standing back and going, 'What is in the locality already?' And then it’s going to them and basically I think the Walmgate Residents’ Association – and I know you’ll probably confirm – is they will be frightened that you’re going to go in there and suddenly take over or do stuff. And they’re fearful that their nose is gonna get pushed out, I would think.

INTERVIEWER: I don’t think that’s the case, actually. From what I’ve been speaking about with the residents’ association in Walmgate, they’ve got difficulties themselves and it may be that they actually have to disband.

RESPONDENT: I’m not surprised.

INTERVIEWER: There are a couple of people who are holding onto it and those two people that I’ve spoken to seem to see the Red Tower in a positive light.

RESPONDENT: In a way, you want rid of the ones that have been causing the issue. ‘Cause they had a centre, they had all sorts in Walmgate.

INTERVIEWER: In Space109?

RESPONDENT: Yes, and it was very much, ‘This is ours.’ And obviously things have changed. Well it’s quite a few years. It’s two years now.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But I suppose it’s going along in the right way and saying... And I suppose it’s like with the café on Walmgate in the tower saying, ‘It’s awesome what you’re doing. We’re looking at doing this. We don’t want to trample on your toes. Actually, we want to come alongside and work with you.’ And I suppose it’s a bit like a lot of the work I’ve done in York. I’ve done a lot of networking and it’s going in and saying, ‘Well what do you want from us as well? What can we help you with or not? Why don’t you come down and see?’ And just do it softly, softly. It’s surprising – communication goes a long way.

And sometimes the first time they might be a bit prickly. And then it’s finding out, ‘Right, who else can we get in?’

INTERVIEWER: How do you do the communication stuff, though? I have spoken to lots of people and I have an idea of what needs to be done but it’s good to know your...

RESPONDENT: I don’t know. I just go in and I just do it. I don’t know how I do it. I just go in and I have a chat with them. And obviously it changes on the person.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And what you find is, ‘Have they got a dog?’ or something and you start chatting about that. And we’re women as well. That helps! Batter the eyelashes helps sometimes!

And it’s just going in and saying, ‘Oh well, part of this...’ And I think for me it helps, ‘cause I am quite known now in the city. I’ve worked very closely with the council and other biggish organisations and I think I’ve proved my worth.

So I can say, ‘I’ve worked with these people already and this and that.’ Care Cent. wanted to work with York Junk Food ‘cause they get food – tinned food – that they can’t always use. And at the moment it goes to FoodBank. But actually they would have given it to us, ‘cause FoodBank’s got too much. It’s got, like, fourteen tonne. You know?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. ‘Cause my line of enquiry with this project has been about the building of the bridges through communicating. But I thought it was about media.

RESPONDENT: It can be about media but sometimes it’s the personal touch, actually going around to each organisation...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: ...and actually taking the time out. ‘Cause you can actually miss a lot of people. And it is literally networking. Going on like the voluntary action courses and meeting people.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that sounds awesome. Can I come along and see?

RESPONDENT: And I suppose if you’re excited about it, your passion comes over and people get hooked to that passion as well. And it’s about being non-threatening. ‘Cause people do get, ‘This is our project. Don’t want anything to happen.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But actually it’s about saying to people, ‘This is what we’re doing. If you’d like to, great. If not, great. But let’s help each other. If you need any help, give me a shout.’ And it’s...

INTERVIEWER: Pinning up on that, if it’s about personal touch and it’s about people going in and chatting and stuff, this is a concern of my, which maybe I shouldn’t be concerned. We’ve talked a bit about it before in another conversation.

RESPONDENT: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: I’m a student. I’m a middle-class girl and I’ve got that interest in heritage, although I do really see the usefulness of the Red Tower doing what it can do to help build those bridges and be a place for people to meet up and stuff. And I want those things because that’s altruistic of me. I see it as good.
But I see also that my position in society means that sometimes it can be difficult for people to...

RESPONDENT: I think sometimes again it’s about redressing it. So how you just said that to me, I would say that in a different way to somebody else that I’ve just met. I probably wouldn’t come and say, ‘Oh, I’m a student.’ I’d just say, ‘I’m part of this project and I’m really keen to see what you guys think about it or how I can help facilitate it, what you want.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Do you know what I’m saying? It’s tweaking it and it’s breaking that down. I mean, you might change if you were talking to a really well... You know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Like my grandad, just be who you are.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But it’s about changing that. The same when you’re talking to travellers. You talk differently. I would dress differently as well.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And take someone with you. And I think you’ve just said something which is lovely to hear, that there’s two people hanging on in that residents’ association. I would work with them and get them involved. If they’ve got an interest already and they’re from Walmgate, that’s a massive key as well. But building relationships takes a while.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I’ve lived here two years now. Three years I’ve been in York. And I’ve spent a lot of time networking in communities and through the church and... I think when you work with a particular group of people, you sort of get in automatically as well with stuff. And I just have a knack to get on with everybody!

And it’s taking somebody else with you as well. Get me to come out with you for an hour or something and meet people and have a chat with them.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: But again, it comes back to, ‘What does the Red Tower want?’ ‘Cause there’s no point you selling one angle when that is nothing what they want.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.
RESPONDENT: ‘Cause then someone else’ll go out and talk about that angle to the same person and they’ll go, ‘They don’t know what they’re on about, these two.’ Do you see what I’m saying? In a way you’re like a salesman. You’ve got to be a salesman sometimes.

INTERVIEWER: It’s coming up a lot, that idea. I think I’m going to stop it again.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 23: 26-08-15 Phoenix Pub Group Int.: Lilac, Ed & Vicky

INTERVIEWER: So it’s Vicky, Lilac and Ed, whose names I will anonymise once I’ve sorted that out, but can I ask are you all happy for it to be audio-recorded?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes.
RESPONDENT 2: Yes.
RESPONDENT 3: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And in the interviews that I’ve done with you before, you signed a consent form. Are we happy that those consent forms cover this?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes.
RESPONDENT 2: Yes.
RESPONDENT 3: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Great, that’s three yeses. Okay, just to kick off, can we, around the table, just explain who you are and what relationship you have to York in terms of what you do? Go, Ed.

RESPONDENT 1: My name is Ed, I work for the Conservative Trust, we are conservation volunteers and I’m employed for two years on a contract just to do a bit of work engaging with communities within Tang Hall and Guildhall. So that’s what I’m doing for the ne– I’m six months into it and you were the first group who we’ve managed to pay a little bit of money to.

RESPONDENT 3: And we’re very grateful.

RESPONDENT 2: I’m Lilac and I work as a freelance regeneration consultant with a specialisation in community regeneration, working with communities and also in heritage regeneration, so in terms of the Red Tower and York, there’s the heritage aspect and the community and regeneration aspect that I’ve got a direct interest in.

RESPONDENT 3: I’m Vicky. I do a lot of project work, preferably from the volunteer side. At the moment I’m volunteering to be a network co-ordinator for the Real Junk Food Project charity network and Red Tower is one of those under the umbrella of that.

INTERVIEWER: So we can all say, would you agree, that the Red Tower is what has brought us together?

RESPONDENT 1: Yes.
RESPONDENT 2: Yes.
RESPONDENT 3: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Cool. So in our prior individual interviews, and some of the participations that I’ve been doing with Red Tower, I’ve been collecting a list of different information sharing tactics that have been used and that’s what I want to talk about today, around engaging with community groups. And this is something that we all talked about in our individual interviews. So I’m just going to read out a list of things that have come up and I just wanted to ask you if there’s anything that I’ve missed or if there is anything that I should add and look at in my later analysis? So I’ve got here, so far the Red Tower has been using Facebook and we’ve been using other social media platforms such as Twitter. Are there any other social media that we’ve been using? Can you think of anything that we’ve been using.

RESPONDENT 2: The TIM website, a bit, in the early days but that’s closed now anyway, so...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. We talked very early on about the omission of the Red Tower from the Visit York leaflet.

RESPONDENT 3: Oh, right. I meant to bring it. I went in and it is on the one you pay £1 for, it’s very clearly on there. I spoke to her about the slim one and she said that was printed last year, but then I meant to bring August’s one and it’s not on there.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right.

RESPONDENT 3: Because I also saw her with the slim one, they hadn’t put the belfry, and that was something I had fought for. So I picked up on it, so I would get back– I can’t remember, I spoke to a specific lady who was in charge of that upstairs and...

RESPONDENT 2: Was that the De Grey Rooms?

R2 or RESPONDENT 3: Well upstairs in the tourist place.

INTERVIEWER: In Visit York.

RESPONDENT 3: In Visit York they’ve got offices, it’s the tourist information, you know...

INTERVIEWER: It’s opposite the Mint Yard, York Explore, near Thomas’s pub.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah, next to Thomas’s pub, where we were upstairs, when we all first met. And upstairs they’ve got offices and there’s a lady that specifically deals with that and I went to see her, to explain that it’s important to put it on there, but it’s hit and miss, because they’ve got odd ones on, there’s not a consistent thing that all of them are on. They’ve just got odd ones on. And really for me it should be consistency of having them all on.

RESPONDENT 2: Thanks for that, we’ll definitely check that out.

INTERVIEWER: That’s a really interesting point, and maybe we’ll...
RESPONDENT 3: Because I went in for something else and I thought actually I’ll just check– And it is on the one you pay £1 for.

INTERVIEWER: Brilliant. Okay.

RESPONDENT 2: So, basically the skinflints don’t know we’re there, but the ones that pay money, fine. Well that’s okay.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that might be a bit of an issue.

RESPONDENT 3: And I would check that conservation and everything, I can’t think what else, but they would know things coming through them about that.

RESPONDENT 2: Well we ought to find that out, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay. Well that’s something I can potentially look up.

RESPONDENT 3: I know when I did the Belfry they subscribed a membership fee, but I’m hoping because you’re a community group, you shouldn’t have to.

RESPONDENT 2: Well you think they’d just go to Friends of York Walls, because their website is really, really good. It’s got all the points on the walls in, so that would be...


RESPONDENT 3: If somebody doesn’t say anything, they just don’t do it, do they?

RESPONDENT 1: Do you think they appreciate you turning up and saying, ‘How about us?’

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah, I’d imagine they would.

RESPONDENT 3: Well I did it for the Belfry as well, because The Belfry has got Guy Fawkes was christened there, and I said, ‘Well you’ve got the Minster on, why haven’t you got the Belfry on?’ Because that’s a valid point.

RESPONDENT 2: The Belfry’s not – what St Michael le Belfrey?

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah. Opposite the...

RESPONDENT 2: Really?

RESPONDENT 3: It wasn’t on there.

RESPONDENT 2: That’s ridiculous.

RESPONDENT 3: But it’s on the new one now, and I was like, ‘Why is there inconsistency?’
RESPONDENT 2: It’s only been about 500 years to get on there! But that’s York, isn’t it?
There’s so much old stuff.

RESPONDENT 3: I think if anyone speaks up and works with them, they’ll do it, but if you
don’t; then they don’t have to, do you know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER: They just omit it, maybe by accident, maybe just from overlooking.

RESPONDENT 3: Well they’ve got so much going on and they’re working with members
and stuff like that, then they just...

INTERVIEWER: Interesting. That is interesting. So I guess leaflets are a– So we’ve got Facebook
and social media...

RESPONDENT 3: Are you talking about the Red Tower project now?

INTERVIEWER: Red Tower project, everything that’s connected to the Red Tower project and I’ve
just got you guys to help me collate a list, a database, of all the different kind of media-y assets
that we’ve got connected to the Red Tower and then to discuss kind of like how effective they
are. Which I know that we’ve had discussions about...

RESPONDENT 3: You see from the point of view of Real Junk Food, and how it’s good to
have Twitter and Facebook connected, but the more active you are within the network, it will just
start shooting up.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, the network of the Real Junk Food project?

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah. Because what happens is, each member of the network actually will
say, ‘This is going on at this place as well.’

RESPONDENT 2: Well it’s a bit like any social media, if people like it on Facebook– I mean
sometimes I’ll, you know, I’ve said this before, we’ll put something out on Facebook and loads of
people will share it and it will get a hit rate of 500 and it’s not necessarily more exciting than
something that gets a hit-rate of twenty, it just depends how many people like it and share it.

RESPONDENT 3: You see what would have been good if it was still going, actually you
would have had a page on a website and your café, because the idea is the more you work
together, the more it, sort of, it can feed in together, so it would be good if you and your café
could feed in together. Because one of my jobs will be to try and get you guys to work together.

RESPONDENT 2: We’re all for working together.

INTERVIEWER: Our leaflets that we designed, that I designed, they’ve undergone quite a few
different things. I don’t know if there is anything we need to add in terms of...

RESPONDENT 2: I think every time you do a new iteration, upload it on to the Facebook
page.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Okay.

RESPONDENT 2: That’s a really good way of getting...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, we’ve got another one coming up from the Heritage Open Day.

RESPONDENT 2: What I suggest you do is put that on the Facebook group and say, ‘Hey, share this.’ Because if you just print a few out and put them in the Red Tower that’s as far as they’ll go, or put them through doors. If you put them on everyone’s...if everyone sees that, there’s like 50/60 members of that group and we all pick up on it and we circulate it, we print it off and immediately you’ve got it out there. But you need to upload it onto that group. You can’t do it to a page, but you can do it to a group.

RESPONDENT 1: I did a really good peer review...

RESPONDENT 3: You can do an event, you should be able to do an event as well.

INTERVIEWER: We’ve got an event for the Heritage Open Day, it’s there.

RESPONDENT 1: ...and it was really interesting, because

[unclear – 0:09:00.7]

RESPONDENT 3: ...main person, then everybody helps it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: Do you know what I mean, because the more...

RESPONDENT 2: Claire was helping me with the flowers and....

RESPONDENT 3: Don’t have the meeting in the leaflet, don’t have the meeting in...

[unclear – 0:09:13.03]

RESPONDENT 2: We need to keep together, don’t we?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. We’ve got photographs as well, that’s the other thing that we use quite a lot of. And we’re using them just mainly on Facebook and Twitter pages.

RESPONDENT 3: What about...there’s another device you can use now, that you just put photographs on.

RESPONDENT 2: Instagram.

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah. Instagram.

INTERVIEWER: We don’t have...
RESPONDENT 1: My girlfriend does a lot of it and she’s comms for Natural England and she was telling me that Facebook is getting too old now, as in the people who look at Facebook, it’s a much older range. Twitter is still going strong, but Instagram is the one coming in.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah, it’s coming in. But it’s just photographs, Instagram, and odd comments, it’s not really anything, do you know what I mean? So it’s like moving away from that social media, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT 2: Well it is social media, but it’s part of a mix. So people just want to see...Instagram would be good if we had, say we were doing a building project and you had before, during and after.

RESPONDENT 3: Different stages, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: The stages of building, stuff like that. The visuals. At the moment, how many pictures do you want of people eating cake? It has an interest, but it’s not of itself

INTERVIEWER: I think that somebody else has said about maybe having like a timeline of how the bed has grown? That would be quite interesting.

RESPONDENT 2: We’ve got plenty of photos of that for that reason, precisely for that reason.

RESPONDENT 1: It is a beautiful bed, I keep saying this.

RESPONDENT 3: I’ve gone past it today and there were some people looking at it and some people sat down.

RESPONDENT 2: It really catches...because it’s gone so high over the...

RESPONDENT 3: It’s got even bigger...

RESPONDENT 2: I know, it’s scary.

RESPONDENT 3: ...since I was there.

RESPONDENT 2: It’s like The Day of the Triffids. But people stop on both sides of the wall, so people actually stop, they don’t look at the Red Tower, it used to be they’d be going to the Red Tower, now they go towards the bed. It’s great.

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting, as well. Continuing on this collation of different kinds of media things, we’ve got photographs, social media, photographs on social media. Right, some of the more static things that we’ve got at the Red Tower – we could potentially include the raised bed as a drawing in factor.

RESPONDENT 2: Oh, absolutely. Incredible Edible would call it a propaganda bed.
INTERVIEWER: A propaganda bed.

RESPONDENT 1: A propaganda bed; I like that.

RESPONDENT 3: Is there any way of linking in with Edible York and stuff. So you have...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. Absolutely. It's on their trail.

RESPONDENT 3: Have you on their trail as well.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, they're on the trail.

RESPONDENT 3: Because that's another-- And can they, if you put some up, can you put stuff on there? Do you know what I'm saying? Because then that gives you more...

RESPONDENT 2: Linda, who has been working fantastically hard on the bed, is one of the trustees for Edible York, so she's...

RESPONDENT 3: It's a partnership then, isn't it?

RESPONDENT 2: Absolutely.

RESPONDENT 3: And that's what's important, getting as many partners as possible.

RESPONDENT 2: I don't know where we'd be without Linda on that bed, she's been brilliant.

RESPONDENT 1: Have you ever thought about doing something static when you're not there? To say this happens here on a Saturday?

INTERVIEWER: Well I have, because from my point of view I think that would be really good, to have something on the door...

RESPONDENT 2: Yes, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: You know, this is what we're about, we're not here today, but we'll be here next week at this time, maybe with something that you could write on.

RESPONDENT 3: Can you put it on the door?

INTERVIEWER: I don't know if you'd be able to hang something off it?

RESPONDENT 3: For conservative reasons?

RESPONDENT 2: Well if we hang it off it will be okay.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I mean that was an idea, I don't know the logistics of that...

RESPONDENT 3: I mean we'll probably eventually get a notice board.

INTERVIEWER: ...the practicalities of that would be different.
RESPONDENT 2: I think that can be done. I think a conversation with Harry from CYC could make that happen.

INTERVIEWER: Ooh, I've forgotten something, I've forgotten to sort something. It's connected back to the leaflet – the illustration by Frank, the architect, that's something that's a showcase thing, isn't it?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, well there's several, he did several, so I don't know whether we need to just alight on one and say that's going to be our logo. At the moment we're using a mixture of, I'm just pulling stuff off Dropbox and using it as I see fit.

INTERVIEWER: Well there is one particular one that I've used in my leaflet design that's kind of going through the sort of developments, that's the one that I sent to the next guy who is doing the Open Day one.

RESPONDENT 2: Oh, Ian?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: Good, fine.

INTERVIEWER: Okay and the other thing is we've got the interpretation panels that the Friends of York Walls did, so that's still there.

RESPONDENT 2: And your nice little work of art.

INTERVIEWER: I was just going to say.

RESPONDENT 2: That's really nice. I think that's really good.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. I guess that's what I'm calling the community board, but I don't know if it necessarily does that job.

RESPONDENT 2: Interpretation panel?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it's kind of an interpretation, but it's also trying to raise– The point I made is because I was trying to raise funds as well, because it says on the front...

RESPONDENT 2: Carolyn Weaver would be a good person to talk to about that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yeah. Okay, the other one was the, this is just me trying to collate different types of media that we're using, but I think we've kind of pretty much covered it. There's a lot of future ideas coming through. For example, the idea of a cinema and using logos and also possibly merchandise.


RESPONDENT 3: The Conservation– I presume you have a webpage, do you?
RESPONDENT 1: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: Are these guys on it? The project that you’re working with?

RESPONDENT 1: Well I kind of do my own blog thing, but we have a quarterly magazine which I submitted that press article to that said you’re going in. It’s a bit of a black hole, I’ve chucked it in, I’ve said you were going in and I’ll wait and see if it’s come out. [pause] But other than that I’d hoped, yeah– It’s a bit more localised, to be honest. But we’ll hopefully go into the national magazine. ’Cause it was lovely because you were our first, there’s six of me around and you were our first ever bid.

RESPONDENT 2: Great, that’s good to hear.

RESPONDENT 1: Which gave it a bit more...

INTERVIEWER: On that sort of front of what you’ve done for us and the idea of putting it on the blog, there’s been a– There was that news article that was– Did you get very much from that in terms of comments or anyone getting in contact with you? Did we get any?

RESPONDENT 2: I didn’t hear anything, no.

RESPONDENT 1: The only one I got was actually from our own volunteers, who are avid newspaper readers and quite a few of them said, ‘It’s nice to see what you actually do for a job’ to me. But I thought it was nice, because it was based on your original, Claire’s original, bit, wasn’t it? She wrote it [unclear – 0:17:04.9].

RESPONDENT 2: Oh did she?

RESPONDENT 1: I just plagiarised that.

RESPONDENT 2: I’m very glad to see it.

INTERVIEWER: Cool. Okay.

RESPONDENT 1: And one other thing – the People’s Health Trust who have got a big following, they did a piece on you, I should have forwarded it, I’m sorry.

RESPONDENT 3: It would be good if you can keep a scrap book of all the...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah. They did a bit and they came back to me and said they would be really interested in a follow-up of how things were going.

RESPONDENT 3: I was going to say, because if you keep a scrap book, then you’ve got, hopefully, the reporter’s name, then when you decide this is how we’re going, this is what we want, contact every single one.
RESPONDENT 1: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: I've got an electronic version of that.

RESPONDENT 1: If I'm honest, the reason I didn't forward the People’s Health Trust to you was because it was very much, 'Check us out. Look what we’ve done for these people.'

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT 2: We’re not precious about that! That’s fine.

RESPONDENT 1: But there’s nothing I can do about that.

RESPONDENT 2: Well if we’re funded by– We accept that if we’re funded by an organisation, that’s what it is about.

RESPONDENT 1: I was always very much that this is a tiny bit of cladding to go on the side of your enthusiasm, that’s how I view it.

INTERVIEWER: For the purposes of my research, I’d be interested in reading that. So that would be handy.

RESPONDENT 1: I’ll forward it.

INTERVIEWER: And the last thing that we’ve done, for the Red Tower, is been on the radio. I don’t know what your experiences of that were?

RESPONDENT 2: Very straightforward.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: Just had an interview. That was a few months ago, that was actually on the coat tails of Friends of York Walls, because it was on the Residents’ Weekend, so Chris Ranger for Friends of York Walls and myself did a bit of a double-act on that. So that was fine. And we haven’t pushed it since. So we just haven’t pushed the...

RESPONDENT 3: Well I know Radio York would be interested again once you start [unclear 0:18:53.3] and also I had...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, we need to do something newsworthy really.

RESPONDENT 3: Well I could come along and say that we’re supporting you or whatever, it doesn’t matter, but it’s surprising once– They want to know the next stage of what’s happening.

RESPONDENT 2: Yes, absolutely.

RESPONDENT 3: And they would have all been at the Open Day, the launch.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. I think we've covered the list, I just wanted to make sure that I was getting everything and then I can produce, as you say, like a scrap book type thing with everything that we've done and put it out there.

RESPONDENT 3: Well it will help you guys to see where you've gone. Because sometimes you get really disheartened, like we were saying, thinking we're not getting anywhere, we aren't getting the right people and what's the point? And then when you look and you go, 'Well, actually, we are.'

RESPONDENT 2: Well there's always people involved. It's just that they apart from maybe four or five of us, there hasn't been the consistency.

RESPONDENT 3: Have we been able to ask them why they're not involved?

RESPONDENT 2: Well where possible. But it's just basically other pressures on time. There's no consistent reason.

INTERVIEWER: When you say pressures on time, you're meaning like...

RESPONDENT 2: They're busy doing other things.

RESPONDENT 3: I mean the other thing is to advertise through York [unclear – 0:19:56.3] you know when we thought that accountant that came in and...

RESPONDENT 2: In fact I've got a guy did come back saying he'd quite like to help out and I got back to him, that was about two days ago, and I said yes, great, but he hasn't got back to me. But CVS hasn't come up with anything much, but I did advertise on their website.

RESPONDENT 3: I found it really hard to work their website, I'll be honest. When I was looking for volunteer help...

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right. Why?

RESPONDENT 3: It's not easy.

RESPONDENT 2: It's not user-friendly.

RESPONDENT 3: You can't put something in or just put nothing in and look at every single one, it's weird.

INTERVIEWER: Which website is this then?

RESPONDENT 3: York CVS, it's horrendous.

RESPONDENT 2: It's called Volunteer York, isn't it?

RESPONDENT 3: It's just horrendous. I mean you think, 'Is that all you've got? You can't just have two.' I know there's loads, do you know what I mean?
INTERVIEWER: Is that a council run website then?

RESPONDENT 2: No, well it’s almost the voluntary arm of the council, in a sense.

RESPONDENT 3: But they’ve cut back on a lot of stuff that they give and a lot of courses for free and stuff. It’s extortionate, some of the prices.

RESPONDENT 2: Yes. But we are members.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, right? Okay.

RESPONDENT 2: TIM is a member, yes.

RESPONDENT 3: And you can go and get help, every other month or something?

R2 or RESPONDENT 3: I think you can, yes.

RESPONDENT 3: Advice and stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So we’ve got a list of stuff and my question today is sort of, we’ve kind of touched on it, this idea of effectiveness. How do we measure what works and what doesn’t work? And is that a futile exercise? What do you think?

RESPONDENT 2: I think we should measure it, because we need to be effective. I mean what’s all this for, is the thing that runs through my mind on a regular basis? And if we can’t answer that question – And I’m sure Ed, you know, you have a job, you have to deliver, I know maybe the parameters are fairly relaxed with you, but you still have to earn your crust, don’t you?

RESPONDENT 1: Well I mean I’ve always looked to you, I think I’ve said this to you, that from what I’ve seen and the enthusiasm I’ve seen from when I’ve been on – I haven’t been on them much, but when I have gone on them, it’s been really good and I was always very much, I thought I was lucky to get to stumble across you at the time I did. Because I very much had a feeling that you were going places and this kind of leads on to this, as you know, as in collecting your evidence and your photo [unclear – 0:22:43.5] on the one hand, that would be really good to apply for bigger bits of funding, but at the same time, what are you doing this for? Is it to get bigger, or is it to...

RESPONDENT 3: I think to me is it comes back to like the mission statement. What is your mission? What is your vision and what is your aim from a junk food perspective – for us it’s intercepting food waste, me collecting statistics. So eventually for the government we can say, ‘Why have you got best before on here?’ But then there is also the other side of working as a community and networking.

RESPONDENT 2: Yes, the latter is what we’re about, really.
RESPONDENT 3: Then for like, well for me it’s communicating, I use food as a form to communicate with others.

RESPONDENT 2: Of course, yes.

RESPONDENT 3: And training and educating people and then for like the heritage side, for me, is the cherry on top.

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah, that’s how I always used to look at it.

RESPONDENT 3: I think you said, if it was just a building, just a normal bog-standard building, let’s just say you got one of the flats and that wasn’t there, and you were still doing that and that would still be good, but you’re no different to anybody else. You are different because you’re in in a heritage building and...

RESPONDENT 2: There’s a story to it. There’s a real story to it.

RESPONDENT 3: So that’s like your starting point, but then that’s not enough to get people to come and stay there, do you know what I mean?

RESPONDENT 2: No, absolutely.

RESPONDENT 3: If you haven’t got a pop-up café– So then that’s what...

RESPONDENT 2: Well that’s why we have the café. Because at least it’s something that’s happening and actually what’s happening slowly, going back to the measurement thing, people are getting more involved, the aim was to get people from immediately around the area involved, not exclusively, because that won’t keep it propped up, but if it means nothing to the people in the local area, it means nothing as a project. It’s like the whole of the [unclear – 0:24:38.7] element, if you like. There’s nothing there, it’s a vacuum. So the idea behind the café, as I saw it, was that if we keep going through the summer, people just see stuff going on, so they pop in, have a piece of cake, have a cup of tea, the kids run up and down. And that’s actually starting to happen now. And that’s what we were aiming at. If that didn’t happen, I would personally be saying let’s just close the door and walk away. If no one locally went in there and showed a shred of interest, I’d say, ‘What’s this about?’ So that’s my measurement. So you’ve got the kids running in and out, they’re showing an interest, they’re bringing their mates in, they’re leafleting, so the pay as you feel thing with them is not about money, it’s about saying, ‘I’ll give you a piece of cake if you go and give this leaflet to your mum and your dad and your cousin and your, you know, your friends or whoever.’ And that’s how it’s working with the kids and that seems to have worked quite well.

INTERVIEWER: But this is a question that I asked Ed, actually, the other day, we got into this, so if that’s the case, if it’s about people seeing that we’re open, seeing that there’s stuff happening and coming in, shall we just forget all the Facebook stuff?
RESPONDENT 2: No, not necessarily, they can work together.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay.

RESPONDENT 2: Because people come because they’ve been Facebook. I’ve heard loads of people say, ‘I saw it on Facebook. I keep meaning to come in, because I keep seeing the Red Tower on Facebook and I really want to hear what it’s about.’ And they might be somebody who lives in, I don’t, know Brighouse or Huntingdon or somewhere, not necessarily on the doorstep. So I think it’s got to be a combination of the two.

RESPONDENT 1: And it’s always nice to be able to look you up.

RESPONDENT 2: Well that’s right, because people come in and say, ‘Oh, I’ll look you up on Facebook now I’ve been in.’ So I’ll give them a leaflet and they’ll say…in fact they’ll go off and look up Red Tower on Facebook, it’s a symbiotic thing, the two work together.

INTERVIEWER: So, yeah, do we want, with the media stuff and the information, do we want, I guess– This is me working it out as part of the group and as a researcher, but do we want our media that we’ve got already, do we want more of it to go further afield to get into more people’s faces, for people to see it, or is it something else?

RESPONDENT 3: Well I think we were touching it either side. You need a team that can move this forward and it’s not just reliant on the key people.

RESPONDENT 2: That’s right. So I think we need to get it, we certainly need to get it across York, because that’s where we’re going to get the people that are going to make this happen. We can’t confine it to a very local area and we can’t rely on visitors from Canada, but at the same time, if– I mean, it was in The Guardian a few weeks ago, I got something in The Guardian, just a sort of snapshot…

[START OF SECOND RECORDING]

RESPONDENT 2: …oh it’s in The Guardian I’ll go and– So even the national/international work together. But what we really want is to get people from across York to say, ‘I want to be part of this’ and actually get behind it. They don’t need to be from Navigation Road flats, they could be from anywhere. I live in Dringhouses, I don’t live anywhere near the Red Tower, but I’m happy to get involved.

INTERVIEWER: Would it be of interest then to try and do, especially with the Heritage Open Day coming up, would it be of interest to try and measure where our…?

RESPONDENT 2: Have you got a clicker?

INTERVIEWER: We’ve got a clicker.
RESPONDENT 3: And you’ve got to design what your area is, because some people just come past, but it is actually coming in or sitting down?

RESPONDENT 2: It’s coming in.

RESPONDENT 3: And I think you should use the heritage thing, if you get some job descriptions, actually get some job descriptions and have you got a mission statement? Actually have it up, like a, ‘Wanted’ so people can start...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, we’ve done that. But we’ve done it online, we haven’t done it physically.

RESPONDENT 3: No offence, it’s the retired people you want, in some ways, because they’re not going to need the money...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, and time.

RESPONDENT 3: [whispering – 0:01:15.4] you cut the bits, don’t you, where they just to pull off with the phone number on, or something, to get in touch. So they don’t have to, because it might be really busy, and just have, we want to take this further, we need (a), (b), (c), (d) – are you interested?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, that’s a really good idea.

RESPONDENT 3: Get in touch. And it might mean you guys actually have to go and visit, and I don’t mind supporting in that...

INTERVIEWER: We want to reach out to volunteers and...

RESPONDENT 3: Because you aren’t going to be able to maintain this and move this on, until you get that.

RESPONDENT 2: I’m very confident, I’ve had enough conversations with enough people with enough diverse interests, if we get that up and running, with that space upstairs, just as general usable space, café, kitchen, microwave, we will get it used, it will be very, very well used. I’m absolutely confident about that. The difficulty we’ve got is getting from where we are now, which is a very random group of people who are very overstretched to actually something...

RESPONDENT 3: Have you got like a bit of a mission statement? Because I know some people like to see that – this is what they’re about, this is what they’re doing, this is their...

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, we’ve got all of that. We’ve got it somewhere, it dropped off really because we’ve been busy with stuff in the summer, but that’s all...

INTERVIEWER: I mean I think it’s interesting what Vicky’s saying, and I think also because...

RESPONDENT 3: Because people like to hold something, don’t they?
INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 3: Media is great, but I like to have something and just...

RESPONDENT 2: Well maybe we can put that on the leaflets, just something very simple on the leaflets. So the leaflets are not just about saying this is where we are, but actually specifically this is what we’re about and this is what we want. So maybe just really tilt the emphasis on those leaflets.

RESPONDENT 3: I think it would be nice to maybe contact the local press before this and actually see if they’ll do something. Because I know they put something in like what they wanted and it was inundated with stuff, it was amazing and people were offering— I saw some of the emails, people were offering voluntary stuff as well and I think it’s to say, ‘Hey, we’re here. Oi, we want to open this, we want to actually stay open every Saturday through the whole year, but actually we can’t do that, because at the moment we’re a small team with life and other things going on.’

RESPONDENT 1: Because I do look at that as in I think it’s ambitious, not in a negative way, I think it’s ambitious of you to say, ‘Right, we’re open every Saturday.’ You’re not doing once a week in a row.

RESPONDENT 2: Well we’ve said we’ll close after the 12th. We’re not going to carry on after the 12th, because of logistical stuff. We’ve got no heating, no...

RESPONDENT 3: ...heating and stuff, you just can’t.

RESPONDENT 2: But that’s fine...

RESPONDENT 3: That gives you time though.

RESPONDENT 2: ...we can start to regroup about the project, if indeed there is to be a project. And I think we need to have that conversation, well we’re going to have that conversation...

INTERVIEWER: We’re going to have that conversation, yeah. We’re going to have it– On the 2nd we’ve got a future of Red Tower meeting.

RESPONDENT 2: Have you two been invited to that? Would you like to come?

RESPONDENT 1: To the...?

RESPONDENT 2: We’re meeting at, I think it’s the 2nd...

INTERVIEWER: It’s next Tuesday?

RESPONDENT 2: No, it might be Wednesday.
INTERVIEWER: Is it Wednesday? We’ll have to check, but it’s in the evening at [unclear – 0:04:24:3].

RESPONDENT 2: We were just going to have a bite to eat and just talk about the future of the project. If either or both of you want to come along to that, it might be difficult because it’s an evening...

RESPONDENT 3: Can you email me?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I’ll email. I’ll write that down.

RESPONDENT 2: Have you got a copy of that to send to Vicky and Ed about it?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: Would you mind?

INTERVIEWER: No, no, no. Not at all.

RESPONDENT 3: ‘Cause I mean the other thing is, United Response are always looking, once you’ve got your basics in, are always looking to send people to volunteer somewhere. So you could have a very basic volunteer team, do you know what I’m saying? Just to do the basic stuff.

RESPONDENT 2: Well we’ve got that now, what we need is the people that are actually going to help do the heavy lifting, really, to take it forward.

RESPONDENT 3: It’s the ploughing. You’ve ploughed a bit, but you need to carry on ploughing, don’t you?

RESPONDENT 2: I think we need to have a brainstorm about that and then it might come out that one of us knows somebody that we could tap on the shoulder and say, ‘Look, could you do this? Would you like to get involved?’

INTERVIEWER: What’s interesting here is that I’m just getting this idea of like we’re not only wanting people just to come and see the Red Tower at the weekend, we need the core.

RESPONDENT 2: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: So we’ve got two audiences of sorts and that requires two different kinds of...

RESPONDENT 2: Well one draws on the other, doesn’t it? Because...

INTERVIEWER: Well, yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: Because that’s what...my thought from the beginning was we would extract the core team from the people who visit, so that people would come along. And people
have come along and said, ‘Yeah, this is great. I’d like to get involved.’ But then they’ve backed away because they’re busy and...

RESPONDENT 1: I think there is definitely something about telling people that you need, officially you need– We have it in our name and we have to advertise formally for volunteer postmen. We don’t pay a penny, we have to....

RESPONDENT 3: It’s got to be structured as well. And it’s got to be...

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah, job description, really, this is what we need. And it’s actually saying to the– It works two ways, it’s how much can you give? And if it’s actually, ‘Well I can only give a day or a few hours a month’ well at least you know where you stand and it’s saying that to people. Because sometimes I know from experience, people have said, ‘You’re expecting too much.’ And I’m, ‘Actually, no, I’m not. If you said you’d do like just the Facebook, that’s great.’ And like Claire I used to email...

RESPONDENT 2: That’s been our approach.

RESPONDENT 3: I’ve got your email, I’ll look at it by Friday. That’s fine.

RESPONDENT 1: It’s the same with spelling out what they’ll get in return, as well. Because quite often...

RESPONDENT 3: Well it’s part of, it’s part of conservation, it’s part of the pay as you feel network. You’ve got your education and there’s like four things seem to be there. Actually key things that you’re wanting to do and that’s massive.

INTERVIEWER: And with doing the sort of, when we’re talking about the Facebook page and stuff, we’re not necessarily doing it in a strategic way, we’re just doing it...

RESPONDENT 2: No, because we haven’t got a strategic team, that’s why.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: So somebody will think of something and do it. I’ll just suddenly think, ‘Oh, hang on, we haven’t done this.’ And I’ll just get on and do it, rather than saying, ‘Oh, should I ask– Is it my job to do that?’ I just think I’ll just do it. Because it’s quicker that way. It’s done and I’m not badgering other people.

INTERVIEWER: It’s an interesting thing, because I’d be really interested to see, to compare, like through our media, like tracing it through our media before and after, like if we were to have media that is sort of, not laissez-faire, but ad-lib, and then if we have a strategic...

RESPONDENT 3: If you look at certain projects in the junk food that have been active, and making a point of putting stuff on and communicating everything that’s going on for that
project, look at Yorkshire Food, how stuff was picking up, people getting involved, and then
suddenly odd bits and left it, and it's like it has been parked.

RESPONDENT 2: You do need to be strategic to get the results.

[unclear – 0:08:22.7]

RESPONDENT 2: ...and we've not being strategic and the reason why we're not being
strategic is we haven't got the time and resources to be strategic. But if you are, it will pay off.
That's my view.

INTERVIEWER: And we want that, don't we? As a group.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: And I guess you guys...

RESPONDENT 2: Yes and the core strategy that can then be delivered is absolutely what
we're after. But we just haven't got the time to do it. Anyway, I'm going to have to go.

INTERVIEWER: I was going to say, actually...

RESPONDENT 2: Is that it?

INTERVIEWER: ...kind of, yeah, we've kind of got to a point where we know what we need to go
in a certain direction and I might be able do so some research that actually tracks how...

RESPONDENT 2: So what you're after is how effective is our communication?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT 2: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Essentially and we've discovered that they're semi-effective. We have had, as
you've said in prior conversations, we've had people link together through media.

RESPONDENT 2: It will work, it's worked pretty well and I know that I often put stuff out
there on Twitter or Facebook, Facebook particularly, and it just goes.

RESPONDENT 3: They link together, don't they? Should like together, so whatever you put
on either, it should happen.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, the TIM, we have a TIM Facebook page links to the TIM Twitter
account, but we haven't got a Red Tower Twitter account.

RESPONDENT 3: And that's maybe what we need to do.

RESPONDENT 2: That's the next step.
RESPONDENT 3: And I think you’re right, it’s getting the basics in and printing off all the stuff that you already have, because you probably have got everything that you need, to say to people this is, you know, and actually this is how it is at the moment, but we’re not saying that’s set in stone, because as more people come on and more people contribute, we might tweak or adapt or...

RESPONDENT 2: Absolutely. These are lots of people. Definitely.

RESPONDENT 3: But you’ve got to have a starting point.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, and that starting point is something we, I know we have already started, but...

RESPONDENT 2: But we need a committed group of people, that’s what we need. But it is very fluid. I mean look at tonight, it’s great that you two here, but Patricia and Claire aren’t, for very good reasons and all the rest of it, but that’s just how it constantly works and you never, ever get everyone together at once, ever. It just doesn’t happen. Because life gets in the way.

INTERVIEWER: Does anyone have any last minute...?

RESPONDENT 2: No.

INTERVIEWER: That’s cool. I’ll stop it then.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 24: 15-01-16 Business Park Frank

INTERVIEWER: So just to start this off, can you explain how we’ve met? Just to backtrack.

RESPONDENT: I think we met at an initial meeting at the Red Tower – or it might have been a club or a coffee shop to discuss the Red Tower – and I was one of the people of our team to offer help and assistance and just an architectural and historical discipline. So that’s really I think how we first met, in a café in York, I think.

INTERVIEWER: And there was a bunch of other people, weren’t there?

RESPONDENT: There were other people, yeah. There were different disciplines. I think one or two residents represented, people from the city council, Friends of York Walls. A number of other interested parties.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And that’s when you first brought the drawings that I’ve come to talk to you today. Was that the first time?

RESPONDENT: Yes, I think that was the first time. There might have been one before then, but again, I tend to forget.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay. So can you tell me, perhaps fill me in a bit about architectural drawings. Okay, not like a lecture, but I can see, for example, I’ve got this blueprint of the Red Tower, or the architectural drawings on my right, and then your architectural drawings, which are coloured. There’s a difference, isn’t there, between them?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Those are record drawings from the RCHM York City Council, of the defences of York. And they’re really good as a record; the whole volume is good as a record. I think the difference lies when, depending on the amount of, let’s say accuracy or information required on any stage of a project or a scheme, quite often if it’s a study then let’s say the drawings or plans or information is wrong, it doesn’t really need to be at a precise level, or drawn at, or presented at a precise level.

So typically in a sketch scheme or feasibility study, the type of information, type of drawn information will be relatively informal or sketchy, and that suits the stage of the project. And it might not go any further than that. Sufficient type of information to provide the basis of the scheme, for people to comprehend, say, the amount, the scale and character of that.

And typically, like this and lots of schemes, I would tend to...if people say, ‘What’s it going to look like?’ is a very similar question at early stages as to, ‘How much is it going to cost?’ But I come from the, ‘What’s it going to look like?’ So I would typically take some photographs and then take the photograph and sketch over it and put a proposal on top of that photo. It’s a relatively easy and quick method.
As I say, it's sketchy but it's really to give a flavour or an idea, and also to get people interested, get them enthused. And, you know, to show the potential of any particular site or project.

So again at this stage it would be quite informal, but often a sketch is sufficient to get the imagination going and get people interested and enthused.

INTERVIEWER: Mm. So you said that you used photographs and drew over them. So is that the case here?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You've used photographs?

RESPONDENT: Mm.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, that's interesting. And then the colourings, I mean, I always really like the colourings. But I wondered what your colour scheme...why you chose those colours. Was it just...?

RESPONDENT: Well it's a red tower and it's basically... Presumably it was called that because the roof originally was red. It was maybe a different shape. It's gone through several iterations or different appearances, no doubt. Who knows what it was like in medieval times? We just don't know. And Victorian times, as the history has shown, it maybe didn't have a four-pitched roof. Maybe it was just a double-pitched roof, as the illustration says. But presumably that was the Red Tower 'cause it was made of red brick, probably had red tiles or [unclear – 0:05:44.7] tiles on it, whereas the other towers on the city walls are all stone, as far as I can remember.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So that's really why it's called that. It's quite distinctive in that way.

INTERVIEWER: I'm interested that you've got the history that's come off the Friends of York Walls website. What did you make of these drawings?

RESPONDENT: Well the thing about historic drawings is you have to allow for artistic licence. I think it was shown that Turner did one view of Bolton Abbey which was impossible to paint 'cause he would have had to have been up in the air by 40 or 50 feet. Topographically, that is.

So you've got to really consider artistic licence and lots of the people doing the paintings, often they did sketches and then went back to the studio to do a painting and it was down to their memory. There were no iPhones in those days to get a snap.
So hugely these representations are reasonably good and accurate but they might not have done the stonework quite correctly or the picture might not quite be right. But generally I would say one can be reasonably assured of the content, but not always completely. You have to reserve judgement.

But again, the historical documents, I think if you were doing an assessment I think you would bear that in mind.

INTERVIEWER: So I've just got one more question about the drawings.

RESPONDENT: That's alright. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Actually, are you now considering working on additional drawings, in light of the feasibility report?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. For the present study, again we wouldn't really commit to drawing it up on computer. We might draft out things for you to get the general limitations and the general positions right, but we would generally tend to do it quite informally. And as accurately as possible.

And again, in this case it would be showing actual plans or alternatives and then we would try and do some internal sketches, again to give an overview of the character, because some people can't actually read 2D drawings; they need a 3D sketch. And then you can hint at other bits of character like, 'What are the walls finished in?' and, 'What are we going to do with the roof? What does the stair look like?' which can only be conveyed in 3D. Again, a sketch would hint at the overall character of what could be included and maybe what this exercise will produce.

INTERVIEWER: So these record drawings...

RESPONDENT: They're drawn up by the RCHM Royal Commission.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: And they're pretty accurate, yeah? They tend not always to be let's say 100% accurate but they're very good. Very, very good as guides. They are 2D. And again, you'd normally consider going to 3D purely to explain things more fully. 'Cause looking at a section, some people can't really interpret that to know what's going on.

INTERVIEWER: That's really interesting. I have a quick question, a technical question really, about this area. To my eyes, reading these drawings, I can sort of make out, for example, this one here, Section A underneath it. The eaves, I hadn't realised how busy it was on the top.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: Like actually being myself in that space, can you explain why that's represented so...

RESPONDENT: Well it’s graphically represented as what it is, and it’s always difficult with 2D drawings. As I say, it’s an accurate drawing. Now a drawing isn’t a painting and it’s drawn as a matter of fact. And the other section you can’t really appreciate that these timbers are at an angle, but it is a section. It’s a view, a very strict viewpoint either way. And they are accurate. What it doesn’t do is, as I say, give a sense of character. Also what’s often useful is to put a person in on these sections and elevations to give a sense of scale. It’s very difficult to know whether this is...it could be twice as big as it actually is, but when you put a person in it gives that little bit of scale.

INTERVIEWER: And again with regards to these areas of shading here on the first floor plan and the ground floor plan, I hadn’t realised, is that the thickness of the walls?

RESPONDENT: Yes. The different shading is just the different build periods. Because a lot of this was rebuilt in, I think it was...

INTERVIEWER: I hadn’t noticed that.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, 1850s, so it’s explaining what of the original, say, 15th Century or whatever it is, what brickwork survives. But what I would tend to do, I would tend to overlay those and get my own drawings if I can, to give me a bit of clarity as well for when I want to do my plan. And I have done this. And again, it tries to simplify this as well. But the 2D representations are still what they are. But if you put a person against them it tends to help.

INTERVIEWER: At this stage am I able to take a photograph? Is that okay?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I mean, these are for my internal use. These wouldn’t go in the report.

INTERVIEWER: That’s perfect.

RESPONDENT: And these are just a bigger version for me to work on. You can see that tends to give you an idea.

So different colours but...

INTERVIEWER: And you’ve got scales.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. And you can then get an idea of... And I did check some of these dimensions. I have to check them again but...

And then, as you say, one thing to comment on the drawings that were produced. They are purely as a record. They’re not really intended for, shall we say, interpretation. You know, they’re good record drawings. Then you can do something with them.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. Well this seems to be a very good point to which I can explain my idea that I've been playing around with.

So I got this idea 'cause I've been thinking of ways to try and, as my part of the role at the Red Tower is to do consultative work, and I've been trying to consider ways in which to engage people in a more interactive manner because of some of the access issues that we've got. And also a really good way of gaining feedback.

So I'll just explain what it is. What I'd like to do is to produce a pictorial feedback form or a leaflet or even just one side of A4. But the main intention that I would like to do is to use some of the record drawings in a more interpretive manner, as perhaps you can sympathise with. The idea is that I have different views of the tower so that people can actually annotate them with their ideas of how they feel that the building should be used.

RESPONDENT: Mm.

INTERVIEWER: And my question is whether it would be a useful exercise for encouraging people to get involved in the progress of the building as a whole. And I've put this past Imelda and Caroline and they seem to think it's an okay idea.

RESPONDENT: No, it's very good. People do like making the odd comment and they like to be involved, and hopefully they realise that not everybody's opinion can be cast in stone and put into practice, but I think like any democratic process, so long as one has the ability to voice one's opinion then I think it is a good idea. And the truth is that one or two ideas from all contributors, one or two ideas can really be quite unexpected or even really innovative. The odd comment can really make a difference. So it's really worth doing.

The key, I suppose, is getting it into a form which is easy for people to comment upon and easy for you to collect the information so that it can be taken to the next stage.

INTERVIEWER: Well I was actually hoping that maybe you'd be able to advise me on that. I've started trying to create really simple drawings but they've become extremely flat. And my drawing skills are adequate, let's say, for this exercise.

RESPONDENT: Yes, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But I don’t know if you have any advice or even potentially some tips that I could... I mean, looking at your work-in-progress drawings, would you suggest that I take a similar approach or maybe I should be more sketchy?

RESPONDENT: No, that's fine. It doesn't really matter whether the lines are straight or wobbly. I mean, as long as people can appreciate, 'Yes, that’s the doorway, these are windows,’ and the section showing a person saying, ‘Yes, that’s a floor.’

The thing to remember is to do it a reasonable size for people.
INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: It might be that it’s four sides of A4 stapled together, one with plans, one with a site plan, one with a question and then other bits as you’re alluding to here.

The other thing is at this stage it’s possibly not worth going too far because there’ll be a lot of input and you’ve really got to find out, ‘Will the stakeholders contribute? Will there be enough people?’ It’s a bit disheartening to spend a lot of time doing these things and then three people fill in the forms. I’m sure there’ll be more than that but the point is what you want is you want hundreds of comments, really. Now whether they’re from visitors, whether they’re from committees, the local community or...visitors might be relevant but they know it. But lots of people don’t know the building.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: They pass by it. They probably might just have popped in or looked into the ground floor but they wouldn’t have gone to the upper floor.

INTERVIEWER: My intention is to primarily target the residents with this pictorial feedback form.

RESPONDENT: And what might be useful, rather than having an architectural section, what might be useful if you’re saying, ‘What can we use the upper floor for?’ it might be worth trying to get a wide-angle shot of the interior upstairs. Or take several photos and stitch them together crudely. But what you could do is then have those in, say, black and white and then leave space around and say, ‘What would you use this for?’

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I did wonder about the use of photographs in this as well. But I hadn’t considered black and white.

RESPONDENT: It’s just that sometimes people might want to draw on the photograph and if they’re drawing on a black ceiling void it’s not so clear. Or even maybe they’re drawn comments. You know, ‘Let’s have some lights here,’ they might put.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. No, that’s really handy.

RESPONDENT: But yes, the idea you’ve shown here is maybe just something that’s filled out. But maybe it’s an A3 folded once or folded twice and, as you’ve kind of indicated, the introduction and then some plans and section and maybe the odd photograph saying, ‘Any comments?’ Or whatever you want to put on there. And then information on the back, sort of thing.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. This is A3, isn’t it? So it could be like...

RESPONDENT: It’s quite a large amount of paper for people to comment on.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe that size. A4.
INTERVIEWER: And do it like that.

RESPONDENT: Well you could fold it into three.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Like that. That way as well. Like a menu.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Yeah, I've had discussions with Harry at CYC about this as well and he's given me some insight as well. Because with the conversation with him, he highlighted the issue of people not being able to read architectural drawings. And I still wanted to make it seem as though it was still something that looked inviting.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. I'm sure it can be, yeah. I think the other thing is I would tend to keep it as simple as possible. It's just there are probably lots and lots of questions that you could ask, but the truth is people don't necessarily want to be held up for half a day answering them.

INTERVIEWER: I've only got nine questions and they've gone through Caroline and Imelda's filters so they're pretty straightforward. And it's not forced upon people to actually do the drawings. But as an invitation.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I don't think you'll find people will attempt many drawings.

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: I think they're happy to comment and put an X or something like that, but lots of people just don't have confidence in doing it.

INTERVIEWER: What would be really interesting is in what context, as a researcher, I will be asking people to fill these in. Would I be there in person or would I leave them to it, come back and collect later?

RESPONDENT: Mm.

INTERVIEWER: So it might be that I end up doing both just because some people would be more willing to do it in their own time, others might...

RESPONDENT: Well it might be that if you have an example, people always like to see, 'Well what sort of thing do you want me to do?' and if you've got something to show them, you could say, 'Well this is something that my colleague did,' that often helps.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that's a good idea.

RESPONDENT: Rather than starting from scratch, you know? It depends, really. If it's a simple form then people will just answer. But if you're saying, 'Here's a plan. What would you
do?’ it’s very broad. ‘What do you want me to do? Is it comments? Is it a line on a drawing?’

They don’t know. So it really does have to be not simplistic but simple.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I haven’t got any other questions actually, but I just thought it would be very useful to pick your brains on the matter.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. No, that’s good. It’ll be great because it’s raising the profile and showing that it isn’t a committee or a group just saying, ‘Well this is what you’re going to get.’ It’s good to get the feedback and as I say, if you take out the spurious but look at the really interesting, you think, ‘Why not? Is this something that we should consider? Should there be a telly office or a computer suite? Or could it be a gym?’ Catering and all that is always very difficult. But maybe there are other ideas. Who knows?

But I think it isn’t just what’s in the Red Tower; it’s really what’s around in the vicinity because that’s the thing that draws people.

INTERVIEWER: So this outer area would still be...

RESPONDENT: I think that should be really well-used, and there are ideas to maybe have an entrance into the enclosure from elsewhere. But 90% of visitors will come along here probably. Fewer this way. But it does open it out slightly. At the moment this is very defensive. So this would open it out to the community, which is the housing in the local area.

INTERVIEWER: I know that there are people working on plans to this area as well.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Tim. And the incredible Movement. I’ve seen some really good examples of how these areas are planted up and used. And to my mind, there should be lots planted and going on. I mean, it’s business, ’cause people see things and they want to be involved. And it’s an attraction. It draws, and say, ‘What’s all this about?’

So that would be really interesting to get all this feedback from people who visit or from the local residents and community.

INTERVIEWER: I was also going to try and put in a map of the area to answer the question about just local needs.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I’ve got one of the questions where it’s like, ‘What is needed in the local area?’ But do you think perhaps using a map of the area would be a bit too vague or... What would you say?

RESPONDENT: Possibly yes because again, you have to be very specific. You know, ‘Does it need more roads? Here’s a plan of the roads. Does it need more footpaths? Does it need more trees or planting or grass?’ So you can point to something specific. But to give a general map
and say, ‘What does it need?’ it’s too indistinct. I think if you go with the specific items then it’s easier to get people to respond.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I picked up on that from what you said about having to be specific up in the space areas.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So just applying that to the maps as well.

RESPONDENT: Probably most people would say flood defences or... ‘Cause that’s a number one.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: Especially recently. If this went out tomorrow, I think a lot of people would say, ‘How are we going to get over the flooding?’ and that sort of thing. But it’s a big consideration, especially recently over Christmas. People will be saying that.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Okay. Thank you very, very much. If I’m successful in gathering feedback in...well, it’ll be both the textual and potentially visual form, I guess would it be good for us to have a chat again, potentially?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, fine.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe sort of in a month’s time.

RESPONDENT: That’s fine by me.

INTERVIEWER: And then we can see what’s happened. Okay, great. Thank you very much.

END OF TRANSCRIPT
Interview 25: 28-04-16 Waitrose Jonathan

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, could you explain who you are and how we know each other?

RESPONDENT: Right. I am Jonathan. I'm retired. I was a local government officer. I retired ten years ago and about twelve months or a bit-- maybe not as long as that, I became aware of the Red Tower when Katrina Foxton, the interviewer, came to a group meeting that I was running for pensioners in York, to explain something about York's heritage. She did mention at the time about the Red Tower project that was operating on a Saturday afternoon with a pop-up café. And following that talk that she gave us, me wife and I paid a visit to the Morrison Store close by to the Red Tower, and we decided at that time to have a wander across to have a look and see what's inside it; see what it was all about if you like. So that was my first meeting with Katrina who was also happened to be a volunteer within the Red Tower serving up the cups of teas. We had a cup of tea and a piece of cake, and I had a look round and I thought, 'This is something of a project; I might just want to do something for here'.

INTERVIEWER: I'm going to actually add my memories from our first meeting, which I actually think was the reason-- The precursor to coming to that retired members meeting that you mentioned.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: It was actually I met you with the York Past and Present guys at King's Manor because I was doing a conference.

RESPONDENT: Ah, we met before then.

INTERVIEWER: Did we?

RESPONDENT: It was before then, because you posted something on York Past and Present, and I said-- I asked you at that time like you were the the sort of person that we could do to come and give us a talk.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Right, I didn’t remember that.

RESPONDENT: You remember that now?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah I remember that, and then we...

RESPONDENT: And then you said, 'Oh, by all means yeah but I'm not really used to this and it might be a good way of me getting a bit of presentational experience'. And then it was later after that that we met at King’s Manor.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. Yeah, I agree with that's how it was. So, you mentioned that you are a retiree and used to work at the council. And that you came to the Red Tower and you saw that there was a project that you could— What did you say? What were the words you said?

RESPONDENT: Oh I don’t know, I’m geriatric now.

[laughter]

INTERVIEWER: That you said you could see doing something?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. When I visited the Red Tower, using my expertise and knowledge, if you like, of being able to do things, I realise that it was really— I’m trying to be diplomatic here, but it was being run by people that weren’t tuned into how things needed to work and what needed to do. But it was mentioned at the time that there was a reluctance to let visitors to the Tower go upstairs— To use the stairs because of a health and safety risk and it really need a hand rail. And I thought at the time, ‘Yes I can do that. I’ll put your hand rail in there’. And so I did come back to fit a hand rail and during that process I then realised that there was lots of other ways that I could use my expertise and knowledge, if you like, to bring a more practical solutions to the Tower that weren’t immediately available to the people that— The volunteers that were already working there.

INTERVIEWER: That’s also including myself in that.

[laughter]

So, I mean, would you say that you spend, in comparison to other places in York, you spend an amount of time at the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah I spend— Apart from home and fishing— And I haven’t done much of that because it’s become cold, but apart from that, no. Red Tower has become a way of life for me. It’s got into my blood. That red brick is sort of like a wallpaper at the back of my mind that keeps— every time I’ve got a few minutes or every time I’m heading across to this side of York and Huntingdon, I’m always aware that there might be something that I might be able to do down at the Red Tower, and I might be able to take something to the Red Tower. So, as I’m looking round my home and thinking, ‘Oh, that will be useful down at the Red Tower’. And so I’ve really not only invested a lot of my own time and a little bit of cash and stuff like that, I’ve also— it’s become an outlet for things that we have at home that we have no further use for. It’s just enhanced the usability of the Tower for the way that it had been used, and likely to be used in future.

INTERVIEWER: So, do you have any intentions for this place; for the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: Any?

INTERVIEWER: Intentions?
RESPONDENT: My intentions align very, very much with the intentions of the Red Tower Project in general. I was born 71 years ago, and I was born on a council estate. I was brought up on a council estate; the Red Tower is back dropped by a council estate. So therefore I do feel that I got a it of an infinity with the people that are living in social housing around the Red Tower, and I do believe in that the Red Tower has got a role to play in providing for the needs and support of that social housing group, if you like. And the events of the flooding at Christmas time of this year– Of last year proved that the community itself needed a focal point. It needed somewhere that they could return to or refer to in the event of need if anything happened or whatever. And my intentions, if you like, are not just to be able to sort of like facilitate the glamourous side of the Tower like the pop-up café and the hireable space, but also to be able to try and engage the community to become part of that tower and use the tower to the way that they want to use it.

So, as I say, I was brought up in a not so well off area and my parents– I was born during the latter stage of the Second World War and grew up in the 1950s when the communities was all based– The focal points for those communities were things like working men's clubs and such. And now the area around the Red Tower don’t– Although they've got a new working men’s club on Lawrence Street, I wouldn’t know whether that would be somewhere that they would want to go or to become a community meeting place as are the café and the Walmgate Bar or the Bistros in Walmgate aren’t just the sort of places that the housing– The social group and this housing would want to go. But I do see that the Red Tower has the potential to become a meeting place and with the surrogate working men’s club, if you like.

INTERVIEWER: You’ve mentioned this in our conversations before like throughout the summer, and I think it came through in that mission statement document...

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: ...that we wrote ages ago on Google Docs, which I’ll refer to. Tell me about this working men’s club a bit more? There’s a new one?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, there’s a new one on Lawrence Street.

INTERVIEWER: That’s just started?

RESPONDENT: Yes. I think you– No, it was . posted it recently on York Past and Present what was going to happen to the old working men’s club.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: The old working men’s club is a listed building, so they can’t knock it down. Listed because I think it used to be William house. You know who started the retreat?

INTERVIEWER: I don’t know.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: I'm going to be honest. I don't.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I think– If me memory serves me right, yes it was William house who started the retreat. It then became a working men’s club. It’s a listed building, they can’t knock it down. So what they did was, I think a developer has bought it out to convert it into flats, as long as they don’t change the structure of the building. And then working men’s club is being built next door.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And is that open now?

RESPONDENT: I don’t really know, but as far as I know it probably is.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. That’s interesting. Well there you go. So, talking about your intentions for the Red Tower, do you have any concerns about the Red Tower and the adjoining council estate?

RESPONDENT: I think it’s– I do to some degree but it’s the concerns that could be managed– They can be managed. My concerns are is just being able to get the local community engaged with what the Tower is doing. Would they see the Tower as being something quite aloof compared to what they would want it to be. It needs to be sold to them in a way that they would want it sold to them. If you started off with cheese and wine parties, then probably not. If it was going to be a with real fatty looking burgers and stuff like that, and loads of ketchup then probably, yes.

INTERVIEWER: So, from that I am assuming– You talked about wine and cheese in comparison to barbeques; food is going to be an important part...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...of the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. There that I have for it, and that is– I must be careful what I say here, but there are elements that are living within the social housing around the Red Tower, given half a chance would abuse what you were offering. And I say that in as much as – And this is not for publication, but when we were giving all the cleaning products out to all the people that had been flooded out and people were coming backwards and forwards and taking the stuff, one of our new recruits, I was– I went round to punch a whole through her– No, drill a hole through her wall right to And she said, ‘Oh’, she said, ‘You know that stuff you were giving away, I had a friend of mine around here and her boyfriend, he was forever on the phone offering cleaning products out for sale that he’d got picked up from the Red Tower’.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Well, I’ll scratch that bit off.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I’ll scratch that. From here to now, let’s not focus on– Yeah.
RESPONDENT: But, those are my— The misgivings.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: If people played the game and...

INTERVIEWER: I had my bike nicked the other day from. So I know very full well.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But let’s go back to— Okay so starting again...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...to publication mode.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: The reason I started— When you first came in here this afternoon, we had a chat about the Red Tower and things that had been happening and the CIO meetings and so on and so forth.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Because there’s three meetings coming up soon. And we’d started talking about this trying to engage residents.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And I started talking about how I felt there was a need for stuff with the residents. And I’m sort of trying to make a tea party with Jess that she can take over. And then you said something about your, you were spending— What was it you said you were doing at the Red Tower recently to try and engage the residents? Can you remember? Something about having a life force— You used the words, ‘Having a life force in the Red Tower’?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Oh, yes, sorry I’m with you now. Yeah. A presence. I’m with Lilac in the fact that you’ve got to keep momentum going. The Red Tower has not got to be seen again as a dormant space. And the chances are, if you’re in the periods of winter time and early spring and cold weather and wet weather that it becomes a dormant space again. And so they don’t see— The resident won’t see that there’s a living entity within that Red Tower, and just tend to ignore it then; they won’t notice. But the more they see the door open, the more they see the information boards outside and people walking about outside with a cup of tea in their hands, the more likely they are, I think, to want to know about this. What I don’t think that the— Well, their interest will be enhanced if we could take away the barrier of the wall. So, we’re hoping through the development of the tower that an access to the tower and its land is available through a hole in the wall— A space through the wall which will take away that barrier, and it will
allow anybody that doesn’t— That’s probably not quite as mobile as they would like to be easy access to the Tower without having to walk all the way around.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. That’s grand. Okay, I think we have covered quite a lot of this section, so I’m just going to pop round to the next subject area. And we kind of touched on it a bit talking about communication and...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...social media. Can you explain in your own words what the Red Tower does with its communications and social media?

RESPONDENT: Currently I don’t think— Yes, so currently the Red Tower has got a Facebook page which is, ‘York Red Tower’. It’s got a closed Facebook group which is the Red Tower Project. Red Tower Project is an administration group, if you like, but it contains not only administrative but also interested parties. I personally, be it right or be it wrong, have tried to encourage people that I was aware of within the York Past and Present group or whatever, or people that I do know that have got a historical interest in York and it’s by-laws, but also have got a cross over into social provision, if you like, so that they’ve got an interest in different camps, the history, the provision of – social provision, if you like, in the form of refreshments and also people’s— I’m quite keen on the incredible edible vegetable plots; the raised beds. So I think there’s a— If you can get people that are interested— Like we’ve mentioned Jenny who provided the tablecloths, but Jenny has also— She’s been making a lot of the costumes for the [Unclear – 16:58.9] plays. She’s been making those but Jenny is very clever at making things. She’s also very interested in gardening. So Jenny, apart from a— She’s also been involved in a lot of archaeological digs around York. So, her knowledge, expertise and interests caught across lots of different fields.

Now I felt that at the time that Jenny was an ideal candidate for being inclusive or included within the Red Tower Project. The only body that I’ve met or come across who had knowledge of like Jenny I brought them in [background talking] [pause] I brought them within the Red Tower group. So, that lady that I mentioned, she went up— Drilling a hole through her wall she said, ’I’d really like to get involved in being a volunteer in the Red Tower, which I haven’t been able to do because me job prevented it.’ She’s got a new job now which has given her Saturday’s off. So, she’s going to be another potential volunteer. So where I’ve come across someone like that, but the issue I have with the social media side of it is that I’m not too keen about the ‘York Red Tower’ page.

INTERVIEWER: Oh right, okay.

RESPONDENT: Because it’s not clear as mud. Well it is clear as mud, really. Sometimes I’ve posted stuff and it’s—Nobody can recognise it was from me. Other people that have posted it have had to put their name on the bottom so that people could— because I posted a response to [pause]...
INTERVIEWER: A post?

RESPONDENT: Yeah she– I forget– She does cakes and stuff. I can’t remember people’s names very well but, anyway, she posted a post on saying, ‘I think the little seedlings that I got, I planted the seeds from so and so about Red...

INTERVIEWER: Libby?

RESPONDENT: ...Libby– ‘are ready for collection’. And so I posted it afterwards and followed it up with, ‘I’m going down to the Red Tower, would you like me to call in and pick ‘em up’. I think she didn’t realise it was me; she thought it was Linda.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see. Yeah.

RESPONDENT: You know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: So, those sorts of things it’s far too ambiguous. You’re far better off with an open Facebook group than a Facebook page that is limited. And I think that if you’re going to– York guys from the university is going to be looking after our social media side. I’m sure we’ll cover that side of it because they will produce a proper Facebook page that is open– A public Facebook page and not a closed Facebook page.

INTERVIEWER: Potentially I mean, I’ll feed back if that’s okay feedback some of what you’ve just said to them.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I went over the dynamics of the York Red Tower page and the closed group Red Tower Project page and they picked up on it being a tricky thing. As you say, it’s not clear as mud or it is; it’s hard to...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...tell and also the person who’s posting isn’t always clear.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. You can change that, you know, it’s a process you have to do. You just go to– When you’re posting, instead of Red Tower you can click yourself down to be yourself instead of the Red Tower.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Only when you’re posting.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Not when you’re replying to somebody else’s...

INTERVIEWER: And when you’re replying as well.
RESPONDENT: Can you?
INTERVIEWER: Yeah I'll show you after this...
RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah.
INTERVIEWER: ...I'll show you how it's done. Because Lilac started doing it, I've noticed.
RESPONDENT: Yeah, but it's not ideal. I don't think that it's a good enough page to encourage people from [pause]– I don't think it's a good enough page to encourage people on a worldwide– Because we are, we're global, to want to use that page.
INTERVIEWER: Going back to your initial concern about sort of engaging the local community...
RESPONDENT: Mm.
INTERVIEWER: ...how do you think the Facebook page does on that level? Would you say it's effective?
RESPONDENT: No. No, because I honestly believe that the community around here, if they use Facebook it will be for not that purpose. A lot of the people that you would like to try and engage with probably don’t have Facebook, probably don’t have the Internet, and probably can’t afford the Internet or whatever. So you've got to— You would win the battle of engaging the local community if you could do it outside of social media.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, can you give me some examples of how you would do that?
RESPONDENT: Well, you've already alluded to some already, is that if we could get the people– our friend Martha, right? Our friend Martha is finding it very difficult to walk now. And when I've spoken to her about popping over to the Red Tower and having a cup of tea with us and all that, she said, ‘Well I can’t really walk that far’ and that sort of thing. If we can find a way-- I honestly believe that if we could get-- We ought to have a wheelchair in the Tower, right? So that if we were to find that there were some people who would like to go but can’t do it, where we could actually go to the flats and bring them back in the wheelchair, and take them back again. Those sorts of things so that the people that physically can’t make the distance or whatever can be helped. And the people that don’t have access to social media can be encouraged to come and join us. And I think there could be a snowball affect if we can engage one or two to encourage their mates and their neighbours to want to come and join us, and to become like a little community group, if you like. This has worked in other areas. I can remember back until the days of my youth when the Brown Cow in– at the back of Walmgate there, you know in Hope Street; the Brown Cow was notorious for...
INTERVIEWER: Is this a pub?
RESPONDENT: It’s a pub. It’s a pub but that was a meeting place. But it was a meeting place for
the old Irish women and a lot of [pause] might not be PC to call them this, but Hawkers.

INTERVIEWER: Uh?

RESPONDENT: Google it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay I'll Google it, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Google, ‘Hawkers’. They’re aligned with travellers. Right? And they would sit
around in there during the day with their clay pipes and chat to their hearts content with a pint
of beer on the table, right, and chew the fat for the day. And that was a focal point and a
meeting place for them. The Red Tower could become– I’m not saying clay pipes and a pint of
beer, but it could become a meeting place or focal point for that group of people.

The Red Tower has got a very difficult job to try to engage the local community that have shown
a reluctance to engage with each other in recent times; they’ve become very insular with each
other. So my wife who lived in the flats in Walmgate when they were first built, because they
used to live in a prefab around the back– by Woolworths just the other side of Walmgate Bar.
And they moved into these new flats, and in those flats everybody knew each other, were all
neighbours up there down there, that way, that way; everybody knew each other. But here it’s
not the same. And so you’ve got to sort of like try to find a way to get them talking to each
other, to get them to engage with each other. Getting the engagement with each other and
getting engaged with us.

So, I honestly feel that the ideas relating to open days, free this, do that, would be a good one
to get people engaged. It may be disappointing for the first couple of attempts at doing this. It
may feel that we have a Tower full of folks ready to serve people and tables full of cakes, and
nobody comes.

So, that hasn’t got to be a– That hasn’t got to be the be all and end all of it. Perseverance
is going to have to be there all the time. You know, you can’t just say, ‘Now we aren’t doing that
again because it didn’t work’.

INTERVIEWER: So, yeah. And coming back to the subject area?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Social media isn’t going to be part of that or...?

RESPONDENT: No, I don’t think so.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.
RESPONDENT: No. I think it is going to be knocking on doors, word of mouth for this local area. Where social media does work, is where we want to engage the wider community when we– It is a historic building. There’s a lot of people who have historic interests that was– If you was to do a straw poll of the people that came from York Past and Present, last Friday, as I’ve already said, there was the girl from Holland. When she came to York it was– One of the places was got to be the Red Tower she’d been to. The lady from Lincolnshire who’s– she’s become quite a friend really, but she– There was a discussion over the last couple of days when somebody mentioned about the stone from the old castle– From the old prison.


RESPONDENT: Right. So they mentioned and she said– And somebody said, ‘I wonder what happened to all the old stone’, right? And I happened to say to her like as a reply to her comment that, ‘You actually really were looking at some of the old stone when you came to the tower on Friday,’ because– And if you look around that stone how interesting it becomes. Some of that stone has got iron bars still in it, right? And she says, Well no’, she says, ‘I’m going to have to come back and have a look at that’. There was that Laura McCoughlin I think, you know, from down in Harrow, you know, that museum in Harrow, she’s now wanting to come up, because I said to her, I said when she was...

INTERVIEWER: You’ve mentioned this, yeah. You have mentioned Harrow, yeah.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Last Friday and the prison stone around the walls, she was also saying, ‘I’m really going to have to come and have a look at this’. And everybody– Every time somebody said that I’ve said, ‘You let me know when you come in and I’ll come and open it up just for you’. And she said, Right, you’re on’. And so she could be coming. So, I think there will be people coming that are picking up on it now. It’s trying to get– I think we may have broken big ground big time with getting it into York Past and Present. So, this is why I thought by inviting a special open day for York Past and Present it will open the door for me to actually go in to York Past and Present and get it out there, to get some information on to it. Because there was even people that was sort of like replying to that then, ‘Well, what is this Red Tower? Where is it’, sort of thing. So, it’s building up.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so the last question is sort of related to what we’ve been talking about, and I’m asking everybody this. What is your definition of heritage?

RESPONDENT: Ooh, I think you’ve asked us this before when you came to our meeting, wasn’t it? Heritage, I think it is– My definition of heritage is [pause] it can be [pause] it can be not distant past and it will not necessarily be near future, or this near past. It can be something that has made the places where we live and work, right, part of what we are, and part of the city that we have come to know and love. So it can be a Tudor building like the Red Tower, or it can be something– A new iconic building like the Hiscox building, because Hiscox building will be heritage to some people. It will be our heritage, it will be something that our children and
grandchildren can look up to and say, ‘I remember my dad talking about that when it was first built’.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: I don’t know, was that right or wrong or?

INTERVIEWER: Well, no, it’s not a test. I have to keep telling people it’s not a test. What it is, is it’s a really good way of me knowing where people stand on that.

RESPONDENT: No, but in general, is that a reasonable definition of heritage or?

INTERVIEWER: Everybody says different things.

RESPONDENT: No, I’m asking you as a PhD student.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, for me, my personal opinion of what heritage is, is that it is [pause] it’s the material remains from the past which could be the near past...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...that the – We want to use or to [pause] manage in a certain way.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And people manage them the heritage material remains in many different ways.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Sometimes it can also incorporate like peoples memories.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And sometimes those memories go on exhibitions and so on and so forth. With the Red Tower, it’s more about how we’re using a brick building to try and encapsulate or to function as a social space in a very particular, unique area of York...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...Which is, as a whole, a site of heritage.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So, I mean, that’s just one answer I’ve given. I’m sure I’ve given many others that kind of...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: ...It’s a long answer. I like to ask it because somebody asked me...

RESPONDENT: Yeah.
...kind of you’ve just done at the end of my first interview I took. And I was just like, well I’m going to ask everybody that.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And I think it’s a good way of...

INTERVIEWEE: You see the thing about– You take a building like the Red Tower, to a lot of people– Somebody actually referred to it as a brick shed. One of the York Past and Present people, and I didn’t really...

INTERVIEWER: I’m nodding.

INTERVIEWEE: ...I didn’t really...

INTERVIEWER: I’m nodding and smiling.

INTERVIEWEE: I replied back to that, ‘A shed?’ But, no, what you’ve got in the Red Tower is you’ve got so many different facets to it, not just the fabric of the building. The fact of what it was used for its history during its construction; the William Henley aspect of it. The fact that it was the inside – internal walls – all the bricks really were manufacturer locally so you could do a history of York brick making relating to how the Red Tower was built and how it was refurbished after it had been almost destroyed in the English Civil War. So you see it’s not just a brick building, it’s not just four walls and a floor and a roof. It’s got all these different aspects to it. If you look – I mean, its design– What about the floor? What’s underneath that floor? Does anybody know what’s underneath that floor? You know, so it’s got– its heritage is what it is. The construction of it, the craft groups that was employed during the construction of it, where its materials came from, when it was refurbished, who was responsible for refurbishing it. So, there’s lots of other– There’s lots of aspects to it that– Lots of questions that probably have never been answered before.

INTERVIEWER: Well there you go.

INTERVIEWEE: There you go.

INTERVIEWER: There’s a whole PhD in there somewhere I’m sure.

INTERVIEWEE: There is, of course there is. Crack on.

INTERVIEWER: Thanks. Right, I’m going to say that we’ve covered all my subject areas for the interview, and I’ll stop the interview. Unless you have anything further to add?

INTERVIEWEE: No, I would just like to add that [pause] since I became involved with the Red Tower, the Red Tower isn’t just a brick building, it is also a very, very active committee group of people who are– as I say, committee but have resolved to breathe life into a public building that had been not used for a long, long time but to use it in a way which is going to benefit the
community. I love working with these people, it’s become part of my life and I hope that my life lasts long enough to be able to see it developed and to operating that people envisage it.

INTERVIEWER: Well, thank you very much, Jonathan. That’s such a great end to that interview.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

29-04-16 Morrisons Cafe Matt

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me who you are and how we know each other, how we met?

RESPONDENT: My name is Matt and we know each other by the Red Tower.

INTERVIEWER: And do you remember the first day we actually met?

RESPONDENT: Not really, no.

INTERVIEWER: I don’t, either.

RESPONDENT: I do. I think I just walked into the Red Tower and you were there with your hat on.

INTERVIEWER: You came to the meeting with...

RESPONDENT: Yes, that was after we had met though.

INTERVIEWER: ...Reginald. Oh, okay, was it?

RESPONDENT: Yes. We had met before that. It was just me, you and Jonathan, I think, if I recall.

INTERVIEWER: I’m just trying to think whether it was that time.

RESPONDENT: It was soon after the floods.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, it was very soon.

RESPONDENT: Very soon after the floods.

INTERVIEWER: Can you give an account of your relationship to the Red Tower and how you got involved?

RESPONDENT: Basically, I’m just a local lad. I’ve helped out with the recent floods, and the Red Tower was a sort of focal point for that area. So that’s how I got involved, basically, just helping out and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: Can you kind of give a specific description of what you actually did? I ask everyone these questions.

RESPONDENT: Right. During the floods?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.
RESPONDENT: During the floods, I came out in the middle of the night and there were no emergency services or council or anything like that about, so I helped put some sandbags out on properties, did a food run, three mile food run for residents that were stuck in the flats. I saved a soldier from drowning. You didn’t know that, did you?

INTERVIEWER: I didn’t, yes.

RESPONDENT: Me and a couple of mates, we saved the soldier from drowning. He was up to his neck in water on Navigation Road itself and we advised him that he didn’t want to be in there and he needed to come through the flats to the back where the water was only waist-high. Managed to get him out of the water and sent him on his way through the flats. Didn’t think anything of it at the time, it was just one of those things, but people tell you that you’ve done a marvellous thing.

The other thing I did during the floods, I got a mother and a small baby out of the floodwater into a waiting ambulance. I built a makeshift bridge so that they could get out.

INTERVIEWER: You were really active during the floods but then it was the aftermath...

RESPONDENT: Yes, it was the aftermath of the floods, there was a lot of work to do. It seemed that our council was letting us down, the residents in particular, at the time. It took them some time to actually pull their fingers out. So we found ourselves doing a lot of the council’s work for them. Basically, when the floodwaters went down, we moved the sandbags first and then started clearing out the properties, carpets and damaged furniture and stuff like that, putting them in skips. I’ve gone on further to help deliver food parcels, deliver water, keep an eye on the estate and make sure no one burgles anything or anything like that. I’ve done a bit of all sorts, really.

INTERVIEWER: So how did the Red Tower feature in that? It seems silly because I know, but-

RESPONDENT: Well, the Red Tower is a predominant building in the area and even though it was flooded itself, Jonathan managed to get it up and - as soon as possible, and was able to use this as like a- before the Council pulled their fingers out and brought a P.U.B. down, the Red Tower was more of a focal point for the residents to come and get information, to come and collect food parcels, cleaning products. Like I say, if it wasn’t for the Red Tower we would have had no storage at all, especially in the first six weeks of the flood. We would have been travelling to other places to get the cleaning products down.

INTERVIEWER: You’re saying we. Who is we in this?

RESPONDENT: These other volunteers. I didn’t do all this by myself. These other volunteers that helped out come from all walks of life, all over the city. It’s a fascinating thing, disaster.

INTERVIEWER: Today I’ve just walked through and they’re taking away the portakabins and Matt’s nodding. What’s the next step now? What are your intentions now that-
RESPONDENT: Things have died down a lot now. Loads of residents are back into their properties. Some of them are still upset about what's going on. The Council has done rush jobs, basically, scrimped and saved where they can on money and we feel that the residents deserve more than that.

INTERVIEWER: You’re talking specifically about the guys opposite?

RESPONDENT: About the renovations in all the Navigation Road downstairs flood-affected properties. I call them directly affected because these are the people that were affected that aren’t classed as affected, for some reason. People stuck in second floor and third floor flats that couldn’t get out, they needed food delivering, they needed water delivering, problems with heaters – that’s damaged a lot of water on the estate. Water pipes now need changing and stuff like that. People’s flats are leaking and stuff. But I mean, I’m coming away from the voluntary work now. I’ve been at it four months. I’ve had no money whatsoever, no dole, no benefits or anything. I wasn’t allowed to claim benefits. Because of my volunteer work, I wasn’t looking for work, so I couldn’t claim any benefits. Last week I made a claim for benefits and today I’ve had a job interview and I’ve been told I may be starting work at the City of York Council, a week on Thursday.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I’m glad that you’ve taken the step you wanted to take has happened.

RESPONDENT: Yes. Like I say, I’d like to get my foot into the City of York Council, so I’m starting low. I’m off on green bins, recycling. They know that I’m into my recycling and environmental protection so I’m hoping to get my foot in on the ladder, so to say, and hopefully they’ll see a bit of potential in me and move me up.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think are your concerns the Navigation Road Estate, mainly?

RESPONDENT: My main concern is the council may now decide to finish the work that they need to do and just leave and basically neglect residents that are still suffering. I mean, it’s raining now. You get residents phoning, me in particular. I get people texting me, ‘Have you had any flood warnings?’ Since the floods, it started out as a warden flood scheme and it’s now gone onto community emergency response team, which involves anything from blackouts to an aeroplane crashing into the estate.

INTERVIEWER: And you’re part of that?

RESPONDENT: Myself and a girl from the council, Katie Fisher. We’ve set it up. Hopefully, next time something happens, which hopefully there won’t be but we know that it will flood again, there’s no doubt about it. They can spend as much money as they want, it’s going to flood again. But hopefully we’ll be a bit more prepared. We’ll be able to get information to residents as quickly as possible and hopefully save a bit more of their property, their personal possessions than what happened last time. Last time it was so quick. A lot of people didn’t believe it was going to happen. It had been 30 years since the last time this area flooded, so a lot of people
just didn’t believe it was going to happen so they weren’t prepared. But this time around, we’re
going to be prepared. A lot of residents know my face. They know that if I go knocking on the
door, something’s going to be wrong.

INTERVIEWER: One of the things that you’ve been really good at or that I’ve seen you do is
you’ve got the connections with the residents in Navigation Road and probably other places in
York, too. And so I want to ask about communication techniques. What did you use and what do
you think is effective?

RESPONDENT: I’m very well known in York anyway, before our floods, maybe call it ‘infamy’, but
I’m very well-known and I can go to any area in York, knock on someone’s door and someone
will give me a cup of tea if I need one. I’m that well known. Communication, as you can tell,
when I talk my words get jumbled up or I sometimes lose track of what I’m saying and stuff like
that.

INTERVIEWER: That’s very natural. I think everyone does that.

RESPONDENT: But I don’t find it a problem. One thing with Navigation residents, a lot of them
know me. I mean, this guy here, he knows me. He lives on Navigation. So a lot of residents know
me anyway, and because they know me, they’ve told their neighbours about me and then when
I have gone around and seen if the neighbours are all right and stuff like that, ‘Oh, you must be
Matt’ so stuff like that. I haven’t found it hard, really, to communicate with any of the residents.
I’ve managed to talk to quite a lot of them. I think one of my main hindrances about
communicating with the residents, and it’s not something I can prove but it’s something that I
have been told, is that the council have turned around and said I’m nothing but a troublemaker.

INTERVIEWER: So when you’re talking about communicating with the residents and people are
egging you in and having cups of tea, so it’s face-to-face...

RESPONDENT: Yes, cultured.

INTERVIEWER: ...and you’ve mentioned that people are texting you...

RESPONDENT: They’re texting me...

INTERVIEWER: ...so they’ve got your personal number...

RESPONDENT: ...these Facebook messages. I’ve set up a residential Facebook page for the
residents to use themselves. I don’t really have anything to do with it. I’ve set it up and I am
admin, but I let the residents discuss things amongst themselves. If I do need to have a word
then I put a word in there but I just let them use it themselves. It’s for them, for the residents. I
suppose you’d call it a residents’ association but on Facebook. We tried to set up a residents’
association, and I don’t know, maybe because of the floods or because it was cold weather or
whatever, a lot of people just didn’t seem to be too interested. I think if we tried again in the
summer time to set up a residents’ association as such, I think we’d probably have a bit more
interest. But as it stands, that’s why I’ve set up the Facebook page.

INTERVIEWER: Coming back to the Red Tower, do you think the Red Tower has any part to play
in the area now, since the floods?

RESPONDENT: We wouldn’t be Navigation Road without the Red Tower, I don’t think.

INTERVIEWER: Is that your honest opinion?

RESPONDENT: That’s my honest opinion. It’s been there forever. It’s been there before the
estate, basically, so the Red Tower is Navigation Road as far as we see it.

INTERVIEWER: But how do you see it interacting with the estate? Or how would you like to see it
interacting?

RESPONDENT: I mean, it can’t be open every day. It just isn’t viable for it to be open every day. I
don’t know, we could maybe have some sort of residents meetings in there once a month or
something like that. It could be used as an emergency centre during any sort of crisis, if the
Tower isn’t affected badly then we could use that as a base, so to say, maybe to work from. For
myself in particular it would be ideal. It’s right on the edge of the estate and you can see
everything that goes on from there. Plus, a lot of the residents walk past there to come to
Morrison’s or whatever when they’re shopping, so it’s an ideal point for meeting people. I do
think there should be more residents’ notice boards down there. That’s one of the problems we
have at the moment. There are two notice boards on Navigation. There’s one at the end of
Rosemary and there’s one at the top on...I can’t remember the name of the street now.

INTERVIEWER: I think it’s Margaret Terrace.

RESPONDENT: Is it Margaret Terrace? Yes, there’s one there. One gave us a thriving shopping
centre when that was put there. Since then we’ve got all these amenities on this side now, so the
residents, instead of going to Walmgate and walking past the notice boards, they’re coming out
the Red Tower side and of course there’s no notice boards, so they can’t see what’s going on.

INTERVIEWER: That’s really interesting, I never thought of that.

RESPONDENT: I’ve lived around here all my life and my mum used to, where the new builds are
at Walmgate bar, that used to be a pub called the INL pub, Irish National Working Man’s Pub.
My mum used to work in there so as a child I would roam about the bar walls and Navigation
Road as a kid. So that’s how I know the area.

INTERVIEWER: A million questions are suddenly popping into my head. Okay, in some ways
we’ve come to my last question, actually. What in your opinion is the definition of ‘heritage’?
This is not a test.
RESPONDENT: Something old that should be preserved, I suppose. One of my main fascinations is the Battle of Britain. That is heritage to me, so it’s something we all should remember, like the Red Tower, like other buildings in York. Do you know the [unclear – 0:17:02.7]?

INTERVIEWER: The deconstructor, is it, or the destroyer or something?

RESPONDENT: The [unclear – 0:17:08.2]?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: Yes. If you stand from a distance you can see that brickwork is camouflaged. You can see the camouflage pattern on it from the War. Not a lot of people know things like that.

INTERVIEWER: That’s interesting.

RESPONDENT: [unclear – 0:17:25.0] stood here and looking at it, but if you look you’ll see the bricks are different colours on one side than they are on the other. If you stand over on the other side of that car park and look at the Tower, you can see the actual pattern where it used to be camouflaged in the War. So things like that, you know, there’s history there. It’s something that the local people should know. That’s heritage to me.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the walls are heritage?

RESPONDENT: Of course they are, yes.

INTERVIEWER: What about your memories of the walls?

RESPONDENT: What do you mean?

INTERVIEWER: Like your memories of being a kid, running around – is that heritage.

RESPONDENT: We used to think they were firing bows and arrows. You know, it’s childhood memories and stuff. But it isn’t just that, it’s what it brings to the city as well – the tourists.

INTERVIEWER: Is that a good thing?

RESPONDENT: Yes. We are deemed as a racist city, believe it or not. There’s no say, for instance, Muslim minority areas in York. There are a few Muslims in York but there are no specific areas where they are, like you would say in Bradford or Birmingham or places that there are certain areas. There’s none of that in York and we’re deemed as a bit racist in that way. However, how can a city that has millions of foreign visitors from all over the world be racist? At the end of the day, they pour money into our city, you know what I mean? Tourism, history – history’s great, everyone should know a bit about history.

INTERVIEWER: I really like that fact about the...

RESPONDENT: You didn’t know that, did you?

RESPONDENT: Well, all this used to be council waste yard. This is where skips and that used to be, all this. So that was the cooling tower, you know, you burnt all the rubbish.

INTERVIEWER: I understand that...

RESPONDENT: I’ve seen it working back in the old days, but obviously it’s dormant now.

INTERVIEWER: The reason it’s still up there is because it’s a good landmark for the place and to make sure that you go at a certain height over it, 200 metres above or something.

RESPONDENT: It isn’t that. Morrison’s wanted to buy it and put a big sign down it saying ‘Morrison’s’. They’ve been refused. It’s a local landmark, like you say. They got refused. They’re not allowed to put a sign down it saying ‘Morrison’s’, that’s it, no chance. There are some interesting things about York, like do you know Skeldergate Bridge?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT: Did you know that used to open?

INTERVIEWER: I did, actually. I’ve sat at the coffee shop there.

RESPONDENT: The coffee shop on the...That used to be the gate tower.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. And I actually sat there looking at it for a long time with my friends.

RESPONDENT: You can actually see the welds can’t you?

INTERVIEWER: You can see it, yes.

RESPONDENT: Well, if you go across the road as well you can see the strips in the road where it used to come apart.

INTERVIEWER: Ah, right. But that doesn’t work anymore, does it?

RESPONDENT: No. I’ve seen it open. There was a warship which came to York years and years ago, in the ’70s or the late ’70s and they opened it then and that was the last time I’ve ever...it’s always been closed since then. Always.

INTERVIEWER: Right, I’ve covered all my questions.

RESPONDENT: Good.

INTERVIEWER: Is there anything that you want to add?

RESPONDENT: What like?

INTERVIEWER: I don’t know. Anything that’s come up in your head. No? Okay. If you think of anything, I’ll-
INTERVIEWER: We're on record. First can I ask you what you're doing in York? You said you're locals?
RESPONDENT 1: We are. We're going shopping. [laughing] I'm sorry, but we are.
INTERVIEWER: That's okay.
RESPONDENT 1: Walk the dog.
RESPONDENT 2: We thought we'd come the scenic route into where we wanted to go.
INTERVIEWER: The scenic route of where you wanted to go. So what part of York do you live in?
RESPONDENT 2: South Bank.
INTERVIEWER: South Bank, okay.
RESPONDENT 1: I live on the top of Gillygate.
INTERVIEWER: Oh right that's really– Yeah, I live just in The Groves behind St John's.
RESPONDENT 1: Oh yeah. I know where you're at, yeah.
INTERVIEWER: And so when you say the scenic route, what part have you done of the walls, then?
RESPONDENT 2: From start of– We walked along the river to Walmgate Bar, at that end, and then walked all the way along The Wall from there.
INTERVIEWER: Okay, and...
RESPONDENT 2: We haven't had to go near a road yet.
INTERVIEWER: Was that part of the...
RESPONDENT 2: Yes, off-road.
RESPONDENT 1: ...part of the appeal? Yeah, we like wandering. If we can, it's nice to go on The Walls as opposed to get away from the traffic.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay. That's brilliant. So you're going shopping and anything else that you'll do today that is part of your...
RESPONDENT 2: No, it was me mostly. I wanted to go to a particular shop in Gillygate and we decided that we'd go this way around. So we have to go through the middle of town which really busy. We haven't been on the walls for a while so we thought it would be a nice thing to do.
INTERVIEWER: So do you all work in York then? Are you...
RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. Well-ish. I do and Hat does, don't you?
RESPONDENT 1: Yeah, and then I used to work in York and now I commute to Hull as part of a training programme.
INTERVIEWER: Do you mind if I ask what your occupations are roughly?
RESPONDENT 2: NHS, NHS.
RESPONDENT 1: NHS.
RESPONDENT 3: I waitress.
INTERVIEWER: In York?
RESPONDENT 3: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: Which restaurant?
RESPONDENT 1: Oh God. Well I don’t work there anymore so I'm currently...
INTERVIEWER: Ah, ah. I've, yeah, worked in...
RESPONDENT 2: And watch she doesn't eat the grass!
INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Part of it is the dog as well. Yeah, so the dog's been coming and is now digging.
RESPONDENT 3: He's loving it.
RESPONDENT 1: Yeah. He really is helping you.
INTERVIEWER: Libby's had enough dog activities today, haven't you Libby? She got knocked over by one earlier.
RESPONDENT 2: Oh right because they're pretty big, aren't they, when they go?
INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah. Right so as locals, as people who live in York, do you have any concerns about the city at all that you, I know it's quite a deep question but anything that comes to the top of your head.
RESPONDENT 2: I worry about what all the— What they're turning the shops to in town, that.
RESPONDENT 1: Yeah. I worry about that as well. There's been— It sounds horrible but you might know. At the top of Gillygate, there's been a few just York shops that just sell absolute naff, naff. And you're just like, 'Oh that could be such a beautiful— It's such a beautiful space.' And it just looks like a naff tourist shop, and there's lots of them that have sprung up around town recently. And it sounds really snobbish and whatever, but it's just like, 'Oh. It's just ... '
RESPONDENT 3: It's the same thing what they're doing to Terry's Chocolate factory, isn't it? Because they're turning that into a lot of flats and it's so gorgeous. I wish that they
could have done something a bit more magical with it. Kept it as a big chocolate factory museum, I think.

RESPONDENT 2: Or had a great big, massive garden that everybody could go to because the park's only just across the way, isn't it? And the river's just across the way.

RESPONDENT 3: And the Knivesmire.

RESPONDENT 2: The Knivesmire. So apart from there being a link with the new building, it would be nice if there was a general purpose something in there.

RESPONDENT 1: And also the traffic in York is atrocious. I mean that isn't a new thing at all but it is ridiculous. And I think the congestion, I think it-- York is, to be fair, probably one of the more cycle friendly cities in the UK. But I think it would be great if it could be more cycle friendly, maybe just completely pedestrian-ise the whole walk and maybe just only let residents go in and out of their cars. I know they are going that way with the park and ride, but I just think it's a bit daft.

And there's been a lot of cycle accidents as well and it's such a tiny, beautiful city. It's not designed for the amount of traffic that goes in and out. I mean I'm guilty. I have my car because I need to get to work to and from Hull every day, but I do think it would be nice if they could consider that.

INTERVIEWER: It's interesting because I also, I'm a cyclist and knowing the routes around York, it's a bit-- Yeah. You do take your own life into your own hands really.

RESPONDENT 1: Definitely.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, but no that's really interesting. I've been having, yeah, some thoughts about that as well, the same sort of thing. Okay, what's my next question? Do you have any-- Then those kind of concerns are linked to desires or aspirations for the city. Are there anything else that, anything that you think could see York becoming or something that you'd like to see happen in York?

RESPONDENT 3: Well the Tour de Yorkshire was really good. I thought that was a pinnacle celebrating Yorkshireness, wasn't it?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, that was...

RESPONDENT 3: That was great.

RESPONDENT 2: It's keeping people coming back apart from when the bike race isn't on, isn't it? That was a really good pull, wasn't it? There's not many-- There's lots of high street shops, isn't there? There's no great big bookshop anymore because Waterstones is only tiny.

RESPONDENT 1: There's a few knicky-knacky ones. I mean there are a few nice ones on the arcade.

RESPONDENT 2: They've reopened the art gallery now, haven't they?
RESPONDENT 1: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: We really missed that and I can't remember whether they decided we had to pay to go in anymore. Are they still thinking about it?

INTERVIEWER: I'm not sure. My last was that they were charging and that people had actually stormed the art gallery.

RESPONDENT 2: Because we love doing that, just being able...

RESPONDENT 1: ...yeah, we used to always go when we were little...

RESPONDENT 2: ...just to be able to wander in and not think about it and go in.

INTERVIEWER: Will you not go, do you think, because of the charges?

RESPONDENT 1: I don't think we'd not go but definitely think twice because it's not like you can just pop in and have a wander.

RESPONDENT 2: Because when it's open and free, you feel like it belongs to you more.

If something's yours, you wouldn't expect to pay for it. We used to go there all the time, didn't we, and meet people for coffee and go have a trundle round and, you know.

RESPONDENT 1: Used to love going there, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I also used to go the art gallery and I think I probably– Because I don't have my York card at the moment and that makes a complete difference.

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah, definitely.

INTERVIEWER: But I am a student so I might be able to get...

RESPONDENT 1: Do they do student discounts? Do you know?

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure they do.

RESPONDENT 1: I would...

RESPONDENT 2: Probably, have to go and have a look and see. Because I mean York needs a definite something, doesn't it? It needs an image for the future, doesn't it? Because we're so lucky that we've got all these old buildings.

RESPONDENT 3: I think York has a really strong image.

RESPONDENT 2: What, for the tourists?

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah. Like the ghosts, The Walls, everything. Everywhere you go now, you see Clifford's Tower, the Minster, the Shambles. I think it's probably the best historic– I think it's the best city in the world but I'm biased. But it's amazing, it's like Edinburgh. They're on that gorgeous, historical level. I think it's got a great image personally, York.

RESPONDENT 2: I think there should be more green spaces. You know down Hungate end of town?
INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: I think they should make sure there's a nice...because they've got all that lovely, I know it's lovely. I love seeing all the cranes and the development there, but it would be nice if there was another...

INTERVIEWER: I can see one over there actually, yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: Another nice big space because no one's built any, since Rowntree's and Terry's, no one's built a great big, massive, lovely outdoor space.

RESPONDENT 1: And also we need to protect the green spaces that we have because they were planning on putting another housing estate on the other side of Askham Bog. And that would have been an absolute nightmare because that's already...it's a beautiful little bog. It's already pencilled in by the park and ride, A64, Boxwood and it's just that's a gorgeous nature reserve. There's so much work goes into conservation there and obviously it's another place that we all probably I think feel quite strongly about.

RESPONDENT 2: Where's all the York philanthropists? Need to go and buy a big bit of land in town and turn it into a lovely great big garden thing.

INTERVIEWER: I think there are philanthropists out there.

RESPONDENT 2: Oh yeah, and knock down Stonebow, build it there.

INTERVIEWER: Knock down Stonebow.

RESPONDENT 2: We don't like brutalist 1970s' architecture.

RESPONDENT 3: I agree actually. They are hideous.

RESPONDENT 1: They are hideous but they're iconic. They're of their time.

RESPONDENT 2: There's better examples in other cities. They can go somewhere else to look at it.

RESPONDENT 3: Obviously they don't have the money though, do they?

RESPONDENT 1: No. They're of their time and everyone knows what you mean when you say Stonebow, doesn't it?

RESPONDENT 2: It hides, there's lots.– There's lovely beautiful street behind Stonebow House, isn't there? With big old chapels and things on.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah, you're right, yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: That's where Steve lives, isn't it?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah [unclear – 0:09:21].

INTERVIEWER: Get involved as well? We're just having a chat.

RESPONDENT 2: We're having a chat. Are you local or a visitor?
RESPONDENT 4: I would be local, yes. I moved into a house over [unclear – 0:09:32].

RESPONDENT 2: Ah, so you'd have different ideas about us then, about...

INTERVIEWER: Well we're just talking about the concerns and aspirations of York.

RESPONDENT 4: York as a whole city? Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and then we'll talk about Red Tower in a second. But as you've joined the conversation, what do you think? I'll give you one of these as well.

RESPONDENT 4: Oh.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, so far...

RESPONDENT 4: What do I think of...of what, sorry?

RESPONDENT 2: Of York in general.

INTERVIEWER: Did we completely put you on the spot? Sorry.

RESPONDENT 4: That's okay, that's alright.

INTERVIEWER: Well how about we talk about Red Tower and then if you've got something that comes to mind then you add in. So, yeah, we're sat here outside...

RESPONDENT 4: I've just probably missed what's just been said.

RESPONDENT 3: That's okay.

RESPONDENT 4: That's okay.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. The Red Tower, we're sat outside, sunny day, can I ask what you think of the Red Tower honestly?

RESPONDENT 2: I love it.

RESPONDENT 3: I think it's dead cool.

RESPONDENT 2: I've walked past it so many times and driven past it so many times, and to be able to come down here and it's open, it's just amazing, just lovely. And you can walk into it without paying.

RESPONDENT 4: Yes [unclear – 0:10:42] walking past and it's a building that's there and not used. There's a lot of potential.

INTERVIEWER: Potential, yeah. What is the potential, do you think?

RESPONDENT 4: That's tricky.

RESPONDENT 2: I like the idea that you suggested of it being, remaining open and communal. Because even just like today, people have come in and just had a chat but you wouldn't maybe, usually stop and have a chat, would you?
RESPONDENT 4: [unclear – 0:11:06] community space speaking to other people.

RESPONDENT 1: I think people probably who are a, well a bit local probably see it, love it [unclear – 0:11:16] but it’s almost like part of the furniture. There’s so many places, you’re like, ‘Oh that’s lovely,’ and then you just walk past. But we came in today because obviously it draws you in and I think it would be really nice to have somewhere that does that. And it links you to the city and it’s quite, yeah, it’s lovely.

RESPONDENT 2: Because I’ll go back to work on Monday and say, ‘Oh you know that old tower off Foss Islands? It’s open.’ Because I mean people who’ve lived here for– We’ve only lived here for twenty years.

RESPONDENT 1: Only! Only the rest of our lives!

RESPONDENT 2: We’re not proper locals...

RESPONDENT 1: ...yeah, we are...

RESPONDENT 2: ...who would remember that from when they were– Their grannies and things and they’ll probably remember when it was used for other things.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, yeah. So with the same kind of questions about York to the Red Tower, what would your concerns be for this building? Do you have any– You don’t have to have any.

RESPONDENT 3: Maybe just looking at it now, the roof, the top of it looks a bit broken downy and maybe some of the bricks. So I’d be a bit worried that it might crumble away if no one actually properly looks after it. And obviously there’s not a lot of money going around at the moment so...

RESPONDENT 1: And also I think one of my concerns would be people just taking advantage of it. If you are lovely and you do this gorgeous project and people are very welcome and opening, people, they’re always going to be able to take advantage or– I don’t know.

INTERVIEWER: Well yeah, what do you, yeah, what’s the worst case scenario in that?

RESPONDENT 1: Well I don’t know. Someone maybe going in and graffiting or just not appreciating it and not taking care of it. Because everybody, obviously everybody sat around here obviously loves York, loves what York is doing but people, some people might just say, ‘Oh yeah. This is a great place to just hang out and get out the road and I’ll just take out my fags,’ you know? People won’t have the same respect.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay.

RESPONDENT 1: Maybe, maybe. That’s probably a worst case scenario but...

INTERVIEWER: Fingers crossed.

RESPONDENT 1: Yeah, no. Fingers crossed.
INTERVIEWER: Touching wood. So what...

RESPONDENT 2: It looks, sorry, because it looks really, architecturally it looks lovely. It's very sweet looking, in proportion building, isn't it? It's not overwhelming or...because I think the local kids, for little school projects and things, it's another little bit that they could get to. Because when those two were in primary school, they used to walk all the kids, in the crocodile, into town to look at different things. And it would be another little thing where they could get to along their little history trails.

INTERVIEWER: So that's a nice, a good idea like a– And I guess, like a blah, sorry. Thinking on my feet here. Would you say that that would be an aspiration for the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT 2: Yes. That's an aspiration for it.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any other ideas or aspirations for the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT 1: You know you mentioned you were thinking of Halloween, having some films in it but I think it would be really nice to have an old projection screen or something small. What do you think? Have a little film club or something like that.

RESPONDENT 3: I agree, that would be really cool.

RESPONDENT 1: Something like that, I always think those sorts of things are really sweet. It's a really nice idea but I don't know what sort of planning permission and things [unclear – 0:14:36] I don't really know anything about this.

INTERVIEWER: Actually yeah.

RESPONDENT 4: You could link that sort of thing up on a temporary basis.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I mean one of the things we're wanting to sort out first is the lighting.

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah, it's very dark in here.

RESPONDENT 2: But it's very atmospheric.

INTERVIEWER: Do you like that?

RESPONDENT 2: I like it.

INTERVIEWER: You like that?

RESPONDENT 2: I like the fact it's like that. I didn't think I'd want it to be all electric and...

RESPONDENT 4: No, you wouldn't want industrial lighting or something.

RESPONDENT 2: Because sometimes it takes away the– It's more exciting just a little bit.

RESPONDENT 3: One thing I've had an idea for is getting some electric, little electric candles to go upstairs just along the beams or in the little alcoves. Just to give it a little bit more.
RESPONDENT 2: Yeah, it's the safety, yes. So you can actually see but today it's a really bright day. Even when you went upstairs, you could see all the light coming through and see the structure. And I suppose in the middle of winter, if you didn't have any lighting, it would be different totally, wouldn't it?

RESPONDENT 3: That would be cool.

INTERVIEWER: Right so what we've got there at the moment, we've got several different plaques and bits and bobs inside. What do you think about these different information things? Did you read much?

RESPONDENT 3: I haven't looked at them.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT 2: Went straight in that open door.

RESPONDENT 3: Straight up in the attic.

RESPONDENT 2: Saw those stairs and straight up there because that's really– So we bypassed that actually. So we should really have a good look.

RESPONDENT 3: I can see the gecko picture though you were talking about, the gecko and the... It's so cool.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I don't know actually what became of that gecko, it's a mystery. We don't know.

RESPONDENT 2: I don't know what happened. It got released back into the wild. That's what we'll tell.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. That's what we'll say, back into the wild to make itself a new home.

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah. I like the idea that we went straight in, had a good old root around without any preconceptions, and then we would come outside and see all of the informations then and think, 'Oh yeah.' That's what that's for.'

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting. What about these city wall plaques? Because they've been around for quite a while.

RESPONDENT 2: I'm afraid to me, they've just become part of the furniture and– Because they're everywhere, aren't they? You do get very familiar with things and...

RESPONDENT 3: Yeah. We're just too used to it, aren't we really?

RESPONDENT 2: You'd have to stick a photograph of something else next to it just to catch your eye. Because you know when the art gallery took a lot of– They did all, put all the artwork outside on the walls, didn't they? All of a sudden, you were stopping and looking at different bits of, not just artwork, but of even that little bit of corner of town that you would have just maybe...
RESPONDENT 1: ...you start paying more attention, don’t you...

RESPONDENT 2: ...yeah, walked past before.

INTERVIEWER: That's really interesting.

RESPONDENT 2: It made you think, ‘Oh yeah. It's not just a painting but I haven’t stared at this bit of wall. It's quite nice.’

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. They didn’t, probably didn’t appreciate that when they started putting them out there. Probably just thought...

RESPONDENT 2: Because the tourists will walk around, won't they, and they’ll look...

RESPONDENT 1: ...and actively look for the kind of thing...

RESPONDENT 2: ...and look at things.

RESPONDENT 1: Definitely.

RESPONDENT 2: Whereas we'll go into town, we've got a mission.

RESPONDENT 1: An agenda.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah shopping [unclear – 0:17:48]. Okay. My last question, because don’t want to keep you for too much longer, is what do you think heritage is and is heritage in York? And is it here at the Red Tower?

RESPONDENT 2: Yeah automatically because it's what's gone before. It's what you discuss with your family and your friends and...

RESPONDENT 1: And it's people's roots.

RESPONDENT 3: It's just history, isn’t it?

RESPONDENT 1: Connected to a place, yeah, I think, well yeah, if anywhere's got heritage, I think York definitely has.

RESPONDENT 2: And it’s enjoyable because we've had a nice day already, haven't we, by thinking we were going to have a traipse across town but we're going to go along the wall, across town, that's nice.

INTERVIEWER: How about you? Do you think there's heritage in York?

RESPONDENT 4: Yeah, I think there is certainly. The place is but partly, to me, it’s more than just seeing them building the old stuff. It’s getting an idea of the way of life or what might have been before in some way which perhaps isn't then as much. I suppose I don't go around as a tourist. I don't look in the museums or places which you might do otherwise, yeah. No, it definitely does. The numbers of old buildings you see in the town as well as new ones just keep reminding you, yeah.
RESPONDENT 3: I think it makes you proud, or makes me proud to be Yorkshire because it's just so beautiful. And I feel I was part of that heritage having a really beautiful historic city and all these gorgeous things that we just take for granted. But I think it's really special having that as part of our heritage.

RESPONDENT 1: I know there's that book. You know the one by C, oh what's he called, C.J. Sansom. There's basically, oh, these set of books by C.J. Sansom.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, yes, yes.

RESPONDENT 2: That detective guy, yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: About Henry VIII. They're like, they're quite popular...

RESPONDENT 2: Sovereign.

RESPONDENT 1: Sovereign, yeah and basically...

RESPONDENT 3: I've never heard of them.

RESPONDENT 2: Oh he's really...

RESPONDENT 1: ...oh they're amazing...

RESPONDENT 2: ...accurate historian, yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: So it's like they're historically accurate set in the Tudor times. Basically it starts off, there's lots of books in the series, starts off with the first book. It's called Dissolution, it's about the dissolution of the monasteries but it's quite historically accurate.

And it's basically about this hunchback bloke.

Anyway the third book is called, is it called Sovereign? Sovereign, it's about Henry VIII's tour of Yorkshire, when there was all this discrepancy about whether Henry VIII's claim to the throne and all the rest of it. And I can't remember what the house up here, it was the House of Tudor versus House something else.

Anyway he comes up round here and in the book, it's got lots of maps, old maps of York. And it mentions places and when I was reading that book, I was like, 'Oh. That's where this is;' and walking around and being like, 'Oh that's really interesting.'

INTERVIEWER: That is really interesting, yeah.

RESPONDENT 2: Isn't one of the stories about the Big Door, it might have come from the monastery that was in the Treasurer's Place.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. The Big Door is part of...

RESPONDENT 2: Was it St Mary's?

INTERVIEWER: It was, yeah, I think it was something to do with that part of town, the hospital. They had it made, it's not an old, old door. It's one that's been made to, I think, it
was to stop a door between, passageway between, oh I've forgotten what the details were.

But it's not an old, old door but it looks lovely.

RESPONDENT 2: It does. But it's making those little things, isn't it? Stuff that we think is...that he actually might have walked on his falsie along here at some point in the past.

RESPONDENT 1: I know, it's awesome. Other buildings, I know [unclear – 0:21:25] but Bothing [0:21:27] is an amazingly beautiful, beautiful, beautiful building and all the history that goes with that. It's just very interesting.

INTERVIEWER: So I get the impression you're very much enamoured of— You like— So you're proud of...

RESPONDENT 3: ...absolutely, yeah...

INTERVIEWER: ...yeah.

RESPONDENT 1: I mean I went to uni in Manchester and I absolutely love Manchester to pieces, absolutely. Had the best time but it's like you do appreciate York when you come back. There is just something about it. It's very...

RESPONDENT 3: Because it used to be the capital, didn't it? Didn't it used to be capital in Viking times?

INTERVIEWER: Oh I don't know if they had the equivalent idea of a capital.


RESPONDENT 4: Yeah, maybe just local capitals in a sense.

RESPONDENT 3: Because it's got all the Viking stuff, hasn't it? Jorvik Vikings.

INTERVIEWER: It was, I mean it was a Roman and then it was Viking, well there was an Anglo-Scandinavian, no Anglo-Saxon then Scandinavian then Normans came. William the Conqueror and then it was the medieval period. I think that's what— I'm not— I don't know.

RESPONDENT 3: That sounds good to me.

RESPONDENT 1: That sounds good, I'm going to agree with that!

INTERVIEWER: Great, okay. Well that was everything that I could have hoped for. Thank you very much.

RESPONDENT 3: Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: Enjoyed the discussion and...

RESPONDENT 3: I know!

INTERVIEWER: ...please take a biscuit.

RESPONDENT 3: We are really not that knowledgeable.
RESPONDENT 1: We are not that knowledgeable at all. Sorry.

INTERVIEWER: Ah. I hope you enjoyed it.

RESPONDENT 3: I suppose that's nice. We're so used to it, we're just like...

RESPONDENT 1: Don't really think about it.

RESPONDENT 3: No.

INTERVIEWER: Well that's interesting in itself, isn't it really? You don't normally...

RESPONDENT 1: I don't really appreciate it.

RESPONDENT 4: Just pass by things.

RESPONDENT 5: Would anybody like a last...a biscuit?

INTERVIEWER: No thank you. Let's get those ones inside else...

RESPONDENT 3: They're melting, yeah.

RESPONDENT 5: Well we've got a plate in the back and...

RESPONDENT 3: Make something out of it, a heritage day.

INTERVIEWER: Oh yeah. We're having a heritage day on the 12th September. It's going to be a kids' activity day with juggling, balloons. We have...

RESPONDENT 5: Henry, we've got Henry.

INTERVIEWER: Compost Henry's doing the animal balloons and there might be a lady doing some storytelling, but we should have tea and cakes and stuff.

RESPONDENT 2: That's really nice.

INTERVIEWER: And if you want to hear the recording, my email address is on here and just give me a bell so that you can...

RESPONDENT 2: Have a listen to us lot.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, because I think it's been a really interesting conversation and I need to give you one of these as well.

RESPONDENT 1: Thanks very much.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. Enjoy.

RESPONDENT 1: Nice to meet you. Bye.

INTERVIEWER: Nice to meet you too. Thank you so much.
INTERVIEWER: Doing residents and the people who work here and some of the council members as well. So right, so I’d like to ask you first, where do you come from?

RESPONDENT 6: London.

INTERVIEWER: You’re from London.

RESPONDENT 6: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And so why are you here today?

RESPONDENT 6: We’re on a long weekend’s holiday.

INTERVIEWER: A long weekend holiday in York?

RESPONDENT 6: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Just in York?

RESPONDENT 6: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And why did you choose York?

RESPONDENT 6: I chose York because I read history at university and I’ve always wanted to come here but never have.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you learnt about the history of York elsewhere or...

RESPONDENT 6: No, just more about British history but I know obviously York is quite a key historical town. So that’s why I wanted to come here.

INTERVIEWER: Fantastic, brilliant. And so you’ve been walking the walls today?

RESPONDENT 6: We have, yes.

INTERVIEWER: How have you found the experience?

RESPONDENT 7: Been very nice, yeah, lovely day for it, yeah.

RESPONDENT 6: I think for us what’s really nice is we were saying about walking it rooftop level actually is quite nice. It’s a view you don’t get very often.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and has there been anything else that you’ve been doing on the walls?

Just...

RESPONDENT 6: Just, for now, just walking and reading all the various different plaques and stuff as we go past. We visited the museum, the York Castle Museum yesterday so we didn’t stop there. But if we hadn’t gone yesterday, we probably would have stopped.

INTERVIEWER: So did you always– Did you plan to– Were you always intending to come to do the walls? Was that part of the plan?

RESPONDENT 7: I think so.
RESPONDENT 6: Yeah.
RESPONDENT 7: At some point over the weekend, yeah.
RESPONDENT 6: Yeah, and we just planned our weekend on the basis of the weather forecast. So yesterday was indoors, today’s definitely outdoors.
INTERVIEWER: Gosh yeah, it rained a lot yesterday, didn’t it? Great so with regards to the plaques that you’ve been reading, could you give me your impressions of how effective they are?
RESPONDENT 6: I think they probably get it just about right. Just enough information to keep people who are wandering engaged and– But not too much information so that you feel bogged down and burdened, yeah.
INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and the same for the Red Tower or do...I mean there's several plaques.
RESPONDENT 6: There are several plaques there and actually we didn’t stop and read. We only read the main one, the one that is colour coordinated with the rest. We didn’t actually stop and read anymore.
RESPONDENT 7: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: Okay, no that's fine. Did you have a look inside the Red Tower at all?
RESPONDENT 6: Just put my head in but didn’t actually stop, no.
INTERVIEWER: You can be honest. What is your impression of the inside of the Red Tower?
RESPONDENT 7: Well didn’t go past the doorway, did we?
RESPONDENT 6: Not really, just had a quick nose.
RESPONDENT 7: Had more of a village fete feel to it.
INTERVIEWER: Village fête feel, okay. That’s good information, great. Let me see, so my last question is, I've been asking everybody this, what is your definition of heritage and history?
RESPONDENT 7: Yeah. I think obviously that’s why with historiography, you get the different interpretations and then historiography being the study of the interpretations is quite interesting in and of itself. Because it tells you more about the time that you're– The people who were interpreting the past than actually about the actual history.
INTERVIEWER: Okay, great.

RESPONDENT 6: Does that make any kind of sense?

INTERVIEWER: That does make sense, thank you very, very much.

RESPONDENT 6: Well you’re welcome.

INTERVIEWER: I think that’s all the...

RESPONDENT 7: How long were we...?

INTERVIEWER: Four minutes of your time. Thanks very much for your help.

RESPONDENT 7: Thanks very much.

INTERVIEWER: Bye.

END OF TRANSCRIPT