**People, place and power**

***Place and its importance as a motivator and inhibitor of change***

**June 10th 2019**

**Seminar 10-12.30, followed by lunch**

**Meeting Room, Yr Hen Llyfrgell, Cardiff**

**9.45 am – tea, coffee and welcome**

**10.00 – the role of place in ‘breaking the cycle’ of low attainment’ - Presentation of PhD research: Jack Watkins**

**10.20 – ‘On the edge of a hill: there is no place like home’ Presentation of PhD research: Rhiannon Morgan**

**10.40 – Working in Rhondda: James Watts Rees**

**11.00 – Llechi, Glo a Chefn Glwad: Slate, Coal and Countryside: Sarah Lloyd-Jones**

**11.15 – Discussion led by Duncan Holtom**

**12.30 – lunch**

**13.30 - AGM**

**a briefing note for the AGM seminar**

**Context**

People and Work has long recognised the importance that people give to place – their home, their community, their environment. We have always worked with ‘place’ as a core feature of our approach (e.g. action research projects that have been based in one small place) but we have never really focused on the value of the place itself as more than a context for the work. Specifically, we have never really looked at how place provides a motivation as well as an inhibitor for change.

There has been an interest in place-based work over decades, although how it has been thought of and shaped has reflected the key needs of the time. A recent Lankelly Chase report (2017[[1]](#endnote-1)) sets out three ‘types’ of place based approaches:

* *Communitarian: The causes of disadvantage lie within the area and the people who live there – a lack of individual skills, capacity and/or motivation, or a ‘loss of community’. Programmes with this focus tend to centre on skills training and technical support, community development and promoting self-help.*
  + *Systems: The causes of poverty lie in the failure of local systems and services – lack of co-ordination or responsiveness to local needs and preferences. These programmes tend to be government led, focused on strategic partnership working and collaboration and/or managerial solutions. They may concentrate on local agencies and services, or they may promote community empowerment, supporting local residents to have a greater say in local decision-making or to take over local services and assets.*
  + *Structural: The causes of poverty are structural, resulting from economic change, and related changes in the labour and housing market. These types of programme have focussed on economic and physical regeneration, giving a greater role to business, encouraging investment to bring more jobs into the area, changing the housing mix and designing out crime and addressing environmental degradation. But some programmes – especially more recently - have also focused on local economic solutions – developing social enterprise and keeping money local.*

People and Work is really interested in what place means to the people who live and work there. We are now working with eight other organisations across Wales to develop a model of people-led place-based work for rural and post-industrial areas that builds on what people are already doing within a place, and that sees the role of place as a social, economic, educational, environmental and health hub in people’s lives. This is a very different take on place-based work, which has tended to be stimulated by the negatives around places.

We want to draw together a group of interested people to develop this thinking. Our AGM seminar, entitled **‘People, place and power’** will explore place as a motivator and inhibitor of change for the individual, for communities and for those who work with them. It will involve four short inputs (15 minutes each):

* Jack Watkins and Rhiannon Morgan will talk about their PhD research with people who participated in People and Work activities between 5 and 20 years ago. They will include insights into what they have observed and learned about the role of place in these people’s lives.
* James Watts-Rees will talk about the Rhondda and its importance to him and his life.
* Duncan Holtom will provide some insights into what People and Work has learned about place as a motivator and inhibitor of change.

There will then be a discussion around:

* what a focus on people-led place based work could offer – what are its strengths and weaknesses
* how ideas around the foundational economy, local economic development, low-carbon/ carbon neutral development and sustainability mesh with place based work
* what successful people-led place-based work would look like?

1. https://lankellychase.org.uk/resources/publications/historical-review-of-place-based-approaches/ [↑](#endnote-ref-1)