

POWER IN **Big Local** PARTNERSHIPS:

A GRAPHIC REPORT

COMIC CREATED BY CHARLOTTE BAILEY IN COLLABORATION WITH:

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THIS GRAPHIC BOOK EMERGED FROM RESEARCH CONDUCTED WITH
BIG LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS IN ENGLAND. THE RESEARCH FOCUSED ON
HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE IN BIG LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS.

WE PAID PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO INCLUSIVITY AND INVISIBILITY IN DECISION-MAKING
AND HOW POWER AND KNOWLEDGE OPERATE IN COMMUNITY MEETINGS.

SPACES FOR DECISION-MAKING

WE WOULD RELY ON PEOPLE POPPING IN TO HAVE A CHIT CHAT.



MANY COME FOR THE FREE FOOD.



WE'D HAVE BISCUITS AND A BREW AND A LAUGH TOGETHER. EVERYONE PITCHES IN.

NOT EVERYONE CAN GO OUT ON A COLD FEBRUARY NIGHT TO SOME MEETING...



WORKER

...BUT YOU CAN'T SHARE PIZZA OVER ZOOM.



BIG LOCAL REP

NOT TO MENTION THE TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES.



THE CHAIR

INTERRUPTIONS...

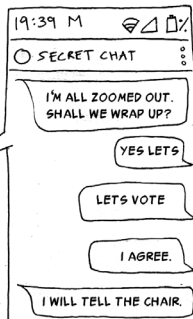


A RESIDENT

ON ZOOM EVERYTHING THAT I SAY IS ANNOUNCED TO THE WHOLE ROOM.

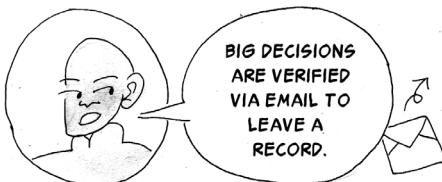


A WORKER



THEN BOOM.

MEETING IS OVER.



BUT WHAT COUNTS AS A DECISION?

WHAT DECISIONS 'COUNT'?



WHO DEFINES WHAT DECISIONS ARE IMPORTANT OR NOT?

THOSE PAID?



I GO ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR THIS PARTNERSHIP.

THOSE WITH TIME?



I WANT TO DO A GOOD JOB. EFFICIENCY IS KEY.

SOCIAL CAPITAL?



EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY KNOWS ME. AND I WANT WHAT'S BEST FOR THEM.

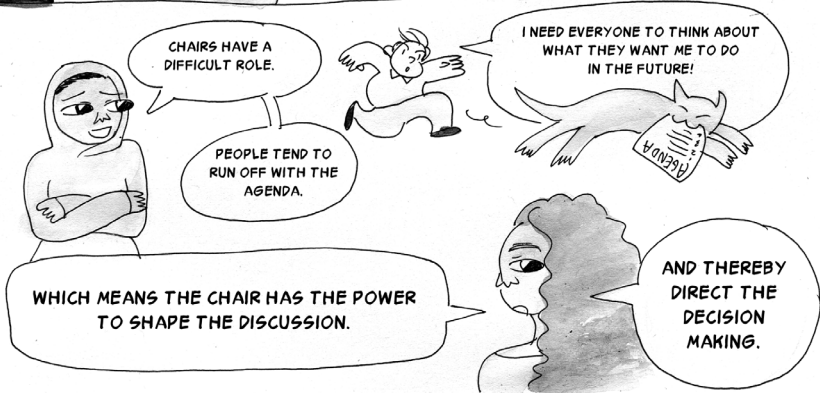
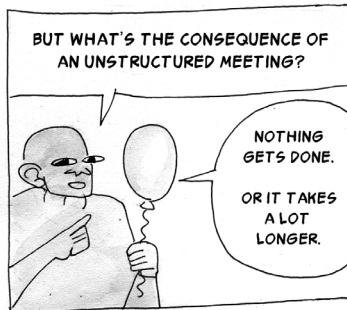
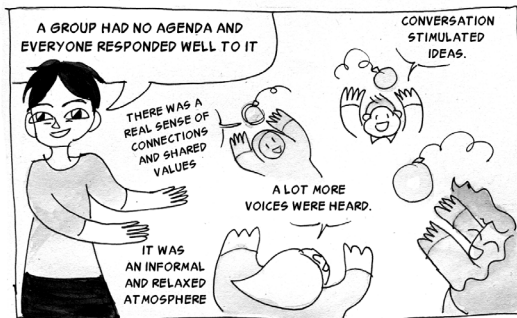
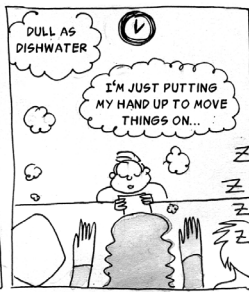
PARTNERSHIP RULES & AGENDAS

RULES ARE OFTEN
IMAGINED OR ASSUMED.

AN EX-MEMBER
WAS A CIVIL SERVANT
WHO SET THE TEMPLATE
FOR AGENDAS.



WHAT ROLE DOES THE
MEETING AGENDA PLAY
IN TERMS OF DECISION
MAKING POWER?



MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT

EVERYONE WANTS TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND BE INCLUSIVE AS POSSIBLE.



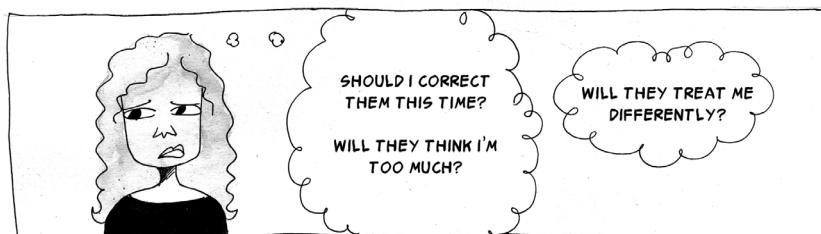
ISSUES OF RACE AND GENDER ARE TABOO TOPICS TO AVOID MAKING MISTAKES.



DISCRIMINATION CAN HAPPEN IN HIDDEN AND UNINTENTIONAL WAYS.



WILLFUL BLINDNESS MEANS LEAVING UNCOMFORTABLE THINGS UNQUESTIONED.



AND DESPITE HAVING FORMAL PROCEDURES MEMBER RECRUITMENT OFTEN RELIES ON SOCIAL NETWORKS OR WORD OF MOUTH.



PARTICIPATION: VOICE & POWER



HOWEVER THIS FAILS TO RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT.

FOR EXAMPLE INTERACTIONS WITH DOMINANT SPEAKERS...

THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE



COULD WE MAKE PROJECTS MORE TRANSPARENT?

THOSE WITH EXPERIENCE



COULD WE MAKE KNOWLEDGE MORE ACCESSIBLE?

HOW COULD WE MAKE MEETINGS FEEL LESS FORMAL AND DAUNTING?

THOSE WITH CONFIDENT VOICES



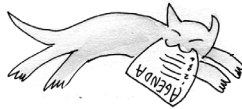
HOW CAN WE TAKE NOTICE AND MAKE SPACE FOR THE NOT YET HEARD?

GETTING THINGS DONE REQUIRES HAVING THE POWER TO PLAN AND ACT.

BUT IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT POWER IN DECISION MAKING IS
RESIDENT LED AND COMMUNITY OWNED.

THIS IS A VITAL ELEMENT OF THE BIG LOCAL ETHOS.

POWER IS A PROCESS AND CAN BE TRANSFORMED WITH
INCLUSIVE PRACTICES.





WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE PARTICIPANTS
IN THIS RESEARCH INCLUDING THE INTERVIEWEES WHO
GAVE THEIR TIME AND SHARED THEIR STORIES.

ALL CHARACTERS IN THIS COMIC ARE MADE UP TO REFLECT SOME OF THOSE STORIES
AND ARE NOT MODELLED FROM ANY REAL PERSON.

WE HAVE FOUND OURSELVES IN AWE AND HUMBLLED BY THE
COMMITMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF BIG LOCAL MEMBERS.

THE RESEARCH TEAM ARE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRE FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENT. THE CENTRE IS COMMITTED TO ETHNOGRAPHIC INNOVATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF OLD AND NEW ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGIES.

MEET THE TEAM



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CHARLOTTE BAILEY IS A CARTOONIST AND WRITER WHO SPECIALISES IN TRANSLATING ACADEMIC RESEARCH INTO COMICS. SHE HAS DRAWN AND DEVELOPED THIS GRAPHIC ESSAY IN COLLABORATION WITH THE RESEARCH TEAM.

FIND MORE OF HER WORK AT WWW.CHARLOTTEWITHINK.COM

THE RESEARCH PRESENTED IN THIS COMIC REPORT FOCUSES ON HOW DECISIONS
ARE MADE, BY WHOM AND IN WHAT CONTEXTS.

IT EXPLORES HOW SOME VOICES ARE HEARD MORE THAN OTHERS AND
HOW DOING THINGS 'THE RIGHT WAY' CAN HAVE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES
OF LIMITING AGENDAS AND IMAGINATION.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

