

THINK
TANK
FOR THE
RADICAL
CENTRE

BIG TENT BIG IDEAS





"IT WAS INSPIRING
TO HEAR SO MANY YOUNG
PEOPLE EXPLORING THEIR
PRIORITY ISSUES - ON TOPICS
SUCH AS YOUTH VIOLENCE
AND MENTAL HEALTH - AND
BOTH WHAT THEY WOULD
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LOCAL POLITICIANS DO
ABOUT IT, AND
INDEED WHAT THEY
ARE DOING ABOUT IT
THEMSELVES..."

GEORGE FREEMAN MP

SUMMARY

GREEN GROWTH

- Hold a competition about which places can pedestrianise their city centres fastest.
- Organise a UK carbon tax.
- Use all the data we collect on people's journeys to name and shame places and neighbourhoods with the worst polluters.

HEALTHY GROWTH

- Teach children to cook at school.
- Agree to share health data anonymously to make NHS patients eligible for the world's most advanced new therapies.
- Use big data and financial creativity to level up the NHS.
- Combine youth work with mental health support.
- Design health solutions with those who have lived experience.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH

- Ask Coventry to share the secrets of its reinvention at a special summit.
- Teach children to automate and to code creatively.
- Ensure the arts form part of every policy in cities.
- Reward communities that cut the cost of health or pollution by handed back some of the cash saved.

GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY

- Retask our armed forces to deliver humanitarian aid in war-torn regions across the world.
- Promote smart collaborations that engage across sectors in support of Global Britain playing a leading role to end global hunger and malnutrition.
- Use expertise in the City of London to launch ethical investment in Africa.
- Launch new clubs like Fridays in Coventry, with secure places for young people to relax and enjoy live music upstairs while local business volunteers provide help with a 'job shop' and mentor skills such as CV writing on the floor below.

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FOREWORD 1

George Freeman MP
Founder, The Big Tent.

I want to thank our Big Tent partners, Radix thinktank, for preparing this New Ideas report, capturing the best ideas from the Big Tent Leaders Summit and Ideas Festival 2021 in Coventry.

The Big Tent is a strictly non-partisan foundation set up to catalyse and curate the new conversations, ideas and leadership required for transformational renewal and regeneration for the people and places left behind by partisan politics.

After the interruption of covid in 2020, Coventry 2021 was our fourth annual festival. Reflecting the challenge of sustainable post-covid recovery, the theme was 'Healthier, Cleaner and Inclusive Growth – how to make sure the City of Culture is a catalyst for lasting cultural and economic regeneration of the region'.

After all the enforced isolation of the pandemic, it was all the more special to bring together 70 speakers, 150 Summit guests, hundreds of festival attendees and nearly 2,000 digital viewers with over 15 leading ministers and parliamentarians from across the political spectrum, including the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Mayor of the West Midlands, Jess Philips MP, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP, Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP, Fabian Hamilton MP, Baroness Barker, Nadhim Zahawi MP, Stephen Kinnock MP, local MP Taiwo Owatemi MP and local Green, Labour and Conservative councillors.

The festival in the spectacular Assembly Festival Gardens site was a wonderful showcase of the world class innovation and enterprise creating exciting new career opportunities in Coventry and the wider West Midlands region.

Across the unique pavilions of the festival ground - the Queen of Flanders, Piccolo and Third Space - attendees explored four topical public policy themes running through the festival's sessions:

Green Growth
Healthy Growth
Creative & Inclusive Growth
Global Connectivity



As well as the chance to explore these major policy challenges, it was inspiring to hear so many young people from the city and local area exploring their priority issues - on topics such as youth violence and mental health issues, and both what they would like to see national and local politicians do about it, and indeed what they are doing about it themselves.

In between sessions, we heard impassioned local voices at the Speakers' Corner, added our doodles to the Big Tent cartoon and art wall and enjoyed delicious street food across the festival site.

A heartfelt thank you to our partners The Eleanor Crook Foundation, the HALO Trust, the NHS, Cadent Gas and Gamewagon, without whom we would not have been able to put the event on and with whom we built some stellar panels.

Final and sincerest thanks to the Coventry City of Culture team for inviting us to bring the Big Tent to Coventry and providing us with the beautiful venue at Assembly Festival Gardens. As Britain looks to Build Back Better, it is clear that the Coventry Cluster is leading the way in cleaner, healthier and fairer economic growth for all.

This report will help to capture some of the energy of the event and help our various follow-on workstreams with local and national leaders.

We hope you will feel inspired to join us and help deliver the promise of transformational regeneration of which Coventry is such a powerful embodiment.



FOREWORD 2

Chenine Bhathena

Creative Director, Coventry City of Culture

Coventry's year as UK City of Culture has thrown a spotlight onto the youthful energy, innovation and social activism of our citizens, and a moment to explore and highlight the invaluable role of culture in a modern and diverse Britain.

We have created a joyful year of events and activities with a strong social conscience, rooted in our rich history but looking to our future. In order to reimagine our collective future, discussion and debate are essential, and so hosting the Big Tent Festival was an invaluable opportunity to engage our communities in a whole host of topics and policy areas, always looking at them through a creative and cultural lens.

It was an incredible opportunity to use our voices to express our hopes and dreams, challenge ourselves and each other, and be true to our deeply held values.

Over a scintillating weekend in July 2021, Big Tent brought lively discussions to our Assembly Festival Gardens. Situated in the heart of the city centre, it offered a chance to examine the state of the nation - in covid and despite covid - and to consider a manifesto for the future. Our cohort of 15 Coventry-based Cultural Leaders, part of our Transforming Leadership programme, were at the heart of the conversation, bringing youthful, fresh, surprising and diverse perspectives to a range of themes.

From policy areas around housing and transport, to the green agenda, health and isolation, and challenges of global migration, a range of local-global issues were tabled, challenges shared and solutions explored.

Following the extreme difficulties faced over past 18 months across all parts of industry and our society, summer 2021 was a fantastic moment to review the way in which our society functions, and - as we reset - start to identify new ways of working that are more collaborative, more caring, global in impacts and local in change, and underpinned by innovation and ambition.

Ultimately as a City of Culture, we have been committed, even before covid, to explore and understand the value of creativity across our city and how it can improve and transform people and places in so many different ways.

Key to our vision for Coventry City of Culture Trust is how we can contribute to the long-term changes that the city is looking to implement, and how the investment in the city of culture between 2015-2024 can really help our city to thrive:

- *How arts and culture can move the city forward and bring about positive, sustainable change.*
- *How being City of Culture can develop the city identity and support our storytelling.*
- *How an improved cultural offer can support inward investment.*
- *How artists can be embedded in city planning, public realm, transport and wider infrastructure design and growth.*
- *How culture can re-animate our high streets and city centres post lockdown.*
- *How art can bring neighbourhoods alive, and citizens together.*
- *The importance of protecting our green and blue spaces and rewilding our cities, promoting healthier lifestyles.*
- *How culture can improve equity and make our city a more inclusive place to live.*

Culture is the golden thread. It really is the glue that brings us together; it is acupuncture for our city, promoting healing and regrowth. So how do we support arts, culture, creativity into the future? How do we ensure creatives aren't priced out? How do we provide the infrastructure of the future?

All these and more were discussed in a lively debate. We were so proud to host this and hope that, as Coventry moves forwards and tests new ways of working, we can create a blueprint to share with others across the nation.





INTRODUCTION

Ben Rich

Chief Executive, Radix UK

In the 1900s and early 2000s, I worked for what we called an 'issues-led' public relations firm. At the time it was quite an original descriptor, if somewhat pompous. Most PR firms were focused on the City, Westminster or Fleet Street (there was still the odd newspaper on Fleet Street in those days, not to mention the traditional journalistic haunt of El Vino's).

What we felt made us different was that we were less concerned with knowing one or other 'audience' and more with understanding the issues that shaped our clients' businesses, whether it was urban regeneration, copyright theft or climate change.

This approach encouraged lateral thinking across sectors: how could we change the economics of brownfield land regeneration for investors? By changing the legislative framework which governed the polluters, or the attitude the public took to housing built on reclaimed land. How do we persuade governments to protect intellectual property? By demonstrating the economic value of the creative industries to UK plc.

Our objective was to take our clients and consultants out of their comfort zones, hearing from others who didn't think like they did, didn't necessarily share their priorities: political financial or social, but who nevertheless cared about the world we all share.

It is what today we would call shattering echo chambers.

This is what Big Tent does. It asks: *"How does the world look not from Westminster or West Kensington, but Coventry or West Bromwich? What matters to people who live from pay cheque to pay cheque, when the money runs out on Wednesday night? What does 'health policy' mean for my kids, my parents, my future?"*

And it works both ways: it didn't take long for a health crisis in China to become a global pandemic, political collapse in Afghanistan to lend fuel to terrorism, climate change in Bangladesh to foreshadow a climate emergency on our doorstep. Coventry's problems are tied up in national and international priorities.

Big Tent exposes us all to new ways of thinking, other people's priorities and it is from such exposure that new and innovative ideas and solutions emerge. This is also Radix's approach to what we call *"civil disagreement"* - and it has led to the creation of the ideas put forward in this report.

This is not a comprehensive manifesto. The ideas set out here are not perfectly formed nor even necessarily thoroughly thought through. Some, such as the introduction of UK carbon tax, are *'big ideas'* that would take years to implement and huge political capital.

Others, such as a competition to pedestrianise town centres, could be initiated tomorrow by a junior minister. What they all share in common, however, is to pose the question: *"Why not?"*

Our PR company's issues focus may have been original; our principle in a brainstorm that there was no such thing as a bad idea

was definitely not, but no less valuable for it. Bad ideas are just the start of the conversation. At the Big Tent Festival, the ideas - good and bad - all have the potential to inspire innovation and change.



SECTION 1

Green Growth

1. Our Future City and Town Centres

BIG IDEA:

hold a competition about which places can pedestrianise their city centres fastest

PANELLISTS:

Beth McArdle, Partner & Joint Head of Birmingham Office, Shoosmiths (Chair)

Siraj Ahmed Shaikh, Director of Research at Institute of Future Transport & Cities, Coventry University

Trish Willetts, Coventry BID Director

Cllr Jim O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, Coventry City Council

Coventry was one of the first pedestrianisation schemes in the country – at least according to Trish Willetts, the manager of Coventry's business improvement district.

She was speaking at the Big Tent meeting on city centres, alongside Coventry's regeneration supremo Cllr Jim O'Boyle, and Siraj Ahmed Shaikh, director of research at the Coventry University Centre for the Future of Transport and Cities.

It was Siraj who suggested the idea of faster pedestrianisation.

"If it was up to me, I would take as many urban areas as I could and pedestrianise them," he said. "There is something amazing just walking through, with stalls, with food, with music and art. The city becomes a blank canvas where people can draw their creativity."

It isn't just about avoiding the car fumes, he said – though we will have to make our centres accessible for people who don't find walking easy.

We need to launch a competition between cities about which ones can pedestrianise fastest, he said.

One problem, as most people will tell you, is the weather. But Siraj said that, on his recent visits to Copenhagen, they have blankets and plastic sheeting.

"It will be minus 7 and people are outside having dinner," he said.

Safety is something else we will need to work on, he said, but that maybe as simple as just improving the lighting.

"We are human, we are love each other – we love to meet each other, and we love to be out there," said Trish. "People are ready to come out again. The change is now..."

"The city centre isn't just about shopping – it's about experiences, meeting your friends," said Jim. "That is why we have been investing in the Herbert Art Gallery, and the Belgrade Theatre." One old shopping centre is now being refurbished as a restaurant quarter.

"If people live in city centres, they become safer," he said and in Coventry, at least, they are.

"There is something amazing just walking through, with stalls, with food, with music and art. The city becomes a blank canvas where people can draw their creativity."

2. Getting to Net Zero

BIG IDEA:

The UK should organise our own carbon tax

PANELLISTS:

Ximena Banegas, Campaigns Adviser, Changing Markets Foundation (Chair)

Sam Alvis, Head of Green Renewal, Green Alliance

Tom Bradley, External Affairs Manager, Cadent Gas

David Elmes, Professor of Practice, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick

Julian Dean, Mayor of Shrewsbury and the Green Party's Climate Change Officer

Most green taxes won't tackle climate change by themselves if the UK is the only country that puts them into effect. But there is a good case for the UK to go it alone with a carbon tax - in other words, tax paid by the fossil fuel companies on all oil, coal and gas taken out of the ground or imported.

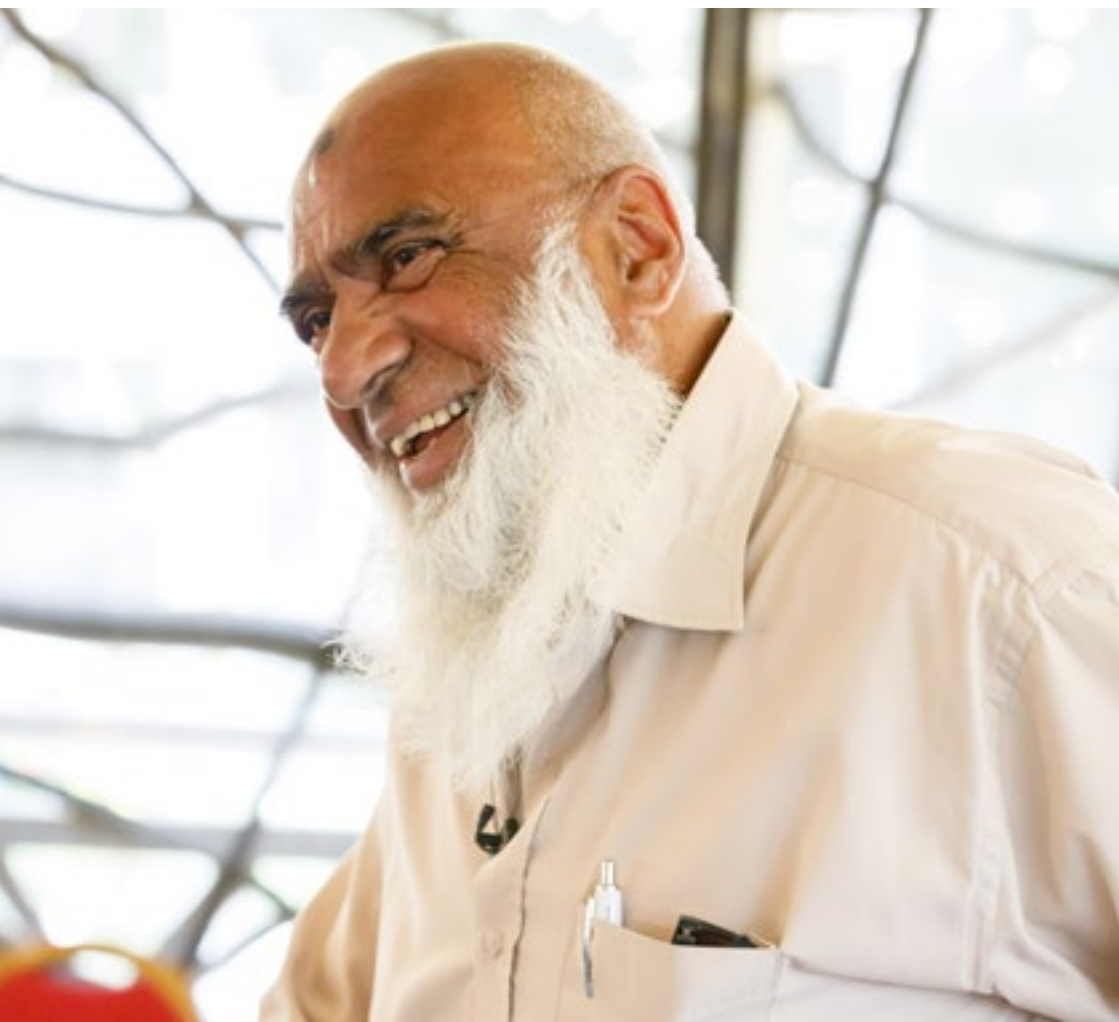
This is an idea that is supported by a broad coalition of NGOs and civil society groups, both in the richer countries and the Global South – and it's the proposal put forward by Julian Dean, a Green Party councillor in Shrewsbury to the net zero session at the Big Tent in Coventry.

It's an idea that embodies the principle that the 'polluter pays', but – even more importantly – it would drive change: demand for carbon-free goods and services would go up as the carbon costs start being properly reflected in prices. And, as it increases over time, a carbon tax would remove the ability of fossil fuel producers to profit from the destruction of our climate.

In the short term, a carbon tax could raise a very large amount for governments around the world to invest in the essential changes needed for the transition, said Julian. There are different ideas on how this money should be divided, but an essential part of any international framework of carbon tax is that a significant share of this should go to help poorer countries adjust to the transition.

"Richer countries have promised £100 billion a year in such help for poorer countries, but so far only a tiny fraction of this has materialised," he said. "A global carbon tax would provide a mechanism to raise such dedicated finance. Poorer countries have put far less carbon into the atmosphere than richer countries, and funding to help them adapt and mitigate is an essential part of climate justice."

"Just as it is pointless vaccinating children in the UK against covid-19 while adults in much of the world continue to go without vaccines, so we – the wealthy nations with the biggest historic carbon deficits – have to enable the



developing and poor nations to have a just transition so that they too can decarbonise,” said Julian.

“The G7 failed in many respects, but there was one very significant development – an international agreement on minimum levels of corporation tax. This suggests that an international framework for taxing carbon is now also feasible, and this was reinforced by the final communiqué of the G7 leaders.”

“We recognise the potential of high integrity carbon markets and carbon pricing to foster cost-efficient reductions in emission levels, drive innovation and enable a transformation to net zero, through the optimal use of a range of policy levers to price carbon.”

But the fossil fuel lobbyists and their allies in government will be working hard to undermine or water down any carbon tax initiative, said Julian. “We need to exert all possible pressure to make sure that a strong international framework for carbon tax is at the top of the COP26 agenda.”

A carbon tax – like a minimum rate of corporation tax – would not be adopted everywhere at first, but if enough countries do adopt it, this will drive international change.

“Countries that fail to take part would face barriers to trade with countries that are part of the carbon tax framework, which would help to avoid a potential competitor advantage for non-compliant countries,” he said. “Imports from such countries would be taxed at a higher rate, giving a strong incentive for these countries to come into line themselves, nor would their governments share in the ‘dividend’ from carbon tax.”

In the UK, a carbon tax would be good for our quality of life, said Julian: “But transitions are painful and prices will rise, so we have to have measures in place to make sure this is just – and for us a key such measure is a Universal Basic Income.”

A carbon tax would, for example, mean:

Healthier diets and a more efficient farming sector less reliant on dirty subsidies like red diesel.

More liveable neighbourhoods, because public transport is more equitable and reduces congestion and other forms of pollution.

Homes that are more efficient, cheaper to run and warmer.

Jobs which will be better than an economy based on housing booms for boomers and barista jobs for ‘boomerangers’ – young adults stuck back at home.

Tom Bradley, who spoke next, is external affairs manager of Cadent Gas – which sponsored part of the meeting – and a former parliamentary candidate, was very upbeat about prospects for net zero.

The danger is that we feel too passive about net zero, he said. “We need to take that and flip it on its head and look at the great opportunities for net zero – and often that is about creating the environment that is most beneficial.”

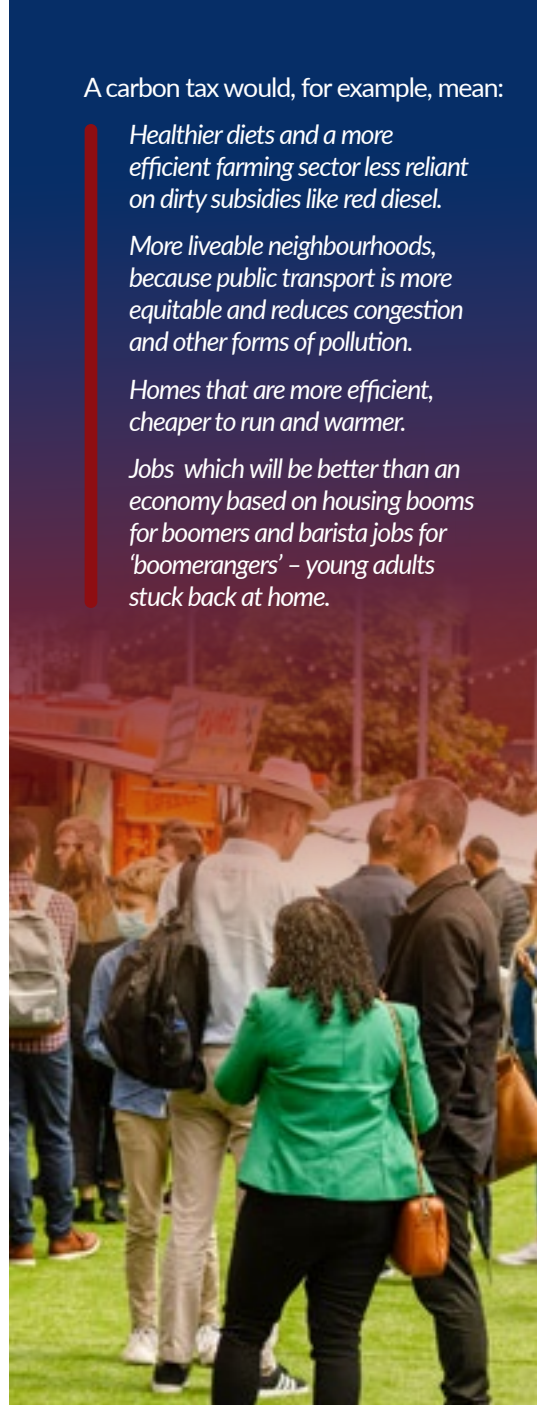
He suggested what that might mean for what he called the ‘decarbonisation of heat’ – the “trickiest to tackle”: “We expect heat – we need that heat in this country – and our heat solutions need to cope with the worst scenarios, like the Beast from the East.”

That is why they are involved in trials of hydrogen in the home, for example.

“We often view net zero as top down – what is going to be forced on us – but what to consumers want? What kind of solutions will work for everyone?”



A presentation slide for Cadent, the UK's gas network. The slide has a dark green background. On the left, white text states: "Approximately 80% or 22 million homes across the UK use natural gas for home heating and hot water today. Transitioning all of them to low-carbon heating systems in the next 29 years will be a challenge the scale of which is almost unprecedented in the last 85 years. That's why Cadent are developing solutions to support this change-over to low-carbon heating. We believe that in order to meet this challenge, hydrogen, heat pumps and electricity will be needed, providing people with choices for how they heat their homes." Below this text is the name "Dr Angela Neale" and her title "Director of Strategy, Cadent". On the right side of the slide is the Cadent logo with the tagline "Your Gas Network" and a photograph of Dr. Angela Neale, a woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing an orange top, sitting at a desk with her arms crossed.



“If fossil fuels remain cheap and companies remain able to make massive profits from extracting and selling them, there is no chance that we can avoid the rapidly accelerating climate catastrophe...”

3. Trains, Planes & Automobiles: The future of transport

How many of us have been through the same experience as Big Tent founder George Freeman when he found himself arriving four minutes late for his train connection in Cambridge and watching the train for Norwich leaving the station on time – but without him?

There was no warning and no care at all, and all the staff say is that the “train left on time,” he said.

“We have been running a system that isn’t working for people or places,” said George. “Instead, we have built a purchasing system, designed by the Treasury, that is devoted to rationing supply. Of course that is important, but it should not be the sole defining feature of our transport system.”

George says he was able to be brutally honest about the Department of Transport because he was no longer a minister.

BIG IDEA:

We need to use all the data we collect on people's journeys to name and shame places and neighbourhoods with the worst polluters

PANELLISTS:

Nick Tyrone, Spectator Columnist & Radix Fellow (Chair)

George Freeman MP, Former Transport Minister

Baroness Barker, Lib Dem Lords Spokesperson on Social Enterprise, Charities and the Voluntary Sector

Cllr Jim O’Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, Coventry City Council

Councillor Steve Caudwell, Leader of the Opposition and Green Party group on Solihull Council and Green Party candidate for the West Midlands Mayoral election

Boris Johnson wanted the department shaken up - which is how he came to ask him to be Minister of State there, the second-in-command.

“Within a few days, I realised he was right,” said George. “I was asking as many of the staff as possible what they did – and they mainly said they either covered road, rail, aviation or shipping... Civil servants are brilliant people, and the Department of Transport probably has a greater sense of passion than the others. In each of the four modes there were people passionate about people, place and environment – but they had been kind of relegated.”

That was how George introduced his Big Idea on localising transport decisions and that was what he set out to achieve at the Department of Transport by bringing those people together in a new directorate on the future of transport, dedicated to decarbonisation, digitalisation and decentralisation.

“The dislocation between transport and housing is chronic, serious and you don’t solve this in Whitehall by joint working,” he said. “It needs to be profoundly decentralised...”

The trouble is that we have designed a transport system that isn’t really working for people. The whole machine is devoted to rationing supply.”

We need to make sure we use the enormous amount of data we have about people and their journeys so that we can make all that information available – using a traffic light system of green, amber and red, said George.

Then we can shame the places, the cities, constituencies and schools that are the big pollution emitters, he suggested.

He was followed by Coventry’s cabinet member for regeneration, Cllr Jim O’Boyle, who described the new Covlar (Very Light and Rapid) light rail system – powered by battery, which means it doesn’t require overhead cables or digging up highways.

Coventry – the venue for the Big Tent in 2021 – was, after all, the birthplace of the UK motor industry.

Lib Dem Baroness Liz Barker said that the transport system was about to change.

“Transport is about enabling people to move between places for social and economic purposes – and that is not what we have at the moment,” she said.

We also have a transport policy that favours cars, partly because of the difficulties of providing rural transport



– which means that aviation and cars are heavily subsidised by central government. That will change when people see a difference in their lives.

Green councillor Steve Caldwell, from Castle Bromwich – who came third earlier in the year in the election for West Midlands mayor – said that a third of carbon emissions from the region were because of transport.

“The city of Birmingham is only half the size as it should be in the daytime because of congestion,” he warned: people could not get in or out of the city centre during rush hour. “Electric vehicles don’t help this problem.”

“The trouble is that we have designed a transport system that isn’t really working for people.”

SECTION 2

Healthy Growth



1. Keeping Britain Healthy

BIG IDEA:

We need to teach children to cook at school

PANELLISTS:

Dolly Theis,
Co-Founder 50:50 Parliament
and Health Campaigner (Chair)

Christina Adane, Co-Chair,
Bite Back 2030 Youth Board

Mark Essex,
Big Tent Advisory Board Member

The session on keeping Britain healthy primarily focused on the tension between options and choice. That was how it might be possible to give everyone the options they need to be able to make healthy choices. It's fine to be able to buy lunch from Leon in Westminster, but if all that is available is 'chicken' shops and other takeaways then options are severely limited.

It was also discussed that young people who are already coping with these limited options are often also the one without many life skills such as being able to cook. This is not through choice, but again lack of opportunity. If those parents who are around are working long hours and so are not able to pass on such skills even if they are able to, can the next generation gain them?

So the first policy proposal is that the state should invest in cooking and life-skills training for young people in schools, because:

Children who cook are more likely to report that they like cooking "a lot" as well as showing increased willingness to try new foods. Learning how to cook at school also shows a transfer of benefits in the home, with children being more ready to help in the kitchen.

Eating together is one of the best ways for families to connect. Research has shown that children and adolescents who share family meals three or more times per week are more likely to be in a normal weight range and have healthier dietary and eating patterns than those who share fewer than three family meals together.

To help children understand healthy eating it is also suggested that choice is taken away. Models such as family dining allows children the opportunity to sit at a table straight away, to have food served by older children under the guidance of a staff member, and to eat in a sociable way. The children eat alongside children of different age groups making it a dining experience.

The food is served to the table and then the older children (Family Dining Leaders) serve this onto plates. These children are trained how to serve food so they are always safe when doing this. At the table, children have the hot meal alongside bread and salad which is available for all. Desserts are served after the hot meal and there is always a fruit option should children prefer this. All food allergies and dietary requirements are catered for.

The Institute of Medicine's 2011 Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Policies cites family-style dining as a way for child care providers to practice 'responsive feeding', which includes letting children serve themselves and having adults sit and eat with children to model eating, give guidance on serving sizes, and listen to hunger and fullness cues.

Children who participate in family-style dining are more attuned to their natural hunger and satiety cues, are more likely to try new foods, and are more likely to make healthier choices when seeing these choices modelled for them.

So to grow health eating habits, people need the options available be able to choose from.

Other options to consider include:

How to incentivise companies to produce and provide cheaper healthy food.

Make free-school meals universal.

If those parents who are around are working long hours and so are not able to pass on such skills even if they are able to, can the next generation gain them...?



2. Health and Wealth NHSA

BIG IDEA:

Agreeing to share health data anonymously should make NHS patients eligible for the world's most advanced new therapies

PANELLISTS:

George Freeman MP, UK's first Minister for Life Science (Chair)

Séamus O'Neill, CEO NHSA

Charlie Craddock, Director, Birmingham Centre for Cellular Therapy and Transplant Blood, University Hospitals, Birmingham & Professor of Haemato-oncology, University of Birmingham

NHS patients could be the first to be treated with the world's most advanced – and costly – therapies and drugs simply by agreeing to share information anonymously about their disease with their NHS doctors.

For some patients, it could mean the difference between life and death. Others would be treated more quickly and effectively, and any profit made would be ploughed back into the NHS on a 'Quaker' principle to pay for more research nurses.

The move would benefit the NHS to the tune of millions of pounds worth of free drugs, and save the cost of the existing standard treatments the patients would have received. Conservative MP and then, former life-sciences minister George Freeman told the Big Tent 'Health and Wealth' debate.

Pharmaceutical companies currently seek out top-paying countries like America and Switzerland for trials to win market authorisation once a drug is safe to use, he explained.

But the recent achievements of Britain's life science and bio-sciences industries, including the largest and most impressive coronavirus genomics project in the world, means they could instead be lured to the UK by large, high-value NHS data platforms offering genomic information.

These would provide essential information about illnesses the new drugs are being designed to treat and by providing research trial patients, enabling drug manufacturers to get their treatments onto the market swiftly.

This would mean patients, who were willing to anonymously share their data, benefiting from often unaffordable ground-breaking treatments, including those diseases that until now have been fatal. It would mean Britain could "step up and lead".

"On the back of a year when the UK has literally smashed it globally with the covid recovery trial - bigger than the next ten trials put together - let's empower leaders of clinical centres around the country to allow patients to form little mutual groups".

So when you get a diagnosis, you can share your data and go through your NHS clinician, who shares NHS values, and go to industry to bring the money to us to develop the drugs and we get them for free,” said George.

“The UK should not ‘rest on its laurels’ thinking that it would be a life-sciences powerhouse forever. In the wake of leaving the European Medicines Agency post-Brexit, it should ‘step up and lead.’”

Old ways of discovering drugs meant up to 80 per cent failing and often a fifteen-year wait before they were available to patients. It pushed up prices as drug companies tried to recoup their losses. Genomics and informatics were now shattering this system.

“Patients do want their data released and, if we don’t do this, if we don’t find a new model for getting industry to come here, we will end up getting slow access, low access and, for the next generation of drugs, no access,” he warned.

“The pharmaceutical companies are not otherwise going to come to the UK because we pay very low prices and have become a very slow payer. The NHS rations money by saying we will buy the drug later when it’s nearly off-patent and cancer patients can just wait until the drug is cheap.”

Much of what was articulated by Mr Freeman resonated with Dr Séamus O’Neill, Chief Executive of the Northern Health Science Alliance (NHSA), which links ten large research-intensive universities with NHS trusts and Academic Health Science Networks in the north of England. The NHSA co-ordinates activity at scale across a population of 16 million people and one of its collective objectives is to create an environment where patients have access, in a unified way, to trials.

Dr O’Neill believes the strategic positioning of the sector - diagnostics and data in particular - cannot be a race to the bottom.

“The UK needs to invest in its science base. The pandemic was predictable, and we only just got away with this one. Three years ago, lots of virologists and immunologists couldn’t beg or borrow funding, and now they have given us all a new lease of life.

“If we can start to articulate and win some of the complex debates around evidence and behaviour, there will be health, research, and economic benefits. Now is the time to build on the assets and expertise we have in the UK to solidify our reputation globally as a high-trust, high-value centre of excellence.”

Dr Séamus O’Neill, Chief Executive,
Northern Health Science Alliance



“Positioning the UK in the global economy is about building a reputation and trust in standards and then living up to those standards. So, one of the things we have to live up to is that when your data is in the NHS, you can trust what’s done with it,” he explained.

The UK’s assets lend themselves to the creation of a “high-trust, high-value” centre of excellence, particularly for evaluation and trials, Dr O’Neill added. The combination of these assets in new kinds of partnerships with industry offer the chance to build a much-needed globally important source of trusted authority.

Leading UK blood cancer scientist Charlie Craddock, who has set up a blood cancer network in deprived areas, where funded research teams allow patients to have access to pivotal, breaking trials, told the debate a post-covid collapse in charity funding had led to a need for new “trial delivery vehicles” highly competitive with the other ways new drugs are assessed.

“It is our ethical duty to connect patients with these amazing treatments but they should be owned by the community so that any new money generated comes back to fund research nurses, data managers and new trials.” he said.

“When you get a diagnosis, you can share your data and go through your NHS clinician, who shares NHS values, and go to industry to bring the money to us to develop the drugs and we get them for free...”



3. The Future of the NHS

BIG IDEA:

We need to use big data and financial creativity to level up the NHS

PANELLISTS:

Mark Essex, Director of Skills, KPMG (Chair)

Dr Paul Goldsmith, consultant physician and expert in complex systems

Video Contributions by:

Prof Stephen Smith, former chair of East Kent Hospital Trust

Dr Chaand Nagpaul, Chair of the British Medical Association Council

Innovation in the NHS will not lead to unfairness if correctly 'balanced up' and is urgently needed – so as to fund a system facing crippling post-pandemic labour shortages and a 'crisis' backlog of seven million patients.

The Big Tent debate on the future of the NHS heard that government should take radical steps to harness big data and use the financial creativity of City bankers to find ways of creating money-back incentives. It could also seek out ways of paying for ground-breaking, but often unaffordable, gene-therapy treatments for fatal diseases by installment.

Earning back the lost respect of dedicated professionals could be achieved by:

Scrapping a policy of NHS "industrialisation" that leads to a 'car-factory' approach to patients

Training more doctors as more and more retire early

Raising its 'disgraceful' pay offer to nurses

"The innovation is data and financing to provide those long-term rewards that can make the shift in the envelope of spend over five, ten, twenty years," leading neurologist Dr Paul Goldsmith said. "You need more innovative ways in which funding can come back in and be rewarded."

Gene therapy 'breakthroughs' such as the pioneering Alzheimer drug Aducanumab and the single-infusion therapy that can treat the fatal muscle-wasting disease spinal muscular atrophy required new types of funding. *"These are exciting advances. The problem is that a single infusion can cost over \$2 million and financially there is a very long-term, high upfront costs complexity."*

"But we've got the most innovative financial centre in the world in the city of London and now we've also got a secretary of state who used to be a chancellor. We've also got big data. We need to use them otherwise our efforts are not going to work."

Dr Goldsmith said it had been argued for many years that innovation could lead to

unfairness and the result was that there was no innovation at all. But new technology could 'loosen controls' on clinicians and could be calibrated and 'balanced up'.

"For example, online doctor services are siphoning off all the young, healthy people and so GP surgeries are becoming enriched with older people with chronic morbidities who need a lot more time. There is going to need to be some adjustment in payment flows to reflect patient complexity and it comes back to data to allow this calibration."

He said a device that photographed a rash sent in online could help a practice nurse triage a patient. But using it to 'jump the queue' could be prevented by giving patients with no internet faster GP access. *"Fairness is the basis of human drive but should not be the blocker of new technology,"* he said.

"We need to be much more innovative in terms of addressing the determinants of health and life chances – the early years, parenting, housing - and rewarding local authorities. By far the biggest lottery is who your parents were and where you were brought up. It's not just the NHS bill, it's the policing bill, the local authority bill. We need the integrated data. People are saying 'Don't share data' but we need to share data in the right way if to address these problems."

Former hospital trust chair Professor Stephen Smith told the debate an over-centralised NHS system, little-changed since it was introduced 80 years ago, could not be effective in the 21st century. In a crisis it could deal with a single problem such as covid but now faced the problem of a waiting list of seven million people.

Even pre-pandemic, the NHS had ranked only 29th in the world with poor patient outcomes for cancer, cardiovascular disease and dementia.

He criticised the limit of eight minutes for a GP's appointment as being *"all about throughput, not outcome"*.

"What we are trying to do in Britain is to industrialise this process. Health care is being approached with the concept of a centralised car or widget-producing factory. What sort of measure is that of the need of care? Some patients need a few seconds, others a really complicated discussion. What matters is that people are satisfied and have been dealt with appropriately," he said.

British Medical Association council chairman Dr Chaand Nagpaul told the debate Britain had entered the pandemic with 10,000 unfilled doctor and 80,000 unfilled medical posts. Cuts of around £400 million over many years meant it had only a third of the hospital beds of countries like France and a quarter of the intensive care beds of a nation like Germany.

It would take five years to clear the backlog of patients, Nagpaul said. *"We can certainly do that more effectively if we're honest that you simply can't run a health service without the people, tools and facilities to deliver on the needs of the nation."*

4. The Power of Community in Raising Youth Mental Health

BIG IDEA:

We need to combine youth work with mental health support

PANELLISTS:

Baroness Barker, Lib Dem Lords Spokesperson on Social Enterprise, Charities and the Voluntary Sector (Chair)

Rev'd Jide Macaulay, Founder and CEO, House of Rainbow

Naomi Madden, Director of Projects, Grapevine Coventry and Warwickshire

Jake Field-Gibson, Politika



As with other health related sessions, the importance of lived experiences was stressed: Advocates and activists that have lived experience of mental illness or of caring for people living with mental illness through talking about their mental health journey are well placed to identify best practices. Also the perspectives of service end users are important as they guide treatment outcomes that are sustainable.

Underpinning this session was a recognition that it is the pressures in everyday life that are triggering mental health issues in young people. Furthermore, mental health is not an isolated issue and if not dealt with at an early stage they have life changing, long-term impacts.

In relation to this, it was noted that 50 percent of enduring mental health problems start before an individual is 14. Also, the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly exacerbated matters.

A report from the Disabled Children's Partnership found that 54 per cent of parents of disabled children reported a decline in their children's mental health during lockdown.

Against this background which was presented by advocates speaking in the session, a number of proposals were put forward to make this situation more positive.

There is a supporting need to create opportunities for young people to be present. And as one speaker said – if you're not invited then gate-crash.

Connected to this was a discussion on how to shift power to young people and empower local communities. Demands covered a range of areas, from services made with and for young people, to whole-life support that extended beyond clinical settings.

The role of youth services was also identified. And there is a role for youth work explicitly focused on young people's mental health and wellbeing. Many young people feel that the default for Mental Health Services is that the service sees problems rather than seeing people.

Mental health-informed youth work might deliver distinctive outcomes for young people that are not be delivered by traditional NHS services.

Research conducted by the Institute for Voluntary Action Research found that there were six areas of benefit for young people from being involved in the mental health-informed youth work approach:

- Mental health awareness*
- Confidence in opinions*
- Changing behaviour: handling anger and distress*
- Relationships with family*
- Responding to challenges and opportunities*
- Pursuing opportunities beyond Right Here*

This research found there is the potential for youth work and youth work-led organisations to create opportunities for young people to learn about and develop skills, knowledge and resilience to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

The other significant policy proposal that came from the session was the identification of the need for counsellors in schools. This was not about a therapy provision but about creating the school environment in which mental health is talked about and is seen as being an integral part of the success of the school.

Beyond this, support in schools needs to create spaces for young people to meet, talk and create their own solutions.

The session argued a basket of proposals were needed which included:

Funding for adapting conditions and designated support for young people.

Mitigation against the risk of mental health by developing healthy habits such as sleeping, digital hygiene, and a focus on work life balance.

Making preventative counselling and therapy sessions available.

Refunding sure start centres.

Free school meals for all.

Support for young carers.

And there is a supporting need to create opportunities for young people to be present. And as one speaker said – if you're not invited then gate-crash...

5. What are the health inequalities in left behind communities and how can we level up?

For the speakers in this session, parallels were drawn between action to combat inequalities and the need to combat climate change.

We need to design solutions with those who have lived experience and from an expectation of inclusion.

Speakers identified that even when they wanted to get involved and offer a perspective from their own experience opportunities such as responding to government consultations were written in a way they “couldn’t even understand the questions” but the consultation was “designed for academics and big business” to answer.

This not only makes sure that valuable insight is not included, but it also means that solutions are not necessarily grounded in the requirements of the communities where the need is greatest.

BIG IDEA:

We need to design health solutions with those who have lived experience

PANELLISTS:

Nick Tyrone, Spectator Columnist and Radix Fellow (Chair)

Dolly Theis, Co-Founder 50:50 Parliament and Health Campaigner

Dev Sharma, Co-Chair, Bite Back 2030's Youth Board

Dr Rosemary Sexton, Green Party Councillor Solihull MBC & spokesperson on Health & Adult Social Care

Video presentation from
Prof Sir Michael Marmot,
UCL Institute for Health Equality

Furthermore it was recognised that this approach led to top-down ‘universal’ solution.

So the policy proposal is that all policy design should be based on the needs of those with lived experience and to deliver that it should be for the highest appropriate level of government to set the expected outcomes but then for the lowest appropriate level of government or community to lead the solutions design to best deliver solutions that are inclusive and work for that community.

Other options to consider:

How to incentivise companies to produce and provide cheaper healthy food.

Make free-school meals universal.

Build in proportionate universalism to policy design. That is the recognition that to reduce the steepness of the social gradient in health, actions must be universal, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage. (Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review).

Solutions are not necessarily grounded in the requirements of the communities where the need is greatest...



SECTION 3

Inclusive Growth



1. The Story of Coventry: Past, Present and Future

BIG IDEA:

Coventry needs to share the secrets of its reinvention in a special summit

PANELLISTS:

Trish Adudu, BBC TV and Radio Journalist and a Formats Creator (Chair)

Rt Hon. Liam Byrne,
MP for Birmingham Hodge Hill

Dr Geoff Willcocks, Director of Arts, Culture and Heritage, Coventry University

Lauryn Brandy,
Campaigner Positive Youth Foundation

Coventry should lead the rebuilding of Britain in the wake of the pandemic by sharing its re-invention 'know-how' in a new 'city specialism' programme. It could act as a model for other cities by holding a summit to shed light on what it does best: rebuilding for the future and transforming the lives of young people.

In the wake of covid and amid the environmental pressures of reaching 'net zero', Britain's cities face having to rebuild in much the same way as they did after World War Two. In the same way as the people of Coventry had "rolled up their sleeves and rebuilt" after a bombing raid left 200 fires burning through the city, its people recently came together to try to tackle a wave of knife-crime. It had 'made history by inventing the future' and should share its success with the rest of the country, the Global Tent debate on 'Coventry: Past, Present and Future' heard.

Birmingham MP Liam Byrne said many of the problems Coventry had had to confront such as the changing dynamics of gang violence, social media, county lines and young people's access to serious weaponry and artillery posed an existentialist threat to the fortunes of its children. Yet the civic energy and political entrepreneurialism the city had shown in tackling the 'awful' spate of killings could serve as a model to other cities.

"The inventiveness of Coventry is extraordinary and what is amazing about it is the civic energy it shows in the way that it brings people together. These challenges aren't unique to Coventry. These challenges confront us all over the country. But here in Coventry you have got an energy, a spirit, an alchemy of 'cracking on' with stuff.

In Coventry, you have got an energy, a spirit, an alchemy of 'cracking on' with stuff...

"Please deploy that energy towards the business of crafting new futures for our young people. Be a pioneer of civic energy and political entrepreneurialism because here in Coventry, you are in a unique position: you know how futures are built".

"Come together in some kind of a summit on the future of youth work. You've got the assets and the talent, you know what to do. Come together and tell the rest of the country how youth services should be reinvented for the 21st century and make that one of the outputs from the City of Culture."

Mr Byrne said Coventry's know-how was extremely valuable because few people in public life or in the House of Commons understood how radically the environment of gang violence had changed in the past three or four years.

"This is a revolution and the dynamics of it are very little understood," he said. *"Help to explain what's going on,"* he urged Coventry's youth leaders. He said neighbourhood policing was being rebuilt but called for longer funding settlements. *"You cannot do anything in less than ten years. We've got to stop this two- to three-year funding cycle."*

Lauryn Brandy, of the Positive Youth Foundation, said the key to tackling the problems was to ignore the 'bad image' young people were sometimes branded with and *"listen to their ideas and the good things they want to bring"* because they would drive the city's future. Youth centres needed to be 'young people-driven' and places where young people's values and opinions were respected.

Liam Byrne told how standard funding was often arranged in the reverse order of the way it should be. Prince Charles, for example, had designated a site for youth services when he visited the city in the early 2000s where he thought help was needed most. The project was approved without the funds to ensure it would be a real benefit to the area.

The process was the opposite of how youth projects should be managed, Mr Byrne said. Money should be raised first and used in a way that reflects the vision of the young people it is intended to benefit.

"It would have been better to say, 'Here is some money. Let's give the money to the young people and they can design the solution. Part of it is just a kind of 'surrender the space mindset,'" he said.

BBC journalist Trish Adudu said a simple smile at a teenager on passing them in the street could help – along with volunteering. *"If we do not connect with these young people, they will not connect with us and stay disengaged and disassociated with society."*

But she said people should be bold in reclaiming streets stolen by gangs. *"We have to stop being 'namby pamby' and stand our ground, not give in to bullies. It's our city and if they want to take us on, we need to have the bottle to take them on and tell them we're not moving,"* she added.

"If we do not connect with these young people, they will not connect with us and stay disengaged and disassociated with society..."

2. Creative Coding: Equipping Tomorrow's Workforce – Gamewagon

Video games that teach automation and creativity can help to 'future-proof' tomorrow's workforce in a world where we don't yet know what jobs will exist by the time today's pupils leave school.

Children should learn to automate – or be prepared to be automated – and their creative skills should never be discouraged. Their creativity and imagination must be fostered in every way possible as these are the skills no machine can ever replace, the Big Tent debate on 'Creative Coding: Equipping Tomorrow's Workforce' heard.

Video and virtual reality games developer John Lilley had long been astonished that, in an age when children master screen skills as toddlers, the gap between our knowledge of how to use technology and knowledge of how that that technology has been created, was becoming ever wider.

When the pandemic forced him to seek new ways to keep his Gamewagon company afloat, he resolved to find a method of combatting this gap in people's

BIG IDEA:

Children should learn to automate and to code creatively

PANELLISTS:

John Lilley, Co-Founder Gamewagon, Junior Game Creators workshops and CEO meetspaceVR

knowledge by coming up with a scheme with built-in opportunities for as many children as possible to become 'creators of technology' so they could have a better understanding of the tools they were using.

He offered customers the chance to buy gift cards that could be redeemed on re-opening. Each gift card paid for also provided a bursary for a child on free school meals to attend a one-hour workshop teaching coding and video game creation. The children would usually attend an eight-week course, which would give them time to develop a game that would be playable.

He also put out courses online to help teachers with home learning during lockdown and found that children, who naturally know very well what good 'gameplay' feels like, could create innovative, saleable games.

"All of a sudden they were invested in what they were working on. The positive cycle of imagining, building, destroying and then rebuilding again was an epiphany that motivated them to keep going."

This 'learning in a fun way' was also helping them to build tools for their future careers by teaching 'self-learning' through wanting to improve their games along with both hard and soft skills that would propel them to jobs that could not be lost to machines in the future.

"We have got to learn to automate, otherwise you have to be prepared to be automated," he said. "The beauty of creative skills is that it is very hard to automate creativity. That is a big focus for future careers; we should never put a basket over that creative spirit and imagination".

"It's interesting when two-year-olds can use an iPad that, even though our children are growing up digital natives, the distance between creating technology and using technology has become almost more distant".

"If we use play to turn learning into something they enjoy and are passionate about, computer science is something they may well do in the future, becoming creators of technology, not

just users of it. In doing this they are problem-solving, communicating, working in teams and sharing strengths amongst each other: the future project managers of this world."

Where our education system moves increasingly towards a facts-based model, rather than imaginative learning, Gamewagon's bursaries provide an outlet for children to work creatively and bring their ideas to life.

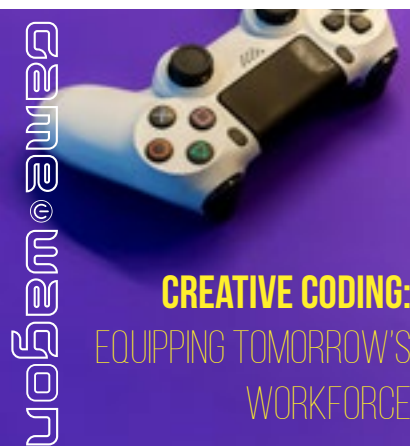
The bursary system has been a success, but to develop it into something more widespread would take further funding and participation from outside sponsors.

Lilley appealed to local councils and educational charities to recognise the benefits that creative coding can offer children, and provide funds to make the programme more widely available, training a whole new generation of software engineers.

"If we use play to turn learning into something they enjoy and are passionate about, computer science is something they may well do in the future, becoming creators of technology, not just users of it..."

Gamewagons' Junior Game Creator programme has now helped over 8000 children across the South East become creators of technology not just users in their after school clubs. Now that this programme, which teaches children how to code by helping them to build their own video games, is available online, Junior Game Creators can now offer this exciting and inspiring course to children no matter their location.

We have now successfully launched our first bursary programme linking local employers to local schools in Coventry to help future proof tomorrows work force and are now seeking other companies, charities and government agencies keen to support the further roll out of this programme. Please get in touch via <https://juniorgamecreators.co.uk/bursaries>



3. Making the Most of the City of Culture

Coventry has put its own stamp on the City of Culture title by turning it into a 'City of Cultures' Festival. It is resolved to use the funding to rebuild communities through culture and create a lasting legacy by shining a light on the talents of the diverse heritages of the people who live there.

The arts should not be 'ghettoised' but instead form part of every policy in the city such as health, retail, urban renewal planning and creative learning in schools. In this way the spotlight could continue to shine on the city and holding the title would not turn out to have simply been a 'one-year-party', the Big Tent debate on 'Making the Most of the City of Culture' heard.

Coventry City of Culture chief executive Martin Sutherland said he hoped a lasting legacy could come from the community-building that came about from seizing the opportunity to make it a 'City of Cultures'.

BIG IDEA:

The arts should form part of every policy in cities

PANELLISTS:

Fiona Laird, Founder National Youth Arts Trust & RSC Director (Chair)

Martin Sutherland, CEO, Coventry City of Culture

Trish Willetts, Coventry BID Director

Debbie Isitt, BAFTA Winning Film maker

Video presentation from

Dr Franco Bianchini, Associate Director, Centre for Cultural Value, University of Leeds

"It's really hard to maintain a spotlight after these massive moments but what we want to do is make sure it is about food, sport, crafts: community engagement, people breaking bread together and sharing languages".

"We're trying to build society through culture but also ensure that the people who have come to the city and made it their home will lead the city forward. We want to celebrate their cultures, not to say that the traditional art forms, western art forms, are the most dominant. That's the particular context to this city and that is what's right for our city".

"We see the legacy as investing in people, investing in organisations and it being part of a bigger picture," he added.

BAFTA-award winning Coventry filmmaker Debbie Isitt said it was important for the city to use its own ideas and 'take ownership' of the title to create a legacy. Part of that was trying to retain the young talent who benefited from the opportunity.

"Over the years I have worked with hundreds of children from the city. Today many of them are working, literally, in Hollywood, for Disney, or in the West End. They are Coventry kids who came without hope or drive but they encountered an opportunity, the kind of opportunity offered by the City of Culture. But we have to give them a reason to stay in our city and help the next generation. It's about training our young people but also retaining them and not losing them to London or the USA."

She said one way of doing that would be to hold an annual, cultural mini-festival for three weeks every summer that everyone had an opportunity to work towards all year. *"It's good for civic pride, good for tourism. We should put everything we've achieved here on the map and grow it year on year."*

The debate heard that successful legacy stories from cities that had held the title in the past included holding onto teams of volunteers who helped out during the festival. Hull, for example, had managed to keep its volunteer teams intact after the festival and went on to mobilise them for environmental projects and more recently to help during the pandemic.

Another successful legacy strategy was putting culture at the heart of all the city's policies such as urban planning, schools and education and even aligning it with health policies such as those on mental health.

Isitt said that it was imperative to have culture in every city policy in the wake of new knowledge of how art can change and save lives. "The problem with the arts is that when you mention them, people think they are for someone else but actually they are for everybody.

"We now know the benefits of arts are so much more far-reaching than the work you end up seeing. If you work together on a community project, if you are isolated and join a choir, you get access to people and relationships and it can make your life worth living and stop you killing yourself. Art changes and saves lives."

National Youth Arts Trust founder Fiona Laird called for a designated policy on post-pandemic legacy for the arts to be put in place by the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport, if none existed. "It should be helping cultures get back on their feet. Where better to start than with the City of Culture. Businesses need that support but so do the arts.

"Coventry is in the process of delivering this amazing City of Culture year in the most trying of circumstances. If you can do all this in the middle of a pandemic, you can do anything."

"They are Coventry kids who came without hope or drive but they encountered an opportunity, the kind of opportunity offered by the City of Culture..."

4. How Covid Helped to Recapture our Community Spirit

Communities that cut the cost of health or pollution bills should be rewarded by being handed back some of the cash saved. The money could then be re-invested in their town or city – and they would have a say over how it was spent.

The savings 'pay-back' scheme could serve as a powerful incentive to people living more healthily. It would encourage them to swap bad habits for good ones, build on the 'phenomenal coming togetherness' generated by covid, and transform run-down districts through the savings being re-invested, building a lasting legacy from the pandemic.

The Big Tent debate on 'How covid helped to recapture our community spirit' heard that the pandemic had broken down barriers. It had generated a wave of volunteering as people helped one another and new collaborative ways of working sprang up.

BIG IDEA:

Communities that cut the cost of health or pollution bills should be rewarded by being handed back some of the cash saved

PANELLISTS:

Ben Rich, CEO, RADIX UK (Chair)

George Freeman, Big Tent Foundation Founder

Taiwo Owatemi, MP for Coventry North West

Video contributions from:

Danny Kruger MP, MP for Devizes, former adviser to PM

Layla Moran MP, Oxford West and Abingdon

In the past eighteen months around half Britain's population had been involved in some form of volunteering and 4,000 new mutual-aid groups had been set up.

Conservative MP and Big Tent Founder George Freeman said the challenge for the government was to "unleash the power of people and communities taking hold" and use it to drive cleaner, healthier growth through place-based social enterprises. The stronger sense of community gained from the pandemic meant now was the ideal time to launch the 'payback' scheme.

West Midlands was the obesity capital of Europe costing £4 billion a year, according to Treasury calculations.



"Imagine if the government said 'we want to drive cleaner, healthier growth. Imagine we took a place that people love and said 'this is what disease - obesity, dementia, diabetes - or high carbon growth is costing us.

It's going up every year and bankrupting us. If you can help reduce the cost of that or reduce the rate of growth of increase, we'll let you keep some of the saving," he said.

"Social enterprises would pop up because money would be promised and they could borrow to provide bike routes and 'Fitbits' - and a thousand flowers would bloom. People could do this for the places they love, save the government a fortune and we would all feel better for it because in our hearts we all want to give a little to make a big difference."

George Freeman argued that social enterprises, which re-invest profits into good causes, now made up a fourth sector of the economy, alongside private, public, and charity. If they were encouraged to help with local problems, it would create

scope for the government to step back, allowing these problems to be handled in more community-focused ways.

The move could have a series of positive effects. George said the government could sometimes look like *"an aircraft carrier from a dingy."*

It's gigantic and often not great at dealing with problems on a local level. There are many large-scale issues where government is the best-qualified institution to help, but also many where it can do very badly. Letting local social enterprises step in instead could improve the way problems are handled, and build on the renewed community spirit that the pandemic has brought out.

"The social enterprise revolution is the one that's coming and part of our ambition is to support it by changing policy but also nurturing a new generation of social entrepreneurs. That would be an amazing legacy from covid."

Conservative MP Danny Kruger said during the pandemic not only had private businesses 'gone the extra mile' to help their staff but public sector services had worked more collaboratively while communities had pulled together to provide support for one another.

He believed that better use of data, tax breaks and public services finding different ways of working could bring about a 'culture of change that recognises the central importance of civil society'.

Coventry MP Taiwo Owatemi said Coventry had emerged from the pandemic with a stronger sense of community and optimism which must now be nurtured. Some of the cynicism and fears that had formed over the years about public institutions were dispelled, care home staff and teachers did an amazing job and neighbours had helped tackle the issue of loneliness by getting to know one another.

"I'd say to anyone who concluded that the pandemic broke our community spirit 'Come to Coventry and you will see a strong, powerful, community spirit,' she said.

If they were encouraged to help with local problems, it would create scope for the government to step back, allowing these problems to be handled in more community-focused ways...



SECTION 4

Global Connectivity



1. Conflict and Global Britain the HALO Trust

BIG IDEA:

Our armed forces could be re-tasked to deliver humanitarian aid in war-torn regions across the world

PANELLISTS:

Sally Lockwood, Correspondent, Sky News (Chair)

Fabian Hamilton MP, Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament and MP for Leeds North East

Prof Mandy Turner, Professor of Conflict, Peace and Humanitarian Affairs, HCRI, University of Manchester

Shabnam Nasimi, Executive Director, Conservative Friends of Afghanistan

Chris Loughran, Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor, the HALO Trust

Britain's armed forces could be "re-tasked" to deliver humanitarian aid in war-torn regions across the world, and the plight of victims boosted by funds raised from a levy on profits from the City of London. This would help the UK steer a clearer path on global conflict and be a force for good.

The Big Tent debate on Conflict and Global Britain was told that the country had lurched from a decade of high-response interventions – in Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan – to withdrawals or doing very little in the wake of the 2009 financial crisis. The consequences of both had been 'dire'.

"We lurched from being 'all over it' to not really being active in the right sort of way and the consequences of both have been dire and played a part in generating protracted conflict, endless wars that we aren't doing enough about," Chris Loughran of the world's biggest landmine charity Halo said.

Britain was now at a crossroads in its foreign policy approach to conflict. After a decade of interventionism it had U-turned in the wake of the 2009 financial crisis, and spent the following decade being 'risk averse'.

He urged the government to draw on the expertise of organisations like his own, whose most prominent supporter was Princess Diana, to help guide the UK's proposed conflict strategy in its integrated review of security and defence.

"Conflict continues to evolve: it's getting more messy, more urban and more protracted and dangerous than ever and having tremendous economic, environmental and humanitarian costs. Yet there is no consultation going on, despite us offering it, so the risk is that strategy is developed on paper in Whitehall and falls well short and people carry on as normal."

Shadow spokesperson for Peace and Disarmament Fabian Hamilton MP called for British troops to be 're-tasked' to deliver aid to regions where victims of conflict were struggling to rebuild their lives and for the UK to be more proactive and use its influence within the United Nations where it "can already punch well above our weight" for historic reasons.

"Worldwide our armed forces are trusted as not being corrupt, as not going out there with the sole purpose of killing. Their job is to defend our country but let's re-task our excellent military, who are well-trained, well-organised, trusted as incorruptible, to save life rather than take life," he said.

Many of the problems that actually fuel conflict stem from inequality of water, resources and money, he added. Yet if just one per cent of the turnover of the City of London was given to international development aid it would "multiply global aid seven times over".



The departure of British troops from Afghanistan was another example of the country's sudden reverse shift in foreign policy and a "huge mistake", Shabnam Nasimi, director of the Conservative Friends of Afghanistan told the debate.

"The UK concentrated heavily in terms of building Afghanistan into becoming a credible, transparent, accountable state, where women had a staple role in society. The CIA and MI6 have already stated there is a huge risk of Afghanistan returning to a terrorist state if we leave in such an irresponsible manner. It is a costly, painful war but what was the point of building all of this and letting it be destroyed? We may well end up going back."

Manchester University Professor of Conflict, Peace and Humanitarian Affairs Mandy Turner said Britain's reputation was suffering through ignoring an appeal court ruling that it should halt weapon sales to Saudi Arabia.

"We need to talk about weapons sales," she said. "There is no way the UK can be seen to be helping to build peace while selling weapons to one side."

"If Britain wants to propose itself as being an essential part of global peace, it should uphold the rule of law."

"We lurched from being 'all over it' to not really being active in the right sort of way and the consequences of both have been dire..."

2. Ending Global Hunger and Malnutrition

The Eleanor Crook Foundation

BIG IDEA:

Promote smart collaborations that engage diaspora communities, entrepreneurs, the UK science, research and innovation community, the community and private sectors, alongside government so as to establish the UK as the world's leading economy tackling global malnutrition, both at home and abroad.

PANELLISTS:

Eleanor Hevey, The Eleanor Crook Foundation (Chair)

George Freeman MP, Big Tent Foundation Founder

David Lyon, Director, ImpactAgri

Simon Bishop, CEO, The Power of Nutrition

Bashair Ahmed, Executive Director, Shabaka

Malnutrition remains the leading cause of death for children under five around the world. Covid-19-related disruptions to food and health systems will only exacerbate these dire numbers: experts predict that the pandemic will reverse decades of progress and cause up to a 50 per cent rise in severe malnutrition globally. Tackling malnutrition through private sector investment alongside increased government support is critical to stemming this roll back.

The Big Tent debate on 'Ending hunger and malnutrition' covered how innovative 'deep development' partnerships with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office priority countries, on agriculture, food security and improved nutrition, could build resilience and healthy communities for generations to come.





Britain would also benefit from these partnerships which address shared global challenges and create economic opportunities.

"The real challenge for us is to harness our science and technology as a global powerhouse in nutritional science, to use the City of London to finance key technologies, complement our international aid budget and support entrepreneurial approaches." said the Conservative MP and then former minister, George Freeman.

This could be done by working with a few priority focus countries in forming deep development partnerships – that 'Ten X' our commitment to enhanced aid, trade and security commitments, technology transfer agreements and accelerated access to agritech.

Simon Bishop, CEO of the Power of Nutrition, which facilitates investment partnerships in nutrition programmes across the world, said there was an opportunity for 'Global Britain' to play a leading role in helping to end hunger and malnutrition, but leaders from across sectors *"need to come together"*.

"We have some of the biggest food and beverage companies in the world and we have the City where innovative financing is exploding. There is a 'Best of British' opportunity for us not just to be very good but to be world-leading and for tackling global malnutrition both home and abroad to be a central pillar of 'Global Britain'."

The debate heard that the world faced *"massive challenges"*. By 2050, its population will have reached nine billion sending demand for food soaring – yet only the same amount of land and only half as much water and energy would be available to grow and produce it.

Tackling hunger is at the heart of building back better, Mr. Bishop said. *"You cannot build back better if you are hungry, you can't think straight and will learn less at school, you're more likely to get ill, including catching covid, and more likely to turn to extremism."*

Global connectivity and building back better from Covid-19 was a central theme of the Big Tent Festival and also the key theme of the UK's 2021 presidency of the G7.

Eleanor Hevey, UK Director of Advocacy for The Eleanor Crook Foundation, a leading philanthropy dedicated to fighting global malnutrition, called for smarter, collaborative approaches that would bring together entrepreneurs, the research community, government and the private sector working alongside each other.

Her views were backed by ImpactAgri sustainable agribusiness director David Lyon, who said innovative opportunities for financing were crucial as there was a *"real aversion"* to financing small-scale agriculture projects in sub-Saharan Africa, which was often seen as *"risky"*, with agricultural projects even riskier. *"The trick is to bring in multiple sources of financing,"* he said.

He highlighted how economic transformation resulting from support to small scale farmers was key to stimulating livelihoods and improving nutrition – with clear links to climate resilience, regenerative agriculture and managing water scarcity.

We need multiple sources of financing, including private investment and the role of diaspora equity alongside aid and development finance, he said.

Bashair Ahmed, Executive Director of Shabaka, spoke about the many layers of addressing critical challenges such as hunger and malnutrition and the key role of diaspora communities in responding to crises and driving Covid-19 recovery - in their home communities of settlement (such as Coventry) and also in their countries and communities of origin.

There was an important role, for example, in remittances, finances and support to small businesses, she said.

"What we have seen in response to Covid-19 is how we harness that power and build partnerships. Diaspora communities work across the spectrum – driving development and contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also when crises hit, we see them raise significant funds. We have seen this for example with the Somali diaspora in the UK."

RESILIENCE & PROSPERITY



A few months have passed since the Big Tent Festival in Coventry, the first major in-person UK policy event since Covid. We wanted the HALO Trust to provoke and inspire forward-looking strategy, which is why we hosted two events covering resilience and prosperity, and conflict and 'Global Britain'. Events since July have shown why both topics are critical to UK foreign policy.

The NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan brought the UK's twenty-year military presence to an abrupt end, something that will be forever remembered by scenes of chaos, panic and tragedy at Kabul airport. While other states are already stating their positions, the UK is yet to share its plans. What the UK now needs is a strategy for the region, and a wider strategy to address contemporary conflict.

Meanwhile, the UK aid budget is stuck at 0.5%. Cutting aid during a global crisis was short-sighted and unhelpful. But if there is any upside, it is a sharpened focus on alternative finance models for development. The UK needs 0.7% back. But it needs innovative finance and private sector investment as well. If Britain is to really address the new global challenges, we can't just go back to the way it was before. We need to move forwards.

Camille Wallen (Director of Strategy)
Chris Loughran (Senior Policy Advisor)

3. Resilience & Prosperity the HALO Trust

BIG IDEA:

We need to use expertise in the City of London to launch ethical investment in Africa

PANELLISTS:

Katherine Mulhern, CEO, Restitution (Chair)

Dominic McVey, Entrepreneur and Business Leader

Ibukun Adebayo, Co-head Emerging Markets Strategy, London Stock Exchange Group

Veronica Bolton-Smith, COO, Invest Africa

Camille Wallen, Director of Strategy, The HALO Trust

Rapid population growth will raise the importance of Africa on the world's agenda. By 2050, it will be home to one third of the world's population, according to the United Nations.

In the wake of post-pandemic cuts to aid, it needs capital investment from Britain and the West but this must be precisely and strategically directed, the Big Tent debate on 'Resilience and Prosperity' heard.

Money and development are currently going into cities rather than countries so while there is enterprise in metropolises, there remains massive and widespread poverty beyond city limits. In 2019, about just over half of Gambia's health and aid budget came from the UK. In 2021 Gambia is one of the countries no longer supported by Britain creating a "massive challenge" for its people.

There was enough private capital in the UK to "fill the gaps" but new, innovative ways of funding had to be found as part of a "huge, concerted effort" to give people support such as access to cheap electricity, social housing and education.



We have a private sector in the City of London that needs to “gap” into what’s happening on the ground in places like Africa and the global south generally. We have a government that is not entirely sure what Global Britain means. If these gaps are met, you potentially have an engine for Global Britain,” Katherine Mulhern, head of the Restitution organisation, which provides support for countries reclaiming stolen patrimony, said.

It would cost £200 million to de-mine Angola but Ibukun Adebayo, a London Stock Exchange Group emerging markets strategist, said there was enough capital ‘out there’ not just to fund the global landmining project but several others as well. The issue was creating opportunities for this type of investor.

“Although they claim not to be worried about financial returns they actually do want something back such as the peripheral benefits. If clearing landmines is creating carbon credits, they want the credits so they can trade those on the market,” he said.

Camille Wallen, of the landmine clearance charity Halo Trust, said it would cost over a billion dollars to clear mines from all the countries where conflict has ended, sometimes as long as 40 years ago. New ways of funding were being found such as an impact bond model where investors received a return of 8–12 per cent, repaid after pre-agreed outcomes were met.

Ethical investment in Africa would be very good for Britain, entrepreneur Dominic McVey told the debate. “It would bring stability to a part of the world to which we owe a duty, bring tax revenues to those host countries.



At the same time businesses here are going to be paying more to the Treasury and the consumer here is going to get goods cheaper, get that green revolution and, hopefully, their tax bill will come down.

“The opportunities are there – it’s easier to do business in Kenya, according to the global business rankings, than it is to do business in Luxembourg or Italy. More in-country processing plants were needed and less red tape. “Why are we sending Kenyan coffee to Italy to be roasted? Why can’t we roast it in Nairobi?” Invest Africa chief operations officer Veronica Bolton-Smith said supply chains were key to Africa’s growth story. “It’s one thing to have the vaccines but it’s the road haulage, the road networks, the refrigerated trucks we haven’t thought about”.

“Yet Coca Cola has one of the best supply chain networks in the world – you can find Coca Cola in almost any village in any part of Africa. Why are we not looking at them as a source of mobilising and moving these vaccines? Currently Africa is under its second or third Covid wave, if we don’t start addressing that now, we are not going to be able to do all these business interactions.”

“Coca Cola has one of the best supply chain networks in the world – you can find Coca Cola in almost any village in any part of Africa. Why are we not looking at them as a source of mobilising and moving these vaccines..?”

4. A Safer Society: Guiding young people away from violence

BIG IDEA:

Launch new clubs like Fridays, with secure places for young people to relax and enjoy live music upstairs while local business volunteers provide help with a 'job shop' and mentor skills such as CV writing on the floor below

PANELLISTS:

Ghulam Vohra, Chair of Coventry Community Forum (Chair)

Mark Payne, Assistant Chief Constable for local policing, West Midlands Police

Tyler Campbell, Founder, Fridays

Liz Gaulton, Director of Public Health

Rashid Bhayat, Founder and CEO of Positive Youth Foundation



A 20-year-old's plan to curb gang warfare on his city's streets through a young people's partnership with business leaders has won praise – and created several young entrepreneurs. It could now become a blueprint for cities battling knife-crime across the country.

Shaken at a spate of murders and stabbings, Tyler Campbell set up a club called 'Fridays' to encourage young people off the streets. It has a dual role, offering a secure place for young people to relax and enjoy live music upstairs while local business volunteers provide help with a 'job shop' and mentor skills such as CV writing on the floor below, the Big Tent debate on building a 'Safer Society' heard.

Launched two years ago with funds from the Prince of Wales' Trust, the venue for 11–16 year-olds has grown rapidly.

Today Campbell has a 13,000-strong social media following, is in contact with over 500 young people in the city and has teams of volunteers to escort members there and back – and check bags.

Campbell came up with the idea of providing a 'safe place' for young people run by young people after a spate of stabbings and shootings left friends and family members mourning knife-crime victims. "I just wanted to help," he said.

The project won the backing of health, school and community leaders who had long realised that the system of mainstream-funded projects was 'broken' and were looking for new ideas. Cuts had shut youth centres, regular funding was too little, too late and often missed out victims such as the girls gangs targeted to carry drugs or murder weapons as they are less likely to be searched.

"We were dealing with things way too late, at a crisis point when it had all kicked off, trying to find money to fix things when they were so far broken," Rashid Bhayat, head of the youth charity Positive Youth Foundation said.

The way funding was set up only contributed to the problems and led to young people being further exploited, he said. Local organisations found themselves *"picking up the pieces"* of many who had gone through short-term funded projects run by organisations who had "long gone" when help was needed most.

"By having those streams of funding in place, we were fooling ourselves that we had got organisations out there doing that work," Rashid Bhayat said. *"But it didn't take much to realise that the young people coming through the door were not the ones who needed the most support."*

Assistant Chief Constable for local policing Mark Payne said older people often perceived young people to be 'a gang' if they so much as congregated outside a fish and chip shop or kicked a football around. They ended up being 'overpoliced' and 'driven into' the criminal justice system. *"We need a range of options. We don't want to be sending young people to prison but, in policy terms, there are very few alternatives routes,"* he said.

Campbell's creation - young people making decisions about the best way of helping other young people - provided the alternative they were seeking. It received support to the tune of £5,000 from the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner's office and won grants from local businesses but to keep the club's voice 'credible' Campbell and his team were to remain in charge of all decisions.

This partnership model was not a desirable luxury – it was crucial to the fortunes of many young people, had saved lives and should be adopted in communities up and down the country, said Rashid. *“This is not a ‘nice to have’: we’re talking about young people’s lives being lost here: kids are dying, communities being torn apart”* he warned.

“And unless boardrooms start looking like the people they intend to serve, we’re going to be stuck here. How can you expect somebody from a real middle-class background to understand what is going on on the streets? For all the goodwill in the world, they don’t have the right language or intentions”.

“Those people in those communities may not articulate themselves in exactly the same way but their message is so important.”

Campbell urged police and health officials to communicate openly and honestly with young people to help break down barriers. *“All you need to do is ask young people what they want provided. Talk to them on the streets or through social media. That builds trust: they open up more and you’ll get the true answer”.*

“I’ve had a fantastic response. We’ve discovered several entrepreneurs and are looking to discover more. I want the Coventry version of Fridays to act as a blueprint that can be replicated in other cities,” he said.

“All you need to do is ask young people what they want provided. Talk to them on the streets or through social media...”



NEW IDEAS REPORT

RADIX BIG TENT

Our political system is failing. Political debate has become polarised and short-sighted leading to a loss of trust not just in politicians but democracy itself. Traditional parties exclude millions, the media is no longer independent, while many think tanks are too narrow in focus and too dependent on corporate sponsorship to promote systemic change.

It is time for a revolution of empowerment to enable us all to take part in political discussion and to shape our responses to the challenges of the future. Radix Big Tent is our answer.

Radix, the think tank for the radical centre and Big Tent, which creates space for non-partisan discussion about big policy issues, are coming together to change the conversation and reframe and revive meaningful political debate. Together, we aim to provoke, develop and promote new conversations about and ideas for the regeneration and renewal of our society.

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"AT THE BIG TENT FESTIVAL,
THE IDEAS – GOOD AND
BAD – ALL HAVE THE
POTENTIAL TO INSPIRE
INNOVATION AND CHANGE."

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