

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE THREE OPEN SPACE EVENTS...

1. Hurt, grief, anger and frustration about the past but, underneath, a deep love, passion and care for Dartington and an emerging sense of optimism about its future;
2. The need for Dartington to be more open & honest and a lack of clarity about Dartington's VALUES and how they are lived/demonstrated;
3. An appetite for experimentation – for Dartington to be genuinely pioneering and progressive once again;
4. Dartington currently lacks a big idea/story about why it exists and what it stands for - a range of parts but no overarching purpose;
5. The original Elmhirst concept for Dartington was radical and holistic and tackled contemporary issues and our future concept should be/do the same;
6. A strong emphasis on the arts, design, craft, making and play being central to Dartington's future purpose;
7. A strong emphasis on progressive and holistic learning/education being central to Dartington's future purpose (including e.g. innovation in uses of technology and making - Fab Lab etc, Virtual University model, other new models of learning, intergenerational learning, etc);
8. A strong emphasis on Dartington being a place of beauty, heritage, magic, enchantment and disorientation and on the spiritual, healing, wisdom, creativity, nature and wellbeing dimensions being central to its future purpose;
9. The importance of Dartington's past role and influence in social change/justice, strong support for initiatives such as Landworks, and a strong emphasis on Dartington becoming an activist and advocate for social and societal change once again;
10. A strong emphasis on the potential of the existing creative and social enterprises on the estate and on Dartington helping to incubate new enterprises;
11. The opportunity for Dartington to convene discussion and debate about important regional/national/global issues;
12. The opportunity for Dartington to convene new relationships, networks and partnerships (including relevant Devon-based organisations e.g. Transition, Atmos, Sharpham, Embercombe; universities and neighbouring cities/areas e.g. Plymouth, Torbay, Exeter; and relevant national and international organisations) leading to meaningful collaborations;
13. A powerful message that local people want to be part of a vibrant, radical, social economy providing meaningful work;

14. Questions and concerns about governance, a strong sense of ownership of Dartington and a desire to be more actively involved - to design a process for meaningful involvement;
15. Questions about who owns Dartington and who it is for. Views ranging from 'give Dartington back to us' to 'let's own this - the future - together'; consensus that Dartington was for local, national and international audiences;
16. A growing sense of the power of people, citizenship and collaboration and Dartington failing to see and value the opportunities associated with localism, new economy, social capital, skills exchange, community-led development and more meaningful volunteering;
17. A growing concern about too many grey hairs and a lack of vitality at Dartington (including "keep off the grass" mentality) and the pressing need to actively engage/cater for young people;
18. Questions and concerns about Dartington's financial sustainability and a desire to better understand its financial challenges:
 - a. Why isn't Dartington sustainable?
 - b. How is it approaching land use?
 - c. How can it use its assets more effectively?
 - d. What is its fundraising strategy (and can this be effective without a big idea)?
 - e. Good will/social capital and power of localism is not being accessed
 - f. New forms of ownership and financing need to be explored
 - e. Currently DHT taking a 'transactional approach' which ignores/ denies other opportunities for meaningful participation and exchange;
19. Disappointing visitor experience: food & drink offering (eg Round House food and coffee); lack of meaningful interpretation of heritage, Elmhirst story, gardens, estate, walks and trails; hospital style blue signage. Dartington tells no story. New opportunities to move beyond the current 'transactional' approach to visitors to a more engaging and participative approach;
20. Future plans for development on the estate need to be more radical and progressive in terms of place-making, sustainability, human and community wellbeing, design, construction, tenure and delivery - Dartington should be leading the way nationally for building beautiful, sustainable and inclusive new places and communities;
21. Frustration about the difficulty of making things happen at Dartington - in-house systems can be blocking or necessarily complicated, particularly if events/ activities cut across departmental responsibilities, IT problems, etc; stifling vitality and involvement;
22. Not everything has to be permanent: opportunities for temporary uses of buildings (opening up of ground floor of Aller Park warmly welcomed as a first step); better use of land for camping, festivals, events.