

## Stewardship Circle - Introduction

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### What is the Stewardship Circle?

The Stewardship Circle offers an invitation to reflect on the role of leadership in creating a culture where communities can connect the strengths of local people to build neighbourhoods from the inside out.

We believe that sustainable communities thrive when people who live together come together to share their skills and passions, and everyone has the opportunity to make a contribution to the place where they live. To achieve this vision, as leaders, we recognise that we need to reflect and challenge ourselves on what leadership means. We need to consider alternative ways of leading that aren't about directing change from the top, but rather creating the conditions that enable people in communities to take action on the things that are important to them.

The Stewardship Circle works through inviting a group of peers, working in community, health, policing and housing to share their understanding, experience and challenges with each other. Each session is facilitated by an experienced practitioner, who will host discussions on specific topics and pose questions to explore. Those involved will share an interest in nurturing citizen led action in the neighbourhoods they serve.

### Programme Structure

Stewardship Circle members are invited to commit to meeting six times over a year starting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 to take part in facilitated discussion days. Each of these gatherings is themed around a particular topic, so members are invited to read key articles, watch relevant videos or listen to podcasts in advance of the session so that they can shape the discussion on the day. Whilst these topics offer a structure to the conversations, the sessions are flexible, enabling members to take responsibility for sharing the issues that are important to them. The group will create a space to explore stewardship behaviours and practice, and consider what rituals and routines it wants to develop in order to model how a strengths based culture can evolve.

## Stewardship Circle: Facilitated Discussion Days

### Session 1 – The Power of Citizen Led Action.

This workshop will involve building new connections and exploring the background and origins to citizen led movements. The group will also start to consider the ideas behind stewardship.

**Facilitator:** Cormac Russell

**Date:** Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 11am – 6pm with an evening meal afterwards.

### Session 2 – Enabling Community Building Practice and Asset Based Community Development.

In this workshop we'll discuss the tools and techniques used in community building practice, and how to create a culture that enables community building to flourish.

**Facilitators:** Cormac Russell and Sally Byng

**Date:** Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015 10am – 4pm.

### Session 3 – Stewardship, leading an asset based approach.

Enabling citizens to take more action in their own communities requires a type of leadership that involves stepping back, whilst still providing support and challenge. This session will explore transforming the concept of leadership, moving towards stewardship.

**Facilitator:** Tom Dewar

**Date:** Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015 10am – 4pm.

### Session 4 – Discovering gifts, establishing rituals.

Stewardship requires us to create opportunities to identify and utilise people's gifts. This workshop will involve learning how older cultures discovered these gifts, and used them to bring people together to establish community rituals and build hope.

**Facilitator:** Bruce Anderson

**Date:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 10am – 4pm and Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015 10am – 1pm

### Session 5 – Inclusion and Social Justice.

Including those on the margins of our communities is at the heart of Asset Based Community Development, so we'll explore leadership and emerging developments in the fields of disability, mental health and aging. This workshop will invite us to deepen our understanding of how agencies can develop in areas of innovation, quality, change, and leadership.

**Facilitator:** Michael Kendrick

**Date:** Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015 10am – 4pm

### Session 6 – Supporting communities to grow their own vision.

When services support communities they often get trapped in a dependency relationship, so this workshop explores how leaders can support communities to grow their own vision, and lead by stepping back.

**Facilitator:** Cormac Russell

**Date:** Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015 10am – 4pm

## Time required

The Stewardship Circle offers 6.5 facilitated discussion and input days. In addition to this members are invited to undertake either a short action research project or keep a reflective learning journal. It is anticipated this will take up approximately 4 days over the year, although members may wish to spend longer on this. Members are also invited to form their own Learning Circle or practice group with peers from their community or field of interest. From our experience we have learned that these groups can be effective when they meet up to 3 times over the year, although they may choose to meet more frequently. Members should allow a total of 2 days to include any preparation time and hosting of the groups.

**This commitment totals 12 days over the year.**

## Assessment Process

There is no formal assessment process, although members are expected to evaluate and learn from each other through offering reflective questions.

It is anticipated that by the end of the Stewardship Circle, its members would have:

- Attended 6.5 facilitated sessions
- Conducted an action research project or kept a reflective learning journal
- Facilitate a local Learning Circle or practice group

## Resources & support available

A number of resources will be available to support Stewardship Circle members with the completion of the programme. These include:

1. A Workshop Guide for each of the 6 workshops which includes the following information:
  - Workshop overview.
  - Core papers, videos and podcasts.
  - Reflective questions.
  - Additional resources and further reading.
2. Action Research Guidance to assist members with completion of the Action Research Project
3. A Reflective Learning Journal – to support members with the process of reflecting on and recording their observations and learning.
4. ABCD Glossary which explains some of the terms used in ABCD.

## Support during the Stewardship Circle

The group will be encouraged to think about how members can support each other through concerns or challenging situations. The group should always be the first resource members turn to.

For concerns regarding capacity or commitment members should contact Richard Holmes, Associate with Nurture Development. You will be provided with a list of participants and facilitators contact details at the first workshop.

## Profile and qualities of a Stewardship Circle member

Stewardship Circle members are leaders who believe in social justice and ensuring every voice is included. They value relationships over prestige, power and position. They understand how to move beyond a single issue, and recognise the importance of mobilising people to develop a whole community vision that includes the interests of everyone.

Members of the Stewardship Circle do not need to have any formal leadership experience, but they will have the ability to inspire whole scale community led action. They may be a leader in civil society or hold a senior role in a social sector organisation. Others might have formal leadership experience as a commissioner or manager in a local council or as a political leader in the community.

## Responsibilities & expectations of participants

Throughout the programme Stewardship Circle members are invited to think about their collective values and behaviours that can contribute to shaping a unique strengths based culture, which in turn they can take back to the communities they serve. Throughout the programme members are encouraged to think about the gifts that they want to share with others in their own communities and members of the Stewardship Circle.

## Who has developed the Stewardship Circle concept?

Nurture Development has been commissioned by Barnwood Trust to develop and deliver an ABCD Leadership Programme to support leaders to nurture more inclusive community building across Gloucestershire. The Trust has committed to a 10 year plan, called You're Welcome which aims to create welcoming and inclusive communities. This commission led to the development of the Stewardship Circle.

Nurture Development provides training, research, and development consultancy specialising in Asset Based Community Development. They work internationally although much of their time is spent in the UK, where they are supporting the development of ABCD practice sites to 'test and learn' about the application of this approach in a UK context. Nurture Development is one of nine named strategic partners with the ABCD Institute, Northwestern University, Illinois.

They work with a very wide range of social innovators, some of which are citizens who, as local residents, want to weave their communities together and foster more inclusion. Others are development practitioners trying to figure out how their institution can organise itself to be more enabling of people and communities to use local capacities for sustainable community development. They focus on working with people who are passionate about citizen led action for change, people who believe that democracy works and that regular folks can come together locally to effect transformational change.