

Hello and welcome to our Good Place Podcast
that is run by good place innovators.

A team of researchers,
educators and student fellows passionate
about transforming communities.

Our project focuses on the notion
of entrepreneurial embeddedness,
the emotional connection to our place and Co.

Creation of value with our communities.

We hope to contribute to
entrepreneurial learning,
making the place based pedagogy
a central point for the growth of
future entrepreneurs and innovators.

My name is Ratka Newton.

I'm a senior teaching fellow in
strategy and innovation at Lancaster
University Management School.

I'm also an education service designer,
an elite of good place innovators project
funded by the Enterprise Educators UK.

In this podcast,
we have inspired educators to incorporate
place based pedagogy to their curriculum.

We debated.

The notion of civic university and
also the role of local council in
injecting pride and rejuvenating
community spirit into our place today

we welcome our first entrepreneur
and CEO of Local Group Circular
1A serial entrepreneur even and a
real placemaker and a place lover,
Stuart McLennan Stewart welcome.

It's great to have you here. Thank you ma'am.

I'm looking forward to this.

This will be fun well before we speak
about your business and your business model.

I would like to quote a line from
a research that we debated in
our very first podcast.

You have to cherish the place
where you do business.

What's your take on this line?

As a local entrepreneur?

So I think for me,
place as an entrepreneur,
you're gonna go in and typically disrupt.

Yeah,
you're gonna challenge the norm challenge.

The status quo probably spook
some people now and again.

And and put things forward that
wouldn't normally be thought about.

That's kind of the whole point
along with what's there,
so that's always really good fun, right?

There's there's, that's fun.

But place gives you the opportunity to set
the ground of the permission to do that.

And what I mean by that,

I think it's it's you know if.

If you look at place,
place means that you've
got to commit to be there.

So the people you can be working with
investing with developing with see you
there and say OK this person's coming back.

This person's bringing people
here they put a business here,
they're they've invested.

They've employed local people but
but place allows you to do that.

Place gives you the ability
to build relationships,
develop and understanding,
build respect and build trust,
and I'll come back to if you want
to be that super disruptive.

If you want to have that fun.

If you want to create that change agenda,
you've got to get the basics right.

You've got to build that.

You've got to have that understanding.

You've got to know what's going on,
and that gives you.

Hopefully by getting place right
in that relationship,
right?

Permission to then go on and
do the things you want to do,
and then they become effective.

Otherwise, if you don't invest in
place and you don't build that.

And don't build that trust.

You just that mad guy that's turned up with
a daft idea that nobody takes seriously.

So you don't get by in you, don't you?

Don't build opportunities.

So places absolutely
critical to success for me,
and it's lovely how you talk about
the returning back to the place,
building the trust, and so.

Let's talk about your business model.

And I know that everything you do
really evolves around the efforts
to bring some new life to fairly
deprived parts of the community.

In in Cumbria and I you know,

I wonder where does this drive come from?

So for me,

making a difference is at the heart
of everything I do, you know,

circular one as a business is all about
sustainability and sustainability is a
big word that's bandied around a lot.
But you know my background.
I grew up in the backwaters of Argyle.
I grew up in a community built
around forestry, farming,
and a little bit of fishing
and and a bit of tourism.
But forestry and farming at the heart of it.
And and so you know,
for those industries to work to thrive,
you had to invest in them.
You had to look after the land you
had to nurture. You had to feed.
You had to to, to, to. And that.
That's what place means.
You know it's it means you have to be there.
You have to invest and and that's part
of making a difference because you can't
make a difference if you don't invest,
if that makes sense.
So it comes from sustainable business,
sustainable practice.
Sustainable culture allows you to then.
To make a difference and
using that reference that.
Discipline that experience that
background going into somewhere

where there's a challenge.

You know that if you're going to deliver change in anything, anywhere, you have to think about it, sustainably going and delivering change because it's your indulgence or somebody's asked you to do it.

So what?

You've got to take the community with you, and to do that, you need to think about it from a sustainability aspect.

You need to think about it from a long longevity legacy.

And so, making a difference in challenging communities is about creating that longevity, and that's that's the stimulant for me because.

Making a difference is about long term making difference, not not just a not just a flash in the pan.

So what you know it's build something that actually means something to people.

Locally people buy into and it becomes.

Long term, viable, sustainable and so yeah,

it's it's it's.

It's using that discipline that background
for me as a person as the baseline.

It's lovely how you talk about your own
influence from your own upbringing.

What you saw around you.

So I guess that's probably where
your drive and passion also for
West Cumbria comes in very much.

So I grew up in the West Coast of
Scotland as seen in the backwater for
Gayle and surrounded by a lot of.

A lot of elderly family members are elderly,
older family members who had lots
of life experience and there's some
huge two huge influences in my life.

My grandfather, my great uncle one,
was a farmer and and and one
was a philosopher.

Arguably in his own way and and between
them they they set this mandate.

You know, have ambition,
but have ambition with respect.

And and and so you know,
I always think about respect
at the heart of everything,
but you have to have ambition
because you when you live in
a rural backwater community,

it's incredibly easy just to follow
the norm and then that's fine because
you then go through the kind of
natural humdrum of life that the
majority people are quite happy with.

But I wasn't.

I wanted to make a difference,
and these two sort of major guides and
sort of influence in my life set that
mandate of go go forth and have ambition.

But with respect because.

If you think about respect,
the start of everything you do,
then you'll do it with.

With that you whatever you deliver,
you'll be thinking about the who's that with.

What's it for?

Why, what's the impact?

What's the benefit?

What's what's the legacy,

and you've had businesses

in very different sectors,

different industries, and what, what?

What about this ambition about the
future of health and wellbeing?

You know?

Where does this come from?

I know you are really driven to reinstate

some pride in the local community,
So what is your ambition for your business,
you know?

And.

Or is this aligned with that place and
that you know in relation to health?

Again,
everything's about making a difference?

And why, why,
why have I got myself involved in health?

It started working with my
colleague chapter Chris Stanley.

You working on a project using
the lateral flow technology to
identify progesterin levels in milk,
which meant more sustainable
dairy production,
right sustainable food production that was.

That's where the that was the catalyst.

And then you know.

COVID lands and it's in my
my view at the time.

It was about time for business to say,
you know what?

Let's not go and take offer low payment.

Let's step up and make a contribution
to the country to the world.

So that was about for me,
saying, OK,

we're here what do you want us to do?

I knew we could have this fantastic science that Chris had brought forward that been used in TB screening around the world.

So we got that flipped across that support we covered so we this quick, affordable test.

How do we help?

And that how do we help then LED into working with major organizations Sellafield.

EBA systems in Cumbria and for me that gave us the mandate to say OK.

Working with those organizations you know they talked about.

You know COVID is is is the the burning platform of human health.

COVID is only a factor of the risk in the management of code is determinant factor of the health of the Community so it's set the mandate to let's now invest on this.

Let's build on the ability to manage your viral risk like COVID to say no.

Let's take the principle of screening.

Let's take the principle of being in place.

That's the principle of building skill sets locally,

and then that allows us to deliver
a long term health agenda because
screening means essentially managing,
measuring, and managing risk,
and that's the starting point
to proactive health.

If you measure and then create management,
you then start putting controls and programs
in place that increase the predictability.

Increase the ability for the individual
to take control of their health
and well being and and ultimately

reduce the burden on the NHS and
you're based yourself in Barrow
Barrow in Furness and obviously you
influence the local players there.

Be a systems you've worked in
partnership with them with Sellafield,
but that's quite a big challenge.

Like you,

you must like challenges, right?

I love challenges and I love

Baro Baro is so unique you know.

I mean we we have probably one of the most
important defense programs in our country.

Based in barrel and so therefore
there's not an option but success

Baru has to evolve and grow from
a health perspective because the

mandate has been set by government.

BA system means that the mandate
been set by government to deliver the
submarine program and more now than
ever we can see that in the world we're
in today that actually the submarine
defense program ironically is all
about essentially creating a deterrent.

And it's a proactive deterrent.

So actually that mandate
carries through to proactive.

Health,

which carries due to OK.

How can we therefore then influence
and support the community?

So if you get this catalyst saying let's work
with a major employer who has to succeed,
it doesn't have a choice.

There's no Plan B.

So when there's no Plan B,
everybody's got to put their lean in
and and be part of the success and
that for me is the perfect mandate.

You know there's no room for anything
other than success which which creates a
great environment for entrepreneurial spirit.

It creates a great
environment for partnerships.

It forces partnerships,
collaborations, public,
private, public,
private and 3rd sector
collaborations coming together.

You know we're starting to
work with with with kadas,
the drug and alcohol charity to
look at new approaches to support
and drug and alcohol problems.

I love that that's a legacy
that COVID started,
and if we keep thinking about innovation,
partnerships based around saying
there's no Plan B for Barrow,
we must deliver plan A that that
just feels like the perfect mandate
for for the entrepreneurial spirit,
yeah. Myself had a privilege to
work with you and with the company
for quite a while, and you know,
I've always been struck by your ability
to stop navigate these relationships
that you talk about within the place,
understanding all the dynamics the community
needs, and it's been quite complex.

There are political players,
you know the government is involved.

The NHS and you've always made the

effort to do the right thing and
also to do it in the right way.

I mean, have you always had this approach?

And is it something that can be learned?

It goes back to that word respect if you
when you're invited into any situation,
anywhere, social, business, whatever.

Any need based or anything lead lead with
respect and and when you get a chance
to work with such amazing stakeholders.

We we we just focused and lead with
respect which means that we listen,
we consult we we make sure that whatever
we bring forward is is something that
is is right for the Community because
we've listened and worked with those
really important parties to make sure
that it's a coalition of ambition
based around doing the right things.

Well, Stuart listen.

I'm going to swap jobs with you.

What do you reckon?

So imagine that you had to redesign
our curriculum because you know
with your expertise,

how would you look at that.

What we teach in entrepreneurship?

What would you do and how would you approach

this to incorporate the local agenda?

That sense of respect?

You know what?

What would your approach be?

That's an interesting challenge,

and I think my goodness,

putting me into anything to do

with academia could be.

It could be intriguing to say the least.

I think I think I'm a massive believer

that the SME economy of this country

is is the bedrock and and and it's

the it's the sector that's there.

It's needs.

It's a needs driven sector,

you know,

corporates sit on the back of that but but

when you think about the link between SMEs,

third sector and local authorities

and and I see that this of the

relationship between those three

working together public sector SME's

and and and and and 3rd sector.

And I would be really considering

how how do we make sure we capture.

All the ability in there because

the future business person in this

country is going to have to think

about post Brexit challenges.

It's going to have to think
about post COVID challenges.
Have to think about inflation
for quite some time.
Cost of money.
ESG goals,
the climate,
and so therefore,
we're going to have to have a really
refreshing rethink at times about how we,
how we deliver entrepreneurial business
and and business management and and
that's going to be about increase
increasingly confidence to to take
bold steps and do something different.
But if you've got those sounding
posts between the same economy,
the third sector you know,
churches do amazing things in communities.
And as great example,
and the public sector keep those.
Keep those sounding boards at the
core be my thing of of making sure
that the that the barometer is
always led by them back to respect.
Yeah, and it's almost like revisiting
how we operated in the past.
When I think about how my grandparents

lived in a small village and there will
be the church, the school, you know so.
Maybe we are coming back to the basics as
well about how communities operated before.

Yeah, communities bring resilience.

A strong community is
like a strong sports team.

They're successful because they
work together.

They know each other.

They work for each other and that creates
resilience and more now than ever.

We need resilience.

And if you have resilience with
entrepreneurial spirit, great things happen.

That's why the best SMEs are a
balance of both of those things.

I believe so that gives you a higher tax.

Don't know?

I mean, you know,

I think you can change our curriculum and.

Put and you know it would be great.

Maybe you can work on it together,
but you know,

I really what I really want to ask you and
we're coming to the end of the episode,
but I'm really curious about what
is your place and where do you
personally feel placed and happy.

So I have a favorite place and it's the
Isle of Isla and I go to Iowa because
Iowa is a really interesting place.
You have the most amazing whiskey
industry which has got amazing
heritage and create a great.
You see, you have the most amazing scenery,
white sand beaches you have the
most amazing people who are
pragmatic through and through.
You have dynamic tourism
running right through it,
but it has to have a reset as well
about producing whiskey from using
a much lower carbon strategy.
It has to embrace the new world,
but it's equally somewhere to go
and look at that change agenda,
but also go and walk the dogs in the beach,
clear the head, enjoy a whiskey,
but actually you know it's a place to go and.
We all must have this somewhere to
go and let the brain do the reset.
Let the creativity come back to the
fore and and come away from the cold phase.
That sounds beautiful and Stuart,
what can we look forward to from
circular one?

What are the plans for the future?

Circular ones are very exciting time we've taken what we've learned in the last two years and we are really focusing very heavily on helping businesses deliver proactive health agenda.

So you will see coming from us.

Very exciting programs of work based health programs and it's all.

East and Proactive health is based on the principle of place having somewhere to go to,

having somebody to talk to,

using a health screening models

and diagnostics to so you

deliver a proactive program,

which means that you know,

by being successful in these approaches,

partnering public partnering,

private partnering third,

partnering every turn,

don't reinvent the wheel,

create coalition, that's our.

That's where circular one health going.

We have a platform called me and my health,

and that's going to be the

platform for all of that.

And it will be about.

Bringing together all of those

sectors and the individual making
sure that the individual feels
empowered and responsible for
their own health and well being.

And that comes from education that
comes from support that comes from
having somewhere to go and talk to
somebody to pick up the phone to.

Because we have to make that
level investment and business
must make that level investment.

We can't do this all leaning on the NHS.

It's not fair.

In the NHS,

we almost play our part so
this is our contribution.

We've learned that that's
something we do well,
and it's something we're invest
very heavily in with partners.

And yeah,

you look forward some pretty
interesting things coming this autumn.

Well,

we have a lot to look forward
to and we'll be watching the
progress of the company like Hawks.

Well, thank you so much for your time Stuart.

It's been great having you with us and
thank you for inspiring our ourselves,
the educators,
students to be mindful about the place
of business and to be collaborative
and also consult local communities.
I've enjoyed your reflection on
trust and respect and making places.
Better and better for us
and for the communities,
so that's all for today and I
hope you enjoyed our debate.
Feel free to drop us a message,
comment or recommendation of a resource
initiative or any idea for our
project and until next time take care.