

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 with
an extra sensitive eye for our place,
local context and through community needs.

Our project focuses on the notion
of entrepreneurial embeddedness,
the emotional connection.

There are places and Co creation
of value with our communities.

My name is Radka Newton and I'm a senior
teaching fellow in strategy and innovation
at Lancaster University Management School.

I'm also an education service designer and
elite of good place innovators project.

Funded by the Enterprise

Educators UK in this podcast,
we have debated about the importance of
place commitment of our business leaders
to make places good and livable in
connection with the Communities Co creating.

Right and rejuvenating,
sometimes deprived and forgotten
places today we welcome our local
entrepreneur and innovator Andrea Winders,
who brings a new perspective to our debate.

Andrea is a real shake and mover and her passion for connecting people, places and products is really remarkable.

Andrea's diverse background, from managing her own businesses to becoming an executive director of Enterprise Investment in Sunderland City Council, is fairly intriguing.

Andrea welcome, thank you.

No thank you for having me Radka.

Welcome here and Andrea if you don't mind I will just start with your own quote to understand where your motivation comes from.

So you say I'm taking on the challenge of tired cities, towns and high streets and changing the look.

Feel residents value and futures retail is not the answer.

Investment, design and development will change outcomes well what a quote.

So this tells me Andrea, you are a woman on a mission.

I am absolutely on a mission.

Sometimes I speak a different

language direct to everybody else, because this actually started in came from my time in local government.

As you quite rightly say.

I've been an entrepreneur all my life and then I worked for two years as an executive director and local government and realized actually everybody turned to the local authority to solve places when they're failing or when life isn't too great and local authorities haven't got the money or the time or the resources any longer to.

To make much of a change and sometimes when they do, they build something and build it and they will come.

So I'm passionate about taking a different approach to failing places, businesses, towns, High Street, whatever it is, and I've created a system that I call magnetism.

I'm not going to go into it today for the sake of the podcast, but if at a later date anybody wants to get in touch with me about magnetism, but it's all effectively, it's all centered around changing the attractiveness of the thing.

The place that that the High Street and and I said the High Street.

Retail isn't always the answer because it isn't.

We have to make everything that

we do people centric

because it's people that make changes,
not buildings.

We have to respect our place and respect
our history and look to our future,
but center everything that we do
about people and then connect them to
products and then connect them to place.
And if we start to have a different
approach to life and might.

My approach is that we use commerciality
and sustainability to make those changes
will have a difference if we keep doing the
same old same old we'll get the same old.

Belts, well,

let's see how this magnetism work today.

Andrea and it's probably maybe like an
opposite of this stigmatism that maybe
we'll we'll talk about a bit later.

And when we last spoke together,
you mentioned that you deliberately
placed yourself in one of the most sort

of deprived cities in the UK in White Haven,
which is actually a very
dear place to me personally,
and I just,

I guess placing yourself in the
middle of this need makes sense.

Absolutely makes sense, and I did.

Chose white,

in fact I do remind them

this sometimes I chose you.

I looked around the country and I wanted to
find somewhere that I considered to be stuck.

There was a paper written as a result
of the industrial strategy which
looked looked at the places either
stuck stifled or strategic and it
was a balanced scorecard approach.

It was very scientific and

Whitehaven was on the list of stock.

Or if you like left behind places and
what the reason why I chose Whitehaven was
it was a great snapshot of the country.

So it's coastal rural,
urban, isolated but also.

Mimics a city miniature,
which I know will come on Scott
to discuss in a in a wee while,
but it's not got total deprivation.

It's got pockets of deprivation
and pockets of wealth,
and that really interested me how
you can have somebody living next
door to a neighbor who has who has
a brand new car on the drive works
at Sellafield because that's a local
largest employer and I was interested
in giving everybody a life chance
and understanding how we can use
the power of magnetism and approach

the problems in a different way.
And that's really interesting
because we discussed this with Andrew
Walker here in our earlier episodes.
That places are not homogeneous and
it's it's the same for Lancaster.
Actually, that we have, you know,
places of wealth as well as you know,
so you can have neighbors who are
in in the same position.
But Whitehaven is quite specific,
like you said,
and I always feel it's it's all cut off,
you know,
the the transport doesn't flow there.
And and and that sort of the stigmatization.
So I wonder,
you know with these deprived places.
Is sort of stigma associated with
these places and you know to what
extent does it prevent that sort
of attracting the investment and
the flourishing of
the places? I think there
definitely a stigma, so I can.
I can hark back and do a
comparison to Sunderland as well.
So Sunderland had an area that was
former shipyard or shipbuilding or
ship workers and that had an area
that was considered deprived and

that was called Hendon and and it was it was definitely people who lived in Hendon were on occasions stigmatized for living there.

Grossly unfair because it was a fabulous place and it it struggled to attract investment.

So if I now transfer that over to Whitehaven and we've got these pockets of deprivation, what what what I found in Whitehaven is? We have a strange attraction of investment.

It tends to be all around nuclear, and it's nuclear, despite the people.

So we get a lot of money, a lot of big companies who come and set up an office in Whitehaven and surrounding areas just to supply Sellafield, but they forget.

Completely about the people.

As you correctly mentioned, it's quite difficult to get to White Haven, so it's physically and digitally really poorly connected, so that was another of my considerations for Tuesday.

It too,

and I don't think that anywhere should be stigmatized.

It was back to my people centric position.

In this people are people.

It was really highlighted quite well in the social mobility report that the government produced. There's a place not far away from Copeland Borough Council, which is the area that White Haven sits in called Alladale. And it doesn't benefit from Sellafield. It doesn't benefit from the Sellafield pound as much, and on the social mobility table they were almost at the bottom, meaning that life chances of people in that area were pretty pretty low when we went to to Whitehaven, or to Copeland, it was about halfway at the table, but it was completely influenced by Sellafield. So I think we don't. We don't, don't just have the stigma of it being slightly deprived area in in some parts, but we also have the isolation that is caused by being serviced. If you like by a large. Public sector high paying organization which is only open to the few and not to the many. Umm yeah it is. It is a bit of a.

I mean it.

It provides you know so so much employment
that the region really depends on it.

But it's sort of double edge so
it's absolutely fantastic to have
Sellafield I'm I'm I'm very much
in favour of Sellafield and I
think what we've got there is a
chance where we could do more with
with more and extend the benefits
of Sellafield to more people.

They do a great job.

They do a lot of work in the
social impact world, but.

It's quite a vast spread out area,
Whitehaven,

and therefore there are little pockets
that don't quite get the benefits.

So no, I'm really in favour of of selfie.

They do some great things,
and they attract some great investment.

What we need to do now is attract
different kinds of investment,
create different kinds of opportunities.

Think about everybody's unequal
and put everybody on a level of
playing field as we possibly can.

Well, let's talk about your project then,
and so that's that's quite an exciting
initiative called the Micro City Street Lamp.

Uh, So what is it about?

And how is White Haven going
to benefit from this project?

OK, it my I love my project,
I'm I'm I've been working out for three and
half years so I tend to over oversimplify
it and people don't understand it well.

So I'll try and keep it in
in the in the relative terms.

What I've done is I've taken the assets of
White Haven and the assets of Whitehaven.

Are those that have already mentioned.

But adding to that more importantly,
the fact that it's a grid pattern,
it was one of the first grid layouts.

Well, it was the first grid
town in Europe and it is.

Remit that New York was based on on my team,
so for me we've got a city miniature and

what I also note about the UK is that
almost every city claims to be smart,
but when you dig a little bit deeper

and ask you know what is smart
really and what do you mean by it
and what you tend to see is like

little tiny bits of smart,
innovative innovations.

So I'll give you an F.

For example Oxford Road in Manchester
had a really great smart approach to
traffic lights and traffic management,
but it was only in one Rd in a small area.

I wanted to create somewhere where we could.

Really create and make a truly smart
place and mimic a city but in miniature,
so a size that is manageable
but actually acts like a city.

So it's ironically,

Whitehaven is just that,

so we've got all the attributes
we've got ringroad around that.

We're really we are a city manager,
and this is a place where academics can
come and research and understand everything
will be connected in it's simplest form.

What I've created is secure
shared digital infrastructure,
super fast digital infrastructure
on the ground.

This all goes live in September,
by the way,

and above it I've created an orchestration
platform so that everything connects
to everything else in real time
and we can do real live measuring.

We can approach subjects like personal data,
protection of personal data.

I'm also looking at cybersecurity,
particularly with the cyber corridor
coming into play in the northwest,
and then we then our verticals
are just absolutely endless,
so I'm looking at energy,

health and Wellness careers.

AgriTech Aquatech, and it's an invitation.

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This is about it's an invitation

to businesses.

To come in and invest.

and come and come and experiment
in smart city and my my hope
then through magnetism is to attract
them to come and open diverse
opportunities and businesses so we can
start to work with the children who
are teenagers who have sat in their
bedrooms playing on their computer.
Screens who have got fantastic
talents that don't quite fit within.
Whether it's traditional education
or the traditional work path
into the nuclear industry,
give them an opportunity to come.
And stay in Whitehaven because what
we tend to find is we lose talent.
We lose talented young people
and they don't tend to come back
and then attracting you in.
That's what we discussed in our
last podcast as well that the
place is good when the talent stays
when there is a reason as well.
But why heaven is such a specific example,

isn't it? So it's it's a great city?

I've not really seen any other great city in the UK and I wonder how transferable is your model then?

So this sort of digital platform?

The connectivity.

Oh yeah, sort of almost sourcing data.

Live data from maybe the citizens movement.

I suppose our people are maybe using the city so all this richness of data through this sort of digital connectivity platform in the grid model, is it going to be transferable to other places?

It's absolutely transferable.

And we've we've we've chose.

I chose white around its grid for this this project because there are quite a lot of cities around the world that are built in the grid pattern.

Glasgow is a grid pattern.

For example, London started as a grid.

And it's not there now.

I think it's quite much more than a grid and New York.

Definitely a great pattern.

So however,

it doesn't mean that you have to be a grid to use my process.

You don't even have to have the infrastructure if you're a small place,

so I want to extend this to places
as well as cities and little

forgotten towns that maybe think
particularly coastal as well.

That maybe think there's not
we we can't ever do that.

We we can't afford that or
we can't aspire to that.

I've designed this such as we could
actually take the platform anywhere.

So imagine if I if I was
an entrepreneur then.

And let's say my interest is in
working with these young people
with the teenagers and I want to
create some sort of a provision,
a service that would get these
young people together and I would
want to maybe Co create some
something for their local citizens
through these young people.

How how would I still
benefit from your support?

Well,

what would what we are actually going
to create as part of the platform?

Is is a backup and support team.

We're almost going to create.

Well we are.

We are creating digital real

estate so it's not metaverse.

And my my tech team will absolutely kill me for even mentioning the metaverse word,

but but it's not metaverse

in the sense of sitting

with a VR headset on it's metaverse and

it's living absolute touchable real way.

So we're going to have a marketplace

and we're going to have this fabulous

digital place where entrepreneurs will

be able to enter to really low rate.

So we were lowering the barrier to entry

and open a digital place and we will.

We will have connections with

all our residents and all our.

Visitors in white because it's not

only residents who I want to attract

and bring in its visitors, I want to

stimulate the visitor economy as well.

So we got some really

exciting arts and culture.

Things coming along.

Yeah, it would be really low entry barrier,

but get to a widespread audience who are

engaged and excited and inspired to be

part of this great digital opportunity.

So it's almost like you're offering me

a ready made network for me as well as

an entrepreneur can maybe connect with

some other like minded or I can become a.

Art of a supply chain.

I can understand the market much better,
so this digital place in a physical
place that's that's quite a fascinating.

It's really fast,

and that's exactly so you understood.

I explained it quite well. It's.

Yeah, that's exactly what we're doing.

We we we?

We want to create a community online,

and but I also want to extend

it to physical as well,

so that the place really benefits from it.

But yeah,

it's it's a completely different take

on smart and for me there are two.

There's one key element to this

is the Aux station platform.

Have used business process management

software and thinking so that everything

connects to anything in real time.

I'll give you one quick example

and that is health,

so one of the first projects that

we launched within this is health

and I want to see how we can link

health to things like for example

parking one of the biggest issues

in Whitehaven for residents and

visitors is the perception that there

isn't enough parking after there is.

It's in the wrong places.

That sounds a little bit like a

les Dawson piano sketch that there

was on television years ago.

So what what I intend to do with parking?

I've got a digital parking operator

working for me and a digital health

company working with me and we're going

to connect to encourage people to walk more.

So maybe show them where

there's parking available.

Not exactly where they want to be,

but then coat them to park a

little bit further away than

they would normally want to,

because it maybe gets you steps

up 2000 that day really easily.

Then we're also going to link

parking into vibrancy and dwell.

One of the biggest issues that we've got in

the town is that it's quite quiet at night.

And and the restaurants in fact,

now only open Thursday,

Friday,

Saturday night,

so it's getting quieter.

For me,

that's an ever descending circle and one of

the issues that we've got is

people have to pay to park,

and they really don't like to pay to park.

So I've devised a system not

yet put it into practice,

but it will when we go live where

people can earn their parking

automatically through their digital

self and being encouraged to stay and

be rewarded for dwelling by giving

them offers and encouraging them to

go into the different retail outlets.

They're in the town. So lots of ideas.

There's really.

Real data driven innovation with the

stuff community needs in the center of it.

It it's really fascinating.

Yeah, yeah, that's that's great.

Well when I think about our

students and how we bring up stuff,

entrepreneurs or educate entrepreneurs here,

what do you think we should pass

on to our students?

You know, so that they are able.

Maybe you know to think,

think like you be more creative.

What can education give to the entrepreneurs?

Today I'm,

I think education needs to give

our entrepreneurs freedom.

I'm a little bit of a rebel and I

I struggle sometimes to be confined

in an educational curriculum

and mainstream education.

Although I did OK.

I think education needs to give these
your students and entrepreneurs freedom
and and mix them with the right people.

So encourage external entrepreneurs to come
in and and and work with the students.

Or maybe maybe the university
could encourage work.

Workspace that entrepreneurs come in
and use some of your underused spaces
for entrepreneurs to come in and be
there and be alongside the students.

What I found in Whitehaven,
they've recently opened.

A new business center and it's
to encourage entrepreneurship.

And at first I was a little
bit skeptical about it,
but the building is beautiful so I
wasn't skeptical about that at all.

But I was.

I was concerned that we wouldn't
get entrepreneurs coming using it,
and it's been fantastic and it's
by creating the right space and the
right place and the right atmosphere.

We've now got entrepreneurs mixing
with established businesses.

We have students coming in.

I've got students in this week.

I had students from the UFC in a few weeks ago who were guests of one of the other businesses in there.

And it's just making the right people.

And the other thing is belief as well, because there's plenty of people tell you that you can't do what you're doing and so give education needs to give your students freedom and belief.

Or maybe we should be inspired by your smart city model and think about a smart education connecting people together.

And like you said, you know people working alongside each other instead of from the hierarchical position, right?

Yeah, absolutely right.

And Joe.

Well, one last question.

I'm sorry we're coming to the end of the episode and there is lots we could talk about.

But I'm always curious for all my guests.

Just to ask this, what's your place?

Where do you feel placed and happy?

So my my place is actually anywhere green.

I I know I'm talking smart cities, but I I love green I'm I'm I'm really interested in microbiomes and that's

a whole other subject. But I'm very.

I live in a forest in Ravenglass and

that's I'm at my happiest there.

My my lifelong goal is to to

be working and living in France

because of the the the spread.

So yeah, my happiness is Poppy

place is green but also energy.

I I like the energy of places.

Yeah, green the that's a wonderful

end as well to think you know,

we can combine the digital the tech

with the nature you know we can

enhance these two worlds together

and we can be happy in both worlds

like you you radiate it so you are

very inspiring for us to think about

how we can do that better great.

Well thank you so much. Andrea.

Thank you for your time.

It's been great having you with us.

Thank you for inspiration,

encouraging us to think digitally

collaboratively.

And also nurturing the more

experimental mindset.

I think in our endeavor to connect people,

places and products and services as well.

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 idea for our project
and until next time take care.