

Hello and welcome to our Good Place Podcast 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 true community needs, our project focuses on the notion of entrepreneurial embeddedness, the emotional connection to our places.

And Co creation of value with our communities.

My name is Ratka Newton.

I'm a senior teaching fellow in strategy and innovation at Lancaster University Management School, Education service designer and elite of Good Place Innovators project.

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

Rejuvenating sometimes deprived.

Unforgotten places and today we welcome our leader in residence and head of Behavioural Insight in Sellafield Joe Telfer, who will enrich our debate even more

and she will give us a new perspective,
a perspective of a large established employer
who has been a major influencer of West.

Cumbrian lives for over 75 years
Joe has been with Sellafield since
1998 in a variety of roles and
she's also a local Cumbrian girl.

Joe welcome hi Radka,
thank you for having me so Joe,
you have a fascinating role in Sellafield
and I know that you have seen many
phases in this large organization.

Now how it's evolved over the years.
What does selaphiel mean to the place
of its business to West Cumbria?

Sellafield is so inextricably
linked to West Cumbria,
I think it's really important to
understand that West Cumbria isn't
just a location for the organization,
it isn't.

Just a venue where it happens to be based.
Sellafield is part of the identity
of West Cumbria.

It's part of the fabric of West Cumbria.

I think I'd I'd go as far as
to say generationally.

Is fundamental really to the area,

not just from a social economic perspective,
but but from something much
deeper or almost DNA,
and I think it's really useful to
understand why all those years ago,
80 years ago West Cumbria was
chosen for the organization.

I think that's a really important
kind of point of context.

Back in 1942 the area was chosen
to be a royal ordinance factory by
the Ministry of Supply and that
was to support the war efforts.

And then post war,
the site continued to be adapted to
grow the munitions capability and
and since then over the years the
site has been added to it's grown.

We had called a hole built in 56,
which was the world's very first
commercial nuclear power station and
then more and more facilities are
being added on to reprocess waste to
store waste to manage waste in a safe manner.

So it's been there a long
time in West Cumbria,
and it's something that I
think West Cumbrians.

Very rightly proud of absolutely John.

You know,
I'm I'm really glad that you've brought the
history of the place because we don't
really touched on this in this podcast
because the history makes the place as well.
So and in the same way solar
field has been the placemaker,
and I think we sometimes underestimate how
much innovation has gone in in technology,
how it influenced the evolution,
and you know, the the importance
in the in the war.

Personally aware of it so and and
the the sort of generational impact.
And I know from my own research in Sellafield
how generations you know come and go
and how they are proud of being the part.
So it it's very important to reflect on
the history so so thank you for that Joe.

And you know,
as a local Cumbrian as well.

How do you think the culture of West
Cumbria influenced the business of Salafi?
World because I know when I was
there with you we we talked a lot
about the culture and you know
whether the stuff organization had
to adapt to some specific cultural

features of the West Cumbrian region.

I think it's fascinating when you start to look at the local culture and and you beg questions like that about how does that inform how Sellafield does its work and how how it goes about its business.

I think it's really interesting to pause for a second and think about the characteristics of West Cumbria and the characteristics of the community.

In which Sellafield sits in and and I'm really comfortable to talk about that as a West Cumbrian lass.

And and this is what I've kind of reflected on here.

I'm a great believer in the importance of understanding the history of an area and the legacy and how that informs the culture and the DNA when we look at West Cumbria.

In the past the industry has been mining, farming, fishing.

And and for me, that very much shows itself in characteristics and the community characteristics of not being afraid of honest hard work, often physical work.

There's a characteristic in
West Cumbria of Groundedness,
almost a solidity and a pragmatism,
and there's certainly a lack of
patience for things that don't have
a purpose or don't make sense.

There's certainly an impatience
with things like pretension,
and I think it's really interesting
to reflect on those.

Characteristics,
because that might help us understand
why Sellafield for all of these years,
for all of its 80 years,
has found a home in the place of
West Cumbria and and the fact it's
the nuclear industry in particular.

I think very much chimes with the
characteristics of the of the Community
and what the Community feels is part
of its identity and can work with.

I've always felt very grounded up there.

It's a no no nonsense place.

For me, as a Czech citizen,
we have a very similar culture,
very straightforward.

What we say,

what we think and I always felt,

very accepted in West Cumbria
and really felt I could
be myself and I feel that also in
the business you get things done.

People just want to get things
done so that pragmatism.

Let's get things done.

I think that suits the nuclear
industry very well as well because
you have a lot of regulations
safety but they get things done.

Yeah, I would agree.

Yeah, it's really interesting
to to to bring that idea in.

I think it absolutely suits the industry
to be in West Cumbria in many ways.

Hmm and just thinking about
you know our debates that we've
had on this podcast previously.

So we we discussed certain issues
around stigma around places and we
know also that you know that area
of West Cumbria has been sort of,
you know doesn't have a very positive.

Run sometime so you know it's
talked about as a stuck place or
you know a bit of a deprived place,
so I guess it has suffered
some stigmatization,

so have you seen any sort of maybe
negative impacts on the ability,
maybe to attract talent to Sellafield?

Is that stigma visible for you?

That's it's a really interesting question.

I must say that I don't sense a stigma
to do with the deprivation of the area.

If there is a stigma,
it may be to do with the remoteness
of the area geographically.

Were 45 minutes away from the motorway,
and that's significant, especially nowadays.

So, so that might play a part,
perhaps in attracting new talent,
but what I've noticed,
especially post COVID in terms of
whatever negative perceptions there
might be about inaccessibility or remoteness,
it's made-up for tenfold in terms
of being on the doorstep of the
Lake District National Park,
the beauty, the fells, the lakes,
the low population density,
especially post COVID.

That seems to be very attractive
to people looking to.

Maybe build a a new career elsewhere.

Yeah, I see.

You know it's it's a place of such beauty.

So much richness.

But like you say that M6,

it's almost the M6 stigma, isn't it?

It's it's a bit people sobbing

Kazik and that's it.

You know they don't tend to go further,

which is a real shame and

and as an influential leader,

you know yourself.

Joe,

what would you like to see for your

place of West Cumbria to happen for

the future generations you have?

Two beautiful children.

So how do you envisage that

development of the of the region?

I would really love to see the

continued growth of Sellafield.

It's got tremendous capability and

to grow that whole West Cumbrian

coast into the the energy coast

where it's got the expertise to

really well world leading expertise

to really lead nuclear industry

activities is something I want to see.

I also want to see broader growth

into broader energy capability on

that West Cumbrian coast, but of course.

Also, to have a healthy economy,
I'd like to see the diversity,
and I know that's something
Sellafield invest millions of pounds
in to help local entrepreneurs to set-up
new businesses not related to nuclear,
not related to energy and and
I guess like everybody in any
community that they live in,
I'd just like to see vibrancy.
I'd like to see increased hope,
increased confidence,
increased optimism in the area.
Ultimately, I'd like to see our
young people choose to stay.
Of the choice,
and I'd like to see young people from
outside the area choose to come into the
area because it is a really special place.
It's it's a wonderful answer job because,
you know, we reflect here on what
does it mean to have good place?
And we've mentioned with many guests that
place is only good when people want to stay.
So I would you know, Sellafield as well.
It's it's a learning organization and
you know, I think the future is bright.
You know there is so much

to offer and I wonder what,
from your point of view,
what do you think Sellafield has?

What kind of role does it
have in the community?

Sellafield really clear that
it has a significant role and
a significant responsibility.

Actually for the community,
because it's close to a nuclear
site at the very minimum,

Sellafield wants to make sure that.

The the local community isn't disadvantaged
by having a nuclear site on its doorstep,
but it's so much more than that,
and I think Sellafield in particular is
acutely aware of the responsibility it has.

In West Cumbria we have a campaign
called Pride of Place which is
a wonderful name and I've always
been really impressed with that.

That lovely kind of sound bite
of the name of that campaign.

And that's where Sellafield work
really closely with local authorities,
local members of the community.

To gather ideas on how best we
can grow the economy,

Sellafield has a really big role

to play and it does take that
role really seriously and and and
that's so pleasing to see.

And in your role,

Joe's head off behaviour inside.

I mean,

is it a part of your role?

Maybe to encourage people to think about
their own contribution to the community?

Their personal contribution?

Yeah, that that's a great question
from a behavioural point of view.

One of the things I I

think about all the time.

Is is the consciousness of
our behaviours and and how?

How aware we are of the way we think
and the way we behave I I think

we can all fall into the trap,
potentially of of being of having

learned helplessness of assuming that
somebody else will come and fix it.

Whether it's a personal problem
or or whatever.

So something I I do spend a lot
of my time listening and talking

to people about is the issue of

ownership and personal responsibility

and we have a wonderful area.

In West Cumbria and we can all play a part and think about what our contribution will be to that area and this is just fantastic to hear from you in industry because we talk a lot here about responsible management and as a management school.

We are now really clear that we have a big commitment to responsible education and we started thinking about what does it really mean to us and many colleagues say you know it's about accountability, transparency.

So I think we have quite a lot to learn from you, you know and from your vision for the future as well.

And Joe, you've worked with us many years, and you've mentored many of our students.

And in our project we are trying to see how place can be brought more into the curriculum.

What would you like to see our students sort of who are learning here with us?

How could we enrich?

Maybe the curriculum?

How could we bring that sense of maybe pride or place into into the school into the classroom?

I, I think Lancaster is
another very special place,
and it has another very special place
in my heart along with with West
Cumbria and what I'd love for your
students to do is to be interested
in the context of the university.

In the context of the city of Lancaster,
because I do believe that there's
a very powerful.

Powerful insight that the past can give us
and the history of a place can give us.

I'd really encourage your students
to understand more about the
history and the context of the City
of Lancaster and the university,
and to perhaps reflect on how
that history informs our beliefs.

Nowadays, even the language that we use,
but I think even more important than that,
I'd love for your students to think
about and and to really celebrate
that at this particular point in time.

They are here and they are part of that
history of Lancaster and of the university.

And and I'd like for them to consider
what they would like their contribution to
be to the story of the place that they're in.

While Joe, you know,

I couldn't have said it better.

I think you've summarized what we are trying to really achieve here with this project and that sort of the sense of history and the impact on our beliefs at the moment are really important.

They talked here about students being becoming transient.

You know,

they just come and go and that's what we are really trying to change.

Try to embed them more as stakeholders of the city as citizens in Lancaster.

So it's great to hear that you would endorse this this notion and that you feel it's important and always enjoy when you bring your children to the campus as well that you are also trying to stuff.

Show the these different places.

How they what they look like, how they connect and how they feel.

Because places have different feelings.

Yeah,

well on that note I'm going to ask you a very personal question and I would like to know what your personal place.

Where do you feel happy and

placed if I'm allowed,

I'm going to offer two answers, two places.

And when I think about those two places,

it's interesting to reflect that

they they both have something

very important in common.

My two places are number one.

Walking on Saint Bees beach.

St Bees is a lovely little village

on the coast in West Cumbria.

It's got to be on a windy day,

not on a lovely pretty sunny happy

day on a windy day and that's very

West Cumbrian to walk on Saint

Bees Beach on a windy day where

it's fresh as we would call it.

My second place where I feel

placed and happy again.

Another little village in West

Cumbria called Sanath which I have

very deep links to and it would

be on the Cliff tops out Sanath

and when I think about those two

places and and I I reflect why those

immediately came to mind.

It's because they're they're

places where I feel very grounded.

I feel at peace.

I feel a certain belonging and
I think really interestingly,
I feel a sense of timelessness,
West Cumbria,
on reflection has a really strong
sense of timelessness.
Where I think you can reach
back almost to your
parents and your grandparents and beyond
and you can walk where they walked,
and certainly because of the natural
beauty you can almost see through
their eyes and you can see what they
saw and you can reflect a little
bit like a said about my hopes for
your students here at Lancaster.
I can reflect on how I fit into the
story of my place in West Cumbria
and I can start to decide how I want
to contribute to that place and the
next part of the story of the place.
Well, I think we should rename the
podcast the story of the place Beautiful,
it's wonderful and I feel so happy that
we share a special place so St Bees
Beach is very dear to my heart as well
and I love it when it's windy as well.
So it's gotta be windy it's gonna be windy
well Joe thank you so much for your time.

It's been wonderful having you with us.

Thank you for your inspiration,
encouraging us to think about the
impact and also reflecting on that
large organization of that role of
the organization. In the community.

And the responsibility thinking about
that responsible direction for the future.

And that's all for today.

And I hope you enjoy our debate and
please 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.