

Living Streets Aotearoa



New Zealand Walking Conference 2006 3 – 4 November 2006

ABSTRACT

Surname	Boulter	First name	Roger
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Presentation topic	Lessons from community dialogue		
Presentation title	From the community upwards		
Presentation Style	Presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Interactive Workshop <input type="checkbox"/>
Time Required	0-10 mins <input type="checkbox"/>	10-20 mins <input type="checkbox"/>	20-30 mins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Presentation Remit (500 word maximum)

There's nothing like testing out your technical ideas by talking to the ordinary people who have to live with them.

That's what Wendy Everingham did. The walking environment had been low in the priorities of the small rural District Council - Banks Peninsula, population 3,000 (now part of Christchurch City), but a meeting convinces the local Council engineer that things can be improved. A scoping project, active community involvement and lots of passion produce an innovative walking map and signage project for the small settlement of Lyttelton (the historic port for Christchurch, and a close community). This project is highlighted as a best practice example in the Ministry of Transport's strategy "Getting There – on foot, by cycle", and wins a national local government award.

The map wasn't drawn up by a cartographer, just by a lay person talking a lot to local people. Was this the secret of the success and acclaim which met it? That it was something lay people felt comfortably using?

Banks Peninsula District Council (which covers Lyttelton, the wider Peninsula, and the historic French settlement of Akaroa) then employed Wendy and transport planning consultant Roger Boulter to prepare a District Walking and Cycling Strategy. Using Wendy's already-strong community links, community consultation is again a strong foundation for this project, starting with a 'blank slate' in order to harness the enthusiasm which people have when seriously asked what they want for their community.

Wendy has also undertaken walking audits for Christchurch City Council and (now former) Banks Peninsula District Council. Rather than approaching these as technical research, the emphasis was on making the experience enjoyable and inviting people to talk and discuss their ideas. A host of concerns were raised, together with ideas of how to resolve them. These in turn were collated into a practical plan of action to be presented to local Councils.

Is this a useful model local communities could use to improve walking conditions in their areas? Wendy and Roger think so. They've found there is real passion in communities which must be tapped if good, practical, creative ideas are to be brought forward. But local people do need to feel they are 'part of the action', or the ideas won't flow.

This will be a joint presentation, Roger contributing more of the planning theory on consultation and community development, and Wendy of how it works out 'on the ground'.