

Dear friend,

This is the first, in what I intend to be a series of e-mail newsletters -leading up to the 5-day Community Building event at The Hall, Mildenhall, starting August 12th 2012.

ABOUT THE EVENT

We will be using the same event-design which we have used in 8 previous "Facilitating Ourselves" events in the UK since 2003. It differs from the standard Community Building Experience or Community Building Workshop in the following ways:-

- > A longer period of time together
- > Combination of "Community Building" and "Open Space" formats (more of this in later messages)
- > Ongoing small-groups who will take time to meet every day of the event, in addition to Community Building circle time and Open Space sessions, which will also be happening every day.

We also invite that you get into pairs after the morning circles for 15 minutes (or extended into the tea-break) where you reflect on the circle and its process - partly "how was it for you" and partly aiming for a facilitators' perspective on how the group is getting on.

We have found in previous "Facilitating Ourselves" events that this multi-context structure gave rise to an astonishingly cohesive and happy experience - which the designers of the event certainly did not foresee though they had hoped for something good.

The small groups will be allocated by a Harry Potter-style "Sorting Hat" on the first evening. We have allocated an hour and a half session each afternoon, for the special kind of challenge, support and nurture that come out of small-scale Community Building. The organisers of this event will be offering support to the small groups, in case they need any help in providing the nurture that is possible.

I don't want to make this e-mail too long - so I will send out more info about the Community Building and the Open Space aspects later on. But for Open Space there needs to be a specifically worded question, to help to focus what we may find ourselves inspired to offer into these open-space sessions. It is intended as a poetic evocation, rather than an invitation to discussion. Here is the question I have put together for this year's event:-

"How can the main signposts of community building (pseudo-community, chaos, emptiness and community) help us in the navigations of real life? And what can we do, here, to try out new ways of doing this navigation together?"

(This question reflects my belief that everything we do - in company or alone, in seriousness and in fun - has impact on where we stand in pseudo-community, chaos, emptiness and community.)

That's all for now. Looking forward to seeing you very soon.

Best wishes,

Mike Roth