**Social Science Centre Meeting**

**7 December 2013**

**Present**

Sarah A., Mike N., Gary S., Joss W.

**Apologies**

David M.

**Writing on stop and search**

At the beginning of the meeting, from inside Revival we witnessed a group of police stop a young man on a bike at the head of Sincil Street and, within fifteen minutes both he and the bike had been taken away in a police van. We didn’t and still don’t know the details of the situation. But given the prevalence of young black men being exceedingly disproportionately ‘stopped and searched’, we were not sure how to respond in the moment in a way that wouldn’t make the situation worse. We will be writing about it to think and talk this through and to again raise in public concerns around racism, othering and profiling; the accountability of the power of the police; law, justice and oppression; the politics of abolitionism; and the point that increasingly violations of privacy, person and body are ‘legal’.

**Working with the *Lincolnite* paper**

* Gary (and anyone who wishes) will meet with Dan Ionescu in December to talk about the plans below.
* The Social Science Imagination (SSI) course will definitely have its own space online, hopefully as part of a wider project to publicise and offer free public education across Lincolnshire.
	+ Next SSI podcast will address the theme of Education, with Peaceful Warrior and Gary recording with Richard K. on Friday the 13th -- link will go on the SSC website as soon as it’s available
* The paper is also interested in more pieces addressing issues of social concern, locally, nationally and internationally
	+ We would like to write a response soon to the recent QAA report on ‘student experience’, also to the news of taking caps off student numbers at universities, etc. -- there is a group working on this at the moment and we will send around drafts of things as they are available for people to comment or get involved.
* Reflecting on the relationship between the SSC and the *Lincolnite*
	+ Could this be disruptive, if some people are participating online and some in classes? We figure it won’t be, as this is a version of what happens now. One consideration is how people might meet each other and work together. In any case, we will need to keep talking about what the relationship is and is for, in relation to the wider aims of the SSC.

**A space for the SSC?**

* We have had some offers of physical space. We need to think about what it would mean to have a space, why we would or wouldn’t want to occupy/inhabit certain spaces -- the ‘bread shop’ and the social centre are still in the SSC imagination…

**Ideas for a co-operative university**

A number of people within the SSC are now working on a project around the formation of a co-operative university. We discussed how to intensify and focus our research and practical work in this area, how to integrate it into the formal and informal contexts we work in and types of work we do, perhaps seeing the project of exploring a co-operative university as one way of doing so.

* Dan Cook’s new [report](http://josswinn.org/2013/12/realising-the-co-operative-university/) flags up many of the questions a research project like this should ask.
* There is a seminar on co-operative university in London on December 12th -- Joss W. and Richard H. might go
	+ We may be forming a research group on co-operative universities and alternative education at the university, with a broad and diverse research group organised from across the university and a focused research project about and from within the SSC -- can this be organised co-operatively, democratically?
		- Perhaps to include conceptualisation of alternative to students as consumers or producers: *members* of a co-operative, where the power to control your future sits, not in classrooms but being part of decision-making processes at all levels and in all ways -- education becomes more than about learning a discipline or doing a degree, but about how we live and live together
		- Perhaps to include praxis and studies in co-operative pedagogy
			* deliberative democracy (rather than involvement, participation)
			* diversity, different levels of investment, affordances of time
			* stake in decision-making in the first place

**New course (to be named)**

The Social Science Imagination course has been running in parallel to but not wholly connected with the running and wider project of the SSC. Why shouldn’t the SSC be the critical project that the first term prepares people to work on; and when the SSC needs it as we do now?

We suggest that the new course will start in mid-January, run for 10 weeks, and aim to take arguments and recommendations to the AGM in May. We will be reading, but reading things that help us to conceputalise the SSC, including but not limited to:

* democracy -- as a historical and diverse project
* consensus and other forms of decision-making
* co-operatives
* collective action

It was suggested that prior to the course beginning, we read the SSC constitution and FAQ page, which are two principal statements of what the SSC is, come to discuss themes emerging that we want to discuss and plan the course in advance. But is it too dry to start with a constitution? In SSI we started with the sociological imagination…people have things they can tap into; perhaps we could start with something about co-operatives; could start with an introductory reason, as well as with the original document?

The ideas for this course raise the pressing question of whether the SSC is about creating a workers’ co-op or a consumer co-op? The point of the SSC was about exploring this sense of ownership about something. We can try this as an experiment. We could treat it as a SSI course, and theme it broadly (e.g. democracy, what is co-operation), but then apply them in our discussion to the co-operative we are creating. One week exploring and evaluating, one week looking at implications for practice and applying (theory and practice). Publicise to other groups -- e.g. Hackerspace, co-operative schools, considering in their terms, etc.

**Childcare**

To look into eventually doing a day class at the Volunteering Centre, near Tentacroft Street, if they could help with childcare.

**To do**

* Joss will send a note out about Christmas dinner - book dinner ahead of time and pay what you can
* Next week or two Joss will draft a blogpost about next term and start publicising
* Gary will set up a meeting with Dan at the Lincolnite before Christmas
* Gary will start a piece on stop and search; everyone to add
* Everyone to send notes on QAA paper