**Title: Case study lesson environment 4: Sheffield Street Trees (UK)**

**Introduction to lessons**

In his Letter from a Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote,  “You may well ask, ‘Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, etc.? Isn’t negotiation a better path?’ You are exactly right in your call for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Non-violent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatise the issue that it can no longer be ignored”. The Sheffield Street Trees campaign illustrates this beautifully as direct action was used successfully not only to actually protect trees but also to bring the issue to the attention of the wider public. This led to a successful process of negotiation where different views were taken into consideration when deciding how to manage the street trees.

These lessons use a fictional context using ‘[Mantle of the Expert’](https://www.mantleoftheexpert.com) to introduce different perspectives and to engage learners in the Sheffield Street Trees case study which is introduced at the end. At this point it would be helpful to make a distinction between the fictional drama and what really happened. Although different perspectives and complexities are introduced through the lessons, including the contestability of the decision by some tree protectors to break the injunction by going through the barriers as ‘persons unknown’ the final outcome of the actual protests was that the protestors were vindicated in their objections.

The new tree strategy that came from negotiations illustrates this and is a much more cautious and participatory approach to street tree management in Sheffield. Sheffield Council received criticism from national bodies such as the Woodland Trust and was investigated by the Forestry Commission. They issued an apology for the dawn raid on Rustlings road (that the first scenario is based on) ‘A public unreserved apology’ was recommended by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/sheffield-council-makes-new-public-apology-over-tree-felling-scandal-3004071>

Subsequently in March 2023 the [Sheffield Street Trees Inquiry Report](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/sheffield_street_trees_inquiry_report.pdf) by Sir Mark Lawcock was published and the leader of Sheffield City Council and the City Chief Executive issued an [apology](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/an_open_apology_for_the_behaviour_of_sheffield_city_council_during_the_street_trees_dispute.pdf) to all those involved in the protests.

A script is provided for those teachers who are not familiar with Mantle of the Expert but this can obviously be used flexibly with those who are. Out of role curriculum activities feature throughout.

**Curriculum links:** RSHE, Religious Education, Citizenship, Drama, Expressive arts, English, Maths, Science, Geography, History

**English National Curriculum for Citizenship links**: **KS2** Knowledge, skills and understanding: ‘1a talk and write about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect themselves and society’; ‘2a to research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events’; ‘2e to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, using imagination to understand other people’s experiences’; ‘2h to recognise the role of voluntary, community and pressure groups’; ‘2j that resources can be allocated in different ways and that these economic choices affect individuals, communities and the sustainability of the environment’

**KS3 ‘**Pupils should use and apply their knowledge and understanding while developing skills to research and interrogate evidence, debate and evaluate viewpoints, present reasoned arguments and take informed action’; ‘Pupils should be taught about…the roles played by public institutions and voluntary groups in society, and the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities, including opportunities to participate in school-based activities’.

**Learning outcomes:**

* To consider the value of street trees.
* To understand different people’s perspectives on street trees.
* To use a case study to explore the effectiveness of non-violent actions.
* To understand the importance of resilience when taking action as a citizen.
* To understand the link between emotions and bodily sensations.

**Concepts:**

Value

Interdependence

Ally

Non-violence

Negotiation

Change

**Key vocabulary:**

Tree surgeon

Arborist

City Council

Cabinet Minister

Urban

Speech

**Resources needed:**

Resource Sheet 50 Tree Information

Resource Sheet 51 Tree map

Resource Sheet 52 Top 10 tree benefits sheet

Resource Sheet 53 Life expectancy of trees maths challenge

Resource Sheet 54 Engineering solutions

Resource Sheet 55 Role cards

Resource Sheet 56 Example email

Resource Sheet 57 Carole’s account

Resource Sheet 58 Carole’s account (simplified)

Resource Sheet 59 Carole’s account (SEN, Communicate in Print)

Resource Sheet 60 Storyboard template

Resource Sheet 61 Sally’s speech, abridged transcript

Resource Sheet 62 Diary entry features

Resource Sheet 63 Resource sheet for learners

Resource Sheet 64 Spectrum of allies

**a. Starter activity**

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| **Activity** | **Time** |
| 1. **Creating an engaging context**  a) Show short film of trees and tree felling (47 secs) PowerPoint  b) Narrate beginning of story:  i) From resident’s perspective  ii) From tree surgeon’s perspective  Teacher: “I am going to read you a story and can I ask you to imagine that you are the person in the story while you’re listening to it”  Jenny was in the middle of a disturbing dream where a giant bee started attacking her when suddenly she awoke to hear a loud buzzing sound coming from outside. Far too loud for a bee! She looked at the clock - 4.30am! She got up, put her dressing gown on and went over to the bedroom window. Jenny moved the bedroom curtain aside and looked out of the window. It was only just beginning to get light. There was a man in the beautiful oak tree opposite her house. He was cutting off a branch of the tree with a chainsaw!  She hardly knew what she was doing but in the next few moments she had run downstairs and out the front door to the safety barrier around the tree and she was shouting up at him ‘What are you doing? Stop that! Leave the tree alone!’ It was only then that she noticed her neighbours up and down the street gathered around the trees that were being felled. Some of them were huddled in groups in their dressing gowns, others were crying or shouting out to the tree surgeons to stop. One person had even gone over the barrier and was hugging the tree to stop it being felled.  “I’d like you to imagine what Jenny was experiencing – the sounds she heard, how she felt…what she was thinking… you can make notes if you like. (PAUSE) Would anyone like to tell us what it was like?” (Learners offer their thoughts/feelings/impressions).  “OK I’d like to tell you the same story but from the point of view of one of the tree surgeons. I’d like you to imagine that you are this person now”.  David was feeling pretty fed up having to get up before dawn to do the job that day. He’d never had to do that before in all his twenty years as a tree surgeon. It was a profession that he really enjoyed, although it was pretty dangerous. There was always the chance of an accident from falling or being injured by the chain saw. He had to really concentrate to avoid this and do the job well. He had real knowledge of trees and had spent a lot of the time conserving them by pollarding trees that had got dangerously large or pruning off dead or dying branches. This job was different but he needed to pay the mortgage.  When he arrived on the street the protective barriers had already been put up around the trees. He put on his climbing gear and safety harness, got his chainsaw and ropes and started climbing the tree. A beautiful oak, easy to get a foothold on. Not sure why it needed to be felled, seemed to be healthy but he was just taking orders. He was part of a team of tree surgeons working on the trees lining the park up and down the road.  It wasn’t long before the residents started pouring out of their houses across the road, shouting up into the trees. Most of them were still in their dressing gowns – they all seemed pretty shocked. Who wouldn’t be? It was like a dawn raid. A woman from a house opposite the oak ran over to him and shouted up ‘what are you doing? Stop that! Leave the tree alone’ and then she burst into tears. It was horrible. David had never experienced this before – he’d always been helping people out by cutting trees that people didn’t want because they were diseased or dangerous. He had no choice though- this was his job and he’d agreed to do it. He had responsibilities – kids and a mortgage.  “Now I’d like you to imagine what David was experiencing –how he felt…what he was thinking… you can make notes if you like. (PAUSE) Would anyone like to tell us what it was like?” (Learners offer their thoughts/ feelings/impressions). | 10 mins. |

**b. Main activities**

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| **Activity Lesson 1** | **Time** |
| **1. Commission (City Council is client, learners are expert tree panel)**  Teacher: “We’ve received an email from the Council, shall I read it to you?” (and printed out)  Dear Expert Tree Panel  As you will have heard from the local newspapers, the council had a lot of bad publicity following the tree felling on Pemberton Avenue. We misjudged the situation and probably shouldn’t have allowed the tree operatives in without notifying the residents first.  We would like you, as the expert tree panel, to advise us of what should be done with the trees earmarked for felling from now on. We have enclosed information about the designated trees.  We have a limited budget for the work in this area and we would like you to take this into account when advising us. We would also like you to consult the residents in this area to find out their views on the trees.  Please don’t hesitate to get in contact if you have any questions or need any more information.  Yours faithfully  Stacey Fielder  Cabinet Member for Environment  Marcastle City Council | 5 mins. |
| **2. Work on the commission**  Teacher: “OK everyone, so do you understand what we are being asked to do? Anybody got any questions?  OK so let’s get started then. We need to figure out what to do with these different trees – shall we look at the information together? I’ll show it to you on the whiteboard then you can all see it.  **Information about the trees (on PowerPoint slide and RS50)**  1. Old diseased ash tree on the corner of a road – which has been surveyed and is a danger to the public (300 years old).  2. Lime tree which is disrupting pavement and damaging kerbs (100 years old).  3. Maple tree which is overgrown and overshadowing the road and houses near it (200 years old).  4. Oak tree breaking curb with roots/trunk growing into the road and presents a danger to cars (150 years old).  5. Cherry tree planted as a memorial for those killed in WW1, not appearing to be damaging anything (90 years old).    Budget of £10,000 (for the sake of simplifying the maths could use £100)  **Curriculum Activities**  **Art and English Task: Create Tree Map**  Here is an online map, showing all of the important trees in London.  <https://www.treetalk.co.uk/map>  Why do you think someone made this website?  Why might it be useful?  To help us with making our decisions it might be useful for us to have a map of Marcastle with the trees on.  Why would this be a useful tool for the Expert Tree Panel?  Learners use the information on RS50 to create an imaginary map of the area on RS51. They label the trees with the appropriate information:   * Type of tree. * Any issues with the tree. * Any features that make that tree unique.   (Teacher could find examples of hand-drawn city maps to support learners with the drawing part of the activity.)  Discuss if there is any other important information and add that too.  Discuss how to add the information - using labels or a key? | 45 mins. |

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| **Activity Lesson 2** | **Time** |
| **Science Task: Value of trees**  Show picture of a large, healthy, mature tree (PowerPoint).  What is the value of this plant? (Possible advantages can be CO2 removal, air pollutant removal, beauty, shade, flood prevention, wildlife habitat, value of wood. If learners do not know many, there will be opportunities to find out shortly.)  Facilitate science task:  Are there any disadvantages to having large trees in a city? (Block out light for residents; sap, branches and bird droppings can land on cars; roots can crack pavements, take up space, cost money to repair roads, pavements and to cut off dead branches). If not, look out for any disadvantages when you hear evidence in the upcoming lessons.  Do these disadvantages outweigh the benefits?  Look at RS52 Top 10 Tree benefits sheet  Learners make notes (as bullet points, or as a mind-map with drawings).  On the board, teacher records the learner’s findings in three columns: wildlife, people and environment.  Periodically ask learners to come and add a benefit to the correct column.  **Maths Task: Comparing benefits of mature trees and young trees**  Show graph showing benefits of urban trees.  - What can you see?  Explain how the graph works. Remind learners of the research they just conducted and help them to connect that information with the graph they see on the board.  Interpret graph:  - What can you see?  - Why does the line go up at the beginning?  - Why does it go down at the end?  - The crosses represent options for when to fell the tree. Which one do you think is the best choice? A, B, C or D?  **Maths Challenge**  The area (number of squares) under the line shows the total benefit over the lifespan of the tree. Show the difference between felling the tree at A and felling it at C by shading the areas (see PowerPoint slide and RS53 life-expectancy of Sheffield street trees A4 sheet for an example) | 1 hr. |

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| **Activity Lesson 3** | **Time** |
| **Maths Task: Engineering solutions and costs**  Show learners *a* series of pictures (PowerPoint) explaining how street trees can cause problems.  Show learners a list of the possible solutions to these problems, with costs and extra information about each one:  1) Thinner curb  2) Tree pit  3) Pruning tree  4) Felling tree  Show list of trees to be felled in Marcastle (RS54and Power Point).  Next to each tree, is a list of options available to solve the problems.  Learners work out the best solution for each tree, explain their reasons and then calculate the total cost.  - Is this the cheapest possible solution, or did you make other considerations?  **English/drama Task: Find out views of different people role play**  Using role cards (RS55) with several learners per role: conduct meeting with representatives with different views. Teacher chairs. Some learners take minutes in role as member of Expert Tree Panel.  a) Read role cards in small groups and prepare presentation and arguments.  b) As large group – take turns to say who you are and what your views are.  c) Discussion as large group in role (using P4C skills).  d) Tree panel meets again (in role) to discuss whether they now wish to change any of their proposed solutions before submitting them to the council.  Having considered all the evidence the Expert Tree Panel makes recommendations to the council about each of the trees (send Email to council).  **English task**: **Non-chronological report**  Learners write an email (RS56 example email and slide…’planning the email’), outlining their key recommendations. This is to send to the councillors so they can make an informed decision.  Email includes several paragraphs:  1) Benefits of trees for people.  2) Benefits of trees for wildlife, the environment and climate.  3) Problems caused by trees.  4) Suggested solutions for each tree.  5) Outline of the cost for these solutions.  **Step further**  Learners could explain how the costs are actually spread over a very long period (for example, it costs £3000 to create a tree pit, but it solves the problem for 20+ years).  **Optional**  Teacher could set up an email address for learners to send the message to. The imaginary councillors could then reply to the learners. | 30 mins.  30 mins. |

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| **Activity Lesson 4** | **Time** |
| **Dramatic Tension**  (Based on what happened in Sheffield: ‘*Even when survey results have shown that a greater number of households has voted to save the trees in their street, and even when the ITP (Independent Tree Panel) has also recommended keeping them, SCC (Sheffield City Council) has, in most cases, overruled both opinions and insisted on removal. In Briar Road, S7, 100% of the residents who responded to the ‘Household Survey’ wanted to keep their trees; the ITP voted to retain them all, however SCC has ordered Amey to remove them. As of 6th June 2017, out of the****150****trees that the ITP has voted to retain, SCC has ignored their advice 87.3% of the time and listed****131****to be cut down’* [*https://savesheffieldtrees.org.uk/the-household-survey/*](https://savesheffieldtrees.org.uk/the-household-survey/)*)*  Teacher: “We have received an email back from the council in response to our recommendations (on PowerPoint slide):  Dear Expert Tree Panel  Thank you very much for your detailed recommendations in relation to the trees earmarked for felling.  Although we appreciate your efforts we have decided to go ahead with the felling of all the trees.  Yours faithfully  Stacey Fielder  Cabinet Member for Environment  Marcastle City Council  What do we think about this? Any thoughts, feelings, questions?” | 10 mins. |
| **Responding to the news**  Teacher: “I would like to invite you now to imagine that you are a group of residents and tree protectors in the local area who have found out that your local street trees are now scheduled to be felled in a few weeks time. You have been consulted and you have said that you would like the trees to be retained. The council seems to have ignored your views. What are you going to do?”  Get suggestions from the learners – write these down- teacher going into role as the chair of this group facilitating the learners own decisions ideas.  **English task**: **Persuasive writing**  Contact elected people, persuading them to change their mind.  *Paragraphs to include*   * What’s happening? (Introduction) * Why it’s a problem? * What’s the alternative? * What can you do about it?   *Choices*  - Compose letters to councillors / MPs  - Make a petition  - Create a poster (Example Poster RS58)  - Create social media post  When these don’t work: learners make NVDA suggestions based on what learnt so far from other case studies. | 50 mins |

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| **Activity Lesson 5** | **Time** |
| **PSHE/drama task: Identifying feelings**  Share Carole’s account with the class (RS57). Use RS58 simplified account or RS59 Communicate in Print version for learners with special educational needs or early EAL – they could cut this up and put in order / have sections of the story already written out and draw own pictures.  Recap where this was happening (show map of street on board) and why this was happening.  Clarify language that the class may not have come across before. Define the vocabulary/have supporting pictures on the board.  Bound  Erected  Wanton  Cynical  Assets  Compelled  Arborists  Donning  Onus  Futile  Ecstasy  Adjacent  Learners work in pairs, and use two different coloured pens to highlight information in the text.  One colour to highlight emotions, another colour to highlight the physical affects felt on Carole’s body (e.g. butterflies in her stomach, rapid breathing) (NB Link to Power lessons and emotions/physical response).  Feedback and share ideas as a class.  Discuss how we are going to split the account up into 6 parts. Learners, in groups of 5 or 6, discuss briefly how they are going to split the account up – and then cut the account up into 6 sections.  (This is potentially how it could be split up:   1. Join the campaign and make a rota to patrol trees. 2. Sees Arborists amputate trees 11th Jan 2018 – very angry, can’t sleep. 3. Next morning gets a call on WhatsApp group – puts bunny outfit on, and sees lots of hi-vis jackets and metal barriers. 4. Campaigners cheering – tries to get over barrier but obstructed. 5. Stands on house wall – pulls herself over the fence. Tree still standing to this day. 6. 22nd January – pulled off fence by security guards. Other campaigners break barrier down to help her– relieved).   Learners in their groups practise making a freeze frame for each section.  Learners perform their freeze frames in their groups – class teacher or Teaching Assistant to take photos of each group.  Class teacher to input photos of each group’s freeze frames on template (RS60). Learners complete their reflections on the storyboard template – how was Carole feeling at this point?  **Additional reflection questions:**  How did Carole’s emotions affect her physically?  What do you think the lasting effect of this experience was on Carole?  If the SIA had responded differently, what would have been the outcome?  How would you have felt if you were another campaigner, watching Carole be hurt?  Do you agree with Carole’s choices from these events? If not, why not? | 20 mins.  5 mins  35 mins |

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| **Activity Lesson 6** | **Time** |
| **English task: Write a speech like Sally**  Show film of Sally making speech to the police (PowerPoint slide) – stop film and identify possible feelings/ thoughts of different people in scene. Analyse feelings and power.  Write a speech like Sally using RS61 Transcript of Sally’s Speech.  **English task: Write diary entries**  Write diary entries of a police officer, tree surgeon or tree protector using RS62 Diary Entry Features. | 30 mins.  30 mins. |

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| **Activity Lesson 7** | **Time** |
| **What Actually Happened in Sheffield?**  a) Generate research questions – and find answers from different sources: (PowerPoint time line of events, film clips, Forestry Commission Investigation report extracts, newspaper articles extracts, new street tree partnership documents etc. RS63).  Use JIGSAWING method to research and share information:  Number learners 1-5 (or number of questions being researched). This is their home group. Divide learners into 1s, 2s, 3s etc. to research each different question. Learners then return to their ‘home groups’ to share what they found out.  *NB: in reality the tree panel didn’t have to think about costs and most engineering solutions were included in the Amey contract so didn’t present additional costs to the Council.*  b) Use RS64 ‘Spectrum of allies’ tool to identify STAG’s allies, locally and nationally (e.g. Woodland Trust, Environment minister, arts/ poets, media)  Identify why people are neutral and discuss if there are ways to move them towards becoming allies. Did any group move from one wedge to another, why? | 1 hr. |

**c. Reflection / evaluation**

1. Use RS24 ‘Non-violent Methods Checklist’ to summarise and RS34 ‘Movement for Change Checklist’ to analyse.

2. Generate reflection (philosophical) questions for P4C enquiry.

**d. Suggested follow-up activities**

P4C enquiry based on reflection questions generated

**Teachers’ evaluations of lessons**

Information gathering - benefits of trees:

- Children were able to connect this information with some of the concepts they had learned in science.

Drama activity to explore different perspectives during the protests:

- Children enjoyed this chance to get into character.

- Because this activity involved a lot of creative freedom, some children thrived and - others found it very hard to work as a group.

- It represents a good lesson in cooperation and compromise.

- It was important that children got the chance to consider and hear the voices of people on all sides of this issue.

Pupils very keen to know more. Talked about favourite tree in community – I was surprised at how many children had a favourite tree.