

## WORKSHOP FACILITATORS GUIDE

This guide offers a few simple ways to run a workshop that is lively, generous, and genuinely memorable. We've used it many times, and it never fails to surprise and reward.

### **Creating the right setting**

Choose a space where people can feel at ease – a village hall, a living room, a quiet corner of a pub. Comfort encourages openness. A pot of tea (and cake, if you can manage it) breaks the ice and starts conversations before the workshop even begins. Make sure that people can sit comfortably, and in a way which doesn't suggest a hierarchy – circles are good, rows of chairs and 'top table' are unhelpful. Sitting on the floor can break down barriers, but only if it's comfortable for everyone.

### **Begin with the treasured place itself**

Once you've chosen your "treasured place", start by walking it together. Move slowly. Let people notice textures, sounds, changes in light, what's thriving and what's struggling. Being outside unlocks curiosity and helps everyone settle into a shared sense of attention.

# TREASURED PLACES

## Hosting good conversation

Your role is to hold the space, not to steer it. Make room for every voice – invite quieter participants first, or use a simple “round” so everyone takes a turn. Let discussions meander, but keep a few prompts ready in case things stall or tunnel into one topic.

Useful questions include:

- Who lives, grows, or moves through this treasured place?

Think widely:

- insects, mosses, lichens, roots and the unseen microscopic world of earth, air, water, rocks, soils
- people: communities, landowners, workers, visitors, businesses of stories, memories, myths – and the generations to come
- Whose interests shape this place – and whose should?
- What might harmony look like for all its users, human and other-than-human?
- Is this place resilient enough for the future? What needs care, restoration, or imagination?

## Keeping the space respectful

*Explore difference – don’t shut it down – disagreement is often where the best insights and creativity arise. But be respectful. Try to find areas of agreement that can be built on – but don’t force a false consensus. Ask everyone to listen fully with interruptions. Let each person finish their thought. One playful rule in responding to ideas that often helps is to replace “no, but...” with “yes, and...”. It shifts the tone from blocking to building.*

## And finally

Remember: this is not a test or a debate. It’s an exploration – of a place, of each other, and of the stories and responsibilities we share.

Above all, enjoy it. Let the place do its work.

## WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

A simple framework you can adapt for any group, place, or setting.

The aim is to slow people down, widen their sense of who and what a place holds, and spark collective imagination for its future.

## PREPARATION BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

### 1. Choose your approach

Decide whether everyone will work on one shared treasured place, or whether each group (or individual) will bring and explore their own.

- If it's a shared place: gather maps, photos, sketches, stories.
- If participants choose their own: ask them in advance to bring a map, photo, or simple printed image of that place.

### 2. Gather materials

- A mix of coloured pens/pencils, sticky notes, highlighters.
- Large sheets of paper or printed pages enlarged to A3-A1 if possible.
- If not, simple paper with headings marked up works just as well.

### 3. Provide refreshments

Drinks and food are great communication devices! So try to provide something to drink and nibble on – it genuinely changes the atmosphere and encourages informal conversations.

### 4. Check your venue

Make sure the space has everything you need: chairs, tables, places to pin work up, a wall or whiteboard for group notes, power if required, and somewhere comfortable for breaks.

# TREASURED PLACES

## THE WORKSHOP

All elements, including timings, are advisory so feel free to adjust. If following the structure blow, however, we would advise a minimum of 3 hours to allow for relaxed discussion and progression of ideas. It could also easily be over a whole day.

### 1. Welcome & Introduction (15 minutes)

Set the tone.

Introduce yourself/yourselves

Explain the purpose of the workshop:

- why treasured places matter
- how attention, imagination and collective insight help us understand them
- what the group will produce together by the end of the session (this will depend on your aims, in particular whether you want to come up with an action plan.)

Invite people to relax and enjoy the exploration.

Set ground rules - respect, disagree but don't attack, "yes, and..." not "no, but..."

Health & safety: toilets, fire alarms and escape routes etc.

### 2. What Do We Mean by "Place"? (15 minutes)

A short discussion about the idea of place – not just scenery, but relationships, uses, memories, needs, and dependencies.

Prompt questions:

- Who relies on this place?
- What forms of life and livelihood intersect here?
- How does it feel, sound, or function beyond what we simply see?

This opens up people's thinking before they dive into their own example.

# TREASURED PLACES

## 3. My / Our Treasured Place (30 minutes)

Participants form groups of up to six (or work individually).

They identify a treasured place that matters to them and draw a map of it.

Maps do not need to be accurate – they can be intuitive, emotional, symbolic.

Encourage them to include:

- landmarks
- flows (water, people, animals, wind)
- boundaries
- areas of change or conflict
- hidden or overlooked features

## 4. Who Lives, Grows & Passes Through? (3 x 15-minute rounds)

Use the printed worksheet or the large sheet with headings.

Cover the prompt sections with sticky notes, numbered 1, 2 and 3.

Explain the rhythm:

- Round 1 (15 mins): Remove sticky note 1.  
Participants answer: Who lives, grows, or moves through this place?  
Encourage more-than-human thinking: roots, microbes, moss, weather, stories.
- Round 2 (15 mins): Remove sticky note 2.  
Participants answer: Who could also belong here? What's missing?
- Round 3 (15 mins): Remove sticky note 3.  
Participants answer: How could this place be improved for all its users?

This staged reveal keeps energy high and ideas flowing.

# TREASURED PLACES

## 5. Add Ideas to the Map (30-60 minutes)

Groups return to their hand-drawn maps and annotate them with the insights from the three rounds:

- What actions should happen?
- Where should they happen?
- Who or what benefits?
- Who needs to be involved?

Invite them to prioritise:

- What's essential?
- What's achievable now?
- What needs collaboration, care or imagination?

Encourage visual thinking – arrows, colours, symbols, drawings...

## 6. Group Discussion & Reflection (30-60 minutes)

Come together as a full group.

Invite each team to share their map, insights, and priorities.

Capture key points on a whiteboard or large sheet:

- What patterns recur?
- What tensions or disagreements emerged?
- What delighted or surprised people?

This is where themes begin to crystallise.

# TREASURED PLACES

## 7. Closing & Next Steps (10-15 minutes)

Draw the threads together.

Identify:

- Actions that could realistically be taken
- Who might carry them forward
- What support or collaboration is needed
- Any next meetings, walks, or shared explorations

End with thanks – and a moment to appreciate the creativity and generosity everyone brought.

...and Here's a printable prompt sheet for workshop facilitators. Feel free to adapt this using Chat GPT or similar AI to tailor it to your own needs.

### TREASURED PLACES WORKSHOP – a

		Length of session (in minutes)	Timings start-finish
<b>Doors open</b>	Time for arrivals, registration if needed, refreshments if possible		
<b>1 Welcome</b>	Why these places matter, what we'll explore, and what we'll create together.	15	10.00 – 10.15
<b>2. What Is 'Place'?</b>	A place is more than a view – it's relationships, memory, livelihoods, and more-than-human life.	15	10.00 – 10.15
<b>3. Choose &amp; Map Your Treasured Place</b>	Draw the place from memory or feeling. Add flows, edges, details, stories.	Etc.	Etc to suit
<b>Refreshment break</b>		20	
<b>4. Three Rounds of Insight</b>	1) Who lives, grows, passes through? 2) Who could also belong? 3) How could the place be improved for all?	Etc to suit	
<b>5. Add Ideas to the Map</b>	Mark actions, priorities, and possibilities.		
<b>6. Share &amp; Reflect</b>	Explore themes, tensions, surprises, and opportunities.		
<b>7. Next Steps</b>	Collective actions, responsibilities, and what comes next		

Watch this prompt sheet like a hawk while you are doing the workshop. Be prepared to alter the session lengths, or cut back (a bit!) on the refreshment break, to make sure that the workshop doesn't either overrun or feel unfinished. Build slack into the timings.

# TREASURED PLACES

## Assessment Opportunities

- Observation checklists.
- Map quality and detail.
- Pupil reflections.
- Group presentation.
- Evidence of collaboration.
- Link to Eco-Schools portfolios or evidence for LfS awards.

**Copy the above into an AI engine and ask it to produce Downloadable Materials You**

For example:

- A3 teacher posters
- A full printable Teacher Pack PDF
- Pupil worksheets (mapping sheets, reflection sheets, sticky-note sheets)
- A PowerPoint version for classroom use
- An illustrated zine-style version
- A simple version for primary / a more analytical version for secondary

## On Workshops

Everyone has their own ideas on how to run a workshop, but here are just a couple of places you could go to if you are wanting to develop your ideas:

Howspace.com - [How to facilitate a workshop](#)

Researchgate.net - [Trainers' Guide for Participatory Learning and Action](#)