

Memories Space

April – June 2015



Brief Overview

This design is about creating a Space at the International Permaculture Convergence (IPC) 2015, which can be used to honour and remember those who have died in recent times within the permaculture community.

Observations

Hannah (one of the IPC coordinators) had been having a think about ways that we could remember and honour those that have died within the permaculture community, at the IPC this year, in an accessible, creative, respectful and easy to manage way.

She contacted a selection of people who have either offered, or Joe and Hannah have thought about in connection to permaculture, rites of passage and remembering those who have died and I offered to create the design she had in mind. Cari also very kindly volunteered to help and support the design.

Then, Hannah, Joe (the other IPC coordinator) Cari and myself had an email dialogue to explore visions, needs, ideas and other observations about the Space

...I think there are a number of different ways this could go... - a graffiti wall with photos / memories / poems / spontaneous contributions etc. that can be added at will in a beautiful chaotic way.... to a creation of a permanent memorial (e.g. wooden thing with names carved in for example) that could then be given a permanent home else where after the event... or I am sure there are many other ways this could be done ... maybe something that is burnt or composted at the end of the event? Maybe it is a living thing - a fire, a tree planted, a ceremony.... It could be somewhere quiet, it could be outdoors... it is unlikely that we will find a quiet protected wall somewhere that would feel appropriate (e.g. not the toilet walls!) - sorry if this is adding confusion rather than giving guidance...My personal feeling is that something outdoors and tucked away in a quiet corner would be best in terms of providing space for quiet contemplation and remembrance, and appropriate to the permaculture community. I like the idea of a wall that people can add to, but I guess people will need to know in advance so they can bring pictures, etc. to put up? I like the idea of having pens and things available nearby to allow people to write messages. This would have a nice open organic feel to it rather than the stiff, formal and rather miserable feel that conventional memorials have. I know Patrick would have wanted to be celebrated rather than revered, and permaculture is such a down to earth and positive movement it would be nice to do it differently to reflect *our* culture...A ceremony would be nice - something earthy and celebratory. To give thanks, gratitude and take inspiration from these amazing people we were so blessed to learn from. A tree is a nice idea, perhaps a fruit tree, although not the best time to plant one! I wonder about a procession with lanterns, ending up at a nice bonfire where people can share memories, poems, songs and express love and gratitude. Quite how this would work with big numbers I don't know...I created a 'fire space' for a wedding last

year where people were invited to write down blessings and wishes for the couple and throw them in the fire...then gave the newly weds ash from the fire in a decorated jar and instructions on how to use it in planting an apple tree in their new garden...was quite amazing really ...could also work well for the Memories space? Physical space for people to read/write/draw etc...Quietish location in order for folk to have some reflection time alone and with others..Support resources relating to grief/loss if the space generates difficult emotions for people. People attending the IPC could be informed about the Memories Space prior to the IPC, in order to bring photos etc. with them to the event...Memory wall/board....Memory bench/seating (messages/art tied to and propped against)....Memory tree/cut branches (messages/art tied to and propped against) ...Inside space- yurt, room ...Using resources form as natural sources as possible means that an added element to the design would be that people could take messages/art away from the convergence with them, compost/burn the messages, and then grow food/trees with the compost/ash

*I combined the thoughts and threads from our emails as a **Wild Ideas** gathering. Looking at the observations this way meant I could already start to see common threads and emerging connections but keeping the 'spirit' of our collective creativity*

From the **Wild Ideas** and other **Observations** I identified the main themes and following **functions** -

- * The Memories Space will remember and honour those who have died within the permaculture community in recent times.
- * The Memories Space needs to have a positive organic feel to it rather than a formal, restrictive feel that some memorials have.
- * For the Memories Space to hold an 'event' as well as a continuous space throughout the IPC
- * For the Memories Space to reflect the needs and values, of the permaculture community.

Physical Mapping

The Site for the IPC is a large and varied one there are various potential indoor and our door areas where the Memories Space could be placed

Boundaries

- * Availability of space – the IPC is going to be a large event with many different independently designed elements, which will integrate and connect nearer the actual time of the IPC.
- * Challenging weather
- * Potential upset to people caused by the Memories Space
- * Human time/energy to facilitate – I am also designing the Market Place for the IPC as well as attempting to accredit my Diploma at the event.
- * Getting art/craft stuff to venue, I will be travelling to the IPC on public transport so will be limited in how much physical stuff I can carry

Resources

- * The Memories Space in itself will aim to create a resource.
- * Cari would like to help/support the space in some way. She has lots of experience with linking creativity to special space, but not much spare capacity for time to give to the design before the event. She will also be having her own stall at the Market Place so the design needs to take into account
- * My knowledge and experience about grief, bereavement, loss, celebration of life and creative ways to express this.

Possible physical resources - dependent on chosen location on site but to probably include

- Paper, card, string, wool, ribbon, envelopes (recycled, already cut to 'size')
- Pens, pencils
- Written information – about the Memories Space
- Written support information – recycled paper (organisations, poetry etc.)
- Natural resources available on site (flowers, grasses, twigs, fruits, stones etc.)
- Ethically produced Candles

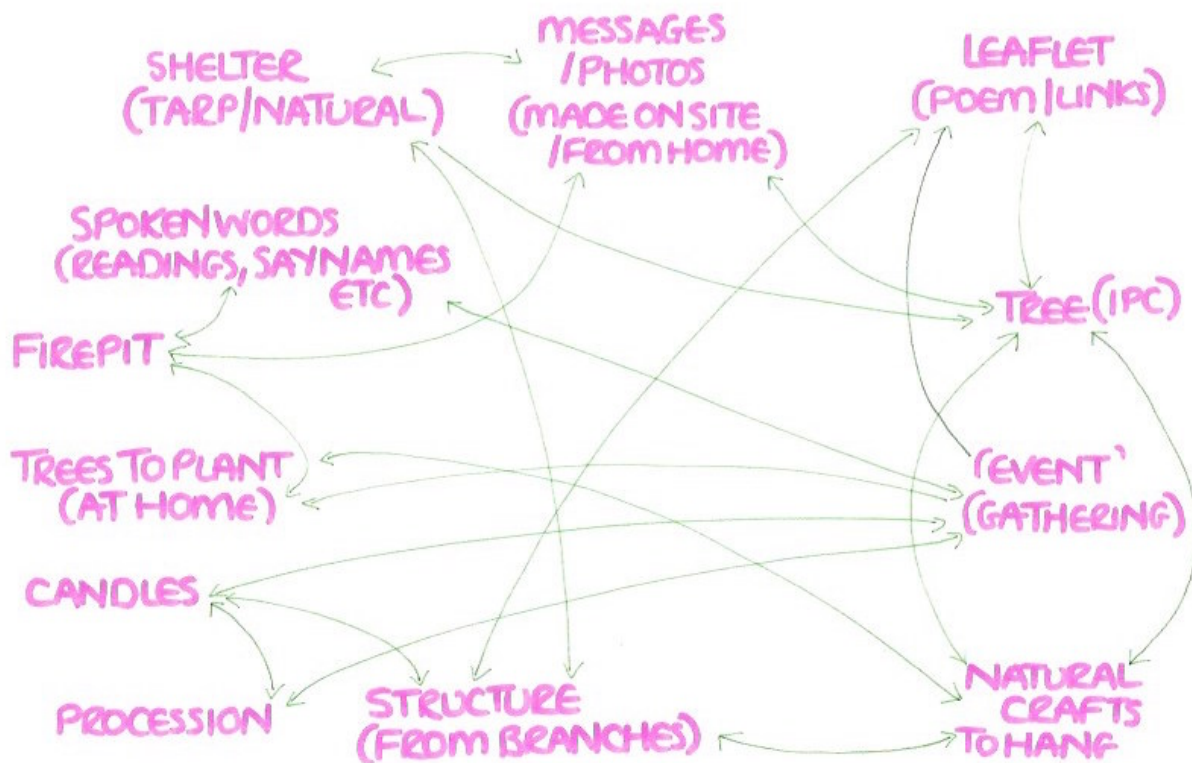
I will be on the site for several days before the event so the Design can be flexible in how it will be implemented according to weather conditions, needs of other designs on site etc.

Analysis

I undertook a PCI (Positives, challenges and Interesting) analysis of the possible physical elements of the potential Space

Activity/Idea	Positives	Challenges	Interesting
Wall/board	Everyone can clearly see contributions, doesn't take up much space.	Is there a free Wall/board in a peaceful part of the site?	Can be easily Photographed/recorded? Although not peaceful, if one of the dining areas were used would be a great central wall area for groups of people to reflect and discuss
Bench/seating	Benches already on site could be located in a quiet area of the site. More flexibility with creativity (sculptures could be made nearby for example). Nature place to pause, reflect and support each other	Rain/wind could mean that art created would be very temporary. Challenging weather for the entire convergence time may mean the Space would be difficult to use	Additional seating could be created with natural resources (logs, stones etc.) as part of the self directed activity by people using the space. Temporary shelter (branches/tarpaulin for example) could give enough shelter in rain/wind
Tree	Lots of trees on site. Could be in a peaceful area Beneficial connections trees/life/death for many people. Very easy to set up in terms of human time/energy. Messages, thoughts, photos etc. could be hung from branches. Many people within the permaculture community have a deep connection with trees	Rain/wind could mean that art created would be very temporary. Challenging weather for the entire convergence time may mean the Space would be difficult to use	Would need a tree with low branches Temporary shelter (branches/tarpaulin for example) could give enough shelter in rain/wind
Gathered branches/twigs In a large pot /sculpture	Could be undercover or outside. Beneficial connections trees/life/death for many people. Not too human time/energy demanding	If outside rain/wind could mean that art created would be very temporary. Challenging weather for the entire convergence time may mean the Space would be	Gathering branches/twigs could be a good activity to do with kids who arrive at the convergence early

		difficult to use	
Undercover (yurt/room)	Not weather dependent. More privacy for peaceful space.	Undercover space on site more limited. Takes time/human energy to organise and potentially maintain (keep tidy etc.)	Might be difficult for some people to have the confidence to visit. (Walking into an enclosed space)
Fire pit area	Fire is a natural area for people to come together and sit quietly or share stories. Messages, written thoughts could be burnt, the ash then used for new life (i.e. a fruit tree)	Risky in terms of damage to either the environment or human health. Having a fire burning each day would use a lot of resources in terms of wood and human energy	Would it be possible to combine a fire pit in the same area as another place area? The fire could just then be used for a ceremony/event?
Procession through the site	Movement of people may crest a good flow of energy. People could join in who wouldn't perhaps visit a static 'Space'	Rain/wind would mean people would get very wet. Would depend on where on site the Space is located and areas around it (busy /noisy with other activities etc?)	Could be organised spontaneously at the IPC after further decisions about location of Space, knowledge of weather and other activities



Beneficial connections between possible elements identified

I then used some of the Mollison and Slay **Permaculture Principles** to help guide the design further -

Relative location

The Space needs to be in a peaceful location on site, but near enough to others so that people feel safe to spend time alone there, and perhaps children can visit without supervision. If a procession is held as part of the design, the route of this is also a consideration

Each important function is supported by many elements

Function	Possible elements
The Memories Space will remember and honour those who have died within the permaculture community in recent times.	Tree, branches, bench, wall, art/craft items, Procession, fire, candles, Event (spoken thoughts, poems etc.), photos, branches/tarp for shelter, candles & holders, plant a tree (after the event) with ash from the fire
The Space needs to have a positive organic feel to it rather than a formal, restrictive feel that some memorials have.	Tree, branches, bench, wall, art/craft items, Procession, fire, candles, Event (spoken thoughts, poems etc.), photos, branches/tarp for shelter, candles & holders, plant a tree (after the event) with ash from the fire
For the Space to hold an 'event' as well as a continuous space throughout the IPC	Tree, branches, bench, wall, art/craft items, Procession, fire, candles, Event (spoken thoughts, poems etc.), photos, branches/tarp for shelter, candles & holders, plant a tree (after the IPC) with ash from the fire
For the Space to reflect the needs and values, of the permaculture community.	Tree, branches, bench, wall, art/craft items, Procession, fire, candles, Event (spoken thoughts, poems etc.), photos, branches/tarp for shelter, candles & holders, plant a tree (after the IPC) with ash from the fire

It was really interesting to see how all the possible elements identified in **Observations** actually supported the 4 functions. At this point I felt really inspired to utilise as many of them as possible.

Using biological resources

Trees, fire, human energy, recycled paper for thoughts and handouts, natural things available on the site (leaves, flowers, branches etc.) are all some of the main elements being explored.

Cycling of energy, nutrients, and resources. Burning or composting

Have a fire as part of the 'Event', burn written thoughts and poems and then plant a tree (after the IPC) with ash from the fire.

Diversity

Hopefully the range of elements should ensure that as many people as possible at the IPC (with a wide range of global backgrounds, beliefs and experiences) feel they can engage with the Memories Space.

Edge Effects

I am aware from other designs in my nursing and permaculture work that the subject of death and dying is an Edge one for many people. Hopefully the design will help to generate more discussion, creativity and solutions focus at this Edge

Consideration of **Permaculture Ethics** -

At this point the design feels like it will utilise all 3 of the **Permaculture Ethics**. Using as many natural resources as possible for physical items needed for the design (Trees, craft made with natural stuff on site (leaves, twigs, flowers, stones for example), not burning excessive amounts of wood and using recycled paper products paper products, perhaps supporting people well in their grief so they do not need to access additional support services) all embrace the **Earth Care** ethic. **Fair Shares** is demonstrated by: the diverse range of elements being considered for the design will hopefully ensure that the Memories Space will connect with as many people as possible at the IPC. In addition, people connecting with the Space will have access to experience and information that they previously hadn't had. Every function of the Design is grounded in optimum care of **People**.

At this point in the Design I also wrote a **risk assessment**, which although not a typical permaculture tool, was a requirement for the event and useful in terms of helping the progression of the design

IPC 2015 Memories Space Design

Risk Assessment May 2015

Katie Shepherd – Memories Space Coordinator

Risk	Likelihood of occurrence	Possible severity of harm	Actions taken to reduce risk and harm
Slips, Trips and Falls – as, at times the Memories Space will be an area of the site where groups of people attending the IPC will gather at one time. Due to the nature of the Space, the lighting may be low (i.e. candles used)	Low- medium People attending the IPC are likely to be mindful of the needs of others, and take responsibility for ensuring self care relating to safety	Low - medium Minor cuts, grazes and bruises which mainly require self-care. Some people may need minor medical attention	Memories Space designed to ensure a smooth flow of traffic around and too and from the Space. Any increased risky areas (uneven ground/low branches) to be pointed out to people using the space and if possible lit by candles. IPC attendees will be aware about how to access First Aid on site.
Burns if candles are used	Low- medium	Low - medium	Candles used will be the small flame 'tea

	People attending the IPC are likely to be mindful of the needs of others, and take responsibility for ensuring self care relating to safety	Minor burns, which mainly require self-care. Some people may need minor medical attention	light' variety There will be a bucket of water at the Space for prompt treatment of any burns. IPC attendees will be aware about how to access First Aid on site.
Emotional upset due to the nature of the Memories Space (a place to remember people who have died recently)	Medium People attending the IPC are likely to be mindful of the needs of others, and take responsibility for ensuring self care relating to emotional needs	Low Emotional upset is a normal part of grief, which most people deal with in a healthy way with appropriate support. Long term or severe upset through this kind of Space only occasionally occurs	There will be written information about grief and bereavement, and support available (organizations, social networks, others at the IPC) as part of the Memories Space Design.

Above actions to be taken by me (Katie) with support from other IPC workers and volunteers

Decisions and Implementation

The **Analysis** has demonstrated that in fact most of the wants and needs outlined in the **Observations** can be met by the design to provide a Space, which will be able to creatively respond to change

Flow chart

- Detailing the decisions made for the Memories Space and the plan for **implementation**

August – 1st week

Post to IPC attendees telling them about the Memories Space and giving them the opportunity to collect photos, poems etc. to bring with them about the 'Space (IPC blog, Facebook, Twitter, email)



Sept 1st week

(Same) Post to IPC attendees telling them about the Memories Space and giving them the opportunity to collect photos, poems etc. to bring with them about the Memories Space



'Memories Space' Leaflets, book for comments, Art /Craft stuff and Tea light candles delivered to a friend who lives very near the IPC site



Sept – 1st week

I spend time on Site helping to set up for the IPC and making final decisions about various elements of the design (Trees, Branches, fire pit, Procession) according to weather conditions and other designs on site



My friend delivers the Art stuff etc. to the IPC site



I physically create the Memories Space according to the final decisions made



Memories Space 'Event' timetabled into IPC week in connection with, other designs, IPC coordinators and weather conditions – ideally towards the end of the IPC



At the IPC

Regular announcements will be made telling people about the Space and any tweaks to the design at the morning circles and via information boards



Both Cari and myself will at times be present at the space to support people with creativity, and understanding the Space if needed



Memories 'Event' – me to co-ordinate – created with the needs/wants of those attending in mind but could include – a fire in the fire pit, burning messages /photos/ crafts hung from the tree/branches, lighting candles, people being invited to speak thoughts, say names, read poems etc., a procession leading to the event.



At the closing of the Memories Event people attending reminded about the leaflet with support details available



If fire held and messages burnt, ash collected – offered to people to take some away to place under a new tree



As the IPC closes

If the decision was to not burn the messages etc., then people invited to take them home and compost for use in planting a tree.



Immediately after the IPC

I clear up the Memories Space- burning any messages etc. left and will take the ash from them home to plant my own tree.



The only other 'waste' should be the metal holders from the tea lights, which will be placed in recycling facilities on site



On my return home from the IPC

Evaluation of Memories Space written by me and sent to IPC coordinators – this will include any verbal or written feedback made from those at the IPC about the 'Space



Future

If the Memories Space design is successful then similar Spaces could be created for future permaculture events

The physical aspect of the Memories Space will have the following available to enable people using the 'Space to be able create messages and other expressions of emotion and celebration -

- Small pieces of card, with string attached
- Safe children's glue
- Extra natural string
- Safety scissors
- Tea light candles
- Coloured pens
- Examples of creations to hang made from natural resources on site
- Leaflets which include, written information about the Memories Space and Ideas for how to use it and a list of diverse useful sources relating to death, dying and bereavement Leaflet design
- Note/drawing book for people to be able to express thoughts and reflections about the 'Space

Memories Space

At the
International Permaculture Convergence 2015

The Memories Space aims to provide ways that we can remember and honour those that have died within the permaculture community in a creative and respectful way.

I have designed this space to be as accessible to as many people as possible, whatever your age, background, culture, experience of death or spiritual beliefs.

Please feel free to use this space in whatever creative way you would like to...sit quietly, meditate, chat to others, write messages, draw pictures, light candles, create sculptures, and hang photos & written messages from the tree. Towards the end of the IPC I will burn the messages and photos hanging in the tree, then use the ash to plant a fruit tree this winter ...If you would like to take your message, art work or photo away with you then please indicate this on your hanging. At some time during the IPC there will be a structured time where those who want to can gather to further honour and celebrate the lives of those within our global permaculture network who have died - listen out for announcements.

Resources

Below are some of my favorite online resources about Death Dying and Bereavement. There's lots of information and support within them about grief, remembering those close to us who have died, and ways in which you can prepare for your own death

<http://www.dyingmatters.org>

<http://www.thegroundswellproject.com>

<http://www.cruse.org.uk>

<http://www.winstonswish.org.uk>

<http://deathcafe.com>

<https://www.finalfling.com>

<http://www.recover-from-grief.com>

<http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk>

If after connecting with the Memories Space you feel the need for more immediate support, then I know there are many folk here at the IPC who would be keen to offer a listening ear, or please seek me out directly and we can chat. **Katie Shepherd** - craftychick1@fastmail.co.uk

When Great Trees Fall - Maya Angelou

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.
When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.
When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks
never taken.
Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.
We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of dark, cold
caves.
And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.

Costings

I will bring my own supply of glue, scissors, hemp string, coloured pens and printer ink, all of which can be used again by further projects

Card - £4.80/ 100

<https://www.eco-craft.co.uk/a6-natural-card-kraft-100-pk.html>

Ethical vegan tea lights - £25/ 80

http://www.hapibean.co.uk/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage-ask.tpl&product_id=20&category_id=8&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=35

Recycled Printer Paper - £4

Widely available

People using the craft items at the Memories Space, will be asked if they could make a financial donation towards the cost of the materials. If they feel able, but there will be no pressure to do so. I will make any outstanding cost, as a donation to the running and promotion of the IPC.

Maintain

The Memories Space will be regularly visited by myself, and possibly Cari, to ensure that the risks outlined in the risk assessment are continued to be minimized, and that art/craft supplies are tidy and available etc.

Evaluate and Tweak

A comments book left at the Memories Space, plus verbal feedback from people using the 'Space, IPC crew and my own observations of how the 'Space is being used will mean that I can evaluate the effectiveness of the design on a daily, (or more if needed), basis at the IPC and make tweaks if needed.

As outlined in the **Implementation**, following the IPC I will evaluate the effectiveness of the Memories Space and send this evaluation to Hannah and Joe. Hopefully, if the design is a successful one, it could be repeated at further permaculture, (or other), events.

Memories Space – Design Evaluation

Design process used

Observe Boundaries Resources Analysis Decisions Evaluate Tweak

Assessment Criteria aims

Demonstrating Design Skills

Applying permaculture to your work and projects

Developing your permaculture practice

Permaculture Research Institute Category

Art / Culture

Design Consultancy

Event Design

Design Evaluation and Reflections

The Memories Space design hasn't been implemented yet so it isn't possible to evaluate its effectiveness. Instead, I've evaluated my use of the design process and integrated this with my reflections of the same

Strengths

Undertaking this design really feels like a natural flow from, and connection with one of the earlier designs included in my portfolio, 'Designing Dying.' Its helped me to see at this, (near completion), stage of my Diploma how much of a journey with connected designs my Diploma has been. I've used OBREDIMET many times now as a design framework with a diverse range of permaculture work since my PDC, and Its felt really positive to adapt it slightly knowing that I had the learnt confidence to recognize when some changes in the design process could be beneficial. 'Analysis' rather than 'evaluate' made more sense for this design – in addition, it also made sense to link 'Decisions' and 'Implementation' and also 'Evaluate' and 'Tweak' together in the write-up, to ensure the design flowed well. Also, as in previous designs of mine 'D' is 'Decisions' made' rather than 'Design', which feels like it, should be the whole process. Using PCI (Positives, Challenges and Interestings – again a slight deviation from the usual PMI - Positives, Minuses, Interestings – purely because I like to use the word 'challenge' rather than 'minus' as it gives the design a big nudge to consider a solution), to analyse the various physical spaces for the Memories Space was really helpful in order to make sense of quite a number of passionate ideas from different people about the Space.

Weaknesses

The design feels a bit vulnerable in its resilience, because there are many decisions that can't be made until the last minute. I'm hoping that the careful consideration of the different design stages and a detailed plan for implementation, shared with other key people designing and coordinating at the IPC will increase the resilience as we get nearer to the implementation date. However, part of

me also wonders if risking this vulnerability and trusting that the design will be robust at the last minute is also a sign of the progression of my designing skills. I found exploring the connections between the different elements useful, but then haven't really followed through why those connections are beneficial and how they can make the design a more effective one. I could have used more Principles within the design, although I wanted to push my comfort zone Edge by actively seeking out Mollison Principles, which I don't always feel as confident with, compared to Holmgren ones

Opportunities

Writing the 'Decisions' and 'Implementation' as a design summary, which could be sent to others involved in designing the IPC, meant I could stack some functions, as well as providing a clear, easy to read (and hopefully) easy to understand plan for the busy multitasking IPC coordinators. Designing for part of the IPC has been such a privilege, and most definitely an opportunity. Being approached to do the design has made me realise how far my permaculture learning has developed, and that others recognize this in me. As I have been working on the Memories Space design, I have also been mindful of the fact that the basis of this design may well be something that can be adapted for further permaculture (and other?) gatherings.

Constraints

I have felt constrained at times by not implementing this design yet (new territory for me!), before it's assessed, but at the same time it's felt good to give it a go too. Working as part of a much bigger whole design the IPC has been challenging at times, (effective communication with other busy people, not knowing the site well, needing to be flexible because of unknowns about other designs at the IPC). The subject matter covered in the design is difficult for some people and I have also identified this as a constraint. Lastly as I have undertaken this design I have been going through my own loss issues and facing the death of a close family member which although definitely a constraint at times has also meant I can very much connect, and take comfort and healing from the design.