Zoom out to zoom in on the community

Adrian O'Sullivan

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I have 24 years experience in proprietary Telco Software, but in 2017, I caught the OSS bug

EU OpenHarmony Community lead, ONAP PTL LFN, EF Edge Native Steering Committee rep

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3 Things you don't know about me

I coach an Irish sport called hurling

My favourite place to visit is Dingle

I have 3 children, aged 15, 12 and 9 years old

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2020 – What did I Experience?

Q1

- News of the Pandemic first broke
- Had a great time at FOSDEM 2020 ☺
- Cancelation of travel
- Work office in Ireland closed in March
- Initially felt WFH was going to be short-term
- Carried on as Normal….ish

Q2

- First of many Physical events being rescheduled to be a Virtual event (e.g. ONES NA Apr -> Sep)
- Work in ONAP projects carried on as normal – as I knew the people
- Discovered my locality
- Began to miss workmates banter

Q3

- Joined new community's groups (OpenHarmony & EF Edge Native)
- Online meeting fatigue started
- Frustration of not being able to meet new OpenHarmony teammates F2F
- Feelings of Isolation began ☹

Q4

- Virtual Event overload
- Experience of staffing the Virtual Stand/Booth
- Worry for the loss of the Human side of communities
- Determined to deal with the Isolation
- Hope with news of a vaccine
- Decided to talk about it with you, FOSDEM 21 ☺

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Isolation during the Pandemic

- Isolation : **"the condition of being alone, especially when this makes you feel unhappy"**
  - Cambridge Dictionary

- Some Context , I am lucky to have my office down my back garden for a quiet place to work as per the picture on the front slide. However I am also now alone more than I have ever been in my life thus far

- Humans Interacting via virtual means is not full substitute to real face to face communication, at least in my experience

- Andrew Hutching's heartfelt presentation on Recognising Burnout at FOSDEM 20' noted that Isolation can become a potential cause leading to Burnout

- These are challenging times for the world, Depression & Burnout can become more prevalent when there is no separation of your work and home life for those that need to work from home

What effects do I think Pandemic had on FOSS Communities?

- Code seemed immune, it kept **growing!**
- Used for even more new **useful purposes** (e.g. within tools for data visualization for healthcare workers)
- Reviewed by more people who have **never met**

Code

- Foundations had to **adapt** to rely on virtual methods to attract & retain new members
- Lost valuable source of **funding**, such as event cancellations

Governance

- Cancelled or moved **online**
- Introduction of the **Virtual Stands/Booths**
- Generated a rush to create as interactive as possible Event platforms, however there is nothing to fully replace **Human connection**

Events

- The Public benefited from the **innovative** new open source based applications to help fight the virus, such as contact tracing applications
- Relied even more on **Cloud Network Connectivity**, to work & to be entertained which open source helps fulfil

Public

Developers

- For many, transitioned to **WFH**
- OSS Teams at work and also wider community reduced to **Virtual meetings**
- May have felt little **isolated** like me

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So what little things can we do to improve?

Community – Know your members

- Where are they from
- Local Customs
- Their Time zone

- Hobbies
- Family
- Favourite places to visit

Culture

Interests

Job Role

Goals

- Expertise
- Working Environment
- Fulltime or Part-time

- Leader or participant
- Business or Technical
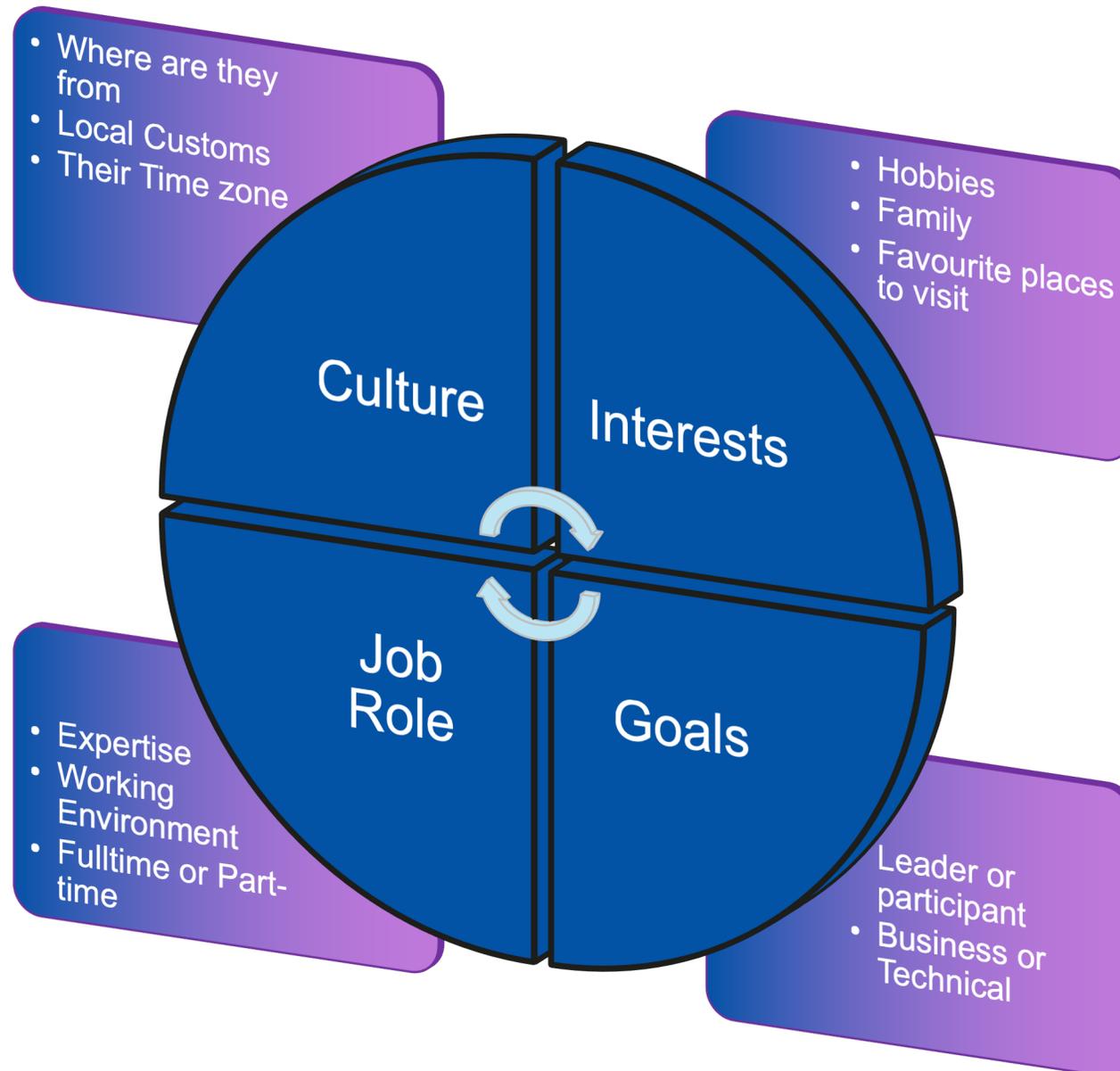
Be aware of the Dangers with Print in FOSS

1 You author a change and summit a gerrit review. You receive a comment from someone you have never met **"Why did you not add the associated Junit for this code modification?"**

2 Print can often seem more harsh than was intended by the comment author. Ok, in this instance the comment author could have said something more verbose like **"It is best practice for this code modification to also have Junit tests. It really helps our code coverage and quality. Please add an associated Junit test, you can add it here…."**

3 However lets change it slightly. For the first more harsh looking text. If this was a comment from someone you have shared a coffees(or beer!) with at FOSDEM, you may have knowledge that the person means well, would you react in the same way?

4 The Pandemic has meant an increase in seeing print from people we have no idea of

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Friendly Virtual Exhibitor Stands/Booths

Many OSS events, including FOSDEM 21' introduced Virtual Stands to substitute the physical event stands due to the pandemic

My great project
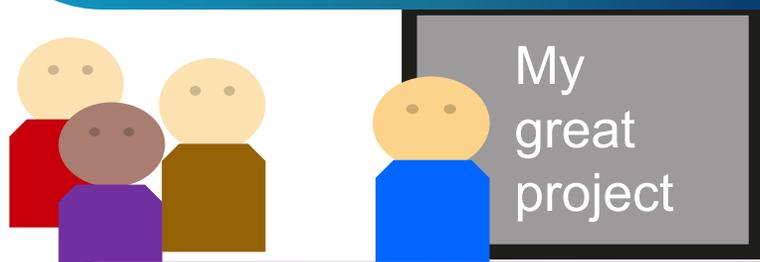
When you are at home, and a session breaks for 15 mins coffee break, where do you go?

How can we make Virtual Stands less scary to interact with?

- Put pictures and introductions to the people who are answering the chat questions
- Online event platform to mimic social events, e.g. drag your icon to a specific table
- Arrange virtual space to entice contact versus download a brochure

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Some video role play, maybe to get you thinking
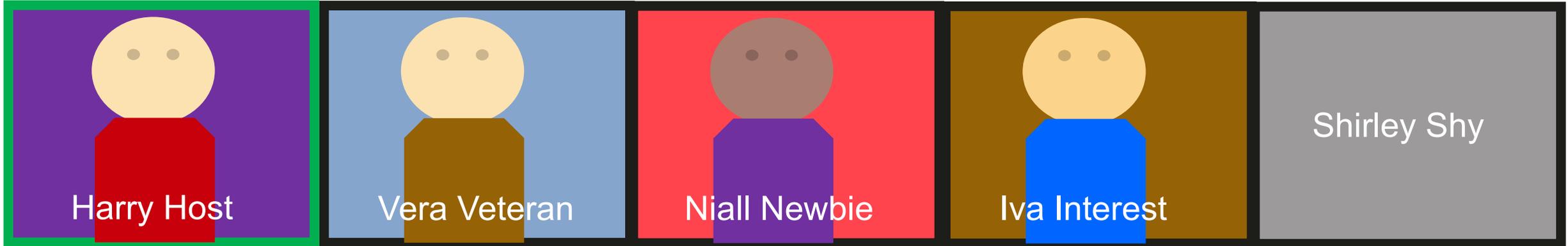
- Harry Host is a PTL running his weekly project call.
- Harry takes very good care of the project, really keeping an eye over almost all project activities
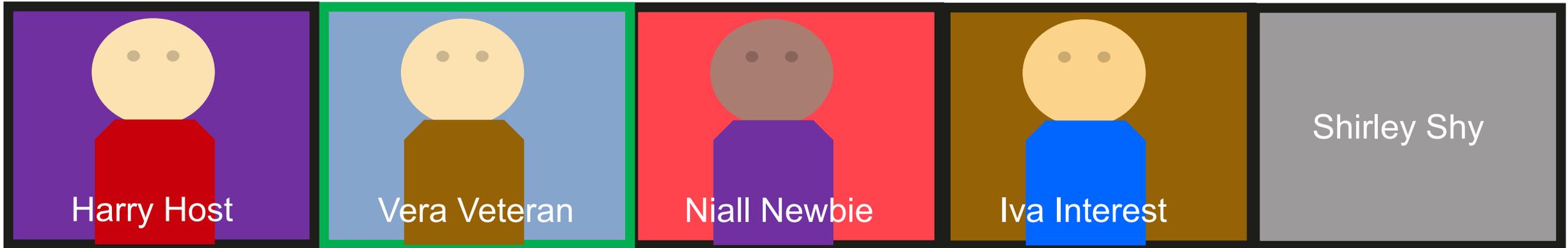
- Vera Veteran is a top programmer, a great asset to the project, and has contributed to this project for years.
- However Vera does like the sound of her own voice and given half an opportunity will take the full meeting time

Harry Host

Vera Veteran

Niall Newbie

Iva Interest

Shirley Shy

- Niall Newbie has just dialled into his second call, he has just made his first contributions to the project this week and is proud about it.
- Niall does not know the others on the call yet, other than Vera eventually committed his change to master

Harry Host

Vera Veteran

Niall Newbie

Iva Interest
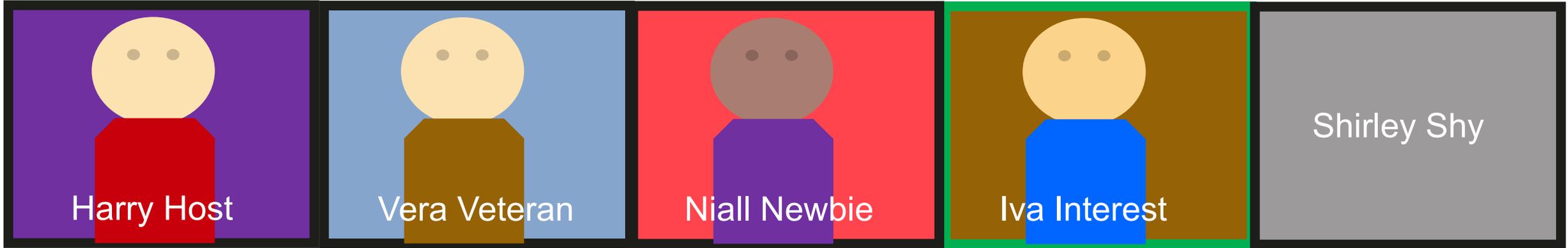
Shirley Shy

- Iva Interest, heard great things about this project.
- She has skills that would be a great benefit to this team, if only the others knew

Harry Host   Vera Veteran   Niall Newbie   Iva Interest   Shirley Shy
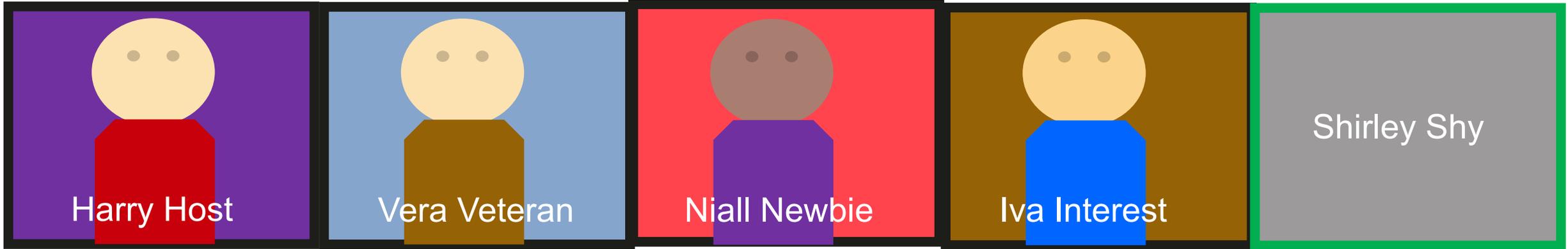
- Everyone assumes Shirley Shy just does not want to turn on her camera because she is shy.
- Actually its because in her local timezone it very late and she dials in her pyjamas.
- No one has ever asked her where she was from

Maybe the wrong way
for Harry start this call … ?

Harry Host

Vera Veteran

Niall Newbie

Iva Interest

Shirley Shy
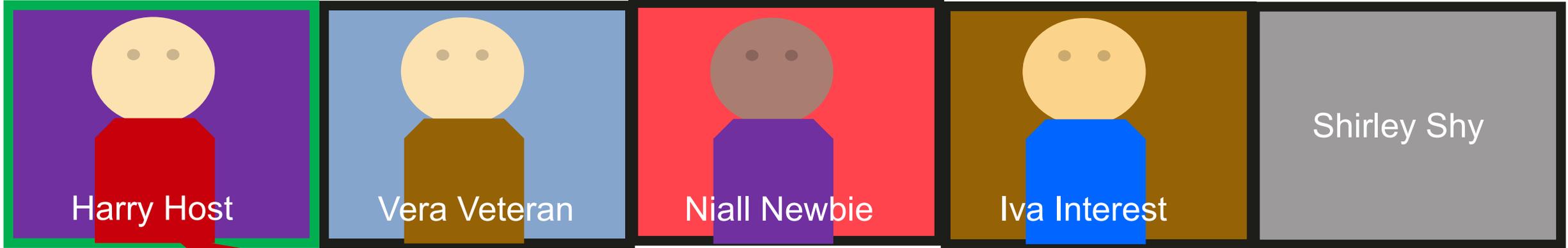
Hi All, welcome to the meeting. We have a busy week ahead of us so Vera, can you please take us through the new feature design for project X. I think you can take the full hour as it is really important.

Maybe a better way
for Harry start this call ... ?

Harry Host | Vera Veteran | Niall Newbie | Iva Interest | Shirley Shy
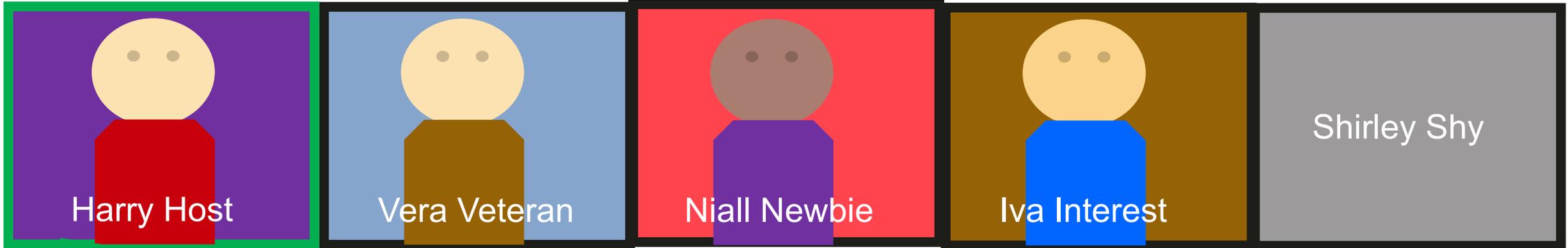
Hi All, welcome to the meeting. I'd like to acknowledge everyone dialing in, your participation in these difficult times is really appreciated. On today's agenda, Vera has very kindly offered to take us through the new feature design for project X. Before we get to that I wanted to congratulate Niall Newbie for his first commits to this project, round of applause everyone please!. Niall, if you'd like to introduce yourself please do, as I know there are a lot new faces for you? I also think it would be of benefit for a quick 10 mins roundtable for everyone to introduce yourselves, where you are from, what your interested in or anything else you'd like to share with us?

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Final Thoughts

In 2021, putting just 5-10 mins of showing a little **empathy & awareness** of the effects the pandemic might be having on the **people** writing the code, printing those comments in gerrit, answering an event chatbox and dialling into your virtual calls is time very well spent in my book

Thank You, happy to take any questions you have

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https://git.ostc-eu.org/OSTC

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