



## Newsletter No 39 – October 2018

[www.transitiontownbridport.co.uk](http://www.transitiontownbridport.co.uk)

**Transition Town Bridport** - a project working to bring together the people of Bridport to plan a life beyond dependence on oil, to reduce the carbon footprint of the town and to make it resilient to change.

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### From the editor:

I wasn't sure what to write about this edition. Then I remembered the headlines in early September when a young Swedish schoolgirl launched her "School Strike for the Climate". [Greta Thunberg](#) simply sat in the street outside the Swedish Parliament with her placard, refusing to go to school, to draw attention to the climate crisis. Her protest got the attention of millions, as did her [simple speech](#) challenging governments to act.

She said, in effect, "What's the use of going to school if they are not teaching us about climate change and how to combat it?" And it's a good point. We have had all types of environmental education over the last thirty years: we used to call it 'education in the environment' when it was just doing nature walks; 'education through the environment' when we argued that National Curriculum Maths and English and Science and lots of other subjects could be taught by studying the natural world, and we made long lists of attainment targets that could be met to satisfy Ofsted; and we had 'education for the environment' when we showed films and used workbooks and toolkits to describe how the planet was in danger and tried to convince pupils that "the world is in our hands" and we (or rather they) have to "save" it.

I have long been dubious about the argument that children will go home and "teach their parents" what they learn in the classroom. I wish it was true, but only in the case where what is taught in the classroom is worth knowing. This argument also heaps all the responsibility for solving the planet's problems on to its weakest and most powerless citizens – i.e. those who can't vote. Talk about an imbalance of power and responsibility! In a sense, Greta

Thunberg is doing the classic, and indeed only thing the powerless can do – withdraw consent to participate in the system and stand as an example to shame the rest of us. But of course her, and our, daily life is deeply implicated in global systems and in reality we can't extricate ourselves.

It has been shown that adults must model the behaviour they wish children to learn, and children are great hypocrisy detectors. If teachers' behaviour does not reflect the values they are trying to teach; if the school does not follow through with principles and policies that embody those values; if the point of education is still selling some pipe dream about getting a well paid job (and, to paraphrase David Orr, lifetime earnings are only a crude but useful measure of the amount of carbon transferred by the earner from the earth's crust to the atmosphere), then it is surprising that more young students are not sitting outside Parliament and refusing to go to school.

Just as economics students are now **demanding to be taught the real economics** of what happens outside the university in the real world, so it would be good to see a growing movement to challenge the way mainstream education supports the 'business as usual' scenario which threatens the future wellbeing of all, especially the young. CW

### **Open EcoHomes 2018**

Fourteen homes opened over two weekends at the end of September, to showcase different approaches to lower Carbon living. Our hosts reported around 220 visitors. The feedback I got from hosts included "Lots of questions on technology and also low tech things like curtain lining"; "People liked the fact that we did things ourselves, keeping costs realistic"; "I had a very nice thank you card this morning from a lady in Beaminster who visited us on Sunday morning and is in the process of managing a similar renovation, and is particularly interested in ground source heating." ; "... I had thanks from all, and two unsolicited very favourable comments"; "all seemed genuinely interested".

This year we had three new homes. In the New Hive in Ryall, Georgia and Giorgio have used geothermal energy and a mechanical ventilation with Heat Recovery system to keep their house warm, along with a super-efficient wood burner. This has allowed them to have a wonderful house with huge windows overlooking the countryside.





At Marles Farm near Waytown, Sebastian and Katie bought a derelict 200 year old farmhouse and brought it up to modern standards of insulation, humidity control and comfort without losing any of the traditional feel of the place. Their emphasis on the conversion, and the new house on the site of the dairy, was to use local labour and materials

wherever possible.

At Forest Farm near Monkton Wyld, Dave and Sophy undertook the conversion and extension of the old farmhouse themselves. They used greenwood larch and oak and traditional mortise and tenon or more complex joints, fastened using only wooden pegs. This use of natural materials and ancient skills will ensure the longevity of this building long after other modern buildings have failed.



*The new barn at Forest Farm*

This is the sixth year we have run the EcoHomes event and it continues to offer a wide range of approaches to more sustainable living, as well as exemplars of domestic batteries, geothermal energy, use of natural materials, green roofs, rainwater recovery, solar thermal and electric power and effective insulation.

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### **Building Sustainable Houses**

The Old Christian Science building on Rax Lane, soon to be demolished, was the venue for four talks on greener building. Sarah Small, RIBA, gave an account of building her own passive house in Weymouth. This standard of building involves very thick insulation, air-tightness, use of the Sun's heat in winter, and a ventilation system which pre-heats incoming air with heat from the out-going stale air. Sarah showed us just how much was involved in ensuring that every corner was sealed with special tape, and ensuring that the electrician or plumber did not drill through the walls. The result is a house which stays the same temperature all the year round without the need for heating. Sarah's blog can be read on [www.tinyurl.com/y82drzuh](http://www.tinyurl.com/y82drzuh).

I gave an outline of our plans for a near-passive house on the site of the venue where the talk was being held, and raised questions about water harvesting, wood-burning stoves and battery storage.

Vince Adams gave an outline of the plan to build 280 low energy houses in Watton Village near Pymore, which will be really affordable for local young families; then Judith Griffies and Chris Reynolds gave an outline of the ongoing plans for cohousing for 53 dwellings opposite Bridport Community hospital. They hope to start building in January. (Sam)

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## **Bio Beads on the Beach**

Those of you who were involved in our "anti-plastics" Green Fortnight last Spring may remember about seventy of us turning up at the Esplanade Beach at West Bay for a beach-clean - at the same time as scores of noisy bikers who were on a charitable run. The double booking of the seafront made life for me as the organiser of the beach clean a little difficult - it is hard shouting above all the Wild Bunch revving of engines -



but albeit rather chaotically we managed to find what I was looking for: little turquoise and black plastic beads about the size of a lentil. Two thousand of them!

They are mainly to be found at the highwater tide line and only in one corner of the beach. At first you couldn't spot them - then suddenly they were all too visible. It is not nice to think of lying amongst all this man-made detritus when what you wanted was a nice basket on some clean sand. Nor is it nice to contemplate how dangerous these biobeads are for wildlife. They apparently are mistaken for fish eggs by sea birds, particularly fulmars, the British version of the albatross, who sweep them off the surface of the waves, swallow them and can then die. Crabs and lobsters mistakenly eat them too. The pellets are quite toxic because the little ridges on them cling on to all sorts of chemicals including heavy metals.

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The jar illustrated here and kept at the Discovery Centre in West Bay as a pollution warning is only the beginning of the story. Where do the beads come from and how do they end up at West Bay? Some of you may have seen a rather enlightening "Inside Out" documentary on BBC 1 South West on September 17th. The programme focussed mainly on Cornwall, where the biobead problem is even worse. We saw bags containing nine million, yes, nine million of them in the back of a van where they'd been collected from all over the county. Pollution by biobeads was shown on the Tamar Estuary in particular.

I was intrigued by the programme because it just happened to come the day after a second beach clean I ran at Esplanade Beach. Have the biobeads gone? No. Far from it. We found more than 3,000!

And now after many months, many letters and emails and the threat of going to the media we are on the point of making some progress because South West Water, who use biobeads as part of the filtering process at two local plants - Exmouth and Uplyme - have agreed for us to make a site inspection. It is our belief that the biobeads in their tanks have escaped into water courses, then out to sea, then on to our beaches. But how many thousands or perhaps millions are their still in the sea?

When our party of seven - people from West Bay, Bridport, Lyme Regis and the Charmouth Heritage Centre and a representative from Litter Free Coast and Sea - have visited the two plants we will be in a better informed position. South West Water make millions of pounds in profits each year. They say they are now installing extra filtering screens to stop biobeads escaping. But have they admitted liability for previous escapes? Or offered to clean up beaches? No.

We hope to report to all concerned soon. (Joe Hackett) [Back to Top](#)

### **Edible Garden at St Mary's School**

We report on some wonderful work going on at St Mary's School. Thanks to Sarah Wilberforce for this contribution.

### **St Mary's School pledge for more veg**

Back in 2014, a group of volunteers from Transition Town Bridport (TTB) and HOME in Bridport installed a polytunnel in St Mary's Primary School in response to the national and local concern about children's health and diet.

The school is in the catchment area of the Skilling estate, a disadvantaged community, and the project was aimed at tackling food poverty and supporting an increase in the take-up of free school meals. The food grown is used in the school kitchen and fruit tuck.

In the four years since the garden has been in operation, school meals have become more popular but there were concerns about waste, especially of vegetables. With a grant from Awards for All, the team planned a project, linking up with **Peas Please**, to start promoting vegetables through growing, preparing and eating together. In April 2018, the project was



*Harvest Festival garden produce*

launched at an assembly of the whole school. To kick off the campaign, children had the opportunity to add their own personal veg pledge in a "pledge tree". A nutritionist ran a series of workshops with the older pupils, which involved basic food choices for health and pleasure. Fun tasks were created to discover different tastes and to understand the role of all the senses in eating. The head-cook and two food educators led a five-week cookery course for parents and children using only fresh vegetables. Participants were then given a recipe book containing all the dishes from the course. The two part-time gardeners worked with pupils to grow legumes from seed. A 'Legume Castle' was planted and harvested throughout the summer.

In June there was an open afternoon entitled 'Taste the Garden'. The mayor, the pupils' families and various visitors were invited to enjoy snacks prepared by the families who'd taken the cookery course, games (including 'Pea Ping Pong') and storytelling courtesy of a creative parent. The cooks were also part of the Bridport Food Festival, leading workshops in the children's marquee.

The project culminated with a harvest celebration in September, where the whole school participated in picking and podding dried beans, making pumpkin soup, baking bread, and sharing a meal together. This work has been recognised by the George Payne Memorial Trophy from the Melplash Agricultural Show, which is awarded to St Mary's Edible Garden Project for achievement in an educational allotment.

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*Gardeners Tia and Mitch with the George Payne Memorial trophy*



*Food bank Harvest*

### **Produce to the Food Bank**

During the summer holidays the EG team watered, cared for and picked produce from the garden (a bumper year of crops). Some tomatoes were frozen for Amanda and Mel. The rest was delivered to Cupboard Love in the church. On one week, Tia tells us, a little girl proudly showed her mum that she had helped grow the food that they were receiving.

### **Future Plans for the garden**

The EG team have been talking about the development of the garden; many of the plans are going to be done this school year, depending on time and resources. The principles of permaculture are at the heart of all that we do. As Tia says "The main ethics are people care, earth care and fair share". We have always tried to practise that within the restraints of a school organisation. We hope to have a larger HOME group meeting soon and would welcome any thoughts from the school on what their priorities are for the community, especially the children. (Sarah)



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## Melplash Show

TTB had their usual presence at Melplash Show in August with a display about Open Eco Homes and Green Fortnight. Always good to get new names on our mailing list!

## Philosophy in Pubs – from Kelvin Clayton

Following the Socratic tradition, philosophy for me is not about acquiring knowledge or being able to quote famous philosophers, but acquiring a critical attitude; it's about challenging received opinion, exposing the inherent uncertainty within professed certitude, and learning to think in new, more creative ways.

Moreover, because this is all very difficult to do in solitude, it's also about creating a safe community environment where ideas can be expressed, considered and challenged. And whilst the Bridport Philosophy in Pubs group may not always achieve these aims, they are what motivate me to run the group.

These aims also resonate with the Transition Town movement. For a community to become more resilient to the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation it needs to learn to challenge the received opinion that has led us to such a critical point; it needs to reveal the flaws in the thinking of the dominant institutions that are expressed with such certainty; and it most definitely needs to think in more creative ways.

The group meets on the third Wednesday of the month in The George Hotel in South Street. The topic for discussion at each meeting is agreed at the end of the previous one, together with a volunteer to do a very brief introduction of the main issues. If you want to take part just turn up, and if you would like to be kept informed of future meetings please email me on [kelvin.clayton@icloud.com](mailto:kelvin.clayton@icloud.com).

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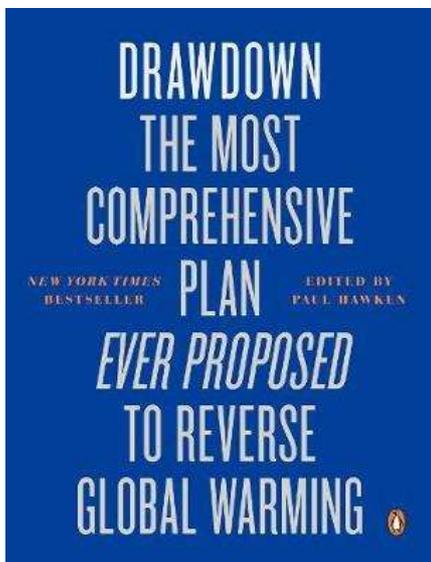
## Beaminster Area ECO Group

**BAEG Founding meeting on Tuesday 23 October 7:30pm, in the Strode Room, Church Street, Beaminster DT8 3BA.**

This meeting is made even more topical by the report published on Monday 8 October by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The Panel calls for intensified effort by governments and citizens to slow down the process of global warming which threatens the future of mankind and of natural systems. For more details [email Michael Dower](#).

## Green Drinks!

Green Drinks is USUALLY on the third Thursday of each month in the back room of the Tiger Inn, Barrack Street, Bridport – starting about 8pm. All welcome to come along and share views, ideas and news of what's happening to make our community more resilient. We meet in the back room of the pub or sometimes in the Alley Bar – seek us out.



Our October meeting will be on the 3rd Thursday as usual, (18th) but please note in **November** it will be held on 22nd to coincide with the TTB AGM to which all are cordially invited. The AGM will be at 6 pm in the St John Ambulance Hall, Rax Lane, Bridport. There will be a short business meeting followed by a presentation by Joe Burlington entitled:

“Drawdown: 80 climate change solutions – that work!” based on a brilliant new book edited by distinguished environmental activist Paul Hawken.

Then we will all go to the Tiger, Barrack Street and celebrate TTB's tenth birthday! Please join us.

## GETTING INVOLVED

If you have a friend or colleague who would like to join our mailing list, send them this link: [TTB MAILING LIST](#).

Come along to any event /workshop. Check out our What's On section [here](#), on our website.

If your local group wishes to collaborate with TTB on any project, or has ideas and energy for a new project, just let us know.

We are very keen to expand the pool of active people for the above projects and to get other strands going. Please [get in touch](#) if you would like to help. If you have any events of a local and eco-friendly nature that you would like us to advertise on our website or in the newsletter, please contact us and we'll see what we can include.

***NB We do not use our mailing list other than for our own regular mailings.***

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