



Newsletter No 29 – September 2015

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

In all the reportage about the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe, few commentators mention the links between political unrest and climate change. This [article](#) on the *Upworthy* website is supported by a number of respectable sources (search for "*links between conflict in Syria and climate change*") and makes a strong argument. Syrians are fleeing a conflict with its roots in climate change, drought and the loss of agricultural livelihoods, exacerbated by the fact that Syria itself has taken in over a million Iraqi refugees since the US-led invasion of 2003. We need a much more sophisticated analysis of what makes people refugees; if someone is fleeing their homeland because they can't survive in the countryside where agriculture has collapsed due to drought, nor live in the overcrowded, crumbling cities because they are battlegrounds, then there are no simple solutions. Political leaders need to take seriously the notion that climate change acts as a 'threat multiplier', contributing to escalation of social, ethnic or religious tensions which can erupt in violent riots or result in domestic civil strife or civil war. The writers of this interesting [paper](#) state categorically that "we have reached the point where a regional climate event can have a global extent": for example, drought in China caused a drop in wheat production and a shortfall of wheat imports to Egypt: the resulting rise in the price of bread was one of the factors in the Egyptian revolution of 2010-11. In the same way, drought in Syria has caused internal migration and conflict, political tensions with neighbours, and now a European political and

humanitarian crisis. The paper goes on to argue that “similar scenarios are likely to be repeated as climate volatility, expanding populations, and competition for resources disturb global markets and possibly national stability”. Urgent humanitarian responses are of course necessary, but talking of ‘bringing peace to Syria’ or ‘encouraging development’ also requires a recognition that politicians can do many things, but they can’t make it rain. CW

St Mary’s School

The Edible Garden in the school holidays

The summer season has kept friends of St. Mary’s School busy. In June there was a second series of cooking lessons for parents and children. Amanda Downes and Mel Hayter, the school cooks, taught the families outside the kitchen where it was sunny (See photo). Over the summer break Tia Perrella and parents picked courgettes, carrots and beans as they ripened. Sarah was able to freeze things ready for school lunches next term. We also had a presence at the Community Allotment Open Day on the 13th August, part of National Allotment Week.



It was also a time to improve and mend things. The poor old cob oven took a battering from over 40 pizzas being made at the Food Festival celebration. Tim Kidney, a cob oven builder, has repaired the cracked dome roof and installed flashing. We wait for this to dry out before we can continue to use it. Our new volunteer Mitch Bart helped to build a shelter for the wood fuel needed in the oven. We sourced seasoned logs at Forest and Tree Care, whose owner Carl Stoodley kindly gave us a trailer full for nothing; and we also had a trailer of manure from Tim and Julie Gary at Modbury Farm. It is only with generosity like this that the project can keep going.

Helen Ross (parent, right) made loads of chutney in the school kitchen which has now been jarred and labelled ready to sell. Becks Garner, assisted by Bob Middleton, has completed the mosaics designed at the 12th June celebration. Robert Golden made a film at this event and on



21st September the whole school is going to watch it together in assembly. HOME in Bridport received a wonderful grant for equipment to be used in the garden area and the Skilling allotment, from West Bay Boot Fund. This is so welcome because it means we can have real community events in future.

Future plans this term are for a harvest festival and lantern event. Volunteers always needed – please get in touch with Sarah at sarahwilberforce@gmail.com, if you can help.

Open EcoHomes

As part of our Open Eco Homes programme we held a meeting on 10 September in Bridport entitled *What is an Eco Home?* John Bol, a passivhaus architect with b3 architects in Dorchester, and John Butler, strawbale builder and student of sustainable building at CAT, gave presentations on how we can achieve comfortable houses with little energy use.

Minimising Energy in Use

A passivhaus (or passive house) is so well built that it does not require heating – human bodies and fridges give off enough heat to keep it warm. This is achieved by very good insulation in walls, floors, roofs and windows, and air-tightness which allows ventilated air to heat up fresh air though MVHR (Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery).

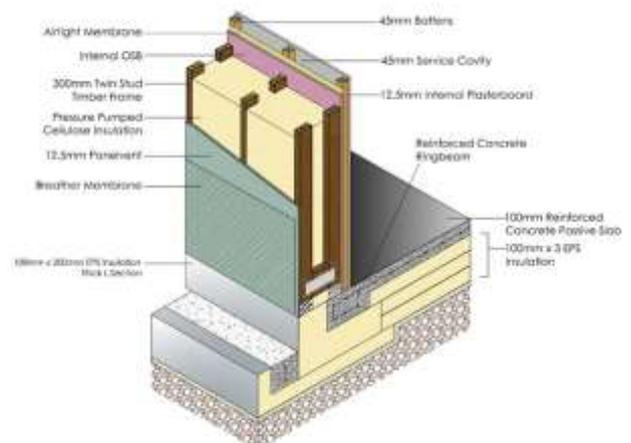
In 2012, there were 20,000 *passivhausen* in Germany, and 165 in Britain. Part of the problem is that the standard does not fit in well with our code for sustainable housing (CSH), and the lack of building expertise means that for every passivhaus in UK, there are 4-6 'nearly passivhaus' which did not achieve sufficient air-tightness to gain certification. This may be corrected by the Passivhaus Institute which plans to bring out different levels of certification.

Energy in Construction

Although passive houses are super-efficient, they can be made from unsustainable materials. John Butler showed that the energy used in making the bricks, expanded polyurethane (eg Kingspan) and blocks used in most UK houses is considerable, and mostly cannot be recycled at the end of their

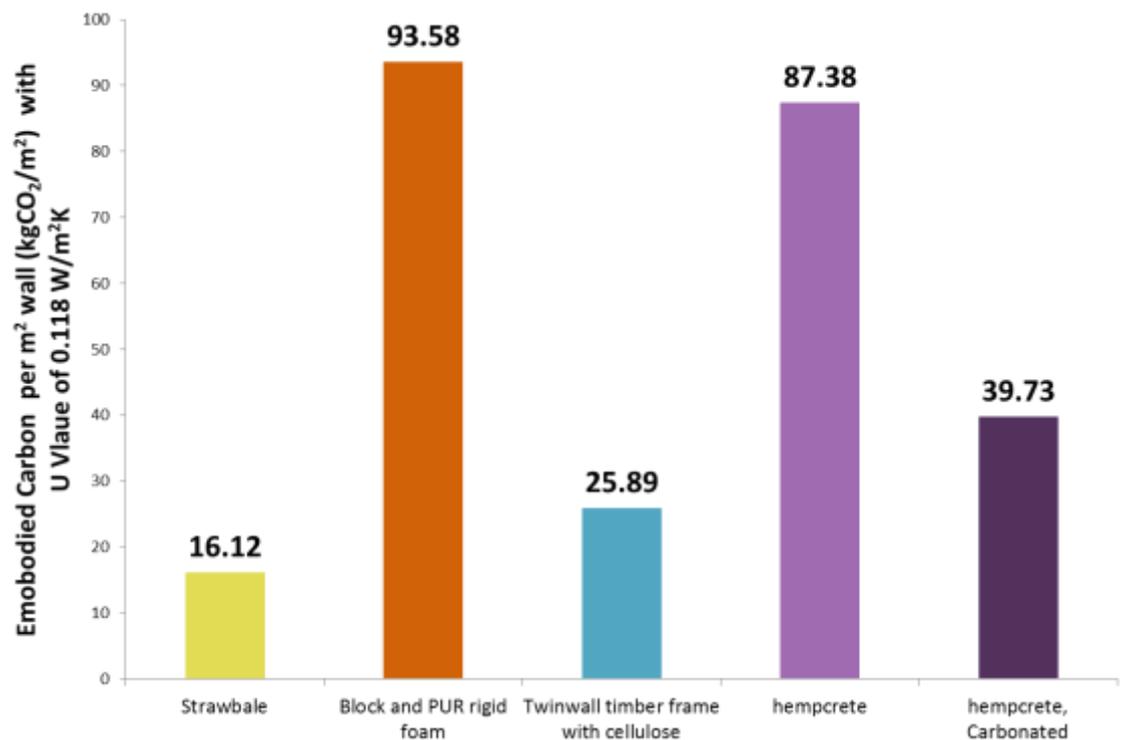


Standard UK brick/PU/block build



Wood frame and cellulose insulation

lifecycle. It is therefore important to choose materials with low “embodied energy”. For a full explanation of these figures and much more, go to [John’s blogspot](#)



Comparison of embodied energy of building materials (J Butler 2015)

Open EcoHomes weekend, 11-13 September

A wide range of eco-measures were on show in the eighteen homes and the Friary in Bridport, Dorchester, Lyme Regis and Beaminster which were opened to visitors during the weekend. Examples of straw bale (Claremont Road), hempcrete (Looke Mead), expanded clay blocks (Stoneyside), timber frame with wood wool (Greenties plot) and structurally insulated panels (Clay Lane) as well as thermafleece wool, wood wool, triple glazing, rammed chalk and cedar shingles could be seen. In addition, many homes had solar PV, solar thermal and rainwater harvesting systems.



Some of the houses had also been open last year, such as the Chalk Wall house in Dorchester, constructed from chalk dug out on site. The timber formwork used to construct the chalk walls was entirely re-used to make the floor, roof and some external walls, and only one skip was used for the whole house. The architect, [Sam Goss](#), was there to explain the thinking behind the pioneering house. Similarly, a representative of [Bioheat](#), the designers of the woodchip district heating system at the Hilfield Friary, was present to

explain how it worked.

New to the scheme (the owners finally moved in three weeks ago) is Looke Mead, self-built by Alex with friends in Litton Cheney. Reclaimed gothic windows from church buildings, larch pillars, Hempcrete, thermafleece wool and cedar shingles make this a very well insulated house, and it is entirely off-grid, generating and storing all its own electricity, and collecting water needs from rainwater and a stream.

An important theme of these EcoHomes is not that you can build a very efficient new building off grid, but that anyone can take measures to reduce

their energy and resource use – take the pulsed shower unit, or shower timers, which cost next to nothing. Cutting down draughts, fitting thermal lining on your curtains and monitoring your electricity use all are inexpensive ways of saving money.

We had a large number of visitors to the open Eco Homes, with 490 visits counted by the hosts. We are very grateful to the owners who were very generous with their time and



hospitality, patiently answered questions, recommended local tradesmen and in some cases even provided visitors with cups of tea. If you know of a local home which might be included in next year's event, please [email Sam](#)



Community Energy in Bridport

Dorset Community Energy is a community Benefit Society set up by Pete West and three other directors to raise money for putting solar panels on community buildings. Over the summer they floated £135,000 worth of shares to put PVs on three schools and three village halls. The schools and halls get free electricity and the Feed In Tariffs (FITs) go to paying off the loan. **STIR to Action** ran a weekend workshop on setting up a community benefit society, facilitated by John Hallé of Share Energy, who has set up several energy cooperatives in the UK. Petra came to take some notes...



A group of us met after this to discuss setting up solar panels on community buildings in Bridport. Ignacio investigated the viability of several buildings; top of the list was Bridport Arts Centre. Although it is a listed building, the roof cannot be seen from a highway, so has a chance of getting planning permission.

With FITs about to drastically decline it was important to pre-register the installation as soon as possible before the next change of government policy. We considered using an existing Bridport Industrial Providential society, BESCO, part of Bridport Renewable energy group, but due to the urgency of it we decided on handing the project over to Dorset Community Energy, which is about to embark on a second tranche of share offers on Bridport Primary School's roof.

Whether the plan for Bridport Arts Centre goes ahead depends on a structural survey of the roof, and the cost of connection to the grid. The chance for BAC to get free electricity during the day for the next twenty years is worth the attempt.



Eight characters in search of a South-facing roof

Transition Conference

Of the 350 delegates at the International transition conference, 30 represented hubs of their respective countries. It is easy to forget that the transition movement has mushroomed to truly global proportions. Judging from Rob Hopkin's forthcoming book, '21 Stories' real progress has been made in creating transitional communities and local employment all over the world.



Some people will remember that Rob Hopkins had to cancel a talk he was to have given in Bridport last year. He has agreed to come and speak to us soon. He is a really inspiring speaker.

New home sought for display stands

We are disposing of our old publicity stands, free-standing, solidly made, useful for displays at shows, etc. There are 8 boards with covers, and two more without. The stands can be pegged in soft ground. The display is attached by magnets or tape (not velcro). If any community group would like them please get in touch with us. Free to a good cause – no need to take all of them.



“Try This” in Dorchester are running two short courses, one on Curtain lining, the other on ‘Getting Smart with Electricity’. Follow [this link](#) for more details.



Democracy in Bridport Project – call for volunteers

Volunteers are needed for the Democracy in Bridport Project. It runs from 29th September for 3 weeks, every day from 10 - 4. There will be training and support with a volunteer manager. Volunteers will offer 2 hour slots and there is funding for parking and mileage @ 45p per mile.

The exhibition is called **Democracy in Bridport** and is part of a project that includes events at the Bridport Arts Centre, an exhibition in the cafe and foyer, which is up now, and a full day of creative and arts activities at The Electric Palace on the 17th October 11 - 9pm.

Full information about the project can be found on the following web site. This is part of the Home in Bridport project.

<http://home-in-bridport.weebly.com>
<http://bridportdemocracy.weebly.com>

If you are interested in volunteering, please [email Robert](#) or call 01308 421 325.

Date and Time of AGM and Speaker

We plan to hold our AGM on Thursday 12th November at the St Johns Ambulance Hall, Rax Lane, Bridport at 6.30 pm. After this there will be a showing of the film 'Transition 2.0'. Please keep the date free and we will issue a confirmation by email.

Join in time for AGM:

From the website www.transitiontownbridport.co.uk you can [download a membership form](#) and sign up as a registered/voting member. Please do this very soon to enable you to vote at the upcoming AGM in November.



Green Drinks! Come to our monthly gathering (third Thursday of the month) at the Tiger Inn, Barrack Street, Bridport and enjoy the wonderful beers and free sandwiches while talking over local, national and international green issues. Solve the problems of the world one sip at a time. **Next dates: 15th October, 19th November**

GETTING INVOLVED

Contact <mailto:admin@transitiontownbridport.co.uk> and you will be added to our mailing list and/or put in touch with the group or activity you would like to join. If you are receiving this you are already on the mailing list, but if you'd rather not be, just [tell us](#).

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

