

Newsletter No 42 – October 2019

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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AGM November 21st
SJA hall Rax Lane 6.30

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(From the editor: I am turning this section over to our Chair, Joe Burlington, who has been recently in London at the Extinction Rebellion protest. Respect, Joe! CW)

In his new book [*From What Is to What If: Unleashing the Power of Imagination to Create the Future We Want*](#) Transition Towns' co-founder, Rob Hopkins, lets rip with new ideas: Make your own pop-up village green; Turn your road into a playground; Play a game called [*Transition Town Anywhere*](#); Give prisoners something meaningful to do; Even, create a Ministry of Imagination ... In Bologna, Italy, Hopkins found an [*Office of Civic Imagination*](#). This last idea emerged when volunteers wanted to repaint a park bench ... but that required authorisation from five different departments.

I have been especially proud this year to have been involved with St. Mary's School's *Edible Garden*. Sarah Wilberforce's team both educates and provides the school kitchen with food grown by some of the children. This summer our volunteers provided guidance for parents on how to prepare meals (Delicious – I sampled them). Particular thanks to all involved. This work matters because (a) the UK grows less than half of its food and the transport of food is energy intensive (ships, planes, trucks to and from supermarket depots); (b) global food production is threatened by droughts, storms, floods and climate change. Wouldn't it be wise for us to grow a lot more of our own? At least our children should know how to do it. 'Food, Farming and The Future' was also the theme of this year's Green Fortnight; huge thanks to all those who worked so hard to make it the success that it was.

Next year's Green Fortnight will focus on fashion. "Approximately half of all textiles are made of cotton. But current production methods are environmentally unsustainable—ultimately undermining the industry's ability to maintain future production". ([WWF](#)). TTB will be pleased to hear from volunteers willing to work on this.

Once again, community-minded and inventive people opened their properties for our *Greener Homes* weekends. Thanks to them for sharing their knowledge and to Sam Wilberforce for doing most of the organising.

I met Rob Hopkins in Trafalgar Square last week where he and I were both supporting *Extinction Rebellion (XR)*. Rob creates visions of the future. XR works to make that future more likely. Each of us can choose where to put our efforts but the organisations complement one another. XR wants:

- 1) To persuade the government to **tell the truth** – for one thing "[Fossil fuels must be left in the ground](#)" - the [UK has biggest fossil fuel subsidies in the EU](#) .
- 2) **Act now** – talk of 2050 is too late.
- 3) **Citizens Assemblies** are proposed to recommend rapid and globally just measures.



Joe addresses the rally about XR

Whichever way each of us participates, the [IPCC has stated](#) "Every bit of warming matters, every year matters; every choice matters and every action matters."

Joe Burlington

Edible garden news

A wonderful couple of pieces of news by Sarah Wilberforce from the Edible Garden project at St Mary's School. The BBC Radio 4 Food Programme today (20th October) focussed on feeding children good food during the summer holidays – just what we have been doing, and more! - CW

Summer Holiday Food Project

The Edible Garden team were involved in a school holiday project in the kitchen, hall and garden of St. Mary's School, Bridport. TTB volunteers joined with others from Home in Bridport to support a core paid team of community workers, cooks and gardeners. Together we provided a safe and fun food experience for disadvantaged families from the Skilling estate and other local areas. The partnership pilot project was set up at very short notice; it involved Dorset Council, the Children's Centre and the school. Tina Ellen Lee (Home) found the funding, and, in the future, will provide documentation of the need and success of this project. Working with Dorset Council, we hope to deliver this on an annual basis. We are so fortunate to have Tina, who has great skills in presenting our work to funders. Charities support this good community work and Tina does it all for nothing.

Five four-hour sessions were achieved, involving up to 30 family members in workshops and entertainment. Mothers, fathers and children, aged 1 to 10, learnt to pick fresh produce, then prepare and cook delicious meals. Many key skills of cooking were taught and there was always a feast of a meal at the end – be it Mexican, Italian, Mediterranean, Picnic, or Veggie Burgers.



Photo: Robert Golden

Our thanks go to Bob Middleton, Amanda Downes, Mary Buesnel, Teresa Perrella and Mitch Burt. We also had both Martin Maudsley and Andrew Dickson to give magic and music to the sessions.

They were chilled out and happy events but quite exhausting for us all! We hope the families will be able to use these newfound skills to become self-reliant cooks using



Photo: Robert Golden

seasonal, fresh, cheap ingredients and turning them into tasty family meals. Many thanks to Katy Batorska, Joe Burlington, Lesley Windsor, Tina Ellen Lee, Robert Golden and Sam Wilberforce who gave their time, energy and skills to the project too.

A new project: Converting part of the sports field into an orchard and wild flower meadow

The Edible Garden team are busily planning their forthcoming project for the new year, having launched it at Harvest Festival.

The team want to plant trees and create wild flower areas in the school grounds, especially around its perimeter, because the school is very fortunate in having such a magnificent outdoor area. This idea is in response to the Climate Crisis and the important role of trees in sequestering carbon dioxide. Not only do trees absorb carbon but they are so important for biodiversity too. We are seeking help from the community and families to make our community life healthier and help wildlife.

The project has already been promised a free edible indigenous hedgerow trees from the Woodland Trust, which will arrive in the spring.

An ambitious plan for an Orchard Avenue has been drafted, so that families coming to school from the back entrance will walk through it. Transition Town Bridport has applied for funds to support this; it will comprise a variety of disease-resistant fruit trees plus events and workshops. The project will initially involve the children in choosing which fruits they would like, and nursery experts naming suitable trees to be planted in the winter/spring 2019/2020.

During the academic year there will be several occasions when the whole community can get involved. The first occasion is this term, on 23rd October, when the gardening team will fire up the cob oven for pizzas while we sow some wildflowers in a woodland patch. Look out for the flyer with details coming soon.

This is a long-term project and the care of these trees and hedge is essential for quite a while. Within a year or two we will harvest the benefits. If you would like to be more involved contact Sarah Wilberforce at sarahwilberforce@gmail.com

Greener Homes 2019

Once again Sam Wilberforce (despite being busy building his own greener home) put together a fantastic programme of visits to sustainable homes in the local area together with an evening of talks on local projects. Here are his reports -CW

This was the seventh year we have run this event, formerly called 'Open Ecohomes'. 16 homes opened for a day this September, of which 7 were new to the event. They ranged from two homes still under construction, two built in the last year, and others lived in for many years but retrofitted with energy-saving and water harvesting devices.



Sailcloth House: Structural Insulated panels being delivered



The Barn

The two unfinished houses included Sailcloth House and The Barn(see photo). The former is in the middle of Bridport, and is made of structural insulated panels assembled in Devon, filled with wood fibre. The house is expected to be of nearly passive-house standard, with high degree of insulation, triple glazed windows and a battery to store solar generated electricity.

The Barn in Charlton Down, built in a disused agricultural barn, will also be air-sealed and have a lot of insulation. Three boreholes will heat the house by geothermal energy.

Other homes were more modest in scale – John and Debbie installed their own effective double glazing for a few hundred pounds; Chris built his house with three friends for £36,000; and Debbie and Simon built a sustainable garden and a sustainable lifestyle around a conventional 1950s bungalow.

I visited several of the homes and was impressed by the standard of questions visitors were asking. When we started in 2012, terms like Carbon Footprint, Photovoltaic Panels and Embodied Energy were unknown to most people. Now most of our visitors know what air source heat pumps and mechanical ventilation heat recovery mean – a significant rise in consciousness about climate change and what we can do about it. Most importantly, it does not have to cost a lot. –

Sam Wilberforce



Philip showing visitors round [Flaxyard House](#). Photos SW



Chris at the [Little Acorn](#)

Affordable Homes talks

Sustainable homes have to be affordable. One way to build them to ensure they are accessible to local people is to form a Community Land Trust (CLT), which will develop and manage homes, and ensure they remain 'affordable' (defined as 80% of local market rents). In a well-attended meeting during Greener Homes fortnight, four speakers outlined the progress and achievements of their projects.

Bridport Co-Housing CLT



53 affordable houses along with common facilities near Bridport Hospital. Emily Richmond provides an update

Powerstock and District Community Land Trust

Vanessa White explains how the CLT has created low cost rural accommodation.



Hastoe Housing Association

Julian Peacock outlines how Hastoe have approached sustainability at Powerstock and other developments



Watton Village



Roy Mathison gives an update on the Watton Hill project, which aims to build 300 affordable homes to Passive House standard

Powerstock CLT

Vanessa White described how Powerstock CLT had conceived their community of 12 homes. Local landlord Victor Crutchley sold them the land for £1, and Hastoe Housing Association built and now manage the project. Vanessa emphasised the need to build for people with local links, and to identify peoples' actual housing needs.

Hastoe Housing Association

Julian Peacock described Hastoe's involvement in the Powerstock project. Specialising in rural developments, they are responsible for 7500 homes. All of these are 'affordable' and many are built to sustainable standards following AECB (Association for Environmentally Conscious Buildings) guidelines. Julian described the balance between building on a tight budget and producing greener homes.

Bridport Co-Housing

Lin, Judith and Monica gave an update on Bridport Co-Housing. With the extra grant funding they have received, 50% of the homes built will be 'Social Housing' – ie 50-60% of the market rent, with the rest 'affordable'. They have now completed purchase of all the land, and are actively looking for purchasers of the part-owned homes. See [their website](#) (and the article below sent by Lin) for more details.

Watton Village

Last year TTB organised a meeting where Vince Adams outlined ambitious plans for the Watton Village estate, just South of the Sir John Colfox Academy. Roy Mathison came back this year to outline progress. The plan involved building about 280 homes, of which 215 will be affordable rented and the rest owned or part owned. The land will be leased out by the Symondsburry Estate for 35-40 years ; a large City institution has agreed to fund the building to the tune of £40 million; [Beattie Passive](#) will build them from Structural Insulated Panels constructed in a small pop-up factory on site with local labour; and Dorset Highways have agreed to a new road and traffic lights opposite the Kings Head. After the lease runs out, the land will revert to the Symondsburry estate but with section 106 provisions that it remains on affordable rent. Dorset Council is supporting the project to the tune of £50,000 and Sir Oliver Letwin has endorsed it. Every house will have solar PV panels and the energy generated, stored in batteries, should easily cover the consumption on site, further reducing the cost of living there. Roy argued that Bridport does not need more buy-to-own properties, and all new developments should be affordable rented properties of which there is a dire shortage.

Co-Housing Affordable Homes On Their Way At Last For Bridport

There are many in Bridport who could be forgiven for thinking that Bridport Co-Housings' plan to build a neighbourhood of affordable homes was never going to happen, but a recent development in the groups' funding strategy means that they are now well on their way to breaking ground, and the good news is that they will be able to make their 53 ecohomes even more affordable for local people. Bridport

Cohousing now has ownership and full planning consent on the seven acre site in North Allington next to Bridport Community Hospital.

On **Sunday November 17th** they will be putting on a special afternoon event for the public in the Town Hall from 2 - 5pm, which will give information about the project and answer any questions about what it might be like to live in cohousing. This will be followed by an intensive Q&A session about Shared Ownership Help to Buy and renting from their partner housing association. It will be a free event ticketed via Eventbrite <https://bit.ly/2kG2fNI> and will be a great opportunity for local people who are interested to find out more and to come along and talk to them.

The cohousing development of one bedroom flats and two, three and four bedroom houses had always been for rent or sale at 80% of open market value, but a recent submission for grant funding from Homes England via the *Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme* (SOAHP 2016 to 2021) means that now they are able to offer 26 of the homes for social rent through their partner housing association and 14 of the homes for leasehold sale will be available for shared ownership between 25% and 75% of the open market value.

The scheme will thus offer housing for a range of incomes, from social rent to 80% of market value for buyers. While the latter definition of affordable housing has been criticised elsewhere as not 'truly' affordable, in practice Hazelmead is an affordable option for several of the prospective 'full owner' residents where no other properties of comparable size in the area were; one member described how *'... we could just about buy on the open market, but we'd struggle. So yep, it's not just the social renters that it's affordable for.'*

With tenders from construction companies currently under scrutiny, it looks highly likely that after a decade of planning and negotiation the homes will start to be built by the end of this year, enabling 53 households to gain access to affordable properties in Bridport town.



The development, which is situated next door to Bridport Community Hospital is to be called 'Hazelmead', and will feature homes built to passive house standard and have a 'common house' on site, which will provide extra amenity space to all the residents. This is one of the unusual features of cohousing, which provides private homes and gardens, but also gives access to shared resources - the common house is a bit like a

village hall - residents can cook and share meals together and there will be a childrens playroom, a lounge, office space and a laundry. Other cohousing features are that cars will be parked around the perimeter of the site, giving car free streets for children to play in, and there will be a large shared area of green open space on site for some community food growing and for leisure activities. The idea of cohousing is to promote a neighbourhood with community at its heart and which is actively engaged in making its own decisions and managing its own organisation.

Another member says *'Cohousing is about how we forge relationships... that aren't necessarily about your best friend. I don't want to live with all of my best friends. I've learned here that communities don't work just because everybody likes each other, they work because there's a reciprocal, give and take. But yeah, it's also about people who share a common sense of community, who are interested in the world, who inspire you a bit...'*

Bridport Cohousing is currently looking for new members and is particularly interested in attracting young people and families to join the project. The town and surrounding villages have a lack of affordable housing and many younger people are having to live with parents, pay high private rents or having to leave the town altogether because they cannot afford to buy or rent a home of their own here. For more information email info@bridportcohousing.org.uk



Lin Scranage and other members of Bridport Co Housing on the site.

Bridport Town Council update

One of the strengths of TTB has been, since the beginning, the active involvement of the Town Council. Dave Rickard has provided this important update on how things are developing:

"Bridport Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in June with a commitment to produce an Action Plan within 6 Months. With so many other changes to local government to get to grips with and our new Town Plan to develop this was clearly a tough ask but I am pleased to report that the bare bones are coming together and it will hopefully be discussed at the next Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee on 6th November with a view to being ratified at Full Council on the 19th November.

We are identifying the direct actions that the Town Council can start to do straight away or within the next budget period and those that will need more research and time and involve attracting outside funding. The third category will be those actions which will involve working in partnership with other community groups, one of which quite naturally will be Transition Town Bridport.

So we will be having a dialogue over the next few months with those bodies and creating a platform for ideas from the public to be appraised by all the necessary criteria of Impact, Feasibility, Engagement and Funding. Watch this space."

Dave Rickard
Leader Bridport Town Council

Since our last newsletter, TTB has been present at several local events, including a stand at the Bridport Food Festival and one in the Bridport Tent at the Melplash Show. We use these important local events as a chance to meet the public, sign new people up to the newsletter, and explain the projects we are running.

Green Fortnight 2020

Lesley Windsor outlines a major new theme for 2020:

We have been thinking about a theme for Green Fortnight 2020 and something that has interested me for a while has been the unsustainability of the fashion industry. The textile industry produce more emissions than aviation and shipping combined. The production models are environmentally damaging every step of the way. There is gross over production and over consumption which leads to mass landfill. Fast fashion companies make 10 garments and if they sell one they will be in profit so can afford to bin the rest. The UK buys more clothes than any other European Country and still only 1% gets recycled.

This is now an issue that is being recognised by many, including those within the industry such as Stella McCartney. However the government response to the UK parliament's environmental audit committee in Feb was as usual very lacklustre, failing to back suggestions like a penny tax on all garments to help fund textile recycling schemes. Now is the time that consumers need to be aware of the issues, because ultimately the fashion industry is consumer led, and our actions can have real impact.

This year Green Fortnight may take a different approach to previous years. First people need to understand the issues, so what better time to introduce those than Feb 14th to coincide with London Fashion Week. For the weeks following we hope to look at sustainable textiles. How much water can be saved by using organic cotton, or is there an enterprise opportunity to revive the hemp and flax industry in this area?

We should value the clothes we buy. Let's organise an evening when we remember an outfit that was special to us and share those memories.

DWP will support us to organise a clothes swap. Look out for the Swish event.

The second-hand market is expected to overtake fast fashion in the next few years and be 50% bigger than it by 2028, according to a report by market analysts GlobalData for Thredup. So having a better understanding of sustainable fashion, Green Fortnight this year could champion Bridport's charity shops, setting challenges to create a new outfit for £20.

We could organise a workshop to mend and upcycle clothes and show all of this off in a grand finale fashion show in Fashion Revolution week April 22nd.

Campaigns like this take a lot of organisation but can be so effective and help create much needed change of attitude and practice in the climate of emergency we are living in.

It would be great to hear from TTB newsletter readers with ideas or offers of support for this exciting project. Please get in touch! - Lesley Windsor

AGM – date for your diary.

Please can you open your diaries (paper-based or electronic) to 21st November and pop in the time - 6.30pm - of TTB's AGM, St Johns Ambulance Hall, Rax Lane. All supporters of TTB are welcome. Thanks to the wonder of joined-up-thinking (it being the third Thursday of the month) we will be going for Green Drinks as soon as the meeting finishes. Needless to say any business will be concluded swiftly and those of us that are members will vote quickly. Whilst talking Membership - do you want to be become a Member of TTB? This allows you to vote at the AGM. If so [Click here](#) and follow the instructions. We welcome new members.



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 date: November 21**

GETTING INVOLVED

Contact 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](#), on our website, www.transitiontownbridport.co.uk .

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 local 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.