Notes from the Transition Cambridge Food Group Meeting, 30th July 2008 in Transition Café, Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

Present: Emily Bingley, Carl Myhill, and Colin Clews. (Mary Geddes also in attendance but on café duty!)

Apologies: Jason Palmer, Ceri Galloway, Anna Mclvor

1. Group Activities

As per the previous discussion at the Open Spaces meeting, it is clear that there are many things that the group could take on. These included growing food, lobbying Council on issues such as the development of a food policy and more productive use of public spaces, developing an internet presence and public education activities.

At present, however, we are still in the position where we can clearly identify lots of potential issues but less clear on the number of people who would be available to take them forward.

It was decided, therefore, to do some basic research on a small number of issues in the first instance, then decide where we go from there. The issues are:

- **Allotments** – there are, apparently, 300 people on waiting lists for allotments in Cambridge. On face value, this would suggest a strong interest in food production. However, it was unclear where this figure came from and whether there are actually 300 individuals (some people may have their names on more than one waiting list). Also, the fact that the Harranbee (sp.?) project has been given land on the Cherry Hinton allotments to run a community project suggests that supply might not be as tight as originally thought.

  **ACTION:** Meeting to be arranged with Dave Fox, Secretary of Cambridge Allotments Society to get a better picture of the situation and also establish their views on the need for more allotments.

- **Large Gardens** – Another way of accessing land to grow food is to identify large gardens whose owners are unable to look after. We would then match them up with people who are looking for land for food production. One such group of land owners might be the elderly: linking them into such a scheme could have the added benefit of giving them regular community contact. Various details would need to be worked out on this, including some kind of security clearance to safeguard elderly participants and the issue of ‘payment’ for use of the land.

  **ACTION:** Colin to contact Help the Aged, Age Concern and the Volunteer Centre to seek their views on such a scheme.

- **Demand for Land for Food Production** – central to the discussion of the previous two issues, was acknowledging that there may not be a large demand for land at present. If that is the case then the group would need to decide whether its aim is to ensure there is enough land to meet existing demand or to go further and generate more demand by educating the public on the benefits of growing your own food.
• **Transition Cambridge Trees Group** – we understand the Trees Group is looking at trees for food as well as fuel. It makes sense to link in with them on this.

  **ACTION:** Colin to contact Trees Group.

• **Derelict Council land** – it was felt that there are probably large areas of Council land either lying un-used or under-used at present. It would be helpful to get some idea on the extent of this.

  **ACTION:** Carl to contact Council to explore this.

• **Community Orchard** – it was felt that it would be of great value to talk to the organisers of Trumpington Community Orchard about the trials and tribulations of getting their project up and running.

  **ACTION:** Trumpington Community Orchard are having a fund-raising open day on 10th August. This presents a great opportunity for anyone interested to find out more.

2. **Group Structure**

   Whilst the Food Group emerged from the Transition Cambridge Open Spaces event, we need to develop our own identity and organisational structure as Transition Cambridge is planned as a short-term initiative. More consideration will be given to this as the Food Group develops.

3. **Next Meeting**

   The next meeting will be at **8.30 p.m. on Wednesday 13th August at the Transitions Café, Jesus Lane, Cambridge**. Agenda items will include feedback from the actions above, recruitment and, as part of that, how we launch the group publicly.