Minutes of the meeting of the Transition Cambridge Food Group  
Ross Street Community Centre  
22.10.2008

Present: Colin Clews, Phillipa Grimstone, Carl Myhill, Nicola Terry  
Apologies: Emily Bingley, Dave Fox, Martin Roach, Rowan Wylie

1. Minutes  
The minutes of the last meeting were approved.  

2. Venue for meetings  
Phillipa reported that Magdalene College could not provide a room on a regular basis, although occasional free bookings might be possible. It had been confirmed that the Café (Jesus Lane) was booked on Wednesdays during term-time, although other days might be possible. Renovations were making hiring rooms in the Guildhall difficult, and the Sustainable City also had to pay for its room. CB2 had a function room, but this cost £50 to hire. A table could be booked in the restaurant, but it would be expected that at least some people would eat, and it probably wasn't conducive to discussions. CB1 was also discussed, but thought to be potentially too noisy or distracting, being a café, internet café and bookshop. "The Shop" project in Jesus Lane had been suggested, and Phillipa agreed to email. The Six Bells pub was suggested, as the landlady had shown enthusiasm for Transition Cambridge, also Anglia Ruskin University (Carl had contacts), public libraries, the swimming pool (there was perhaps a meeting room upstairs), and the Harambee Centre. There was a suggestion that the Ross Street Community Centre room be booked for the next two or four weeks, to ensure that members and potential new members would know where to go for meetings, although other options could also be explored.  

3. Brokerage  
Carl had not yet discussed the possible legal aspects of brokerage schemes with his lawyer girlfriend, but agreed that he would do so.  

Several possible brokerage schemes were discussed. The planned visit to Winston House by Dave, Emily and Phillipa had had to be postponed, and therefore there was nothing to report. Another visit was being arranged. It was suggested that it could perhaps provide a site for practical sessions for the "Grow your own" talks.  

Rowan had attended a meeting at Age Concern, to explore the idea of garden share scheme. She reported that there seemed to be a lot of enthusiasm for the idea. When she had asked for a show of hands from those who would be interested, there were lots. She had received mixed views on whether or not CRB checks would be required. It was decided that a pilot project should be set up, if possible. A message would be put in the Transition Cambridge bulletin, asking for interested volunteers, and if they were forthcoming, Age Concern would be contacted and asked for a matching number of elderly people who could offer garden space. Volunteers might also be forthcoming from allotment lists. It was acknowledged that there were still issues of how to handle personal details, and whether the scheme should be internet-based, with people making their own contacts, or with more personal involvement by group members. Some older people would not use the internet, but the group was still small, and maybe did not have the resources to run a scheme that involved personal contact. It was suggested that a map of those with gardens, and those who wanted space to grow vegetables would aid the matching process.  

There was some brief discussion of how to publicise Ceri Galloway's seed swap event in January.
The "Dig for sustainability" project was not discussed, as Clayton Lavallin was not at the meeting. It was noted that the age group for which it was intended did not match that of most of the Transition Cambridge group.

The practicalities of a produce swap scheme were discussed, the main question being who would run it. Craig's List was again suggested as a possible tool.

Carl reported that a local dairy supplier was wanted by the shop in Lensfield Road, and that perhaps the group could get involved in locating such things.

4. “Grow your own” support groups
There was a brief discussion about the setting up of "Grow your own” support groups, which Colin was working on. Keith Jordan had not yet been invited to come to a meeting to discuss the project.

5. Food-related links for the website
Nicola reported that quite a lot of new website links had been added to the Food Group part of the Transition Cambridge site, but that more would be welcome.

6. “Going live”
There was further discussion of a leaflet for the group's "going live". It was agreed that it needed sections on why action was needed, the aims of the group, and some practical activities which the public could sign up for. The use of a logo, possibly Transition Cambridge's one, and of other illustration or decoration was discussed. Colin was drafting the text of the leaflet, and would circulate it for comment.

7. Future activities
(i) Whether the group should produce a food strategy for Cambridge was discussed, as none currently existed. There was some discussion about what it might contain. It was felt that a lot of research would be needed to produce an informed strategy, and that perhaps the group should concentrate on more manageable projects while it was still small and getting established.
(ii) The group's involvement in Environment Fortnight 2009 was discussed. Colin agreed to find out further information about its programme. Open days in gardens and allotments were suggested as an activity which could promote local food-growing.
(iii) It was agreed that the group should express interest in being part of the Food and Garden Show (19-20 September 2009) for a second year.
(iv) It was agreed that the group should find out more information about a chutney-making event, to be run by Trumpington Ladies. This would provide information on one way of storing food. It was not clear whether the talk was just for members of the group, or if they were asking the Food Group for assistance in running the event. Further discussion about food storage arose from this, and it was agreed that it could form part of the "Grow your own" series of talks, and that a note should be put in the Transition Cambridge bulletin, asking for people to share tips on it.
(v) There was a brief discussion of whether there should be a Food Group bulletin, as items in the general Transition Cambridge bulletin were not always clearly marked as coming from the Food Group. It was agreed that the group should ask to be named in each item in the general bulletin.