Minutes of the meeting of the Transition Cambridge Food Group
Ross Street Community Centre
3.12.2008

Present: Emily Bingley, Colin Clews, Dave Fox, Ceri Galloway, Phillipa Grimstone, Dave Jackson, Carl Myhill, Jason Palmer, Martin Roach, Nicola Terry, Jacky Sutton-Adams, Rowan Wylie

1. Minutes
Phillipa said that she had omitted to mention the discussion of Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's garden share website, during which it had been agreed that it might prove useful, but it was currently not up and running, and so it was uncertain how it would work. It would also not assist those who did not use the web, and therefore it would not make local action redundant. The minutes of the last meeting were otherwise approved.

2. Matters arising
A progress report on the Winston House project was requested. There had been no further developments.

3. Garden share scheme
Jacky had forwarded the agreement drawn up for the Tavistock garden share project to the group via email, and had edited the agreement in the light of a number of comments. It was reported that several people had now offered garden space, or expressed interest in using it. Carl and Jacky offered space in their gardens. Most people were in Cambridge, but a man in Orwell had offered his garden via Age Concern, and it was agreed that his offer could be put in the Transition Cambridge bulletin, to try to find a partner. Jacky agreed to contact those who had expressed interest in the scheme, and arrange meetings for prospective partners where possible. Emily agreed to create a leaflet for the scheme. There was further discussion about the usefulness of the Fearnley-Whittingstall site. It was suggested that it might be useful to monitor the forums, as there were questions being asked there which might be relevant to us. There was some discussion about whether gardens should be checked for suitability for vegetable-growing before being offered to prospective gardeners, but it was felt that that could be too time-consuming if the scheme took off. It was suggested that a lottery grant for a facilitator could be applied for if many people expressed interest in the scheme.

4. Seed swap
Ceri asked for volunteers to help with the seed swap on 18 January, and received some offers. The idea of having a Food Group stall at the event was mentioned. Ceri had already organised quite a lot of local and national coverage, including contacting local gardening groups. However, it was agreed that it would be helpful if a reminder went into the Transition Cambridge bulletin, and posters could be put on railings at key points. Dave also agreed to help with placing posters on allotment noticeboards.

5. Allotments
Dave announced that he had collected 715 signatures for his petition, that it had been handed in on 24 November, and a piece about it had appeared in local papers, and that he was going to address the council meeting on 4 December. His petition was item 3 on the agenda, and a further motion on allotments in new developments formed item 7d. Dave read out a draft version of his speech for the council meeting, it was discussed by the group, and a number of comments about how it could be improved were made. Dave also reported that he had met with council officers to discuss allotment provision, and there had been some positive developments, including their contacting people on waiting lists, revitalising the Peverel Road site, updating the website, and looking at potential new sites.
6. "Grow your own" support groups
Colin reported that Cambridge Carbon Footprint had run a one-off session, which had been well-attended, but that there was too much information to include in just one session. He had discussed the proposal to have six sessions with Keith Jordan, who was enthusiastic about it, and had offered to run some of them. He asked for volunteers to help facilitate the scheme, and for suggestions of other leaders for the sessions. It was suggested that the Botanical Garden should be contacted, and that one of the Master Composters, or Peter Vince could perhaps run the session on composting. The National Trust and College gardeners were also suggested. Dave and Ceri were asked if they would be prepared to give sessions, but both said that they were too busy. It was agreed that leaders for the sessions were needed before venues and other resources could be sorted out. There was some discussion about how many participants would be involved, and about costs, including whether the leaders would be offered anything for their time, and how much the course would cost to join.

7. Google groups
It was agreed that it would be useful for the whole group to have access to the Google group, and Nicola agreed to send out instructions on how to do this.

8. Research group
Nicola expressed a view that the Food Group needed more facts and figures to justify the work that it was doing, and asked for help in finding them. Dave Fox, Rowan, Martin, Carl and Phillipa all offered assistance.

9. Bulletin boards
It was felt that bulletin boards or forums where people could discuss green matters would be useful, but achieving this was not easy. Nicola had been investigating possible software. Phillipa said that Care2 could be used to create discussion forums, but that registration with the site was required. It was felt that this was not ideal.

10. Mill Road Fair
Ceri reminded the group that a request for help with this had appeared in the Transition Cambridge bulletin.

11. Films
Ceri had seen some good films on a permaculture course, and knew someone who could make copies for £5 each. It was agreed that she should choose four, which could be shown by the Food Group, possibly in people's houses. Nicola offered to cover the costs if necessary, and to host a film.

12. Gorilla gardening
Attention was drawn to an entry in the Transition Cambridge bulletin about gorilla gardening outside Tesco on Cheddars Lane.

13. Launch event/"Power of Community" film showing
It was reported that 150 people had booked tickets for the film, and around 100 people had been turned away. It was going to be shown again in Science Week. At least one person had expressed interest in growing food. It was agreed that the Steering Group should be contacted for feedback and contact details gathered during the event. A review of the film had been promised for the Transition Cambridge website.

14. Next meeting
The date of the next meeting would be 17 December.