Minutes of the meeting of the Transition Cambridge Food Group
The Geldart, Ainsworth Street
29.4.2009

Present: Dave Fox, Ceri Galloway, Phillipa Grimstone, Jason Palmer, Martin Roach, Nicola Terry, Pippa Vine, Rowan Wylie

Apologies: Jacky Sutton-Adam, Kim Warren

1. Minutes
Rowan Wished to clarify that she had agreed Sue Dougan's contact details from Emily. Otherwise the minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Matters arising
There were no matters arising.

3. Grow Your Own
Dave reported that the last indoor session had taken the form of a Gardeners' Question Time, and it had gone very well. The latest practical session had also been successful, with 17 out of 24 participants attending. Some crops were growing, though others had failed due to slug damage. Dave thanked Nicola for her help on the day. Feedback forms had produced mostly positive comments, though some had felt that there was too much standing around at the practical sessions. This was largely due to the small size of the plot – it was hard to find space for everyone to work at once. It was thought that if instructions were given at the start, the practical work could be spread out over a longer time, perhaps after the official end of the session (though there was some concern about leaving people unattended). It was felt that the course could be improved by having more practical work included, and that a venue with shelter nearby, perhaps a polytunnel, would be ideal, so that sessions weren't lost or re-arranged due to bad weather. Publicity and logistics would also be easier if courses were more local, perhaps with four centres in the north, south, east and west of the city, though having different centres would involve more organisers and tutors. Perhaps a part-time organiser could be employed if the schemes became really popular, and funding was available. It was felt that the fee could be increased somewhat without putting lots of people off.

4. Garden share scheme
It was reported that there had been two further pairings since the last meeting, perhaps three. 7 were listed on the group's website. Jacky and Rowan felt that it was too soon to contact Age Concern again. The possible issues needed more exploration as pairs developed, and it would perhaps reassure those at Age Concern to see that a number of pairings were working smoothly. Publicity was again discussed. It was suggested that publicity was perhaps now not needed until September, when plots would need to be prepared, but Dave stressed that it was never too early to plan vegetable crops, and that planting could still be done if the ground was already in a decent condition. It was therefore decided that Pippa should still work on a press release.

Jacky had updated the registration form, and also contacted HICCA. There was some discussion of whether to promote Homegrownuk via the group's webpages. The man running it was charging for registration, but claimed that his organisation would reach working class people in a way that the Food Group's scheme would not. It was decided that it should be included in a section on national schemes, but simply listed, not actively promoted. It was suggested that he should be asked to include a link to the group's scheme in return.

Rowan agreed to email the Brighton and Hove group about their schemes for helping elderly people.
5. **Environment Week**

It was reported that five people had attended a meeting to discuss arrangements. A "Guess the food miles" competition was suggested, with a basket of supermarket produce, and one of locally grown items. Lots of offers had been received to grow vegetable seedlings for the stall, to be given away as prizes, or in return for a donation. Kim was collecting photographs of fruit and vegetables for a display board behind the stall, and examples of vegetables and chutney would be used for decoration. A banner was being produced. It was suggested that a map of Cambridge could be displayed, and people could mark locations where excess produce could be picked up. Nicola had been contacting local suppliers to ask if they wished to be promoted on the day. Waterland Organics was contemplating running a special offer on their produce. Ceri agreed to contact the Lensfield Road shop to ask if they would like to be involved. It was suggested that a factsheet of suppliers be produced, as there would be limited space for leaflets on the stall. Nicola had updated the webpage regarding local suppliers and had put a message in the TC bulletin, asking for further suggestions. Information about CSAs was also suggested for display. Nicola had contacted Wimpole Hall about their CSA, but had not received a response.

Ceri asked for help for her plant swap on 14 June. Rowan offered her services.

6. **EERA**

Nicola explained the purpose of the EERA, and that a consultation process was happening now concerning the implementation of plans for the region's developments. It was suggested that Transition groups could work together to have more impact on discussions, with the different groups perhaps addressing a particular area of concern. It might also have an effect if lots of individuals contacted the body with comments, although these would have to be largely individually written to have an effect, not generic comments. Nicola and Jason agreed to draft a message for the TC bulletin, asking if anyone would like to be involved in assessing the EERA document, and drafting responses, although the question of whether the Food Group could co-ordinate lots of responses which would not necessarily be about food was brought up.

Ceri said that she had already had some correspondence with EERA, and would forward it to the group email account for circulation.

7. **Allotments**

Dave reported that the Council had started offering very small plots to those on allotment waiting lists on their sites, and were also removing plots from those who were clearly not making good use of them. These actions had to some extent reduced demand for plots on Council sites (though the small plots were not sufficient for growing vegetables in any quantity). However, demand for plots on sites run by allotment societies had generally risen, being 422 in April 2009 and 391 in April 2008. Two thirds of the data had been collected.

8. **Permaculture**

Ceri reported that she had initially envisaged running a weekend permaculture course in Cambridge. However, it was part of the Transition culture to train lots of people in the method, and she was therefore proposing to try to set up a permaculture group, and to get funding from the Permaculture Society for training. Training provision in East Anglia was generally sparse. It was proposed that the Trumpington allotment site could be used, and projects achieved by those on courses, although it was pointed out that insurance could be an issue, and the committee would have to agree. Ceri agreed to discuss her plans with the Steering Committee.
8. **Next meeting**  
The Geldart room had been booked for 7.30pm on 13 May. Martin agreed to chair.

9. **AOB**  
(i) Nicola reported that she had provisionally book the Café for 28 May for a Food Group social, the aim of which would be to try to get some of the dormant members on the list more involved. The Botanical Garden was another option, although this would involve entry costs, and be weather-dependent. A third suggestion was to hold it in Nicola’s house, where a short film might be shown, in addition to getting people to bring food and drink to share. This idea was accepted by the group, and a film about stock-free farming suggested. Nicola agreed to find a date which would suit her.
(ii) Dave asked for a volunteer for the Grow Your Own session on 16 May. Pippa said that she could probably attend.
(iii) Pippa said that she would need group input if she was to update the Food Group leaflet. There was some discussion about the costs involved in producing a better quality leaflet, with colour and thicker paper. It was suggested that Arjuna might provide a "Postbox". To avoid individuals’ addresses being publically available.