

Transition Cambridge Annual Report

(Oct 2011 to Oct 2012)



Our Mission

To raise awareness about the implications of climate change and rising energy prices in Cambridge, and to encourage everyone to get involved in activities which reduce our carbon emissions and make Cambridge more resilient to energy supply challenges. We focus on practical ways that we can work together as a community rather than individually, because we can achieve more that way - and it's more fun too.

Our Vision

We hold a vision of a future Cambridge that has successfully faced the twin challenges of climate change and peak oil, and has come through them to create a prosperous vibrant city, no longer dependent on fossil fuels and with a strong network of communities supporting each other and providing for each other's needs.

Our Values

We aspire to be positive, inspiring, creative, visionary, practical, active, engaging, local, sustainable, solution-focused, people-centred, inclusive and passionate in all that we do.

Constitution

Transition Cambridge is run entirely by volunteers, and is as informal as possible. Our [constitution](#) is on our website. Each group is autonomous, sending representatives to the hub co-ordination meetings once a month. Our officers are:

Chairperson: Anna McIvor; **Treasurer:** Martin Roach; **Secretary:** Nicola Terry

Our address

Transition Cambridge,
130 Chesterton Road,
Cambridge, CB4 1DA

Our web-site: <http://www.transitioncambridge.org>

What we do

Transition Cambridge is a local voluntary group that aims to raise awareness about the challenges of climate change and energy supply challenges, and to promote practical actions that increase our resilience as a community and reduce our carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuels. We started in 2008, and we currently have approximately 60 active volunteers but many more people take part by attending our talks, workshops, and film nights, going on our trips and training courses, using our website resources and meeting up with us at stalls.

We send out a weekly e-newsletter to 1,900 people that is full of local news and events relating to sustainable living. The newsletter is derived from the content on our website which is constantly updated. We aim to create a new culture of low energy living where we value local resources and where people feel part of a supportive community. We try to engage with all parts of the community, and we continue to grow as more people get involved and more projects get going. We aim to inspire people to live more future-friendly lifestyles and to have fun along the way!

Transition Cambridge Activities

Our various sub-groups have been busier than ever this year. Here is a summary of our activities.

Café

The Transition Café is becoming a bit of an institution! Fortnightly Thursday evenings at CB1 café on Mill Road provide a regular meeting place for those interested in sustainability - over the last 12 months café evenings have featured amazingly diverse topics. These range from Transition classics (eating local, renewable energy, community-supported agriculture) to the practical (how to save seeds, how to have a zero waste Christmas), to the ecological (tree-planting) and the creative (stencilling new designs onto old t-shirts). Reflecting the wider national and international economic difficulties, economics topics were well-represented, with a session on local currencies, a talk on 'politics and transition' and a film on people's responses to the economic collapse in Argentina in 2001.

The café also provides a great way to publicise and gather support for local projects and initiatives – like the forest garden, Cropshare, Greeniversity, Growzones, Greentech and the K1 cohousing project.

CamBake

The Transition Cambridge Food Group initiated the Cambridge Community Bakery project in February 2012 and is still linked although ultimately CamBake will be an independent community run business. The website <http://www.cambake.co.uk> is under construction. A Holding group meets monthly to plan events and keep the whole thing running and there are also regular monthly meetings for supporters. There are projects looking into premises, financing, product development, market research and key inputs and a business plan is in the making.

Currently we have one baker with a public health license to sell bread and baked goods, and several others rapidly gaining skills and experience. Fulbourn Community Market has been a wonderful opportunity to offer samples of our bread and we now have over 120 people on our mailing list. We'll soon be starting a subscription scheme to raise funds to develop the project - subscribers will get discounts on baking workshops and bread, and participate in decision making as the project grows.



Our aim is to use only local ingredients and we are in discussions with a farmer near Cambridge about growing organic wheat for a truly local loaf. Currently we use flour milled at Swaffham Prior Windmill from grain grown in Hertfordshire and Thetford area. We aim to bake regularly through 2013, using a variety of delicious recipes, mostly sourdough with long fermentation times, making bread that is easy to digest and full of flavour.

Cambridge Sustainable Food Alliance (CaSFA)

This is an alliance between Transition Cambridge Food Group, Cambridge Carbon Footprint and four other similar organisations with aims to raise awareness of sustainable and ethical food supply and promote ways to reduce food waste. CaSFA's posters and quiz materials on sustainable food issues have been used by various groups at stalls through the year, including the Schools Eco Conference at Netherhall in November, Orchard Park Summer Festival in July and at the Grafton Centre Eco-event in September. Also CaSFA contributed to a cookery demo of winter seasonal food by Tine Roche in February at Cambridge Cookery School, and film shows of PlanEat in Fulbourn in April and Taste the Waste at the Arts Picture House in May. In May, CaSFA gave a talk to Sustainable Cottenham.



Council Liaison

Transition Cambridge has an on-going informal dialogue with local councillors and council officers through various channels. We are grateful for the support of Sustainable City Grants, this year for the Growing Spaces project, and also other kinds of support, for example, council officers such as Justin Smith speaking and taking questions at our energy group events, and the support of city ranger John McAspurn for Romsey Community Garden. As a group we have responded to the Cambridge Local Plan consultation and, by invitation, to the draft Cambridge Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The Energy Group has close relations with the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership and has supported Village Energy Fairs by bringing stalls this year to Cottenham, Comberton, Abingdon and Shepreth.

Cropshare

CropShare is a small-scale community-supported agriculture (CSA) scheme in Cambridge. It experiments with 'crop-sharing', which we define as an exchange of labour for crops, creating valuable opportunities for farm-community collaboration. Started in 2010 in collaboration with Waterland Organics, we now are coming to the end of our second growing season.

Over the course of two years, nearly 100 volunteers have had the opportunity to experience growing on this local organic farm. And the work of these volunteers has had an impact: the yields for Waterland Organic have grown. That has meant a greater yield for CropShare members as well.

How does CropShare use its yields? While members are able to take and use a portion of the harvest, the bulk of our yield is shared in the community. We have donated crates of veg to



various local food charities (e.g. Food4Food, Jimmy's Night Shelter); used the produce for outreach in the community (e.g. handing out fresh lettuces at this year's Town and Country Fair); and hosted 'Sharing the Harvest' events, where members of the community assemble to learn recipes for using seasonal produce (e.g. red current jam and chutney).

CropShare's popularity continues to grow: in addition to being covered by various local media sources, traffic to CropShare's entertaining blog (cambridge.cropshare.org.uk) is on the rise. And, perhaps most importantly, volunteer numbers are growing monthly.

Energy Group

This year the Energy Group has held two question and answer forum events on Wood Stoves (the most popular of all so far) and on Managing your Home Heating. We also held an energy fair with 15 stands in total, some commercial and some non-profit or charitable, giving advice on insulation, windows, heating systems, renewable energy – everything you might need to make your home more energy efficient.

At our stalls at fairs through the year we have engaged enthusiasm for energy saving through our home energy quiz and our home energy survey – which seeks to identify ways in which we already saving energy, other things we would like to do and what we need in order to achieve those goals. We also have fact sheets, which summarise the more detailed information on the website, on a range of topics: Heat Pumps, Wood Stoves, Solar panels (both PV and hot water) and Managing your Heating system.

The energy group is also closely linked to Cambridge Carbon Footprint, since we have shared goals, some overlap in strategy and considerable overlap in membership. We joined forces for the Question Time part of this year's Open Eco Homes.

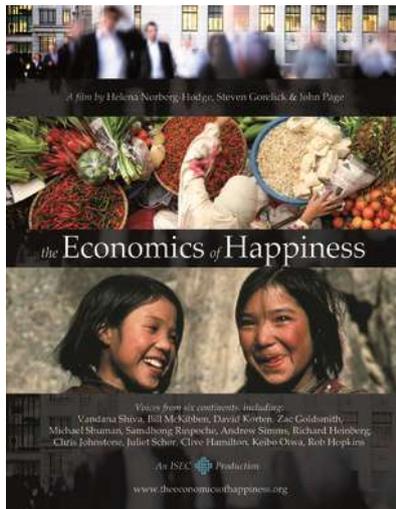
Photo: Open Eco Homes Question Time



Energy Descent Vision

Transition Cambridge held two visioning sessions this year, the results of which have been used to create a document outlining Transition Cambridge's vision for Cambridge in 2030. The document will be released on the Transition Cambridge website this Autumn.

Events and Stalls



Some of our biggest events this year have been the film showings of *The Economics of Happiness* and the new Transition film “*In Transition 2.0*” at the Arts Picturehouse Cinema. *The Economics of Happiness* was so popular that we showed it twice and sold out both times! In all over 300 people watched this stimulating film, which questions whether our current economic model is damaging our well-being. It explores the many negative consequences of economic globalisation – climate change, fundamentalism, economic insecurity and species extinction as well as the personal costs such as stress and depression. It then shows practical examples of alternative economic initiatives which address these issues. After the film, renowned economist Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, author of “*Human Well-being*

and the Natural Environment” answered questions from the audience. This event was organised jointly with Cambridge Carbon Footprint; several of our events are organised in partnership with organisations, creating opportunities to reach new audiences.

The Arts Cinema also showed *In Transition 2.0*, and we had a question and answer session afterwards with representatives from the various Transition groups. After that we had a party to celebrate our 4th birthday, mainly for Transition Cambridge members – with delicious CamBake bread and lots of cakes. It isn’t often that we get all the groups together so we very much enjoyed this opportunity to socialise and top up our inspiration.

We’ve been out and about with our stalls at the regular big public Cambridge events – Mill Road Winter Fair, Strawberry Fair, the Big Weekend, the Town and Country Show, and the Food, Garden and Produce festival. This year we also had a stall at the World Rivers Day Festival and the Orchard Park Summer Fiesta. Our stalls have displays about our projects and events, alongside ways to get involved. For Strawberry Fair, we organised some mini-workshops for visitors to the fair – make your own solar panel, reducing food waste, keeping chickens, and stencilling new designs onto old t-shirts.



With Cambridge Carbon Footprint, we organised a day workshop on *The Work That Reconnects* in January, all about reconnecting with the earth and finding our energy to act. Participants on this workshop spontaneously organised an evening of song, dance and poetry on these themes, as a follow-up. We also worked together to create the first Cambridge SkillsFest in July, with sessions on how to fix bikes, keep chickens, make yoghurt, spin wool, make herbal medicine and many more practical skills to enrich our lives and the local economy.

We held our second Carbon Conversations course for people involved with Transition – those who participated valued the support of the group and the richness of the materials in taking personal action to reduce their carbon footprints in the areas of food, housing, transport and

other consumption. Thanks to Cambridge Carbon Footprint for offering these courses and materials.

We regularly hold newcomers' evenings, where we invite people to find out more about Transition and how to get involved with local projects and initiatives. These are always open to everyone.

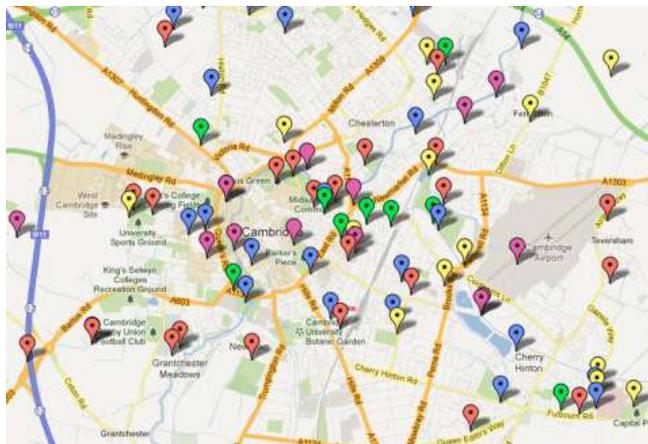
From time to time, we are invited to give workshops and talks on the Transition movement or other sustainability topics. In March, we gave a workshop about Transition at the 'Climate and Sustainability Forum', a student-organised conference in the Department of Engineering. We have given talks at Histon and Impington Climate Change Action group and Gamlingay Environmental Action Group. TC facilitators and speakers were also invited to facilitate Open Space and lead workshops at a conference on 'Alternatives to economic growth' organised by the Green Party in February.

Food Group

The Food Group has a number of projects in and around Cambridge, runs stalls for public outreach at local fairs and events, and special meetings to welcome new members. We organise activities that encourage people to get involved in food growing, cooking and preserving and project a message of the importance of local, sustainably grown food.

Our projects this year include:

- Grow your Own Veg sessions on an allotment plot: hands-on growing sessions;
- Growzones, where a group of people help each other over several weeks with landscaping projects in their gardens or on their allotments, in preparation for food-growing
- The free fruit map, which shows where fruit is growing on public land in and around Cambridge;
- Plus Gardenshare, Cropshare, Cambake and CaSFA, as described elsewhere.



The Food Group ran stalls at Mill Road Winter Fair, the Town and Country Show, and the Food Garden and Produce show, and supported 'Seedy Sunday', the annual seed swap in January, co-organised with Trumpington Allotments Society. A trip to the National Institute for Agricultural Botany was also a great hit with members.

Pictures: Growzones (above); Free fruit map using Google Maps (left)

Garden Share

The Garden Share Scheme has almost 40 people registered, and 10 active partnerships between garden owners and volunteer gardeners. More people are always needed so that we can match people who live fairly close to each other. A new co-ordinator has joined the team, and we are hoping to attract more gardeners and volunteers so we can set up more partnerships in the coming year.

The scheme was featured in a Radio Cambridge interview on April 29th, and we have been asked to advise to other groups contemplating similar schemes. We gave talks in Hildersham and Abington about the project.



Growing Spaces

The Growing Spaces Project aims to increase the number of food producing public and community spaces in Cambridge, and so far we have transformed 13 spots including 8 new locations this year. The “before and after” photos of the growing spaces and their locations are available on the Transition Cambridge website. The growing spaces are generally planted with perennial, low maintenance species, such as fruit trees, nut trees, soft fruit bushes and herbs. Some growing spaces also grow fruit and vegetables, based on the needs and desires of the community. We plan each space based on local conditions; our volunteers then clear away weeds, add compost, plant the plants, add mulch and keep an eye on the new plants until they are well established.

Next to the main entrance of Hanover Court, a defunct electrical box



Before



After

Permaculture

Permaculture is a design system which underpins the philosophy of the Transition movement. It is based on the three ethics, Earth care, people care, and fair shares. Over the last couple of years, the Transition permaculture group has been developing their practice and skills through visits to permaculture projects, watching films, and setting up discussions and visits to each other's sites. We have run weekend courses, including an Introduction to Permaculture course, a weekend



course on Permaculture Gardening, and we joined up with the Triangle Community Garden in Hitchin to offer the Permaculture Design Course. Permaculture group activities have included planting and weaving a living willow screen and hedge laying at Trumpington allotments, the annual seed swap in Trumpington, visits to various farms, projects and the London Permaculture Festival, and stalls with advice such as seed saving at fairs and events.

Romsey Community Garden



The Romsey community garden is now into its second year. The garden is divided into an area for vegetables, a herb garden, a fragrant garden, a nature area, and a recreation area. A large group of people have been involved in creating it. We regularly have lots of children coming, and our youngest gardeners are just 2 and 3 years old. We get together every few weeks to weed, dig, sow, harvest and do whatever else needs doing. We also hold regular social events, such as a teddy bear's picnic and a bonfire evening. The garden is mainly run by and for local people, and is becoming a social space for community gatherings.

Skillshare



Cambridge Skillshare is one of our newest projects and is just getting started. It follows on from the SkillsFest that we ran last year, and aims to encourage people to share their skills informally and for free, so that everyone has the opportunity to learn the skills we will need to live more sustainably in Cambridge. Cambridge Skillshare will be part of a larger network of skill-sharing initiatives called Greeniversity, being run by Peterborough Environment City Trust, and funded by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts.

Transport

This year we held an event on transport, looking at how we might get around in 2030 - post Peak Oil style. When the price of road fuel might be ... £5.00/litre? Five presentations from businesses, from advocacy and campaign groups and a community partnership; followed by tea and biscuits and an Open Space discussion. We saw how cargo bikes are already making deliveries in the City. How Smart Travel interventions deliver better returns for the tax-payer than big infrastructure. How employers can help wean people off car-based commuting. How a small number of people cycling instead of driving can make a huge difference to congestion and – one for the future – how buses might offer an almost door to door service.”

Following this first event there has been a follow-up meeting, and we hope to have another meeting in the next few weeks.

Web-site and weekly newsletter

As well as advertising our own events and news on our website we also invite other organisations with similar aims to submit their items for inclusion. Our events management system makes it easy to manage and edit the web pages and also to generate a weekly email newsletter with events over the following couple of weeks and recent news. This goes to around 1900 people in Cambridge and also in the surrounding villages. We also have a Facebook page which has seen considerable activity over the past months, and we post important news and events (as well as our weekly newsletter) on Twitter.



Treasurers Report

The Accounting Period extended from Oct 1st, 2011 (the closing date of the previous audit) through to June 30th, 2012 (as we now intend to close the account at mid-year, every year).

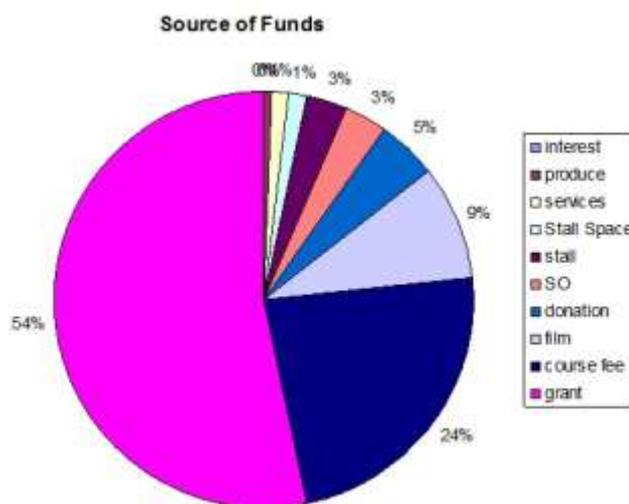
Income for the period was £3,336.26 representing the difference between Revenue of £7,505.32 and Expenses of £4,169.06.

This led to a closing balance at June 30th, 2012, of £9,443.81 of which almost all £9,390.33 was held in the Co-op bank account and £53.48 as cash on hand.

	Opening Balance Oct 1st, 2011	Closing Balance June 30th, 2012
Bank	£6,092.36	£9,390.33
Cash	<u>£15.19</u>	<u>£53.48</u>
Total	£6,107.55	£9,443.81
Change	£3,336.26	
Total Revenue	£7,505.32	
Total Expenses	<u>£4,169.06</u>	
Income	£3,336.26	

Source of funds

Interest	£4.78
Produce	£37.50
Services	£100.00
Stall Space	£100.00
Stall Donations	£238.54
Standing Orders	£245.00
Donations	£357.26
Film*	£677.24
Course Fees**	£1,745.00
Grants***	£4,000.00
Total	£7,505.32



* Most of the film income was subsequently donated to ISEC UK, the makers of the film "Economics of Happiness", with TC retaining 10% for organising the two events.

** These are the course fees from the Permaculture Gardening Course. Expenses from this course totalled £1,165.06, leaving the permaculture group with a surplus for future events.

*** Both these grants were for the Growing Spaces project: £3,000 from the City Council's Sustainable City grants, and £1,000 from the Future Friendly Awards.

Expenses

Core expenses	Leaflets and posters	£31.20
	Web and newsletter	£158.32
	Office rent (finished)	£216.65
	Insurance	£227.30
Events and stalls	Stalls	£87.00
	Events (including film licenses)	£774.49
	Room bookings	£276.60
Groups	CaSFA: poster design and printing	£198.00
	Cropshare: equipment	£199.44
	Permaculture: course	£1,165.06
	Permaculture: general expenses	£55.00
Other	Returned grant money	£780.00
	Total	4169.06

Audit

The accounts have been approved by the auditor Ms Jane Cook whom we thank for her efforts. A copy of her letter is available on request.

Her one recommendation is that a receipt be provided by the Treasurer to any person submitting cash so that we have evidence of the amount paid in and by whom. Please ensure you receive this if you are paying cash to the Treasurer for crediting to the Transition Cambridge accounts

Latest Figures

The latest unaudited figures for Oct 1st 2012 are a closing balance of £7,845.90. The reduction from June 30th is explained by expenses that were due to the Growing Spaces Project, The Energy Group and Hub Overheads (room Rentals, bulletin costs etc.) having now been paid.

Treasurers Comments

While the bank account plus cash stands at a healthy £7,845.90 as at October 1st 2012, approximately half of this sum represents grants received for projects which are still in progress and therefore need to be ring-fenced until our obligations are fulfilled and to meet any further expenses to achieve this.

Nevertheless we still have a significant surplus and this money should best be used in projects to fulfil our objectives. Therefore it is proposed that, while seeking to maintain our sound financial position, we seek ways to ensure that these funds are put to good use by calling for and responding to requests for support from sub-groups or outside bodies.

If such an approach is approved then it is suggested that we could make a sum of £1,000 available in the coming year.

Finally, I would like to thank those members who have contributed to our funds through monthly standing orders at a time when we were seeking to cover our overheads. They played no small part in helping keep us solvent.

Martin Roach, Treasurer
Sept 2012