

Preparing for Peak Oil

The way we live today takes for granted the availability of cheap oil. It's not just transport – vital though that is to modern society: a huge range of products, from plastics to pharmaceuticals, are also derived from oil.

Experts have been warning for years that oil supply is coming to a peak, after which decline will lead to increasing prices. Even mainstream bodies such as the International Energy Agency are now warning that "the era of cheap oil is over".

But what will that mean for the way we live – and how can we prepare for such radical changes? That's the topic of a half-day learning session on Preparing for Peak Oil, which Transition Stratford is running jointly with Transition Leamington at the Lifeways Centre, Albany Road, Stratford, on the morning of Saturday 29 May.

The workshop will hear from local experts on the background to peak oil, what the next few years might hold for oil prices, and how this could affect the economy.

But the bulk of the time will be given over to discussing how we will be affected by rising oil prices and how we can respond practically and sustainably.



Nodding donkey at Kimmeridge Bay, Dorset

If you'd like to contribute to thinking through the implications of rising oil prices on the way we live, then contact Transition Stratford on 01789 298503. The number of places at the session will be limited, and invitations will also be issued by Transition Leamington to people living in Warwick District – so book early to make sure of your place.

Growth potential

Transition Stratford's work to increase the availability of land for people to grow their own food is already bearing fruit. There are now six Garden Shares up and running, with growers and gardener owners all very happy about the scheme. And we're working with Stratford Town Council—the body formally responsible for allotment provision—to help draw up a formal policy on allotments and food growing.

In the meantime, our survey of unused land which could potentially be used for growing food is well under way. Chartered surveyor

and Transition Stratford steering group member Hugh Chatwin has visited fifteen sites so far to look at access and other practical issues and assess whether they might provide an opportunity for temporary or permanent food growing.

We are hoping to report the initial results of the survey to the Town Council at the beginning of June. If you know of any vacant land which you think could be used for growing, or if you would like to help Hugh with the survey, contact Transition Stratford on 01789 298503.

Dates for your diary

Fri 7 May @ 7.15pm, Lifeways, 30 Albany Road, CV37 6PG: Film Friday: E F Schumacher's film testament *On the Edge of the Forest* is paired with *Permaculture in Practice*

Mon 10 May @ 7.30pm: Transition Stratford steering group (venue tbc, ring 01789 298503 for details)

Sat 15 May @ 9.30—12.30: Transition Stratford stall, outside White Swan, Rother St

Tues 18 May @ 2pm—5pm, Stratford Town Hall: Workshop on sustainable energy for historic buildings. Booking essential: ring 01789 298503

Sat 22 May: Visit to Fordhall Farm. To book or request/offer car shares, ring 01789 298503

Sat 29 May @ 10.00 am, Lifeways: Preparing for Peak Oil. To book, ring 01789 298503

Fri 4 June @ 7.15pm, Lifeways: Film Friday - Three TED talks, including Rob Hopkins on Transition to a World without Oil.

Wed 16 June @ 7.30pm: Transition Stratford general meeting (venue and topic tbc)

Sat 19 June @ 9.30—12.30: Transition Stratford stall, outside White Swan, Rother St

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Promoting energy efficiency

Using energy more efficiently will be a major theme for Transition Stratford over the next month.

Energy efficiency on the street

Energy efficiency will be the theme for Transition Stratford's street stall in May, which will take place 9.30 – 12.30 on Saturday 15 May. We will be highlighting sources of information on energy efficiency, as well as telling people about Transition Stratford initiatives to help people save energy and save money. If you've ideas for promoting energy efficiency – the more fun the better! – let us know.

Sustainable energy for historic buildings

The street stall will be followed by a half-day workshop on Sustainable Energy for Historic Buildings on Tuesday 18 May. The workshop, organised by Transition Stratford with Stratford Town Council and the Stratford Society, will take place in the Town Hall between 2.00 and 5.00. There will be presentations from experts from the Building Research Establishment, English Heritage, Marches Energy Agency and Stratford District Council – and a small exhibition by local businesses which provide sustainable energy products and services suitable for older buildings.

The workshop is free, but booking is essential – and nearly half the places are already taken. So if you want to attend, contact Transition Stratford on 01789 298503 to book your place.

Join the Energy Champions

Finally, the next few weeks will see important developments in the Energy Champions scheme that Transition Stratford has been working on with other local groups. As reported in last month's *transition news*, Energy Champions are volunteers who are trained to provide basic advice on energy efficiency to householders, helping them to identify ways to save money and reduce their carbon emissions. Technical support for the Energy Champions will be provided by Act on Energy, the Wellesbourne-based energy advice service.

A project group, which includes Act on Energy and Stratford District Council alongside local groups such as Transition Stratford, Transition Shipston and Making Henley Greener, is working up the details of the scheme. A first training session will take place at the beginning of June, so if you are interested in energy saving and would like to help others do so, contact Transition Stratford on 01789 298503 to find out more.

Visit Fordhall Farm

There's an opportunity to visit Fordhall Farm, featured in the seminal BBC documentary *A Farm for the Future*, on Saturday 22 May. A guided tour of the farm, which is near Market Drayton in North Shropshire, will start at 4pm, with a chance to visit the farm shop beforehand.

The Hollins family have been tenant farmers at Fordhall for generations. Arthur Hollins, who took over in 1929 at the age of just 14, was one of the first organic farmers in England. Following his death in 2005, the farm was threatened by development, but was saved when over 8,000 people purchased non-profit making £50 shares in the Fordhall Community Land Initiative, an innovative Social Enterprise. The land is now farmed by Arthur's chil-



dren, Charlotte and Ben, who continue to promote their father's ethos.

Places for the visit are limited, so if you'd like to go ring us on 01789 298503. We will try to organise car shares, so please also let us know if you would like (or can offer) a lift.